CRITIQUE OF AUTHENTICITY
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Critique of Authenticity

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The concept of authenticity enjoys, in our contemporary world, a rather paradoxical status. Developments within psychoanalysis, deconstruction, post-colonialism, and feminism have undermined the unquestioned legitimacy often attributed to authenticity as a means of asserting individual or collective identity, and also as an important, if not indispensable criterion within debates of moral philosophy. Nonetheless, cultural producers and promoters still tend to deploy claims of authenticity to confer legitimacy, currency, and popular appeal; maybe more so now than ever before in a world in which geographical mobility, hybridity, and virtuality seem to pose an ever-increasing threat to cherished notions of authenticity.

The historical genealogy of the term reveals authenticity as a highly volatile and historically contingent concept comprising three frames of utility: classical truth to an ideal, artistic truth to self, and positive definitions of collective identity. Within a mimetic and Aristotelian paradigm, the artist was expected to be truthful to something outside of the work of art – generally nature itself. Since the eighteenth century, however – especially in the wake of Romanticism’s philosophical turn toward sincerité, naïveté, sentiment, Empfindsamkeit or common sense (most markedly in Rousseau; cf. Ferrara 1993), – the concept has been applied instead to the expression of the artists’ own sensibility, morality and originality. Thus what was considered ‘authentic’ in a work of art was increasingly characterized by what made it distinctive and unique, the manifestation of the moral nature presumed to reside within the artist, and not its truthfulness to something that went before, to norms imposed from outside, or the object represented.

Although the positivist worldview of modernism enabled the possibility of authentic cultural identity, such unitary visions of subjectivity and truth were destabilized in late twentieth-century philosophical discourse. Whereas modernist epistemology described a pre-existing world, postmodern epistemology suggests that rather than existing before language, the practice of desiring, accessing, and describing the authentic comes to define it. Intervening in disciplines as diverse as psychoanalysis, history, linguistics, and philosophy itself, post-structuralist theory after the linguistic turn has elaborated critiques of the theoretical foundations of the modern world. If, as poststructuralist theory claims, authenticity is merely a construct that emerges through the force of hegemonic metanarratives of collective identity, how can other tropes of collective agency emerge to cohere across increasingly fluid geographies and time?
If, in a pragmatic sense, it was the modern reliance on the trope of authenticity for the construction of the nation state that made it appear a normative and necessary aspect of identity, then a global world needs to seek alternative models to build communal identity across potentially shifting economic, political, and social boundaries and affiliations. The pre-nationalist dominance of classicism in Europe emphasized culturo-poetic links between modern and ancient societies rather than emphasizing authentic, and thereby ostensibly unique and autochthonous ownership of the past. It is only the nationalist turn in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century that established a concept of cultural (now mostly understood as national) authenticity, for which Herder’s *Ideas for a Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784–1791) arguably served as a blueprint. As this national variety of what Benedict Anderson termed ‘imagined communities’ has increasingly been replaced by both smaller and larger, geographically ‘porous’ and ethnically heterogeneous communities, the question arises if we have to ‘imagine’ forms of authentication other than those based upon communal or national(istic) parameters. This is precisely what recent theoretical-philosophical discourses (Nancy 1991, 2000, 2007; Blanchot 1993; Irigaray 2004, 2008; Spivak 1988, 1999; Agamben 1993) would seem to suggest: That we have to ‘un-imagine’ or re-imagine community in alternative terms. They seem to indicate that we have to lay to rest the concept of authenticity, either as simply a ‘jargon,’ as Adorno (1964) claimed (who, however, still tried to preserve it for certain cases of modernist art), or even as sheer ‘pathos,’ as the title of a collection of essays on the topic puts it. Or do its jargon and its pathos indicate that we still have to reckon with it as a ‘real,’ but finally unfulfillable desire?

While some authors try to vouchsafe authenticity against the onslaught of poststructuralist skepticism, taking what one could call a ‘melancholic’ stance towards its alleged loss, and deplored such loss as resulting in a culture of the simulacrum, superficiality, fake and ‘phoniness’ (Baudrillard 1981, 1983; Jameson 1991; Newman 1997; Guignon 2004), others – among them most notably Lionel Trilling (1971), Charles Taylor (1991), Anthony Appiah (2005), Ursula Amrein (2009) and Alessandro Ferrara (1998) – try to preserve a modified concept of authenticity, while taking seriously some of the problems opened up by the linguistic turn and its philosophical offshoots. A third branch simply denies the concept any heuristic value and contemporary valence, considering authenticity only accessible as ‘ruin’ of modernity.

A distinction is often made between subject and object authenticity, while a third dimension – that of intersubjectivity – leads an uneasy existence as an extension of subject authenticity. When extended toward the realm of the intersubjective, the long tradition of the pathologization of the lack of authenticity within psychoanalysis (Klein 1955, 1957; Kohut, 1971, 1977, 1978; Winnicott 1965; for a concise overview, cf. Ferrara 1998 and Claviez 2012) has far-reaching consequences, especially when juxtaposed to the theories of feminism and post-colonialism that emerged in recent decades. One of the most striking examples of such a convergence between the subjective and the intersubjective realm is one of the still most influential texts in post-colonialism, Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* (1963), in which the health of the national body politic and the psychic health of the colonized subjects are deeply
intertwined. While Fanon was still deeply immersed in a national(istic) discourse and psychoanalytic paradigm of unity – to which not only his individual diagnoses, but also his allergic stance toward the post-colonial cosmopolitan middle class attest – more recent interventions in the field of post-colonialism and feminism, such as those of Homi Bhabha (1994), Gloria Anzaldúa (1999), Luce Irigaray (2004, 2008) and Helene Cixous (1986) manifest a more ambivalent stance toward the character of unity. While Bhabha’s concept of hybridity enjoys a somewhat floating existence between a descriptive and a normative category,9 Irigarary, Cixous, and partly also Anzaldúa have denounced the strive for originality, unity, and oneness as categories of an inherently patriarchic discourse, while appropriating splitness and hybridity for a feminist discourse10 – taking into account, however, also the negative aspects that such in-between-ness involves.

As such, hybridity now comprises and intertwines – as authenticity still does – empirical, interpretative and normative moments in an almost indecipherable manner.11 On the one hand, on the individual and the communal level (ethnic or national), authenticity endorses both descriptive and prescriptive remnants of denotations such as ‘truthful,’ ‘genuine,’ ‘pure’ and – not the least – ‘authorizing’ (in the double sense of authority and authorship). Simultaneously, on an individual level, notions of hybridity or splitness still smack of the pathological (schizophrenia), while on the level of the ethnic or the national, terms like mongrelization or balkanization are evoked to keep the other at bay. On the other hand, Cixous (1986) considers hybridity a precondition for any act of creativity, while cosmopolitan liberals (Nussbaum 1994; Appiah 2005, 2006) urge us to celebrate diversity without seriously taking into account alterity as a precondition of hybridity;12 a proposition, moreover, often met by the fear that this might result in a loss of cultural distinction and – authenticity.

As far as the arts, and culture in general, are concerned, the negotiation between ‘own’ and ‘other’ holds a special relevance in regard to ‘appropriations’ of Western modernisms or postmodernisms, surely not only limited to the realm of culture. How are we to assess ‘alternative modernisms’ in the sense defined by Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (2001)? Do they rather represent such creative ‘appropriations’ (and what meaning can the etymological root ‘proper’ carry here), or do they dilute allegedly original cultures? On the other hand, considering modernism’s historical roots (such as, e.g., its ‘primitivistic’ heritage), can Western modernism actually yet be considered ‘original’ or ‘authentic’ in any national, or even hemispheric way? And even if the West were to claim (to be) such an ‘origin’: What the post-colonial turn has enabled us to see is that the concept of authenticity is not only a historically contingent, but also a culturally diverse notion or topic in Western culture in general, in non-Western spheres in particular.

In a post-colonial and globalized context, the issue of authenticity has become increasingly central to the redesignation of models of identity production in the face of heightened physical and virtual mobility. Increased exchanges of goods, neo-liberal reduction of tariffs, and ever larger flows of migrants have complicated the identification of individuals with particular communities, modes of consumption or distinct geographic locations. Within only the past decade, the astronomical growth of the internet for communication and cultural exchange has made it more possible than ever before to
access both physical goods and identity-producing information within a virtual realm unrelated to real social or geographical boundaries. The popularity of terms such as the ‘glocal’ (de Duve 2007), a ‘flat’ world (Friedman 1994) or a ‘global village’ suggest a utopian vision of a world that overcomes difference through the universal availability and consumption of cultural signs, real commodities, and potentially unbounded physical mobility. Yet such a vision also produces a dystopian anxiety concerning the loss of local identities understood as authentic, both within cultures increasingly exposed to migration and those who perceive hegemonic threats in neocolonial forms.

Thus, although theorists such as Shiner (1994) have argued that the idealization of authenticity is itself an ideology rooted in problematically narrow definitions of individual authorship, primordial tradition, and a bounded culture, more recent studies identifying shifting modes of authorship, dissemination, and consumption have enabled the maintenance of collective identities perceived internally as authentic despite the apparently enormous changes brought on by forces such as (neo)colonialism and modernization.

In the cultural field, examinations of authenticity often focus on artistic production as conveying symbols of collective identification for both internal and external consumption. One trend that can be discerned here relates to the reevaluation of modern and contemporary arts outside of the mainstream progressive art historical narrative, and the reevaluation of supposedly traditional forms through their interaction with political and market forces from the colonial era to the present day. This trend eschews the long-standing focus of anthropological and art historical study by ceasing the focus on so-called traditional regional arts, instead focusing on artistic production in the Western modality. Rather than regarding it as belated in comparison with Western models and geographic tropes, they understand it instead in the contexts of changing local socio-political spheres such as urbanization and transnationalism (e.g. Basch, Glick-Schiller, Szanton Blanc 1994) and through models rooted in postcolonial concepts such as hybridity, mimicry, (Bhabha 1993), syncretism, and oppositional mimesis, ludic play, or the neo-Baroque as rooted in Deleuzian minor literatures (Harney 2010; Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu 2009; Guha-Thakurta 1992; Mbembe 2001; Kaup 2006). This analytic shift has paralleled the increasing exhibition of non-Western modern and contemporary arts, particularly those of Africa, China and the Middle East, in major Euro-American venues. Related to this globalized cultural exchange, Western art is becoming increasingly imported into a non-Western context in a process creating a globalized cultural consumer community or consumer capitalism of prestigious art. Such a ‘translation’ and renegotiation of Western modes of authentication depends on the simultaneous import of Western institutions such as museums and other valorizing institutions.

