

## Questing authenticity

Rethinking enlightenment and experience in living history

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*Published in:*  
Nordisk Museologi

*Publication date:*  
2019

*Document Version*  
Også kaldet Forlagets PDF

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Jessen, T. S., & Warring, A. E. (2019). Questing authenticity: Rethinking enlightenment and experience in living history. *Nordisk Museologi*, 2019(1), 25-38. <https://journals.uio.no/museolog/article/download/6953/5956>

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# Questing authenticity

## Rethinking enlightenment and experience in living history

TILDE STRANDBYGAARD JESSEN & ANETTE WARRING

**Abstract:** *Living history is often construed as a symptom of a broader tendency in the heritage industry to align communication with emotional and multisensory ways of engaging with pasts, typically in contrast to the object-based museum. Living history, however, is nothing new. In this article, we will demonstrate that discourses of enlightenment and experience have been vital in discussions on living history long before the term experience economy was introduced. In order to do so, we look at the concept of authenticity and “the various meanings of authenticity” in three institutional settings at three different moments in time. As ethnographic studies of the multiplicity of authenticity in contemporary practices illustrate, authenticity offers an opportunity to explore not only how living history museums relate to society, but how they are perceived by the general public too. Perhaps the same is true if the concept is used on historical source materials?*

**Keywords:** Living history, authenticity, museum history, visitors, Denmark.

In the past two decades, living history has become an integrated part of the many ways history museums engage with visitors and society at large. As there is no single definition of living history, there is no single strategy, program, or practice, but it commonly refers to people simulating life in another time, typically set in a historical environment (Anderson 1982). It may involve period clothing and roleplay too. As a cultural phenomenon, living history is often construed as a symptom of a broader tendency in the heritage industry to align communication with emotional and

multisensory ways of engaging with pasts – often in contrast to the previous predominant glass case museum (e.g., Floris & Vasström 1999, Daugbjerg 2005, Daugbjerg 2011, Holtorf 2014). However, living history is nothing new (Rasmussen 1979, Linde 2001, Mygind 2005). For international publications see Anderson 1984, Gapps 2002, Bäckström 2012). Neither is the perception and interpretation of living history as an antithesis to the object-based museum (Müller 1897). This is our starting point. Instead of (re)inserting living history in a contemporary *experience paradigm*, we want

to explore relations between enlightenment and experience discourses disclosed in living history historically (Daugbjerg 2011). In order to examine this issue, we look at the concept of authenticity.

Authenticity is a key issue in many contemporary museums' communication guidelines and annual reviews on living history (e.g. Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter 1988, Hedegaard 1997, Ravn in Daugbjerg 2005, Ravn 2008). It can further be seen in the way living history is referred to in many journalistic accounts and by the wider public.<sup>1</sup> There has also been an interest in authenticity in scholarship on living history (e.g., Anderson 1984, Handler & Saxton 1988, Daugbjerg 2005, Magelssen 2007). This is not the place to present an overview, but what much of the literature has in common is a concern with whether or not living history museums succeed in attaining authenticity, often from a critical standpoint (Handler & Saxton 1988, Stover 1989, Walsh 1992, Handler & Gable 1997).

Rather than addressing authenticity as an ontological category, other scholars scrutinise authenticity as culturally constructed, something that is negotiated in specific and constantly changing contexts (Bruner 1994, Crang 1996, Halewood & Hannam 2001, Magelssen 2002, Daugbjerg 2005, Magelssen 2007). The American anthropologist Edward M. Bruner diverts our attention from what is and what is not authentic and directs it to the meanings of authenticity employed in social practices (1994:401). According to Edward M. Bruner, authenticity always merges into the notion of authority and questions of who and what had the authority to authenticate. In raising the issue of *who* and *what* authenticates, the nature of the discussion on authenticity is changed:

The concept of authority serves as a corrective to misuses of the term authenticity [...]. No longer is authenticity a property inherent in an object, forever fixed in time; it is seen as a struggle, a social process, in which competing interests argue for their own interpretation of history (1994:408).

