INTRODUCTION
Laying Claim to Authenticity: Five Anthropological Dilemmas

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ABSTRACT

The introduction to this special collection examines five dilemmas about the use of the concept of authenticity in anthropological analysis. These relate to 1) the expectation of a singular authenticity "deep" in oneself or beyond the surface of social reality, 2) the contradictions emerging from the opposition of authenticity with inauthenticity, 3) the irony of the notion of invention of tradition (which deconstructs, but also offends), 4) the criteria involved in the authentication of the age of objects (with a consideration of their materiality), and 5) authenticity's simultaneity, its contemporaneous multiple conceptualizations in context. I argue for a perspective on the study of authenticity that acknowledges the simultaneous co-existence of more than one parallel manifestation of authenticity in any given negotiation of the authentic. [Keywords: Authenticity, authenticating, invention of tradition, pastness, simultaneity]

Afew years ago, an old friend of mine, a renowned photographer and art collector, and I, a middle-aged anthropologist looking for a new fieldwork site, traveled together around Panama visiting indigenous communities. Our journey tested our friendship and was accompanied by endless

bickering over what was authentic and what was not. My friend the photographer traced authenticity as an inherent quality in people and things, in non-verbal connections, in aesthetic evaluations, and in a world where beauty and value were communicated beyond cultural barriers. I looked for cultural difference, identities performed or inscribed on things, and miscommunicated intentions. He named people and things "inauthentic" without hesitation, and people responded, offering explanations and information. I was always a step behind, hesitant, polite, but jealous of his ability to unearth local meaning through provocation. Until one day he said:

> You are an anthropologist; you claim the authority to argue that all cultures are authentic, but you are trapped in a box, the box of anthropological correctness. I am an artist; I just look into people's eyes and I know who is authentic, and who is not. I only have to touch and look at a thing to understand, to appreciate its beauty and value.

An example of "anthropological correctness," my companion pointed out, was my "obstinate" denial to label cultural products inauthentic, unreal, or fake. Yet, by contesting my friend's claims of inauthenticity, I reproduced judgements of value about people, artifacts, and cultural performances that inspired my friend to search for "true" authenticity even harder—despite my pleas that such a thing does not exist! We were both caught in authenticity's misleading and essentialist tentacles. So we argued, and argued.

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In this introduction, I explore five dilemmas that complicate or present challenges to the study of authenticity. The first involves the presupposition that authenticity lies at an inaccessible level below the surface of social life, deep within oneself or among societies "uncontaminated" by modernity, a position echoed by Western philosophers, such as Rousseau (Lindholm 2001, 2008, this issue), and my photographer friend in the example above. The second examines the "trap of authenticity," the contradiction emerging from deconstructing (analytically) the authenticity/inauthenticity opposition, while at the same time having to (ethnographically) engage with its meaningfulness on the local level. The third concerns the irony of the notion of invention of tradition, which effectively demonstrates the constructed nature of authenticity in national(ist) narratives, but offends the sensitivities (and inventiveness) of local actors or minority

groups. The fourth considers the criteria used to define the authenticity of objects (in particular, their age) and provides solutions to unresolved tensions between constructivist and materialist approaches to the study of object authentication. Finally, the fifth dilemma addresses the simultaneity of authenticity, its polysemic parallel manifestation under different conceptualizations within the same processes of authentication, asking the question: is there only one authenticity or many?

My current view of authenticity, which calls attention to the co-existence of different simultaneous understandings of the authentic—the negotiation of parallel authenticities in tension—emerged in an attempt to confront conceptual paradoxes such as those outlined above. The concept of authenticity encompasses diverse sets of meaning that range from genuineness and originality to accuracy and truthfulness (Trilling 1972; Handler 1986, 2001; Lindholm 2008). In many respects, authenticity encodes the expectation of truthful representation. It is concerned with the identity of persons and groups, the authorship of products, producers, and cultural practices, the categorical boundaries of society: "who" or "what" *is* "who" or "what" claims to be. These are all central topics in anthropology, and it is therefore not surprising that authenticity is "deeply embedded in anthropological theory" (Handler 1986:4).