Bridging the ambivalent attitudes of theoretical doubt and pragmatic utilization of tropes of authenticity, this collection of essays aims to analyze and critically scrutinize claims of authenticity to produce models of collective identity in a globalizing world of ever-increasing cultural flux. As the title suggests, it locates itself in the Kantian tradition of a Critique designed to gauge the achievements and necessities, but also the philosophical and cultural limits of the concept of authenticity. All the contributions
assembled here address – if in different ways, and in a highly interdisciplinary manner – some of the central questions connected with it, such as:

- Under what conditions, by whom, and for whom is the concept of ‘authenticity’ deployed, rejected, or debated, and who profits from it?
- Does authenticity still have heuristic or hermeneutic value? If not, how can we explain the lasting power of authenticity in cultural practice?
- How do concepts of authenticity vary between disciplines and cultures?
- How do notions of authenticity differ regarding objects, subjects, and collectives?
- How can a cross-disciplinary methodology be devised through which to analyze the social function of the trope of ‘authenticity’ in both theoretical and pragmatic terms?

2

The opening philosophical debate between Alessandro Ferrara and Thomas Claviez sets the stage for the volume and shows what is ‘at stake’ in the concept of authenticity. It also outlines two positions that have dominated the discussion surrounding it: A liberal one in the tradition of Charles Taylor that argues for the necessity of the concept – even for those who are skeptical about it –, and a position that can roughly be called poststructuralist, which, in the vein of Giorgio Agamben and Jean-Luc Nancy, but also Michel Foucault, emphasizes the conceptual inconsistencies and implications of power that inhabit it. Ferrara’s essay tackles what he considers to be the ‘dual paradox’ of authenticity, part of which was also outlined at the beginning of this introduction, head-on: While admitting that “authenticity being so widely affirmed and praised, falls short of what can sensibly and defensibly be called authenticity,” he also insists that a radical critique of its conceptual and moral implications relies upon an unacknowledged admission of its possibility, since otherwise a critique of the alleged phoniness of attempts to be ‘oh-so-authentic’ weren’t even possible. He points out that, in management manuals, authenticity has become an indispensable criterion for successful business strategies, but that the danger lurks in the fact that, the more desperately one tries to be authentic, the less this is being ‘bought’ by critical consumers who are out for the ‘real thing.’ However, in order to even be able to utter such reservations, what is necessary is the assumption that authenticity can and does exist. The second part of Ferrara’s essay is then devoted to a critique of the poststructuralist positions that, especially in the context of the recent debate about community, and the importance of the notion of authenticity in these debates, reject this concept as not only logically inconsistent, but politically dangerous because of its potentially fascist implications, which are outlined (although Nancy never directly refers to the authentic in his *The Inoperable Community*). Ferrara points to five internal inconsistencies that, in this view, a deconstructionist position entails – among
them lacking an account of agency and practical relationality, the exclusion of “entire areas of moral phenomenology,” the paradox that a centerless subject by necessity loses all the distinctiveness that poststructuralism so emphasizes, and a lacking concept of satisfaction that goes with such an assumption. He finally addresses what he calls the problem of ‘Gate 22’ which, in his view, illustrates the shortcomings of a notion of community whose members, to put it in the words of Alfonso Lingis, have ‘nothing in common’: In his view, this chance encounter of people who share nothing (except their flight destination), exemplifies the problems (and final heuristic uselessness) of the concept of a ‘metonymic community’ that he takes from Claviez.

In his response to Ferrara, Claviez takes up the central points of critique of Ferrara. He first points out that a critique of the ‘phoniness’ that Ferrara admits is inherent in certain marketing strategies that try to ride the wave of authenticity does not necessarily imply a positive notion of it. Moreover, he points out the Rousseauvian underpinnings of the attempts mentioned by Ferrara to ‘perform’ the authentic, and claims that a certain impenetrable circularity informs Ferrara’s argumentation. He addresses Trilling’s problematic distinction between authenticity and sincerity that Ferrara invokes, and points out the strong interconnection between authenticity and recognition that is also at the heart of his “A critique of authenticity and recognition,” included later in this volume. Claviez then turns to the possibly dangerous, Heideggerian implications that the concept of authenticity carries once it is applied to an entire community, as the telos that such a concept assumes veers dangerously close to a notion like Heidegger’s Schicksalsgemeinschaft as he elaborates it in the (in)famous paragraph 74 of his Being and Time. He points out that since “Heidegger defines the they [das Man] as a notorious obstacle of the self’s authentic potentiality-of-Being, the only possible way to conceive of the self’s being as always also ‘being-with’ in a non-negative way is to introduce a destined community with which it shares a purpose, or, as he calls it, a common ‘work.’” He finally argues that Ferrara’s definition of a ‘metonymic community’ misses the point, in that it oversimplifies the implications of this concept, and, even more important, that liberal concepts of community lack a convincing strategy to seriously take into account otherness in a form that is more than pure lip service.

In his re-response, Ferrara addresses and rejects Claviez’ critique of circularity and takes up his critique of recognition. In Ferrara’s view, it is the exemplarity – a term taken from Kantian aesthetics – of authentic acts that ensures their significance beyond any analytic scrutiny, as they “couldn’t have been different without diminishing its worthiness or expresses such alignment at its best.” He then critically assesses some of the points raised by Claviez – specifically as regards the unity of the individual in the works of Hume and Freud, pointing out again the moral perils of an approach that undermines the aspect of agency that is strongly connected to such an assumed unity.

The second part opens with Claviez’ essay “A critique of authenticity and recognition,” in which he outlines, by means of 8 theses, the connection between authenticity and recognition, as well as the problematic implications that this connection features. Drawing upon the work of Roland Barthes and Wolfgang Iser, he then presents a semiotic model of authentication, in order to show that the concept of authenticity is based upon the
assumption of a transcendent signifier – an in fact arbitrarily chosen ‘point of origin’ – that is designed to ignore or suppress historical time as a force of contingency and change. Moreover, this assumption then serves to uphold a self-perpetuating hierarchy of experts who claim the competence to decide what is and what isn’t deemed ‘authentic’ with regard to said point of origin.

In his contribution with the title “Authentic power and care as repetition,” Timothy Campbell also addresses the connection between authenticity and power, but gives it a rather surprising twist, as power is, on the one hand, inherent to the dynamics of authentication. However, Campbell asks, “how does one even set about qualifying the difference between authentic and inauthentic power?” Taking as his starting point not, as one would presume, the earlier Foucault who provided innovative and influential analyses of power, but the later Foucault who focuses on strategies of self-care, Campbell focuses his analysis on two figures whose significance have hardly been addressed yet: the entrepreneur of The Birth of Biopolitics and the Cynic of The Courage of the Truth. He goes on to argue that the relationship between the Nietzschean and the Heideggerian Foucault plays itself out in the contested question of the relationship between selfhood and subjectivity; a selfhood that, as he also remarks, is under the constant siege (or ‘chatter,’ as Heidegger calls it) as it is thus prevented from realizing its own ‘authentic potentiality of being.’ Campbell then proceeds by carving out the distinction between the entrepreneur and the Cynic: While the former’s subjectivity, as Campbell observes, “is premised on a relation to the self in which the relationality is seen primarily as ownership,” the Cynic’s subjectivity is characterized by a Bakhtin-like carnivalesqueness, as he “has sundered any relation of ownership to the self since his very being is premised on the possibility that life as carnivalesque can be experienced every day and in every moment.” According to Campbell, however, what is needed is a Deleuzian approach – of difference as repetition – in order to conceive of both power and care as something nomadic – but also authentic.

Taking the notion of authenticity from the level of the subject to that of community, Viola Marchi, in her essay “The alienation of the common: a look into the ‘authentic origin’ of community,” sheds light on what is at stake in the intensely led debate on community that has been raging, as mentioned above, between liberal, communitarian, and poststructuralist camps for quite some time. Marchi argues that, in order to get out of the conundrum of the debate as to how to define community, and what functions to ascribe it, what is necessary is to “reformulate the question of community itself,” and that this requires, in turn, a radical reassessment of the term ‘common.’ In so doing, what we have to disentangle ourselves from are deeply sedimented concepts of the alleged ‘origin’ of community, as they have been dominating our discussions due to the looming shadows of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. Taking a critical view on the assumptions and conclusions of these canonized authors, Marchi insists that, contrary to commonly held assumptions about shared etymological roots, “community and the common appear to be mutually exclusive: for the first to exist, the latter has to disappear.” Building upon the work of Roberto Esposito, she shows that community since its inception is inextricably wound up with concepts of appropriation which, as she argues, are diametrically opposed to
‘common’ as something shared as ‘gift.’ Community then is, right from its start, alienated from the common – defined by her as the ‘non-proper’ – and through this alienation profoundly disconnected from any possible authenticity that its members allegedly share and create. What is needed, Marchi concludes, is a non-dialectical concept of community that acknowledges – rather than desperately trying to overcome – the non-sublatable relationship between community and the common.

Ryan Kopaitich’s essay “Authentic surfaces: toward a concept of transformational authenticity” offers both a new critique of authenticity as well as an attempt to rethink this culturally significant concept. While many critiques of authenticity point to its aporetic construction, and therefore question its viability, simply jettisoning the term may not only be impossible, but undesirable. After so many criticisms and defenses of authenticity, a singular question arises: What is it about authenticity that frustrates our attempts to analyze or systematize it and how does this relate to the brute fact that it remains such a compelling cultural signifier? Such is the starting point for this essay, in which Kopaitich argues that authenticity relies on an unrealizable distinction between surface and depth. Beginning by identifying the ways in which authenticity mobilizes a conceptual collapse between the epistemic and the ontological – the former being, in turn, based upon the “distinction between a priori and a posteriori” – as an integral part of its deployment, this insight is subsequently furthered to frame authenticity’s reliance on the boundaries of supposedly foundational oppositions that are, however, constantly shifting. Thus authenticity is characterized by a tautology, in that “the authentic is what is instantiated by the authentic object, and the authentic object is that which partakes in authenticity.” This is why authenticity, according to Kopaitich, is “reliant on avoiding surface,” which thus constitutes an “interface that exists neither as interior or exterior.” It is just this possibility, however, which guarantees the structure of authenticity in the first place. Taking his start from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, he argues for a reconceptualization of authenticity in a way that “admits to contingency,” and sees “the permeability of authenticity as a continuum, a surface bending and distorting the cultural field.” That is, authenticity has to come to terms with notions of becoming – or, as Claviez argues in his essay “A critique of authenticity and recognition,” to acknowledge history as contingent.

Due to its high versatility, music has been embedded into a vast range of authenticity-related discourses, ranging from collective identity formations and national(ist) identity constructions to individual counter-identities within an increasingly globalized context. As is evident from the four chapters addressing music-related themes, ‘musical authenticity’ has likewise been used as a highly volatile concept and tool, not only with regard to the notion of the creation of the national, but also concerning the construction of modern metonymic societies in a contemporary situation that has been shaped by increasingly blurred boundaries. As it seems, there is almost no contemporary musical context in which the trope of authenticity has not been playing a central, although also highly contradictory key role. This includes the construction of so-called authentic musical traditions within the national movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century, the individualistic
employment of the term within blues, jazz, rock, and folk music movements, as well as the usage within the different realms of migrant contexts and its iconization within the western-global world music spheres.