This suggests that the authenticity of living history practices depends on negotiation, not only among museum professionals and academics, but also between volunteers, visitors, and the general public (Bruner 1994:399f. Also, Magelssen 2002, Magelssen 2007, Gapps 2009). In terms of the discourses of enlightenment and experience explored in this article, negotiation standards, i.e., what certifies something as authentic, may be scientific, but can also be based on visitors' experiences (Wang 1999). Taking a constructivist perspective on authenticity thus offers an opportunity to explore not only how living history museums construe their role in society, but how they are perceived too – not only in the present but in the past as well, a reflection absent in most existing research on past museum communication (e.g., Rasmussen 1979, Floris & Vasström 1999). Under the heading of Edward M. Bruner's concept of authenticity, the purpose of this article is to explore who and what authenticates authenticity in three institutional settings at three constituent moments: The Old Village at Hjerl Hede, the Funen Village, and the Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre in Lejre, all practicing living history.

#### **AUTHENTICITY IN PAST TENSE**

This article covers a period from 1932, when The Old Village hosted one of the first living history events in Denmark, until the end of the 1970s, when present understandings of living

history contoured. In selecting our cases, we have emphasised three exemplary cases of the period. The decision is further pragmatic. Contrary to the detailed, ethnographically inspired studies of contemporary practices, the availability of source material on past living history practices is limited. The lack of source material is intriguing because it demonstrates how museums have deemed or rather questioned living history practices as 'museum-worthy'. The issue is not only evident in our choice of cases. It is also reflected in the materials used in our three cases. The institution most meagre in respect to internally written sources is the Funen Village, the only proper museum included in the article. Despite these limitations, we are able to identify the intentions and communication practices by scrutinising minutes, press materials, personal records, work reports, and visitor guides. Identifying relevant sources is easier at Hjerl Hede and the Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre, originating as a private collection and a research centre respectively.

Even less in evidence, but theoretically equally important, is the reception of the living history practices in question. In an attempt to move away from a narrow focus on the perspective of the institution, and to include at least some kind of visitor perspective, we turn to media coverage and journalistic accounts representing a far greater availability of both intentions, practices and (journalists') perceptions.

The term authenticity is seldom stated directly in source material on past living history practices. Rather than limiting our study to exact wordings, we are including utterances that we deem to be about authenticity in our search strategy. Our attention is fuelled not only by Edward M. Bruner's observation that issues of authenticity always merge into the

notion of authority, but to words with related meanings such as original, as opposed to a copy, genuineness, credibility and verisimilitude, all together exemplary of how authenticity can connect to both pasts, people, materiality and different discourses (Bruner 1994:399f. Also, Wang 1999). Though the term authenticity is relatively new, we will demonstrate that implicit understandings and meanings of the concept have been vital in discussions on living history museums for a long time and have influenced their relations to society. In doing so, we will also show that discourses of enlightenment and experience, existed long before the term 'experience economy' was introduced.<sup>2</sup>

### PRESENT(ING) PASTS

In 1932, The Old Village, a private collection of historic buildings founded by industrialist H. P. Hjerl Hansen a few years prior, hosted one of the first living history events in Denmark.<sup>3</sup> In a family log, H. P. Hjerl Hansen described his thoughts of hosting an annual folk festival with lectures by "renowned men" and how, "eventually, the idea assumed a different character, as I wanted, within the setting of the old buildings, to evoke scenes of life in olden days by means of old working methods" (*Hedebogen* 1932).<sup>4</sup> To ensure a more experience-based festival, H. P. Hjerl Hansen appointed a committee consisting of two local teachers, two craftsmen, as well as a museum manager from the folk museum in Herning, and on 24 July, he welcomed approx. 10,000 visitors to his estate in western Jutland (*Politiken*, 24 July 1932, *Berlingske Tidende*, 25 July 1932).