The anthropological literature that focuses explicitly on authenticity is not vast, but is growing (see, for example, Handler 1986, Bendix 1997, van de Port 2004b, Lindholm 2008, Fillitz and Saris 2012). A few anthropological accounts examine authenticity in relation to specific contexts or sub-disciplines—which do not extensively communicate with each other—such as in cultural re-enactments and heritage sites (Handler and Saxton 1988, Bruner 1994, Gable and Handler 1996), theme parks (Fjellman 1992, Holtorf 2005), museums (Field 2009), ethnic art (Graburn 1976, 2004; Steiner 1994; Phillips and Steiner 1999; Price 2007), ethnic commodification (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009), mimic goods and counterfeits (Jamieson 1999, Vann 2006), politics of indigenous representation (Hanson 1989, Linnekin 1991, Jackson 1995, Conklin 1997), religious experience and the sacred (Lindholm 2002, Van de Port 2005), object authenticity (Spooner 1986, Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999, Reisinger and Steiner 2006, Jones 2010), folklore studies (Bendix 1997), lifestyle migration (Benson 2011, Osbaldiston 2012), and psychological anthropology (Lindholm 2001). The anthropology of tourism is the only anthropological sub-field in which the concept of authenticity has been continuously problematized, with earlier

accounts influencing those of later authors (see, among many, Smith 1977; Bruner 1991, 2001, 2005; Selwyn 1996; Abram et al. 1997; Taylor 2001; Coleman and Crang 2002; Leite and Graburn 2009; Kenna 2010; Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011), often in dialogue with authors writing from an interdisciplinary perspective (MacCannell 1976, Urry 1990, Cohen 1988, Wang 1999, Franklin 2003, Knudsen and Waade 2010).

Contemporary anthropology has moved beyond the confines of essentialist conceptualizations of culture. It is now generally accepted that there are no single, bounded, and self-contained cultures, and neither is there a unitary, fixed, and all-embracing anthropological definition of authenticity (see Handler and Linnekin 1984, Handler 1986, Taylor 2001, van de Port 2004a, Lindholm 2008). Gradually, anthropological scholarship is moving in the direction of acknowledging the existence of plural, multidimensional authenticities (see Field 2009). This recognition has inspired the development of academic conceptualizations of authenticity specified by adjectives or nouns, "particular" types of authenticity with their distinctive authenticating meaning. Thus, for example, anthropologists write about authenticity as verisimilitude, authenticity as genuineness, authenticity as originality, and authenticity as the authority to authenticate (Bruner 1994:309-401); hot authenticity, that appeals to the imagination of the authentically social, or cool authenticity, that appeals to those who seek knowledge about the authentic (Selwyn 1996:7, 20-21); ethnographic authenticity (demarcating cultural types), engineered authenticity (of mass-produced objects), and brand-named authenticity (Field 2009:510-511); authenticity of the image-as-object (the physical properties of a photomechanical image), or authenticity of the image content (relating to truthful or misleading representation in film and photography) (Banks 2012).

The development of analytical conceptualizations of authenticity with qualifying adjectives or nouns is not a sign of academic verbalism, but an academic response to authenticity's multiple vernacular uses: in many evaluations of objects, performances, or cultural practices, more than one conceptualization or criteria of authenticity is debated at any given moment. Some expectations of the authentic might be more explicitly articulated than others, while some might not be communicated at all. Discrepancies of social status, as well as cultural and language barriers further complicate the communication of authenticity, adding on to it overlapping layers of meaning. Steiner (1994) offers a compelling example of this parallel dimension in the negotiation of authenticity from

an African market. A Western tourist (the buyer) and an African art trader (the seller) exchange a Seiko watch for an African mask:

> Several times during the bargaining the buyer asked the seller, "Is it really old?" and "Has it been worn?" While the tourist questioned the trader about the authenticity of the mask, the trader, in turn, questioned the tourist about the authenticity of his watch. "Is this the real kind of Seiko," he asked, "or is it a copy?" As the tourist examined the mask—turning it over and over again looking for the worn and weathered effects of time—the trader scrutinized the watch, passing it to other traders to get their opinion on its authenticity. (Steiner 1994:129)

The multiplicity of meaning under negotiation at any given discussion about authenticity can help us appreciate that a universal definition of authenticity is "a mission impossible" (van de Port 2004a:6). "There are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it" (Taylor 2001:8); as many as those who question the authenticity of objects in local markets and museums (traders, art collectors, curators, or tourists); as many definitions of the authentic as those who debate authenticity in disputes about ethnic identity, cultural trademarks, indigenous land titles, and courts of law (anthropologists, indigenous leaders, government officials, and lawyers). In many respects, the multilayered significance of authenticity provides local actors with a tactical advantage: the freedom to escape from a strict and limiting definition of the authentic, an opportunity to apply their own specific meaning. Authenticity's polysemy can provide advantages for anthropologists too: an invitation to understand the authentic within the cultural contexts of its production (Bruner 1993), or an incentive to discuss—as I will do in following sections—some of the particular contradictions and dilemmas that authenticity can generate.