As the essay of Lea Hagmann and Franz Andres Morrissey illustrates, the concept of ‘authenticity’ has especially become a central issue within numerous music revival movements that emerged after the Second World War. Often, as in the case of the Cornish folk music revival that is at the core of this essay, related debates have been shaped by a conflict between purists – that might be equated with the ‘authenticators’ – and innovators challenging the universalist and often rigid claims of origin and style. At the same time, claims of authenticity are set against a (seemingly dominant) counterpart, which illustrates that the debated claim of authenticity always needs to be understood in its broader context. For instance, in the case of the Early Music movement (or so-called ‘historically informed performance practice’), revivalists have been clearly aware of the limitations of the indirect reconstruction from written sources only. And yet, the Early Music movement has nevertheless been perceiving itself as ‘authentic,’ not so much concerning issues of origin, but with regard to having set itself against the dominant practices of the so-called classical music sphere (Kenyon 1988; Sherman 1997) that is also subject of Marcello Sorce Keller’s essay. Similarly, many acoustic folk revival movements have perceived themselves as ‘authentic’ – despite audible differences to the actual traditional models, as they were juxtaposed, for instance, against the popular music sphere.

‘Authenticity’ has likewise become a central keyword within many academic music-related discourses. In these cases, the concept of ‘authentic music’ has often been strongly intertwined with the idea of a music tradition unaffected by outside (i.e. Western) influences. This concept was not only prevailing in structural-functional approaches of the 1950s/60s, but also already in the ‘official’ definition of traditional music by the International Folk Music Council (1955). As analyses of central discourses in ethnomusicology reveal (Nettl 1983; Barz and Cooley 1997; Post 2006), particularly the preservation of ‘authentic musics’ threatened by modern globalization has been a recurring issue within scholarly debates: While the idea of change and transformation was already articulated by major theorists like Alan P. Merriam (1964) and Bruno Nettl (1964) within the Anglo-American branch of ethnomusicology in the mid-1960s, the shift towards popular and vernacular traditions, hybridization, and transformation only occurred in the 1990s. Notions of ‘authenticity’ were hereby also increasingly intertwined with discourses on modern identity construction, revival, and nationalism, including the impact of changing socio-political spheres (Basch, Glick-Schiller, Szanton Blanc 1994) and related reimagined concepts of community (Spivak 1988, 1999; Agamben 1993). These developments notwithstanding, there is still need for further in-depth studies of the role of music in these processes, including, as Tina K. Ramnarine’s essay illustrates, the understanding of the multiple layers of modern, often blurred identity constructions that are, as is depicted in Marcello Ruta’s essay, tied to authenticity-related discourses.

The articles of the third part thus each illustrate how usages of authenticity can be analyzed and transferred to sociocultural and -political phenomena on a broader scale with
regard to music. Part 3 opens with Tina K. Ramnarine’s essay “Hegel and Sibelius on the Starship Enterprise: beyond the frontiers of musical authenticity,” in which she analyzes how the idea of authenticity is related to the concept of alterity. Focusing specifically on discourses within decolonized scholarship, Ramnarine re-analyses the construction of ‘the other’ within the framework of hybridity, hereby critically reflecting on origin-related authenticity claims in musical discourses. As she argues here, the distinction of self and other collapses in the situation of the observer observed theme. Addressing issues of the biopolitical, i.e. the embodied dimensions of political organization, Ramnarine dissects discourses on authenticity as a means of highlighting unspoken reference points, in this case, white hegemony, which becomes particularly apparent in the case of African Americans in symphony orchestras. Yet, Ramnarine also illustrates how multiple claims of authenticity can be read by different groups into the same object, such as Jean Sibelius’ Finlandia, which thus takes on a multi-dimensional form of hybridity. She hereby illustrates how the reflection on authenticity provides deep access into the complex and constantly changing dynamics of human relations.

Dissecting ethical discourses centered on the relation of music and authenticity, Marcello Sorce Keller’s essay “How we got into ‘authenticity’ and ‘originality’ thinking, and why we should find a way out of it.” takes a critical look at the modern 21st century idea of originality and the emphasis on original works within what has been described as western classical music. Sorce Keller not only explores the changeability of the meaning and value of this concept over the centuries, but also argues that the idea of fixed historical musical icons is an expression of commodification (apparent in the emergence of the idea of copyright) that only emerged in the early 19th century. As Sorce Keller subsequently elaborates, the equation of authenticity with ‘the good’ is actually a late Romantic fantasy. As he illustrates, the related canon centered on the idea of art as being equated with ‘the good’ has taken on almost religious qualities. Yet, this concept is not restricted to art music, but has increasingly likewise been adopted within other music genres, such as rock and jazz music.

Marcello Ruta adds a further philosophical perspective by applying a discursive-analytical approach, thus setting the focus on musical ontology in his essay “Ontology of music and authenticity – a pragmatic approach.” Focusing his essay on a discussion of what he calls ‘situational authenticity,’ i.e. improvisation as self-programming art-performance in a western art music context, Ruta comes to a similar observation as Ramnarine with regard to the blurring of boundaries. By specifically falling back on the writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Ruta hereby tries to identify which questions are at stake in each of those different contexts in which concepts and definitions of authenticity are being used. As he concludes, rather than regarding post-modernity as an opponent of modernity, it ought to be viewed as a continuation.

In contrast to these philosophically oriented and informed reflections, Hagmann and Morrissey apply the idea of multiple authenticities based on Bendix (1997) and Dutton (2003) as a practical analytical tool. Taking the British folk song “Where Are You Going To?” (Roud No 298) as a case study in their essay “Multiple authenticities of folk songs,” the authors explore notions of nominal and expressive authenticity, which is further
expanded by the idea of experiential authenticity. By comparing the song’s appearance in various historic manuscripts as well as historic and contemporary recordings and performances, both authors analyze how “Where Are You Going To?” keeps changing its music, its content and its use of language according to different contexts and the different interpretations of ‘authenticity.’ Hagmann and Morrissey hereby provide an exemplary in-depth analysis of the multi-dimensional conceptualizations of authenticity within a music revival context – an approach that can likewise be transferred to the study of other music-related authenticity discourses.

The fourth and final part of this book returns to the power of claims of authenticity in different social, artistic, and architectural contexts. In the domain of culture and arts, the history and ‘career’ of authenticity is a longstanding and complex one, in which the ‘true’ and ‘genuine’ never completely shed sacral connotations of some sort of ‘origin’ in a “holy picture.” Also interpretable as a ‘melancholic’ search for the sacred, it refers to the ‘authentic artwork,’ the ‘authentic artist,’ or the ‘authentic group of people’ for its authority and exemplary status. Given the longue durée of authenticity as a key notion of Western civilization, one which in the 20th and 21st centuries has also been ‘translated’ into Non-Western cultural contexts, the genuine (due to its links to community) can be seen as a lasting element of a ‘grand récit,’ an all-encompassing narrative. And it is a powerful narrative, one which can either resist, or become part of, the cultural industry via the alleged ‘truthfulness’ of the simulacrum or the copy. Authenticity has therefore outlasted the above-mentioned poststructuralist skepticism and deconstruction in post-modern times, and has actually undergone a real revival in late Cultural Capitalism, with its aestheticized, branded economy (mentioned in this book by Ferrara and Imesch). The several ‘deaths’ and ‘ends’ which characterize the traumatic and paradigmatic 20th century – the ‘loss of the aura’ (Benjamin), the ‘death of the author’ (Barthes, Foucault), accompanied by the ‘death of the original’ (Dadaism, Duchamp, Neo-Dadaism, Appropriation Art) – never managed to completely annihilate, overwrite, or put an end to the continuing allure of authenticity and the sublime, given the actual processes of transformation in which we live. Authenticity as a trope can therefore still survive the ‘fake’ of Appropriation Art, in the same way that there is a ‘truthfulness’ of the copy in Asian contexts. Furthermore, authentication processes are inseparably linked to constructions of identity and their equally deep cultural rooting in defining community, the other, and the self.

These themes and subjects present in the closing section of this book are dedicated to exhibitions and their authenticating power in areas as diverse as the innovative housing projects in the multi-ethnic realm of contemporary Switzerland (Wetzel), art exhibitions that address AIDS in the multicultural US American context (Junge), and the architectural and urban concepts for specific strategies of nation-branding in Non-Western civilizations (Imesch).

Part IV opens with Dietmar J. Wetzel’s contribution, “Transformative communities as alternative forms of life? Conceptual reflections and empirical findings.” His essay deals with a phenomenon which since the late 19th and early 20th century has played an important role in several modernization processes across Europe and North America on
the one side, of multiethnic Switzerland on the other, and one that has risen in significance since the 1990s, the alleged “age of crisis.” Analyzing and debating notions of a “transformative community” and its specificities in general, he then discusses chosen community-based housing projects in German-speaking Switzerland, known as so called alternative cooperatives (“Genossenschaften”). The author points out the relevance of such co-housing-experiments in regard to their potential in the realm of social and political innovation and as a consequence of a fundamental “critique of forms of life.” Using empirical data stemming from a Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) funded research project, Wetzel provides insight into the implications of these experiments in regard to social constructions of identity, community, and authenticity.

Sophie Junge’s essay “Authenticity required: writing the visual history of AIDS in current exhibitions,” analyzes how, via the powerful tool of the exhibition, the ‘writing’ of art history functions in the context of both older and younger artists affected by AIDS. She details how, in this ongoing process, claims of authenticity become powerful instruments, and how the argumentative basis for inclusion and exclusion functions. Authenticity becomes, or is instrumentalized as, a value judgement for the creation of narratives that produce political, social, and arthistorical ‘facts”; it thus becomes a significant criterion for singling out a distinctive social group that revives and reproduces stereotypes of social oppression and highly problematic gender-, race-, age- and class-distinctions (ascribed earlier to an equally marginalized social group), thus (re-)writing the ‘art history’ of AIDS. Junge thus stresses the importance of Art world instances like the museum (Tacoma Art Museum, Washington), the exhibition (Art AIDS America) or the curator (Jonathan David Katz & Rock Huschka), and their responsibility for the process of canon and discourse formation.

Kornelia Imesch’s article, “Authenticity as branding tool: generic architecture versus critical regionalism in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar,” discusses two distinct architectural approaches relevant for the ongoing process of constructing new forms of identity in the Gulf countries’ nation branding, and in their promotion and marketing of their respective near-future visions, in the form of economic and social ‘masterplans,’ (e.g., Vision Abu Dhabi 2030; Vision Qatar 2030). In both theory and in practice, the two discussed architectural approaches engage in this ongoing process, offering different solutions which also concern the emotional and symbolic dimensions of architecture.

In conclusion, as a ‘critique of authenticity,’ this volume offers a rich and controversial assessment of the stakes and arguments surrounding a concept that, its theoretical deconstructions and critical implications notwithstanding, will accompany us for some time to come.

Notes

2 Cf. Taylor, Charles. The Ethics of Authenticity.

Cf. also Berlin, Isaiah. “Herder and the Enlightenment.”


Knaller, Susanne, and Harro Müller, eds. *Authentizität: Diskussion eines ästhetischen Begriffs; Ferrara, Alessandro. Reflective Authenticity.*


Cf. Irigaray, Luce. *Ce sexe qui n’est pas un.*


Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.*


Cf. Ibid. 10.


Cf. Campbell, Timothy. “Authentic power and care as repetition.” 60.