Headlined *Danish Village Life 100 years Ago*, the visitors could tour the premises, eat brought or bought food, watch and participate in folk-dance performances. In accordance

with the initial purpose of the festival, novelist Johan Skjoldborg gave a lecture on folk culture. Known for his commitment to the smallholder movement, this suggests that “renowned” meant acclaimed by the rural population, not academia.<sup>5</sup> Finally, 24 elderly from the region demonstrated old working methods as envisioned by H. P. Hjerl Hansen. One woman was weaving, two women were spinning, while another tendered butter. One man made pottery and occasionally accompanied those doing laundry, casting candles, weaving baskets, tying ropes and cutting sheep on his violin. All the participants wore period clothing (*Politiken*, 23 July 1932).

Contemplating the performances a few days later, H. P. Hjerl Hansen wrote:

Soon, these old working methods will be forgotten. Those who know how to perform them are on the brink of death, and it is sad to say: ‘This time, maybe once more, and then never again’ (*Hedebogen* 1932).

To evoke scenes of past life, the direct experiences of the participants were in other words essential. The use of the elderly’s names in the worksheets accentuates the emphasis on first-hand savvy; It was Maren as a person, not a persona, baking cookies, and Jacob Blacksmith, not a(ny) blacksmith, working in the smithy. As the last sentence in the quotation illustrates, *re-enacting* was not an option. Authenticity, in this sense, implied original, and as such, it corresponded to a typical museum-linked usage (Müller 1897). At the Old Village, the offered experience was to be as enlightening as in a museum, not due to scientific knowledge, but because of practical know-how.

To a number of visitors, the performances not only evoked old working methods but evidently personal memories too. In the log, H. P. Hjerl Hansen rejoiced in the excitement

expressed by visitors while watching the work being done: “The folk festival in July evoked parts of life from olden days and over and over the elderly amongst the audience exclaimed: ‘I remember that’, ‘I use to work with this in my younger days’, ‘Do you remember...?’, etc.” (*Hedebogen* 1932). With this, the event seemingly produced an experience of being enlightened already, at least for some.

To H. P. Hjerl Hansen, the visitors’ perception of the performances as being authentic of not only a past, but *their* past, bolstered the attempt to evoke scenes of past life, as did the number of visitors. Cited in a local newspaper the following day, H. P. Hjerl Hansen elaborated: “We have tried to recall life as lived in a bygone time, and today’s high attendance is, to me, a confirmation of the assumption that others would find it interesting too” (*Skive Folkeblad*, 25 July 1932).

In the media, the number of visitors lent authority to the event too. The proficiency of the committee, as well as the participants, were also mentioned, but the actual attraction seems to be the invitation to watch daily chores of the past free of charge – a “patriotic” gesture by H. P. Hjerl Hansen, met not only by locals but by visitors from all of Jutland (*Skive Avis*, 25 July 1932). From a media perspective, the elderly participants’ first-hand experience of the past was, in other words, secondary to the visitors’ experience of the past. Accordingly, the authenticity of the event was judged by the extent to which the visitors were absorbed, or immersed, by the performances, not in relation to issues of historical correctness or originality.

In 1955, living history became a permanent part of The Old Village. In addition to Danish village life, the program included a Stone Age settlement and the construction of two Aeolian cabins with assistance from the National Museum, “both, a scientific and educational



Fig. 1. Washing with washboard, *The Old Village*, 1932. Source: Hjerl-Fonden.

valuable supplement to the museum village”, as a press-release announced (Hjerl Hedes Frilandsmuseum June 15 1955). Evidently, the two rationales co-existed peacefully at Hjerl Hede.

The following year, a young girl participating in the Stone Age program shared her experience in a women’s magazine:

It was challenging for me to stay in Stone Age character while walking barefoot by the lake. Every time – which was often – a piece of rock got stuck in my foot, I wanted to scream and run. Instead, I had to carry on as if nothing had happened to not disturb the spectators’ illusion of the Stone Age people’s endurance (*Alt for Damerne*, 6 November 1956).