Authenticity Inside, Outside, and On the Surface

The anthropological inclination to discuss authenticity in terms of process, meaning, and context sharply contrasts with the treatment of authenticity in Western philosophical traditions, in which the search for the authentic took a profoundly inward turn (Lindholm 2001, 2008). As early as the late 17th century, philosophers employed the term to deal with a generalized anxiety about the ambiguity of social status and representation following

the collapse of the distinct hierarchies of the medieval world (see Trilling 1972; Handler 1986; Bendix 1997; Lindholm 2001, 2008). Shifting philosophical interpretations of the authentic focused on the representation of the inner Self, as this can be discovered and defined by Oneself, challenging previous perceptions of authenticity that were determined by fixed social hierarchies or defined in terms of social relations (on the surface of social life). Lindholm (this issue) traces this gradual development in the work of an array of philosophical minds—Kant, Descartes, Hegel, Goethe, Rousseau, Hume, Herder, Heidegger, and Sartre. With the passage of time, "authenticity, in the particular form of 'being thyself,' came to serve as a prevalent trope for transcendence in the Western world" (Lindholm this issue; see also Osbaldiston 2012).

From the Western philosophical tradition also emerges the expectation of discovering authenticity in those parts of the world that are still untouched by the superficial conventions of Western society, the Rousseauian vision of realizing the true self among uncorrupted natives (Lindholm 2008). This expectation has given rise to an exoticized version of the authentic—articulated in contradistinction with modernity—the authenticity of the self (deep within oneself) and the exotic Other (far away). From this point of view, authenticity emerges "from the probing comparison between self and Other, as well as between external and internal states of being" (Bendix 1997:17). It is also interesting to note that discovering authenticity in the far away often involves a certain obstacle, a hurdle or a self-afflicted rite of passage: long-distance travel to inaccessible (perceived as isolated) communities, infiltration into backstage realms of social life, and/or penetrating self-analysis and introspection. Even long-term anthropological fieldwork and archaeological excavation can be seen as prerequisite ordeals of such a deeper (or unearthed so far) vision of authenticity.

Seen from the vantage point of contemporary anthropological scholarship, the romanticized expectation of "deeper" authenticity denigrates superficiality as a smokescreen of an inner reality. Yet, as Miller (2005) persuasively argues, the idea that authenticity denigrates superficiality represents a culturally specific Western ontology—and in particular, I would add, a post-Enlightenment one. For some cultures, "real," "honest," or "sincere" identities are revealed on the surface, while mischievous ones are hidden below. In Trinidad, attention to "superficial" mass-consumption goods, such as clothes or cars, communicates statements about authentic modern selves (Miller 1994), while in Mount Hagen, body

decoration manifests "inner capacity for achievement" since the inner self is not divorced from the surface of the body (Strathern 1971:250). In rural Greece, where high value is placed "on appropriate behavior rather than inner truth," Greek islanders experience no guilt in performing authenticity for tourists (Kenna 2010:xx): "the self is not so much presented within everyday life as in front of it" (Herzfeld 1985:11).

MacCannell (1976) was among the first social scientists to highlight the degree to which a romanticized authenticity unaffected by modernity is the object of tourist desire. In fact, the authenticity pursued by many tourists—who, according to MacCannell, desire to access a social world beyond "staged" performances—resonates with the search for a "deeper" authenticity inaugurated by Western philosophers. The search for an authenticity hidden in the backstage invites elements of discovery, travel, and ordeal, and opens the way for the experience of a true inner essence, through the overcoming of personal fears, weaknesses, and the destabilization of travel (Lindholm 2008:40). The appeal of this type of inaccessible authenticity of the backstage is that it is often hidden by yet another back region of sociality (Goffman 1959, MacCannell 1976), and is thus never fully realized or contradicted. Adventurers in search of the authentic can embark—if they wish—on as many journeys as they please, contaminating the very authenticity they seek! In fact, such as in the case of indigenous art, the death of an authentic culture can inflate its market value, legitimizing the intervention of art collectors or anthropologists who attempt to salvage its remaining artifacts, to preserve them as true representations of the authentic (Steiner 1994:104-105).