Cf. Ibid. 65.

Cf. Ibid. 68.


Cf. Ibid. 75.


Cf. Ibid. 106.

Cf. Ibid.

Cf. Ibid. 107.


Cf. Stone, Ruth M. *Theory for Ethnomusicology.* 37–50


Cf. Dutton, Denis. “Authenticity in Art.”


Chapter 11

Multiple authenticities of folk songs

Lea Hagmann and Franz Andres Morrissey

Abstract:

One of the key issues in the British Folk Revivals seems to be the notion of ‘authenticity,’ a term, which is foregrounded by the revivalists and is often the cause of highly emotional controversies. Revivalists tend to establish a ‘historically informed performance practice,’ which then becomes the norm. However, quite often newcomers to the scene challenge this universality and offer alternative interpretations instead, thereby causing severe controversies.

The frequently heard dichotomy ‘purists’ versus ‘innovators’ seems to arise from the fact that both factions seem to have different understandings of ‘authenticity,’ to which they refer. While the former look for ‘historical authenticity,’ the latter are rather interested in the ‘contemporary authenticity’ of folk songs and how they integrate with the artists’ personalities and ways of living. The debate around ‘authenticity’ becomes especially interesting during folk song performances, where in addition to the performers the audience constantly questions the ‘authenticity’ of the songs they hear. The authors of this chapter suggest a model of ‘multiple authenticities’ and evaluate it by taking the British folk song “Where Are You Going To?” (Roud No 298) as a case study. By comparing its appearance in various historic manuscripts as well as historical and contemporary recordings and performances, they analyse how this song keeps changing its music, its content and its use of language according to different contexts and the different interpretations of ‘authenticity’.

Keywords: folk music, revivalism, linguistics, performance, innovation

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Introduction

Authenticity is a multi-layered and highly elusive concept, which seems to change its significance when it is applied to an object, a statement or a situation. In folk songs, the matter is further complicated by the fact that, on the one hand, they can be referred to as objects collected on paper or sound-recordings, i.e., as artefacts, while on the other hand, they also come to life the moment they are being sung, i.e., in performance. In this chapter, we discuss folk songs both as artefacts and in performance and evaluate how the concept of ‘authenticity’ changes according to these perspectives. We do so by introducing
a concept of *multiple authenticities*, based on notions by Denis Dutton and Regina Bendix. In the second part, we demonstrate how these insights work in practice with a case study of a folk song complex called *Where Are You Going To, Fair Maid?* with Roud number 298. We conclude that ‘authenticity’ is a dialogic concept, which becomes ‘in-authentic’ as soon as its parameters become static.

**Folk songs and authenticity: introducing a model**

One of the key issues in the British Folk Revivals seems to be the notion of *authenticity*, a term which is foregrounded by the revivalists and is often the cause of highly emotional controversies. The main problem herein lies in the fact that “much revival is about representing the past – but the representation itself takes place in the present,” as ethnomusicologist Owe Ronström summarizes. This dilemma is not only an issue in folk music revivals but also in many other music scenes, such as the Early Music movement or the revival of medieval music.

Representing music of the past creates a number of problems. Folk songs, for instance, live in the moment of the performance. They vary from realization to realization and from singer to singer, and therefore inevitably develop and change over the time. Before the availability of recording devices, songs could only be noted down on paper, e.g., by folklorists like Cecil J. Sharp (1859–1924) or Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924) during the First British Folk Revival, with varying degrees of attention to detail. Thus, what folk songs really sounded like in former times leaves considerable room for interpretation. This not only concerns the musical aspects, but also the text and the use of the vernacular. In British folk songs, the only parameter which seems to be more or less stable is the story the song tells, as literary scholar Bertrand H. Bronson indicates in his account of variations in the written identical ballads sung by the legendary Mrs. Brown of Falkland (1747–1810); “What was it she had carried in her memory? Not a text, but a ballad: a fluid entity soluble in the mind, to be concretely realized at will in words and music.”

As ethnomusicologist Tamara Livingston suggests, in the majority of music revivals the most common processes are the ambition to

a) establish a corpus of revival music, i.e., a common repertoire,

b) formulate a suitable narrative which surrounds the musical tradition and legitimizes its revival, and

c) define the musical stylistic features, which distinguish the revival performance practice from other musical styles, e.g., mainstream pop, classical music or other folk musics.

These aims are achieved by the revivalists’ research in libraries, in the field, e.g., by interviewing and recording primary informants, and in music archives. In a second step, revivalists, usually a small handful of people, analyze the written, aural and oral material and,
based on their results, then define what they consider a historically informed performance practice. The newly established stylistic parameters eventually become the norm for the interpretation of the revival corpus and are henceforth often regarded as unchangeable.9

However, in many revivals newcomers to the scene or second-generation musicians challenge the universality of these revival music aesthetics and offer alternative interpretations instead – an undertaking which, according to Livingston, can cause a revival to split.10 In the innovators’ eyes, the historically informed music practice is seen as artificial in the sense that the musical outcome is a soulless attempt to copy an unrepeatable – and in fact highly elusive and conjectural – original. Singer Martin Carthy (*1940), one of the central figures in the early Second English folk revival, recalls that “if someone sang an old song that was new to everybody […] your duty was to go and find a new version of it […] that was the duty.”11 At the same time a song might be considered to be better suited to the singers’ way of performing if it were adapted to more contemporary practices, an approach that leads to the emerging English Folk-rock scene in the 1960s,12 which fused ‘traditional’ folk music with contemporary rock. Similarly, in Irish traditional music in the 1980s and 1990s,13 the world music sub-genre of ‘Celtic music’ was created and has since become extremely popular.14

The dichotomy ‘purists’ versus ‘innovators’ would appear to arise from the fact that both factions seem to work from different understandings of ‘authenticity.’ While the early revivalists try to establish norms based on the perception of historical authenticity, the second-generation artists are more interested in how folk song or folk music integrates with their artistic interpretations and the styles of their delivery. These opposing interpretations of ‘authenticity’ seem to be co-existent in many revival movements and can be best described by applying philosopher Denis Dutton’s terminology.15

In his article “Authenticity in Art,” Dutton addresses a dualistic and contradictory understanding of ‘authenticity’ by introducing the dichotomy nominal authenticity versus expressive authenticity. Nominal authenticity is described as “the correct identification of the origins, authorship, or provenance of an object,” and is thus linked to a history in which a linear time factor is central. By contrast, Dutton’s expressive authenticity evokes “a true expression of an individual’s or a society’s values and beliefs,” in which the historical/temporal aspect becomes irrelevant. Therefore, while nominal authenticity refers to historical authenticity, expressive authenticity is linked to the performance per se and to the performer: “[A]uthenticity is seen as committed, personal expression, being true […] to one’s artistic self, rather than true to an historical tradition.”16

In folk songs, both types of authenticity can be discussed with respect to the musical material, e.g., melody, rhythm, modes, tempo, ornamentation, instruments and style, and with respect to the language, e.g., content, register, language or language variety.17 Musical nominal authenticity can be based on ancient scores, descriptions of historic instruments, or historic recordings, while expressive authenticity might adapt contemporary instruments and incorporate various musical styles, such as rock, pop, jazz or ‘world-musics.’ Linguistic nominal authenticity focuses on archaic forms of language and lyrics as something that is fixed, often as written texts, while expressive authenticity incorporates individual sociolects or
dialects of the performers, as well as the selection of verses and the adaptation of content and phrasing for contemporary understanding.

It is this kind of authenticity which we encounter in the etymology of the word itself. As folklorist Regina Bendix points out, the Greek origin of the word *authentes* originally had two meanings: ‘one who acts with authority’ and ‘made by one’s own hand.’ Changes in music as well as in language happen constantly on a diachronic scale in the folk process. This contrasts markedly with the revival movements which, as stated above, have the tendency to fix the revived styles according to certain parameters. Sociolinguists Richard Watts and the second author speak of ‘insects caught in amber’ to describe such fossilized forms. Dutton’s *nominal* as well as his *expressive authenticity* are therefore in constant interaction in music revival processes.

However, in addition to Dutton’s dichotomy of authenticities, which are closely linked to the performer and the performance, it is useful to consider Bendix’ *In Search of Authenticity*, where she describes yet another aspect of authenticity. Focusing on the audience as authenticators, Bendix describes this type of authenticity as “quality of experience” which might manifest itself as “the chills running down one’s spine during musical performances […], moments that may stir one to tears, laughter, elation.” Such emotions are intrinsically linked to the immediacy of a given performance. Ethnomusicologist Owe Ronström describes something very similar with his *authenticity of the consumer*: “The authentic is the experience, the taste, or the emotion. What is true is what feels true […].”

We propose the term *experiential authenticity* for this and see it as closely related to Dutton’s *expressive authenticity* in that it can be also placed on a synchronic level, in contrast to the time-related *nominal authenticity*. However, while *expressive authenticity* is closely linked to the performer, *experiential authenticity* relates to the audience. These three aspects of authenticity and the issue of ‘time’ can be combined into the following model:

![Diagram](image-url)

*Figure 11.1. Multiple Authenticities 1.*
As far as an actual folk song in relation to this model is concerned, we differentiate between two levels. The first considers the song as a tangible artefact in the form of a broadsheet, a manuscript or an archive recording, which can be analyzed in terms of *nominal authenticity*. Access to an artefact is largely independent of time, both in terms of the point in time and frequency. By contrast, the *expressive* instantiation by a performer, as well the *experiential* impact of folk song on an audience, manifest themselves only in an actual performance; they are as ephemeral and as irretrievable as the performance itself. This duality observable in any folk song can be integrated into our model as follows.

![Diagram showing the duality of authenticities in folk songs](image)

**Figure 11.2. Multiple Authenticities 2.**

A case study: applying the model to song Roud 298

As the content of this book suggests, aspects of authenticity are analyzed from a theoretical as well as from a practical perspective. In order to avoid developing a model of authenticity that remains a purely theoretical construct, we will explore how these *multiple authenticities* can be applied to the concept of ‘folk songs’ in the following. We do so by taking the song Roud 298 as a case study. Aspects of *nominal authenticity*, i.e., the point and place of origin of this song, as well as *expressive authenticity*, i.e., the individual performances and artistic interpretations of the same song, and *experiential authenticity*, i.e., the effect the song has on its audience, will be analyzed in the following sections.

The first sub-section dedicates itself to a longstanding controversy between the English folk revivalists and folk musicians from Cornwall: they debate whether the song has an English or a Cornish, i.e., Celtic language origin and additionally question which of the over forty-four different melodies attached to this song might be the original one. By comparing various manuscripts and early print versions, we aim to locate the song’s origin linguistically, geographically as well as chronologically. The subsequent sub-section focuses on the various individual artistic interpretations of the song. Here we discuss linguistic as well as musical variations and arrangements and evaluate statements by performing artists.
about the song. The final sub-section addresses the song Roud 298 from the perspective of the listeners, focusing on the effect the song evokes in its audience, and evaluating paralinguistic and nonverbal reactions to the song.