Less about originality and more about what was credible to visitors, the Stone Age settlement indicates a change in what was deemed authentic. Staff might have relied on the authority of museum professionals in the (historically accurate) construction of the Aeolian cabins, but visitors’ (presumed) preconceptions about Stone Age life, that

is what they perceived as authentic, took precedence in the performances of daily life in an otherwise distant past. Extensive media coverage, both nationally and abroad, and a notable number of visitors suggests that the general public reciprocated the compliment (e.g., *Politiken*, 4 July 1955, *Holstebro Dagblad*, 11 July 1955, *Skive Folkeblad*, 18 July 1955).

### (RE)CONSTRUCTING A/THE FUNEN VILLAGE

The Funen Village is an outdoor museum representing a Funen village milieu as it could have appeared in the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Today, the village consists of 24 relocated buildings from various parts of the region, all surrounded by flower gardens, fenced enclosures, livestock, and cultivated fields emblematic of Funen. The interplay of buildings and surroundings was a key objective from the start. Writing to an associate in 1945, Svend Larsen, the curator at the time, explained: “The Funen Village must not have the appearance of a museum. We will plant orchards of old varieties as well as hops to bloom in front of the houses” (Larsen 1945). In this context, it was the scientific arrangement of objects in museums that was seen as an antithesis to a proper experience of the communicated past.

From the media coverage of the inauguration in June 1946, the museum seems to have succeeded in its effort. Having toured the museum premise, one journalist wrote: “It felt like travelling 150 years back in time, moving in an atmosphere so real and true to our ancestors that one would find it completely natural to see an old woman sitting by the loom” (*Middelfart Venstreblad*, 24 June 1946). Similar to the Stone Age program at Hjerl Hede, authenticity in this sense meant credible and convincing.

30 Adding to the authenticity conveyed by the village milieu, a woman who was born and raised in one of the relocated farmhouses was present at the inauguration. Asked on stage, she attested to the reconstruction being just as she remembered her childhood home and with this confirmed the validity of the museum's efforts (*Middelfart Venstreblad*, 24 June 1946). To Svend Larsen, the geographical emphasis was an important prerequisite for this achievement: "Everything is 100 percent Funen: the nature, the buildings, the objects, as well as the people working here. I think this is our strength" (*Turisten*, 4 August 1946). In this sense, authenticity was merged into the notion of genuineness and (Funen) provenance, making the matter dependent on both material items and personal expertise, or experience.

The interest in the museum exceeded all expectations:

The Funen Village has broken all records. During the first month, visitor numbers surpassed 40,000 [...]. Most are from Funen, from 'the real villages', then from Odense [...] we are pleased to see workers, smallholders, merchants and farmers meeting in the village (*Turisten*, August 4 1946)

As the quotation illustrates, the number of visitors did not validate the museum's efforts alone. The type of visitors and their encounter with the museum mattered as well. Interviewed in another article, Svend Larsen elaborated: "People should enjoy visiting. Located on the border between the town and countryside, the museum should establish linkages between the citizens of the two places" (*Fyens Stiftstidende*, 16 June 1946). Following the same vein, the museum featured a restaurant serving regional courses and an open-air stage intended for concerts, conventions, plays and folk-dance performances. Within the first few years,

the museum also began to mark seasonal celebrations and demonstrate handicraft in and around the buildings. A press-release explained the intent:

Not many people are familiar with how the old tools in the Funen Village were used. The museum plans to demonstrate kitchen utensils and handicraft. A first attempt was made on Sunday [...]. The demonstration received much attention and will, therefore, be repeated this afternoon (Odense Bys Museer October 15 1949).