Yet, despite its unfulfilling nature, the authenticity of the hidden and the inaccessible still prevails, in the desire that it generates, but also in its very denial. An increasing number of Westerners reject the appeal of backstage authenticity or demystify it altogether: they are "post-tourists" (Urry 1990:90-92), sophisticated individuals with an awareness of global interconnectedness. Liberated from the expectation of the authentic, they enjoy stage reproductions, aware of the blurred discrepancies of the "touristy" and the "non–touristy," the authentic and the inauthentic (Franklin 2003). As Baudrillard (1994) has suggested, echoing Benjamin (1936), the simulacrum can be more exciting than the original. In Disneyland, Fjellman explains, the "relentless presentation of the fake as real is often charming" (1992:255). Such realizations bring authenticity back to the surface, but do not completely resolve the tension between simulacra

and originals, authenticity and inauthenticity. I will return to these contradictions in the following section.

For now, I would like to attract attention to what I see as the major weaknesses of the quest for a deeper-level authenticity within the Self or beyond the surface of social life. The first is its reliance on a singular vision of an authentic Self or an authentic culture: the assumption that there is only one "real" Self or "real" cultural identity awaiting discovery. This limited vision neglects the possibility that part-personal identities or variations of cultural motifs and practices exist simultaneously. A second weakness relates to the denigration of the surface of social life or the surface of objects (see Miller 2005, 2010): if "real" authenticity lies within the Self or the backstage, surface sociality and materiality are presumed to be inauthentic. Considerations such as these have led anthropologists, such as Ed Bruner (1994, 2005), to question the presupposition of a hidden social reality or the idea of simulacra in the performance of authenticity. "I do not look behind, beneath, or beyond anything," Bruner maintains; in cultural performance "there is no simulacrum because there is no original" (2005:5). We can easily extend the same argument to discussions about personal or social identities.

Is There a Trap of Authenticity?

With the acknowledgment that context-specific conceptualizations of authenticity should be an object of study, rather than classificatory or analytical criteria, a new dilemma arises that requires some attention. While some researchers recognize the problematic nature of the authenticity-inauthenticity opposition, in their effort to explain local meanings and uses of authenticity, they end up comparing objects, groups, or social phenomena in terms of the binary criteria they have previously rejected. In other words, they fall into "the trap of authenticity," becoming themselves entangled in its misleading and contradictory connotations. This contradictory engagement with authenticity further points to authenticity's conceptual ambiguity, which I see, not as a limitation or an entrapment, but as an invitation to unravel the concept's semantic complexity. I will discuss this proposition with reference to two examples.

The first concerns Philip Duke's (2007) monograph *The Tourists Gaze, The Cretans Glance*, which examines the interface between Minoan archaeology and tourism in Crete. Confronted with a very complex time

period and diverse archaeological interpretations, Duke attempts to shed some light on the reconstitution of the past in the present, and in particular the use of Minoan archaeology by the tourist industry. One of his main arguments highlights how the authority of the archaeological discourse—the version of it that is made available to the tourists—dissolves any suspicion of inauthenticity or awareness of the constructed nature of the particular past. Instead, the archaeology that is available to the tourists presents a very coherent and homogenous singular narrative, with no reference to conflicting archaeological interpretations (of which there are plenty). Duke also problematizes the essentialist, taken for granted use of authenticity—drawing insights from the anthropology of tourism—and it is, in fact, his constructivist awareness and scholarly deconstruction that leads him closer to a contradiction, identified in a review of his book by Deltsou (2008).

Although Duke recognizes authenticity's misleading and unattainable nature, Deltsou perceptively detects that he still operates within its binary framework. Duke's argument about scientific authority dissolving the authenticity-inauthenticity distinction implies that there is something inherently inauthentic in the particular presentational strategy followed by the tourist authorities in Crete. "Should we assume then that making people aware of a site's constructedness would make it authentic?" wonders Deltsou (2008:307). It seems that Duke's discussion of the particular archaeological sites is framed in terms of a concealed expectation of inauthenticity. Although Deltsou does not use this exact choice of words, she points out that Duke has fallen into the trap. I will discuss this point of view very shortly.