As the first author (Lea Hagmann) is an ethnomusicologist with a linguistic background and the second author (Franz Andres Morrissey) a linguist with a background as an active folk-singer, our approach is a musico-linguistic anthropological one, as suggested by ethnomusicologists Steven Feld and Aaron Fox23 as well as by Anthony Seeger.24

**Celtic or English? In search of *nominal authenticity***

In this sub-section, we explore the claim that the song which serves as our case study is of Celtic origins. It is in this context that considerations of *nominal authenticity* are particularly useful, the attempt to find the sources of the song complex Round 298. It includes songs such as *Where Are You Going To, Fair Maid?*, alongside others with a similar content, such as the English versions *Dabbling in the Dew*, *The Milkmaid's Song*, and *Pray, Whither So Trippingly*. It is closely linked to the Scots25 versions *Rolling in the Dew*, *I'm Gann to the Wood* and *Kind Hearted Nancy*, as well as the Gaelic waulking song *Anna Bheag Chòibhneil Bhòidheach*, the Welsh ballad *Ble 'r wyt ti'n myned yr enet ddu?* and the Cornish26 ditty *Pelea era why moaz moes fettow teg?,* now usually referred to as *Delkiow Sery* or *Debo Sywy.* The song represents a dialogue between a man from the upper classes, often depicted as a knight or a tailor, and a young working-class girl, usually a milkmaid. The man tries either to seduce the girl and get her pregnant or, in the more gentle or bowdlerized28 versions, simply asks her to marry him. In most versions, the two part without a happy ending, either because the girl is considered too poor to be married or because she takes offence to the advances and sends her seducer away in anger. The song usually starts with a stanza like this:

*Where are you going to, my pretty maid?*
*With your red-rosy cheeks and your coal-black hair?*
*I'm going a-milking, kind Sir, she said.*
*For strawberry leaves make the milkmaids fair.*29

The color and shape of the milkmaid’s hair vary from ‘nut-brown’ to ‘black-curly’ or even ‘yellow,’ and the recurring phrase: “for strawberry leaves make milkmaids fair” can be replaced by “for dabbling in the dew…,” “for roving in the dew…” or “for rolling in the dew…,” all of which clearly have sexual allusions.30

The big debate of the origin of this widely known song arises from the Cornish political and cultural activists who both aim at proving that the song is originally a Cornish and therefore Celtic rather than an English song.31 References are made to the Welsh and the Scottish versions and to the antiquity of the Cornish version.32 Amongst Cornish musicians, *Delkiow Sery* nowadays is believed to be the “only ‘living’ remnant” of a Cornish language song33 and it is celebrated for its ‘Celticity.’34
In terms of Roud 298's *nominal authenticity*, there are indeed three early sources – the Gwavas manuscripts (1688), the Thomas Tonkin B manuscripts (1736) and the William Borlase manuscripts (1750) – which render the lyrics in Cornish with its English translation. The Gwavas and Tonkin manuscript versions vary slightly, whereas the version in Borlase seems to be a direct copy of the Tonkin manuscripts. The text in the Gwavas manuscript is written in a hand that differs from that of antiquarian William Gwavas and is signed by “your most humble servant to serve you whilst, Edward Chirgwin.” The Tonkin B manuscript bears the annotation: “this song was the first Cornish song I ever heard, it was at Carelew [in Mylor parish] before Sister Kempe was married, sung by one Chygwyn, brother in law to the old Mr. Grosse.”

The Cornish antiquarian William Pryce (1735–1790) was the first to print the Cornish version with the English translation in his *Archæologia Cornu-Britannica* in 1790. For this version, he quotes the year 1698 as a historical reference point. This date stems from the Tonkin manuscript, but is linked there to another poem that is thought to have been a Cornish song, *A mi a moaz*.Revivalists and scholars have since taken Pryce's version as a reference to date *Dekcio Say*. In addition, the Cornish song text was printed by the clergyman and poet Richard Polwhele (1760–1828) in 1803, where it bears the title “A Cornish Idyll,” as well as by the Welshman Edward Jones (1752–1824) in 1794, entitled “A Cornish Song.” The Cornish origin of this song can thus rely on some evidence in the antiquity of the sources, as well as the frequently quoted references, which link the song to Cornwall. No melody is provided.

However, there are two references which seem to contradict the claim of this being a Cornish original. On the one hand, there is an English broadside ballad entitled *A mery nevv Iigge or the pleasant wooing betwixt Kit and Pegge*, which should be sung “to the tune of Strawberry leaves makes Maidens faire.” This song text was printed by a Henry Gosson in London around 1630. On the other hand, there is another English broadside ballad entitled *A Merry new Dialogue between a Courteous young Knight, and a gallant Milk-Maid*, which suggests the song should be sung “[t]o a new Tune, called Adams fall, or Jockey and Jenny, or where art thou going my pritty maid.” This ballad contains the main plot as well as many phrases, which reappear in the present versions of Roud 298. The print dates either from 1688 or 1689 and thus appears, as in the case with *A mery new Iigge*, to be slightly older than the Cornish manuscripts. The earliest English sources of the song can therefore be dated roughly around the middle of the 17th century, i.e., about fifty years before the Cornish versions appeared.

Regarding the geographic origin, a Scottish version provides some information. In 1794, poet Robert Burns (1759–1796) writes to his friend and musical publisher George Thomson in a note regarding his latest poem *O Law Will Venture In*, which he set to a tune called *The Poise*: “The air was taken down from Mrs. Burns’s voice. It is well known in the West Country but the words are trash.” In a longer note on this source he claims that the verses, which he “took down from a country girl’s voice” and which he condemns for having “no great merit,” were the following:
There was a pretty May*, and a milkin’ she went;
   *May = maid
Wi’ her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair:
And she has met a young man a comin’ o’er the bent;
With a double and adieu to thee fair May.45

This version is interesting for two reasons. Linguistic analyses show that although there is some Scots vocabulary in the version, such as ain ‘own’, gang ‘would go’, worse ‘worse’, morpho-syntactic structure of a-prefixing in ‘a milkin’ or ‘a coming’ point to a South-Western English influence. Secondly, the rather unfamiliar-looking chorus With a double and adieu is yet another interesting indicator. Although it had been suggested that this chorus “may have the connotation of two acts of intercourse on the bent,” this rather seems to point in the direction of a mis-heard ‘dabble in the dew.’ ‘Dabble in the dew’ /dæbəl/ and ‘double and adieu’ /dəbələndədju:/ are phonetically very close to homophones if the syllable boundary moves from [ɪn#ðə#dju:] to [ənd#ədju:]. This phenomenon is commonly known as ‘mondegreen,’ a term coined by the American writer Sylvia Wright in 1954, taken from her childhood misinterpretation of the line of a Scottish ballad The Douglas Tragedy, where instead of ‘and laid him on the green’ she understood ‘and Lady Mondegreen.’ Three conclusions can be drawn from this misheard phrase. Firstly, the song was clearly transmitted to Burns orally rather than in written form. Secondly, as Scottish literary scholar Thomas Crawford suggests, the pre-Reformation custom of ‘dabbling in the dew’, which was connected to the English Mayday festivals, must have been unknown in Scotland at Burns’ times. Thirdly, the very word dabble seems to be spread in Southern England rather than Scotland. Crawford supposes that the word could have been unknown in 18th century Scots.

A song which Crawford links to Roud 298 is the Scots Kind Hearted Nancy, which likewise consists of a dialogue between a young girl and her seducer. It first appears in print in David Herd’s manuscript in 1776. Kind Hearted Nancy shows a lot of Scots linguistic influences, especially concerning the vocabulary, e.g. gif ‘given, if’, bairn ‘child’ or gae ‘go’.

Regarding the song’s origin, Crawford states: “It would be a bold critic indeed who would pronounce Kind Hearted Nancy other than a Scottish song, yet its forebears too are English.” Kind Hearted Nancy bears many similarities in content as well as in structure to the 20th century Scots song I’m Gaun To The Wood and the Gaelic Anna Bheag Choibhneil Bhòidheach. At first sight, the Gaelic version, collected in 1954 by the broadcaster James
Ross from a Calum Johnston, might indicate a Celtic language origin of the song. However, according to The Barra Folklore Committee, an organization hosted at the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, it is more likely to be a translation of *Kind Hearted Nancy*. On the other hand, *I'm Gaun To The Wood*, collected in the 20th century by the folklorists Gavin Greig and James Bruce Duncan of the Scottish traveler Bell Robertson, bears many similarities with both *Kind Hearted Nancy* and the early English strawberry leaves-version:

\[
\begin{align*}
I'm gaun to the wood, my pretty maid \\
Wi' your gay gilted gloves, and your bonny yellow hair \\
Wat gin I follow you kind sir she said \\
For strawberry leaves makes young maidens wonderous fair. \\
What gin we a bairnie get my pretty maid \\
Gin ye get it, I'll bear't, kind sir, she said. \text{[etc.]}
\end{align*}
\]

Linguistic and etymological analysis of these Scottish versions of Roud 298 clearly indicates that although the song had been adapted to the Scots and Gaelic singers’ contexts, the song’s geographic origin must be South Western England.

The Welsh version, *Ble 'r wyt ti'n myned yr enet ffein ddu*? (“Where art thou going, thou fine dark maid?”), likewise seems a rather modern translation. The Welsh scholar Howel W. Lloyd (1816–1893) writes in the Welsh literary journal *Y Cymmrodor* in 1883: “[S]o far as we have been able to learn by inquiry, the composition is not to be found in the dialects of Brittany, Wales, or Ireland.” All these factors, related to the notion and derived from the methodological approaches to song text origins from the perspective of *nominal authenticity*, clearly speak against Celtic roots of Roud 298 and place it in 17th century Southwest England, from where it might have been adapted to Cornish.

As the discussion of the lyrics from a point of view of *nominal authenticity* has demonstrated, we can make out early printed versions of the texts. By contrast, locating the origin of its melody seems nearly impossible for a number of reasons. Firstly, the number of written or printed musical notations before the First British Folk Revival is very small, and titles to the tunes vary greatly, making identification difficult. The American based *English Broadside Ballads Archive EBBA* records an unaccompanied vocal version on their webpage, which is entitled *Strawberry Leaves Make Maidens Fair* for which they give no precise reference but which seems to be based on Claude Simpson’s interpretation of a 17th century manuscript tune called *Strawberry Leaves*. The same melody is used by the Cornish revivalist Mike O’Connor (*1946)*, who connects this tune to the Cornish Tonkin text. The tune in the manuscript comes without text or any other allusion to the song, so no direct connection is given, but it is the earliest noted melody that has been linked to Roud 298. Both Simpson’s and O’Connor’s version vary considerably from the original manuscript.

Secondly, it was a common practice, especially with British broadside ballads, to reuse existing melodies for new lyrics, as was the case with the two ballad texts mentioned above.
and Robert Burns’s *O Luv Will Venture In*, which he set to the tune *The Posie*. This tune appears in print in 1792 in the fourth volume of the *Scots Musical Museum* with Burns’ new lyrics. The beautiful tune is in melodic minor and bears the tempo description “slow.” It has nothing in common with *Strawberry Leaves* of the Vocal and instrumental pieces by English composers suggested by Simpson and O’Connor, which is in major and interpreted as an up-tempo song. At the same time, *The Posie* stands in stark contrast to the description of a tune mentioned for *Rolling in the Dew* as printed in 1874 by Scottish poet and song collector Robert Fort (*1846); “An English version of this song has gained much popularity, due, doubtless, to the lively and catching air to which it is set […]”.