In other words, living history was introduced as an educational supplement to the use of the museum as a recreational place. A few years later, the objective was slightly altered: "The museum should not consist of farms and houses alone. It should illustrate how the village was self-sufficient too. In order to emphasise this, we demonstrate old tools" (*Faaborg Avis*, 25 June 1952). Though concerned with a past similar to the 1932 example from Hjerl Hede, the quotations illustrate that the performances at the Funen Village in the early 1950s were less about visitors' recognition and more about acquaintance. This temporal displacement was also evident in the museums' choice of demonstrators. While the first demonstrations were performed by Jens and Maren Madsen, two elderly with first-hand experience of processing wool, the performers were most often members of handicraft associations. While not having direct or personal experience, they were skilled and able to weave in accordance with old weaving techniques. As such, both process and product were visually accurate, or verisimilar, to the self-sufficient village community. In terms of authenticity, this illustrates that whether or not something is authentic is a matter of temporal relations between past and present too.



*Fig. 2. A young girl weaving on an old loom, The Funen Village 1951. Source: Fyens Stiftstidendes pressefotosamling, Odense Stadsarkiv.*

The demonstrations were not particular to Funen, but they lent genuineness from the objects and buildings, and, most importantly, they attracted visitors and visitors' attention. As such, they supported the overall aim of the museum, and their non-Funen character was evidently a fair compromise to the museum. In other words, authenticity appears to have been negotiated between the original, Funen, sources and what was credible, attractive and enjoyable to the (Funen) visitors. Rather than being a question of intentions directed towards either enlightenment or experience, it seems to be a matter of intertwining or interdependence; the Funen structures were important because visitors experienced them

as original, and, perhaps, visitors would have been less interested if they were not recognised as being authentically Funen by the museum?

### **PEOPLING THE IRON AGE**

In 1964, the self-governing institution the Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre (hereafter HAF) was founded in Lejre by ethnologist Hans Ole Hansen. Over the next few years, a number of reconstructed houses assumed the shape of a little prehistoric village, and the archaeological experiments began to include staff and volunteers living in the houses, testing archaeological and





Fig. 3. *Bringing prehistoric life alive, Historical-Archaeological Experimental Centre in Lejre 1972.*  
Foto: Christen Hansen/Ritzau Scanpix.

ethnological knowledge and conceptions about Iron Age objects, living conditions, working processes, and technologies (Hansen 1964, Rasmussen & Grønnow 1999, Rasmussen 2011, Warring 2015). From 1974, families were invited to inhabit the Iron Age village, typically for a week during summer and autumn. By imitating prehistoric life, the so-called prehistoric families gained knowledge and experiences which they conveyed to the visitors, thereby integrating HAF's scientific and communicative objectives.

Although the Centre did not use the term explicitly until the late 1980s, authenticity was clearly related to material objects, technologies, and working processes as being in correspondence with past reality authorised

by science and the institutional framing: "Our information can – and should – aim to show the audience 'the real thing' through its quality and authenticity" (Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter 1988). However, in its communication to visitors and prehistoric families, the Centre stressed that knowledge about the Iron Age was fragmented, and not precise and firm. It was not only a scientific condition; it was an important point to communicate:

We try to do it differently than the museum. We try to teach ourselves the working processes used in the past. We try to reconstruct residential environments. In cooperation with scientists and museums, we try to make it likely that we have matched reality. You can

never match reality 100 per cent. But one can render it so probable and lucid that both children and adults discover something they would never have noticed or thought about (Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter mid-1970s).

The authenticity was validated by experimenting experiences not only by the staff, but also by the prehistoric families. Thus, the authority to validate authenticity was partly distributed.

The prehistoric families seem to have valued taking part in scientific experiments. Several reported in detail about practical and technical observations and experiences (e.g., Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter 1978). They further appreciated experimenting with how families relate under different life conditions:

The reason we applied for a stay in the Iron Age houses was [...] a special interest in the Centre's work – including the possibility to present the past in a museum setting as a living reality free from the 'do not touch' and decoration trend of museums. In addition, there was an exciting opportunity to experience the family's internal function in a completely different environment (Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter 1978).