The second example of how a researcher can be entrapped by authenticity's ambiguous tentacles relates to my recent work with the Emberá in Panama. I am the anthropologist who fell into the trap—reluctantly at first, and willingly later. Troubled by the commentary of tourists and travelers that the particular Emberá community I study—which has recently developed indigenous tourism—is "touristy" and therefore "inauthentic," I compared the practices of my Emberá respondents in the so-called "touristy" community with similar practices of other Emberá in non-"touristy" communities (Theodossopoulos 2007, 2010). Despite my desire to move beyond the authenticity-inauthenticity opposition, I soon found myself entangled, like Duke (2007), in the very polarity I was trying to expose: by defending the authenticity of indigenous practices or communities, I had

to address the accusation of inauthenticity and its dichotomous implications (Theodossopoulos this issue). As I became increasingly aware of the resulting contradiction, I considered avoiding the problem all together.

Yet, avoidance is by no means a solution. In the examples I mention above, the tourists who suspect (or are prevented from suspecting) inauthenticity are participating as witnesses in a process of authentication framed in terms of a dichotomous conceptualization of authenticity. Identifying this process and recognizing authenticity's essentialist connotations is a good first step towards an analysis of the particular authenticities negotiated in specific social contexts, but it is only a first step. To go even further, and unpack authenticity's socially prescribed meanings and the intentions of those who discuss or introduce them, the researcher often has to fall into the trap—willingly, consciously, and reflexively—first comparing the authentic with the inauthentic in locally meaningful terms (however essentialist those may be), in order to understand the evaluative potential (judgments or tactics) inherent in the resulting contradictions.

In my reading of Duke, the author's reflexive attitude betrays his engagement with the contradictory dimensions of authenticity discussed above. To confront the mechanism with which the Cretan tourism authorities are dissolving the expectation of authenticity, he approaches the archaeological sites in Crete in terms of the available dichotomous expectations. Such are the expectations of many tourists, and the formalist theoretical predilections of the official narrative that is made available to them: both rely on the comparison of the authentic with the inauthentic. In this respect, Duke's auto-ethnography sheds valuable light on the reception and manipulation of "a useable past" in the present (Brown and Hamilakis 2003) and its emerging (particular) authenticities. Further ethnographic entanglement—the soliciting of local voices—could have brought into the fore, as Deltsou (2008) correctly indicated, additional insights: the analogic use of a perceived "authentic" past in the present (Sutton 1998) or the locals' frustration with its monumentalization (Herzfeld 1991).

Similarly, in the Emberá example, the notions of authenticity operating on the ground level are at once more dichotomous and evaluative. Such notions invite comparisons and hasty judgments (by outsiders) and a hesitant attempt to redefine traditional culture (by the local community). Apart from identifying this general process, a study of the emerging authenticities requires an engagement with dichotomous and essentialist expectations: authenticity as originality or representativeness (as expected

by tourists) and authenticity as tradition (as understood by the locals). Judgmental evaluations about so called "touristy" indigenous cultures or communities merit ethnographic contextualization, attention to particular practices and local social organization (Theodossopoulos this issue), a consideration of the authenticators who determine the authentic (Warren and Jackson 2002), and the indexing of authenticity by Western audiences (Conklin 1997). Thus, the ethnographer often has to get her/his hands dirty by engaging in the dichotomous evaluations that express the meaningfulness and purpose of local authenticators and their (in)authenticities.

Arguing from this perspective, I do not see the binary logic of authenticity as a trap, but as an invitation to change perspectives, compare one singular and essentialist view of tradition with another, and unpack the local meaningfulness and tactical rhetoric such singular visions of tradition entail. The engagement with authenticity's dual nature—its relatedness and dependence upon inauthenticity—has inspired scholarly analysis in the last three decades. MacCannell (1976) framed his in terms of the authentic-inauthentic polarity, as this is negotiated in the front and back regions of social life. He also observed the illusory and unattainable nature of the expectation of the authentic (Skinner and Theodossopoulos 2011). Bruner (2005), representing a second wave of theoretical engagement with authenticity, recognized the pursuit of authenticity as a red herring, but also encouraged the thorough study of the particular cases where the polarity reveals itself. New generations of anthropologists find themselves increasingly uncomfortable with the singular visions of authenticity that proliferate in their field sites. Understandably, there is some wariness about authenticity's static and exoticized connotations and a fear of falling in its trap; but there are also great opportunities for further analysis focusing on deciphering authenticity's local binary logic and application in everyday life.