Thirdly, while lyrics of English folk songs are relatively stable, the melody is often highly flexible and not only changes between different singers but even between performances of the same singer. Recorded melodies of Roud 298 vary therefore greatly from each other. Sometimes they are influenced by other folk songs, by music hall songs or opera arias and sometimes they seem to be the product of the immediate moment when they are being sung. It becomes impossible to locate which was the original tune, if ever there was one, which shows where the limits of nominal authenticity are. In the next sub-section, we therefore approach folk song melodies from the perspective of expressive authenticity, always following our case study of Roud 298.

**Making a song your own: in search of expressive authenticity**

The discussion of song lyrics and to an extent that of tunes available as notation has shown that printed sources can be approached from a point of view of nominal authenticity. These printed sources represent artefacts that can be accessed and studied repeatedly and at any time, and they, obviously, remain static.

However, we do well to remember that as soon as a performer takes these artefacts and ‘transmediates’ them from paper to an expression in a context, e.g., a sing-song or a concert, expressive authenticity comes into play. Such an instantiation, as our model shows, is linked to a time and place and, even if repeated by the same performer, will differ from other performances, perhaps only in a small detail or quite fundamentally. Collector of the First British Folk Revival, Cecil Sharp, illustrates this in his exploration of the ‘evolution’ of English folk songs when he says that “in most cases, melodic alterations apparently spring spontaneously from out the heart of the singer,” and the revivalists of the Second British Folk Revival Ewan McColl (1915–1989) and Peggy Seeger (*1935), claim:

Folksingers tend to alter melodies at each performance with the result that the tunes are always in a state of flux. […] A singer may, if he chooses, give more attention to the story than to the musical line; or he may concentrate on the tune, explore it, adding here and subtracting there as the mood takes him.
This description is clearly in step with Dutton’s idea of \textit{expressive authenticity} and is also present in Peter Kivy’s description of ‘performance authenticity’ as “faithfulness to the performer’s own self, original, not derivative or aping of someone else’s way of playing.”

In the context of our discussion of authenticities, the adaptation of the artefact, be it a recording or a printed source (words and/or musical notation), the performer’s personal style will inform how the material can be expressed authentically. This transmediation, the transfer from artefact to a performance, means that a performer has to evaluate what to do with the artefact. Charles Seeger identified two purposes of musical notation: one is used by the performer as a visual memory aid and is therefore broad, lacking many details; the other is an exact transcription of all sounds produced, providing as many details as possible. The latter is used, for instance, by song collectors or ethnomusicologists. Thus a printed musical score may be read, in Seeger’s terminology, “descriptively,” i.e. as a set of instructions to be adhered to as it is printed, or more “prescriptively,” which means that a performer is familiar with interpretative practices which, of course, entails the choice of either following, ignoring or subverting these practices. In this sense, a musical notation can be regarded as a set of instruction informed by the quest for \textit{nominal authenticity} or as a departure point for an interpretation that may (or may not) be focused on \textit{expressive authenticity}.

In the following sub-section, we will explore in what ways \textit{expressive authenticity} appears in relation to Roud 298, in that we focus on a limited amount of orally collected versions from the First and the Second British Folk Revival and as they currently appear in the Cornish Music Revival.

\textbf{Collections during the first British folk revival}

The earliest orally collected versions of \textit{Where Are You Going?} are the ones Sabine Baring-Gould found in Launceston, Cornwall, (1891) and in Lewdown, Devon (1892). The Launceston version, which was communicated by a James Olver, is the version which serves as a basis for numerous contemporary Cornish interpretations, often in connection with the Tonkin text. Being in Aeolian mode, it proves to be much more attractive for the Cornish revivalists and their goal of constructing a Celtic musical heritage for Cornwall, than the major version that Cecil Sharp collected from a Jim Thomas in Camborne, Cornwall, in 1914. A note in Baring-Gould’s manuscript of Olver’s version links the beginning of the song to \textit{I’d be a butterfly} by Thomas Haynes Bayly (1797–1839), a popular English song-writer of his age. Apart from the fact that Bayly’s version is in the major key and Olver’s in Aeolian minor, they both show great similarity.

The version Baring-Gould collected from his Devonian informant James Parsons, which is in the Mixolydian major key, was never used for one of the revived Cornish versions presumably because it was collected in Lewdown, Devon, an area outside of the Celto-Cornish imaginary. However, it is precisely this Devonian version found in the collection \textit{Songs of the Four Nations}, published in 1892, which is listed as the only “Cornish Song” amongst English, Scottish and Irish songs. The Cornish lyrics that follow the English
version of the song in *Songs of the Four Nations* is the one printed by the Welsh harpist and bard Edward Jones (1752–1824).

Between 1904 and 1914, folk music collector Cecil Sharp collected fourteen versions of *Where Are You Going to?* in the Southwest of England, twelve of which he found in Somerset alone. During the first decade of the 20th century, a further twenty versions were noted down by Sharp’s fellow collectors such as Percy Grainger (1882–1961), Anne Geddes Gilchrist (1863–1954) and Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958). Most versions were found in South England, but there are others as far north as Staffordshire, Lincolnshire, Herefordshire, Lancashire and even Aberdeenshire.

These melodies collected during the First British Folk Revival vary a great deal from one another in tonality, rhythm, and meter. This phenomenon was already observed at the time, when various versions of the song *Dabbling in the Dew* appeared in the *Journal of the Folk Song Society* (nowadays EFDSS). Similar to the Cornish preferences, tonalities, such as “Mixolydian,” “Mixolydian with Dorian ending,” “Dorian” and “Aeolian with Dorian Influence” seem to have attracted most interest among the early revivalists, as versions in the major key lack similar descriptions. This was presumably the case because to the collectors’ ears modal tunes sounded ‘exotic’ or ‘ancient’ and provided a good basis for their project to define the ‘English national sound.’ However, one of the most common melodic versions collected in connection with Roud 298 in the early 1900s is a 4/4 major tune. This is the version that featured in the repertoires of, and was popularized in, the late 1800s by music hall singers Dan Leno (1860–1904), Slade Murray (1859–1913) and Nellie Wallace (1870–1948). The popularity of this version shows that the large majority of the people during the First British Folk Revival, who did not belong to the intellectual elite of the revivalists, preferred tunes which were ‘in tune,’ as it were, with their everyday lives to long lost and re-discovered versions in church modes. This situation is probably best described in the introduction to the fifth edition to Sabine Baring-Gould’s *Songs of the West*, in which he states:

> When the first edition was issued [1890], we had to catch the public taste, and to humour it. […] But now that the real interest in Folk airs has been awakened, we have discarded this feature. […] When our first edition was published, modal melodies were not appreciated, and we had regretfully to put many aside and introduce more of the airs of a modern character. Public taste is a little healthier now, and musicians have multiplied who can value these early melodies.

Baring-Gould’s statement clearly indicates the discrepancy between *nominal authenticity* as understood by the early British revivalists and *expressive authenticity* as felt by the common people in 20th century UK.
Recordings during the second British folk revival

Expressive authenticity also manifests itself in the different sound-recordings of Roud 298 collected in the Second British Folk Revival by Peter Kennedy (1922–2006), Bob Copper (1915–2004), Roy Palmer (1932–2015), Reg Hall (*1933), Steve Gardham (*1947) and Hamish Henderson (1919–2002). They show individual realizations of dialect features (the Southeast, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Aberdeenshire), as well as individual musical ornamentations. An interesting case study concerning language realization is the *Rolling in the Dew* version sung by Jeannie Robertson and recorded by Hamish Henderson in 1957. Robertson's version is again tied to Herd's *Kind Hearted Nancy* and Miss Bell's *I'm Gaun to the Wood*:

> “O what wad ye dae if I were to lay ye doon,  
> Wi’ your reid and rosy cheeks and your curly black hair?”
> “I’d be fit enough to rise again, kind sir,” she answered me,  
> Rolling in the dew maks a milkmaid fair.

> “What wad ye dae if I were tae bairn ye, […]  
> “For you wad be the daddie o’t, and I wad be the mither o’t,  
> kind sir,” she answered me. […]  
> “But what wad ye dae if I were to run away, […]  
> “For the deil would run after you, kind sir,” she answered me, […]”

Henderson notes of this recording: “*Rollin' in the Dew* is a curious example of a song which is in the process of assimilation and still bears unmistakable marks of its southern origin.” That Robertson's version has still not been fully adapted to Scots in the 1960s, even though there are early versions of it found in Scotland, such as the one Robert Scots mentions, intrigues Thomas Crawford. He comes to the conclusion that the song must have entered the Scots song repertoire “at least twice,” once in the eighteenth century and then again later. However, sociolinguists Richard Watts and Franz Andres Morrissey offer a different interpretation which might explain the linguistic amalgam between Southern English and Scots. They suggest that folk songs linguistically seem to apply a special kind of 'folk song register':

> We submit that although folk songs are associated with the vernacular, they need not be and are often not an expression of everyday nonstandard language, but rather an expression of the ‘informal conventions of a dominant folk usage’. They are rooted in people’s everyday lives (at least historically), but are different enough in their diction and in their subject matter to stand the test of time.

In other words, this folk song register lies somewhere between a regional vernacular and more standard forms of the language and results in a variant which enables the songs to remain relatively stable across geographical distance and dialect variation. Watts and
Andres Morrissey demonstrate this with the example of a Swiss folk song whose lyrics represent a mixture of Swiss German and Standard German (which would not occur in spoken language!), and draw an analogy to the Scots and Received Pronunciation (RP) language situation:

In most contexts, speakers can place themselves on a cline between vernacular and standard, e.g. in Scotland between Scots/Lallans and RP. [...] For a singer of a Scottish song, there is considerable leeway between singing a song in Scots and replacing lexical items like ‘kirk’ or ‘nicht’ with ‘church’ or ‘night’, indexing Scottishness merely with pronunciation.

This is precisely what happens in Jeannie Robertson’s Rolling in the Dew, although the other way round, where the phrase <to get you with child> is replaced by the Scots <to bairn you> and where the <devil> becomes the <deil>. However, the remaining morpho-syntax is largely Standard English, while Robertson’s pronunciation has a strong local flavor.

Robertson’s Rolling in the Dew version is also a good example for individual musical expression. Contrary to most of the early English recordings, which do not show any specific ornamentations or musical arrangements, her version features a number of specific musical techniques, including glissandi, tremolo, trills, fermatas and dynamics. This seems to indicate that she has, in keeping with expressive authenticity, adapted the song to her musical taste and interpretation. This process becomes even more obvious in the more modern recordings of the same song.