By imitating daily life of the Iron Age, the prehistoric families experienced what they perceived as authentic qualities of a distant past: "We live closer to each other here compared to what you do in a modern house. The Iron Age people must have had time and conditions to provide children with more than what a present-day family can" (*Roskilde Tidende*, 11 July 1974). Crucial to their commitment to relive the past in what they considered to be an authentic manner, was the scientific, institutional setting lending authority to their performance and enhancing their feeling of authenticity.

It is a recurrent claim in literature critical to living history that participants suffer from a delusion of authenticity understood as an exact isomorphism, a perfect simulation, where every gap between past and present is closed (Lowenthal 1985, Handler & Saxton 1988, McCarthy 2014). From an interview in a local newspaper, it appears that the prehistoric families were very well aware of the impossibility of reconstructing and imitating Iron Age life as 1:1. They do not seem to have had a naïve illusion of travelling back in real time:

Naturally, we can be more relaxed than the people of that time. They had to gather supplies for the winter, which is something we do not need to think about, and we know that we can get a doctor if we become ill (*Roskilde Tidende*, 11 July 1974).

Unlike the first years, where staff and volunteers wore their own clothes in order to indicate the distance between past and present, the prehistoric families wore garments considered appropriate for the Iron Age (Holtorf 2014:788). The garments, however, caused mounting concern over the drawbacks of the performances, not in relation to the prehistoric families, but to the visitors' reception, and fuelled anxiety by visitors asking the prehistoric families about their experiences of imitating life in the Iron Age, and not so much about the past (e.g., interview in *Faxebladet* 1977). A visitor guide from the mid-1970s illustrates the Centre's concern: "The foundation of the 'Prehistoric Village' was [...] revised to secure that the tourist and educational work did not get out of hand and damaged the whole case". The Centre's objective was consequently presented very distinctly: "The purpose of the Experimental Centre is not to entertain, but to enlighten and

34 educate in an entertaining way. [...] The basis for what we display is always experiments that we have carried out. The Prehistoric Village is not a 'Disneyland'" (Historisk-Arkæologisk Forsøgscenter mid-1970s). On the one hand, the Centre did not consider enlightenment and entertainment to be in opposition. On the other hand, they clearly feared being regarded as an entertaining theme park. As we can see, this dilemma was played out in close relation to meanings of authenticity negotiated between the Centre, the prehistoric families, and the visitors.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this article, we have explored how authenticity was construed and negotiated in selected living history practices in Denmark throughout the twentieth century. The various meanings confirm Edward M. Bruner's argument that authenticity is socially constructed, created and negotiated in specific contexts and always related to notions of authority (1994:399f.).

Negotiations happened in a variety of ways. At the Funen Village, authenticity was negotiated in-house between the original Funen sources and what was believed to be credible to visitors. Journalistic reports, however, demonstrate that negotiation, and validation, also happened externally. With regard to the museum layout, one journalist wrote: "In open-air museums, the objects are placed in their original setting. As such, you get a better sense of life in bygone times (*Faaborg Avis*, 24 June 1946). The example further illustrates how authenticity was negotiated on a spectrum. All the buildings in the Funen Village were relocated. Thus, the original setting in this sense meant the objects' usage situation, not their specific geographical

provenience. In HAF, negotiations involved both prehistoric families and visitors. While the prehistoric families seem to have assumed the Centre's scientific discourse of connecting authenticity to material objects, technologies and working processes, (some) visitors were more concerned with the personal experiences of the prehistoric families, a departure causing the institution to reorganise and emphasise their scientific base. In this sense, HAF serves as a concrete example of how different understandings of authenticity can influence an institution's communication and consequently discourses of enlightenment and experience.