Modern recordings

Unfortunately, there are not that many modern or even contemporary recordings of Roud 298 available which are in a Folk-style, for two possible but different reasons. Firstly, there are the bowdlerized school-version Dabbling in the Dew edited by Cecil Sharp and Sabine Baring-Gould, as well as another similarly adapted version Where Are You Going to, My Pretty Fair Maid? in Mother Goose’s nursery rhymes, which is the music-hall version. These two versions have become increasingly regarded as children’s songs. As a result, there are various recordings designed for children, with somewhat saccharine keyboard sounds and children’s voices, entirely unattractive arrangements for a Folk audience. Secondly, the ‘unedited’ version of Rolling in the Dew has clearly misogynistic lyrics: the young man tries to rape the girl and is not willing to pay for the consequences. Such a story no longer seems to have a place in a time of gender awareness and is therefore unattractive for Folk singers and audiences alike. The only way out of this dilemma would then be to play the tune as an instrumental.

Shirley Collins

One of the earliest modern versions is Shirley Collins’s Dabbling in the Dew, which was recorded for Peter Kennedy’s HMV album Folksong Today in 1955. It was also included on
Collins’s 2002 album *Within Sound*\(^4\) as well as on numerous later compilations. The sleeve notes of Kennedy’s LP read:

Shirley, who works in a London coffee bar, learnt most of her songs at home in Sussex. She is a young girl with a modern approach to folk music, laying an automatic zither across her knee and pressing buttons to select accompanying chords:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Oh, where are you going to, my pretty little dear} \\
\text{With your red rosy cheeks and your coal black hair.}^{85}
\end{align*}
\]

This best exemplifies how *expressive authenticity* manifests itself in Collins’s approach. Going firmly against the orthodoxy of the Second British Folk Revival with its insistence on unaccompanied music as the only ‘authentic’ way to perform folk music, her interpretation not only includes an instrumental accompaniment, but with the autoharp, she also chooses an instrument which was considered very modern in the 1950s and had been only used in connection with American folk music.\(^86\) Therefore, although her arrangement might sound quite tame from a modern perspective because it includes no more than a single chord on the first beat of each bar, Collins’s approach was quite revolutionary for her time. The version she sings generally follows Cecil Sharp and Sabine Baring-Gould’s school-version with the bowdlerized text by clergyman Charles Marson (1859–1914), with minor differences.

**John Kirkpatrick and Sue Harris**

In 1974 folk singer John Kirkpatrick (*1947) and his then-wife Sue Harris (*1949) recorded *The Milkmaid’s Song* on their album *The Rose of Britain’s Isle*, which was voted the ‘Record of the Year’ by the magazine *Folk Review*.\(^87\) While Harris sings, Kirkpatrick accompanies her with his own arrangement on his concertina, not only providing harmonies but also adding harmony and sometimes even a second voice.

Kirkpatrick and Harris sing one of the less common versions collected by Ella Mary Leather (1876–1928) and Ralph Vaughan Williams in Herefordshire that starts as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Across the fields I chanced to stray} \\
\text{I met a pretty fair maid} \\
\text{With her red a rosy cheeks, and her curly black hair.} \\
\text{With her pail around her arms she slung} \\
\text{And like a nightingale she sung:} \\
\text{“T’is rolling in the dew makes the milkmaids fair.”}^{88}
\end{align*}
\]

This is likewise one of the bolder versions that end with the girl sending the devil after her seducer, and in the interpretation by Harris and Kirkpatrick, the song lasts almost five minutes. The accompanying concertina not only plays the introduction to the song but
also an instrumental interlude between stanzas 6 and 7. These are remarkable innovations to the tune, where instruments are not only used for accompaniment, but also to play melodies and harmonies not noted down in the folklorists’ notes.

**Carla Sciaky**

An interesting modern version of *Rolling in the Dew* is that of American Folk-singer and baroque violinist Carla Sciaky of Denver, Colorado. The recording features her light soprano and a second male voice during the chorus lines. The accompanying instruments are guitar, violin, and accordion. The latter plays in unison with the singing voice, while the violin plays the transitions from one stanza to the next and improvises around the main voice. The version is one of the quick jig-tunes in the Mixolydian mode, as collected by Francis Jekyll (1882–1965) in Sussex. The intro of Sciaky’s version consists of her lilting the whole first stanza, accompanied by a fingerpicked guitar. Her outro likewise consists of her lilting, although this time she is accompanied only by the violin, which improvises around her melody line. A fade-out concludes this version, which has a strong Irish feel about it. In her interpretation of the song not only is Carla Sciaky’s choice of source material, tempo, and instrumental accompaniment, as well as intro and outro of significance, but additionally, as one of her reviewer states, “[her] seemingly delicate voice carries a surprising range of emotions: haunting, joyful, plaintive, and playful.” When the first author asked Carla Sciaky via e-mail what she aimed to express with the arrangement of this song, she gave the following explanation:

I love this song both because the young man actually looks into the future, asking about all of the possibilities of what could happen if he and the milkmaid actually roll in the dew, and then I love the responses of the young maid. In so many British folk songs the young woman ends up the victim of a one-time frolic. The man walks away free and the woman is ruined forever, between having to raise a child alone and the stigma attached. In this song, they have an open conversation that considers several aspects of what could occur. The milkmaid’s attitude is direct and matter-of-fact, and I imagine her personality to be bright, cheerful, and even sassy. ‘What if I should lay you down?’ ‘Then you shall help me up again!’ She solves every possible problem — including wrapping the baby and putting it to bed — and then even has the spitfire to retort that the devil will pursue the man if he leaves!

And finally, I love what my producer, Pete Sutherland, added with his guitar part and the voice of the fiddle, as well as the harmonies on the refrain. All of it brings this song alive and makes it fun and ‘frolicky’, to match the sass of the young maid.

This lengthy quote clearly indicates the expressive authenticity Sciaky seeks in her version of the song, which seems to illustrate her interpretation of the story in the recording.


Brenda Wootton

In Cornwall, the Cornish version of the Roud 298, Delkiow Sevy, has played an essential role, a process that reaches back to the early collections by Sabine Baring-Gould of the First British Folk Revival. It is embraced again by the collector Peter Kennedy and the Cornish composer Inglis Gundry (1905–2000) during the Second British Folk Revival and became popularized by Cornish Folk singer Brenda Wootton (1928–1994) during the Cornish Music Revival. As was explained earlier, Baring-Gould collected two versions of this song, one in Cornwall and one in Devon, with English words. Although he points to the Cornish text version by Pryce in his manuscripts, he does not seem to think that the song should be sung in the extinct Cornish language.

The connection of the Cornish text and a melody is first made in 1966 by Inglis Gundry, who was deeply involved in the political Cornish Movement. He chose the melody collected by Baring-Gould in Launceston as a basis and added the English words as well as Pryce’s Cornish text below the musical score. In Gundry’s opinion, the tune Baring-Gould had collected in Cornwall could without hesitation be connected to the Cornish words: “The Cornish [text] is different from the English [text] version collected by Baring-Gould but clearly may have been sung to the same or similar tune [our italics].” It is this version that Cornish Folk artist Brenda Wootton recorded together with singer Robert Bartlett on her LP Starry-Gazey Pie in 1975. On the album sleeve, she states: “Our language (Kernwek) died out in the late seventeen hundreds and this song is the only ‘living’ remnant of it. It has never been translated into English and has come down to us intact, although its theme is universal.” This claim, together with Gundry’s statement completed the narrative of a Cornish and therefore Celtic original.

Wootton’s version consists of a dialogue between singer Robert Bartlett as the seducer, or in Wootton’s words as “a very amorous travelling tailor” and herself as “a rather keen Cornish maid.” The song in Unified Cornish is accompanied by Bartlett’s fingerpicked guitar, which also plays an introduction as composed by the musicians. There are quite a few melodic differences between Wootton’s melody and the notations by Baring-Gould, and they cannot be solely explained by the need to adjust the notes to the Cornish words, but are clearly her own interpretation, in which she expresses musical Celto-Cornishness. In our investigation on experiential authenticity, we shall now focus on this version as a case study.

Celebrating Celto-Cornishness: in search of experiential authenticity

Similar to expressive authenticity, experiential authenticity is on a level that is highly individual. However, instead of being the product of an artist who expresses his or her feelings through music, experiential authenticity as experienced by the audience, hardly manifests itself visibly or audibly. It is an entirely interior emotional process that usually remains unverbalized. Statements, such as ‘it’s beautiful,’ ‘I am truly touched’ or ‘I like it’ can be imbued with very differing degrees of emotion, which can be partly grasped on the paralinguistic level, e.g. intonation, or emphasis, and partly on the non-verbal level, e.g.
smiles, red cheeks or even tears. But many of these processes are experienced on a very subtle internal level, which tends to elude a scientific approach.

In order to obtain an insight into how experiential authenticity functions in connection with the Cornish versions of Roud 298, we use two approaches. Firstly, we analyze the written reactions to a recording of Delyo Syvy [Unified Cornish spelling] by Brenda Wootton and Robert Bartlett on social media, and secondly, we observe a live performance of the song in a pub, which was uploaded on YouTube. We will then analyze the non-verbal reactions of the audience to the song performances. Although the outcomes of both approaches might still be somewhat superficial, they nevertheless give some indications of how and where experiential authenticity manifests itself in connection to this song.

Triggering reactions of people on the Internet is relatively simple: virtual platforms such as YouTube and Facebook offer the possibility for people to write their comments below any posting. Thus to test people’s reactions to the Cornish version of Roud 298, we first checked what reactions a recording by Brenda Wootton and Robert Bartlett of Delyo Syvy posted on YouTube had hitherto provoked. In order to obtain further reactions, we copied the YouTube link of the same recording to Facebook, accompanied by the question: “What is your first feeling, reaction, thought that comes up when you hear this song?” In order to reach a broad range of people, who are all somehow connected to the Cornish Movement or revival scene, we uploaded Brenda Wootton’s Delyo Syvy on three different Facebook pages. These were the first author’s private one, to which only her Facebook friends have access, and the public sites “Cornish Dialect” and “Institute of Cornish Studies,” to which all their members have access. The two Facebook groups had 2416 and 1225 members respectively in September 2016. 

The reactions expressed to the YouTube posts, as well as the answers to our question on Facebook, with a total of 17 interactions, all seem to fall broadly in three categories:

a) the immediate emotional reaction one gets when listening to the song (6)

b) a memory the recording evokes of former times (5)

c) a cognitive association made to the song (6)

Emotional reactions to the songs included statements such as: “I love Brenda, and I love this song! Wonderful to hear singing in Cornish. The words to this song are very old. 😊,” or: “This song is so so beautiful!”100 In these statements, emoticons, exclamation marks and doubling of intensifiers (e.g. ‘so so’) are the means to express the emotion felt by the listeners. Memories of former times include statements such as: “I grew up with that recording. Thanks. I haven’t heard it for years! XX” or: “First thing that comes to mind: singing along with her [Brenda Wootton] as a school kid. I seem to remember this as a children’s radio show our teacher tuned into and we sang along to. But it might well have been a recording. Too many years ago!” Here we can see what emotions childhood memories of Delyo Syvy evoke in the Cornish Facebook community. Examples of posts that express cognitive associations with Wootton’s version are: “It is a rare survival of a
traditional Cornish language folk song.” Although they are only a few, these posts are sufficiently credible indicators for how experiential authenticity can be expressed by means of words and emoticons as well as the two kisses “XX” in one of the above examples. However, body language and facial expressions would be even more revealing.

The live performance of Delkiow Sevy, available on YouTube, takes place in a pub, the “Masons Arms” after the Bodmin Riding festival in 2014. The performers are members of the community singing group Red River Singers and the woodwind band The Hornets. It is difficult to decide from the video how many musicians and singers were actually involved in the performance because of the restricted camera angle. Furthermore, the boundaries between the audience and the musicians are blurred, with the audience singing along in the chorus, the singers becoming part of the audience during the instrumental parts, and the instrumentalists turning into singers for the stanzas played only by the rhythm section. There are approximately five people singing actively, eight are playing an instrument and five seem to be only listening. Non-verbal expressions of approval participants who seem to be audience members in the course of the three minutes of recordings fall into four different categories:

1) facial expressions: smiling, open mouths indicating attentive listening, wiping the eyes (in 9 cases)
2) joining in with the singers (in 7 cases)
3) joining in the rhythm: clapping, seesawing, stamping, nodding, beating rhythm with an implement, e.g. a spoon, dancing (in 10 cases)
4) symbolic gestures of approval: applause, thumbs up (in 6 cases)

The frequent occurrence of these non-verbal signals of emotional as well as physical engagement suggests a considerable degree of experiential authenticity of this performance of Delkiow Sevy. None of the listeners seems completely untouched by the song and the general impression of joy and personal commitment of the audience seems authentic indeed, in the sense of Watts and Andres Morrissey’s “most complete experience of delight.” The manifestation of expressive and experiential authenticity is central to a performance “involving the whole group, performer(s) and audience, in bonding [them] together socially.” From this they draw “[t]he practical conclusion […] that songs are authenticated by and, in their turn, authenticate singers in performance events, and although we may still wish to search for authenticity in the representation of past traditions, the performance is always in the here-and-now.”

Conclusion

By adding to Denis Dutton’s concepts of nominal authenticity and expressive authenticity the notion of experiential authenticity, and by thereby developing a model of multiple authenticities, in our case study of Roud 298 we have demonstrated that authenticity in folk songs is
indeed not one-dimensional but instead draws on a number of different aspects. On the
one hand, there is the song as an artefact, which appears either in written or recorded form
and serves as a source for the performance. In our case, these artefacts were manuscripts
of the late 17th and early 18th century as well as early prints in the form of broadside
ballads and collected song texts dating roughly from the same period. The only early
written melody for Roud 298 appears in a manuscript from the 17th century and bears the
title *Strawberry Leaves*. The nominal authenticity of these artefacts allows for certain
pronouncements concerning its sources, but it also proves quite elusive because of the
highly fluid nature due to the orality of folk songs. In other words, historical sources, often
relatively scarce, are rarely more than a pointer towards a song’s origin in time and space.
Thus, comparison of language varieties in Roud 298 leads us to the conclusion that,
although we are not able to provide an urtext of this song, we can say that it is most likely
to have originated somewhere in the South West of England, probably during the 17th
century and in an English-speaking context. The numerous variations in lyrics, dialect
variants and melodies clearly demonstrate that the nominal authenticity of folk songs, as
postulated by the music revivalists, remains rather elusive.

On the other hand, folk songs only come alive when they are being sung, i.e. in
performance. The singers’ artistic creativity, their expressive authenticity, is crucial for
individual artistic interpretation of their material, for avoiding replication of already
existing versions, and as a means to affect the audience. Our case study has discussed
several recordings of the First and the Second British Folk Revival as well as four modern
interpretations of the song. One artist, Carla Sciaky, gave us an insight into what she
actively wants to express musically through this song. It has to be said that recordings
linger somewhere between nominal and expressive authenticity: if they are seen as a direct
expression of the singer frozen in time, they belong to the latter. However, if they are used
as a point of reference for a later performance, which sees this as ‘the original,’ they can
also shift towards nominal authenticity. This might be the case with Brenda Wootton’s
interpretation of *Delyo Syvy*, which is currently constantly re-interpreted by musicians of
the Cornish Music Revival.

In a song performance, the audience becomes an authenticator of that song. Audience
evaluation can either rely on notions of assumed nominal authenticity, which, as we have
seen above, may be mainly based on stylistic norms established by a community of
practice such as music revivalists, or it may opt to evaluate the performance in terms of its
experiential authenticity. The latter can be rather elusive if not verbally formulated; it can,
however, be traced if we focus on the audience’s paralinguistic and non-verbal reactions, as
we have illustrated with the example of the Cornish versions.

To summarize, it seems that in folk songs, all three kinds of authenticities discussed in the
beginning are present and interact with each other. In fact, they are in a dialogic
relationship with one another and have to co-exist alongside each other. As soon as the
nominal authenticity of a folk song seems certain, this may curtail the expressive authenticity of a
performer. Although a song might be historically informed when being sung in a historical
speech variety, performed by an artist wearing a 17th century dress and accompanied on a
Multiple authenticities of folk songs

historical instrument, it might be rejected as experientially 'inauthentic' by an audience because it fails to appeal, perhaps because in its attention to historical detail it is inaccessible to the listeners. Conversely, while a modern rendition of a traditional song might be experienced as sincere and inspiring by an audience, the very same version may be rejected by revivalist orthodoxy as being completely ahistorical. Folk song performance thus constantly negotiates between nominal, expressive and experiential authenticity. In the final analysis, it is this intricate interplay which in folk circles represents an authentic folk song.

Notes

1 So-called Roud numbers refer to an index created by Steve Roud, which assigns a number to folk songs that share the same theme, in other words songs that are (arguably) related. (cf. Roud's Benjamin Botkin lecture on creating his index: https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/transcripts/110414afe1200.txt; accessed May 8, 2018).
2 First British Folk Revival ca. 1890–1920, Second British Folk Revival, ca. 1945–1970
11 “Scarborough Fair.” BBC Radio. n.pag.
13 A famous example for such changes from traditional music to world music would be the production Riverdance, which in 1994 staged a fusion of traditional Irish step dancing, ballet traditional Irish music and rock elements in the intermission of the Eurovision Song Contest.
16 Ibid. 267.
Scots is a linguistic variety spoken in some parts of Scotland, which is considered by some to be a language on its own rather than a dialect of English.

Cornish was the formerly spoken Celtic language of Cornwall, in the South West of Britain. As a Brythonic language it was closely related to Welsh in Wales and Breton in Brittany, France and more loosely with the Goidelic languages Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaeilge and Manx Gaelic. It died out towards the end of the 18th century and is currently being revived by a number of scholars and enthusiasts.

Delkiow Sevy and Delyo Syvy ‘Strawberry Leaves’ are two different language varieties of the revived Celto-Cornish language Kernewek in Cornwall.

Bowdlerization is the process of rewriting a potentially (sexually) offensive text in more moderate language suitable for schools or members of the middle and upper classes, especially women, who had become a target audience for folk song collections as of the late 18th century (cf. Harker, Dave. Fakesong: The Manufacture of British ‘Folksong’ 1799 to the Present Day).

A vast amount of various versions can be found on the Full English Digital Archive. Cf. The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. <https://www.vwml.org/search?q=dabbling%20the%20dew&is=1>.

Strawberries are seen in the folk belief as an aphrodisiac.

There is a big political movement observable in present Cornwall, which aims at proving that Cornwall is not actually a part of England and should therefore be regarded a Celtic nation of its own.

Kennedy, Peter. Folksongs of Britain and Ireland. 236.


A similar politically motivated fight over the geographic origin of a song is depicted in Adela Peeva’s film Whose Is This Song? (2003). In it she traces the origins of a famous melody, which is claimed by seven different Eastern European countries to be theirs originally.


This spelling is presumably miscopied by Tonkin, meaning ‘Chingwin.’

Tonkin, Thomas. Tonkin B Manuscript. 207g.


Polwhele, Richard. The History of Cornwall. 32.


Broadside ballads are a kind of cheap prints with song texts which widely circulated in the 17th and 18th centuries.


Burns, Robert, qtd. in Low, Donald A., ed. The Songs of Robert Burns. 533.

Ibid.

Crawford, Thomas. “Jean Armour’s ‘Double and Adieu’.” 42.

The reduced vowels /ɪ/ and /ə/ are interchangeable; the voiced fricative /ð/ and the plosive /d/ in fluent reproduction are almost indistinguishable.


Crawford, Thomas. “Jean Armour’s ‘Double and Adieu’.” 42.

Ibid. 42.
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52 Ibid.
53 Crawford, Thomas. “Jean Armour’s ‘Double and Adieu’.” 44.
56 Lloyd, Howel W. “A Cornish Song.” 89.
60 Vocal and instrumental pieces by English composers, arranged for five, six and seven parts. Manuscript. MS 17786–17791.
62 Fort, Robert, ed. *Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland*. 150.
67 The concept of Arjan Appadurai’s (1990) ‘imaginary’ as “image-centred, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality” was linked to the concept of Celtic, as ‘Celtic imaginary’ by Reiss, Scott. “Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon.” 164.
70 Stradling, Rod. “George Dunn: Chaimaker.” n.pag.
72 The British Library Sound Archive. <sounds.bl.uk>.
73 Barra Folklore Committee. “Rolling in the Dew Makes the Milkmaid Fair.” n.pag.
76 Crawford, Thomas. “Jean Armour’s ‘Double and Adieu’.” 43.
83 Kennedy, Peter. “Dabbling in the Dew.”
84 Collins, Shirley. “Dabbling in the Dew.”
Revivalists such as Ewan McColl and A. L. Lloyd were of the opinion that the only authentic way of performing English folk songs would be a) to sing them as unaccompanied songs, b) to sing them in the dialect of the song’s origin, e.g. without an American accent, and c) to sing them vocally ‘unsyncopated.’ Cf. Brocken, Michael. *The British Folk Revival 1944–2002.*

Kirkpatrick, John, and Sue Harris. “The Milkmaid’s Song.”

Leather, Ella Mary. *Ella Mary Leather’s Scrap Book of Songs and Tunes.* Digital Archive Reference: (EML/1/1/19).


Compared to Irish lilting, which often uses the syllables /diddldi/ etc., Sciaky rather uses /da da dadlda/ as a syllabic basis.


1976 until the present day.


Wootton, Brenda. *Starry-Gazy Pie Songs of Cornwall.* Album sleeve.

Wootton, Brenda. *Noswyth Lowen 1.* 00:18:35-00:21:21. (The sound stops at 00:25:57).

Unified Cornish is a re-invented variety of Cornish, which is based on the medieval Cornish variety but is completed with words from other Celtic languages, e.g. Welsh or Breton.


All statements are given as anonymous.

The Hornets and Red River Singers. *Delkiow Sery.*


Ibid. 233.
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Hübisch, Heinrich. In welchem Style sollen wir bauen? Karlsruhe: Müller, 1828


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“A Merry new Dialogue between a Courteous young Knight, and a gallant Milk-Maid.”


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