What is considered authentic changes over time. The participant of the Stone Age performance at Hjerl Hede, quoted previously, reported how she had spread soy on her arms and legs in order to not appear pale. The participants in the museum's current Stone Age program are not covered in soy, and they do not present themselves as people of the Stone Age. They may be historically dressed, but they appear as contemporary to the visitor. This stresses that what was regarded as proper Stone Age appearance in 1955 is not regarded as proper in 2019. Conversely, re-enacting seemed inconceivable to H. P. Hjerl Hansen. In 1932, old working methods were to be performed by elderly with first-hand experience. That skilled members of handicraft associations performed a similar past at the Funen Village some twenty years later, illustrate that the temporal relation between past and present influences how museums communicate and relate to society. The same was evident at HAF. In the beginning, staff and volunteers wore their own clothes to stress the distance between past and present to visitors. Later on, when the prehistoric families came to play an important role in the centre's communication, they wore garments

considered appropriate for the Iron Age. Standards change, and what an era considers authentic moves in and out of consciousness. This is also evident in how museums construe living history. Historically found in opposition to the object-based museum, living history is now an integrated part of the many ways history museums engage with visitors and society at large.

Museum professionals realise that they need to be aware of the public's sense of what is believable. Authorities may be institutional, but authority can also depend on or be shared with visitors or those performing. As evident, criteria may be scientific, but it can also be more experiential and personal. For example, it was not only the first-hand experience of the participants that lent authority to the event in The Old Village at Hjerl Hede in 1932; the recognition among visitors played a part too. In 1955, the number of visitors and their (enjoyable) experiences also held authority. That the festival in 1932 was free of charge further underlines that experiential communication practices historically has do to with so much more than economy. It was about democratising access to the general public's past, and to enlarge the pasts deemed worthy of a place in the museum.

Though the examples are outlined chronologically, our argument is not one of sequentiality. On the contrary, the various standards identified seem to continuously operate as discursive and practical considerations affecting the cultural work done by living history museums and institutions. Though scientifically embedded, experiences were fundamental to HAF's work. The concern with visitors' interest in the personal experiences of the prehistoric families, however, demonstrates that not every experience was deemed palatable. At the Funen Village, a scientific

arrangement of objects was obstructing a proper appropriation of the Funen past, while simulation was considered authentic. At Hjerl Hede, some visitors recognised parts of their own past, and as such experienced themselves to be knowledgeable, or at least so it would seem.

The analytical use of a contemporary concept on historical source material demonstrates that parallel aspirations and concerns, though emphasised and named differently, were also embedded in past museum practices. In our study on selected living history practices, meanings of authenticity, as well as discourses of enlightenment and experience, are present in every example. As such, the three cases demonstrate that the dualism of enlightenment and experience have existed for a long time. Rather than speaking of discourses of enlightenment and experiences as historical processes replacing one another, it might be more fruitful to speak of different discourses on enlightenment and experience, as both continuous and historical weightings.

While it might be a second-hand perspective, the analytical attention to authenticity further allowed us to take a closer look at the perception of the general public. Despite its exploratory nature and limited sample of cases, the study of authenticity, to us, suggests that this perspective would be a fruitful area for further work.

## NOTES

1. E.g., <https://www.visitdenmark.dk/da/danmark/museer/her-bliver-danmarkshistorien-levende>; <https://www.tvmidtvest.dk/artikel/levende-fortid-her-bliver-det-aldrig-2018>; [https://www.tripadvisor.dk/ShowUserReviews-g1938874-d3547741-r603424298-Frilandsmuseet\\_Hjerl\\_Hede-Vinderup\\_Holstebro\\_West\\_Jutland\\_](https://www.tripadvisor.dk/ShowUserReviews-g1938874-d3547741-r603424298-Frilandsmuseet_Hjerl_Hede-Vinderup_Holstebro_West_Jutland_)

- Jutland.html. (All accessed 24 October 2018).
2. <https://strategichorizons.com/joe-pine/the-history-of-the-experience-economy/>. (Accessed 21 March 2019)
3. Today Hjerl Hede Open Air Museum.
4. All translations of the source material are our own. Any emphasis in original.
5. <http://www.museumsilkeborg.dk/leve-friheden> (accessed 19 October 2018).
6. <https://museum.odense.dk/denfynskelandsby/den-fynske-landsby> (accessed 24 September 2018).

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