Authentic Inventions of Tradition

As anthropologists dissociate themselves from the limitations of singular visions of original or authentic culture, they find themselves increasingly uncomfortable with one-dimensional and static conceptualizations of tradition. As with authenticity, anthropological uses of the term "tradition" contrast significantly with non-academic uses, a discrepancy that gives rise to misunderstandings that may have political implications for local actors. By refusing to single out one tradition as more authentic than

others—the axiom of Sameness (Argyrou 2002)—anthropologists can be seen as downplaying the locally perceived authentic importance of particular traditions. In particular, the academic use of the adjective "invented"—frequently used by academics to highlight the constructedness of traditions—is often misunderstood as indicating inauthenticity, a lack of genuineness or deceit. In popular use, "invented," understood as "made up," is juxtaposed to "authentic," understood as "genuine."

The considerable discrepancy between the academic and popular uses of the term "invented" has been particularly felt by "politically vulnerable" groups (Linnekin 1991:446) safeguarding their "authentic" identities and cultural authorship against opposing claims by national majorities or nation-states. With respect to the concept of authenticity, the resulting misunderstandings are exacerbated by the simple fact that "invention of tradition" is an academic construct—presupposing an awareness of late 20th century social theory—while "authenticity" is a concept with a much longer history and context-specific meanings (Trilling 1972; Lindholm 2008, this issue). It is important to note here that the use of the adjective "invented" as a synonym of "contrived" or "recently constructed" emanates a sense of irony that provides a valuable deconstructive perspective on traditions developed to underlie a continuity with the past—especially traditions endorsed by nation-states or empires. Nevertheless, it is this very same sense of irony that also offends—or can be seen as denigrating of—the cultural authorship of minority or indigenous groups.

Hobsbawm's (1983) use of "invention" draws attention to the mechanisms with which Western nation-states create a sense—or an illusion—of antiquity for themselves by institutionalizing or endorsing traditions that are perceived as old, and therefore understood as authentic. Here, the irony of "invention" as an analytic concept targets authenticity as timelessness, exposing its recent constitution, and therefore, its authenticating authority. Despite Hobsbawm's slightly functionalist overtone (see Handler 1984)—apparent in his idea that invented traditions are "legitimizing institutions" or "establishing social cohesion" (Hobsbawm 1983:9)—the irony in his use of the adjective "invented" draws attention to the constructed nature of what is presented as authentic: traditions which might not be *that* old, after all. In this respect, the deconstructive capacity of the notion of "invention" has been as influential as Benedict Anderson's (1983) "imagination": both terms undermine primordialism by depicting authenticity as constructed (Hobsbawm) or imagined (Anderson).

Since Hobsbawm supported the "invention of tradition" with examples from the history of Western civilization, it is not surprising that his oblique reference to "traditional societies"—presented as dominated by custom (1983:2)—does not convey the same clarity or sense of irony that characterizes his analyses of the European nation-state. Anthropological uses of the term "invention" have been more nuanced, more likely to acknowledge intentionality and agency, and applicable to all societies, not merely the West (Wagner 1975, Handler and Linnekin 1984, Hanson 1989). Hanson, for example, presents a more concise and anthropologically suited definition of invention:

> Inventions are sign-substitutions that depart some considerable distance from those upon which they are modeled…are selective, and…systematically manifest the intention to further some political or other agenda. (1989:899)

He further explains that inventions are "common components in the ongoing development of authentic culture" (1989:899). Inventions do not represent the extraordinary in social life, but often occur in the everyday. With such clarifications in mind, it should be recognized that this particular academic conceptualization of "invention" is not applied by anthropologists to denigrate (or de-authenticate) beliefs or practices, but to challenge taken for granted understandings of tradition defined "in terms of boundedness, givenness or essence" (Handler and Linnekin 1984:275). National(ist) ideologies often conceptualize tradition in such objectified terms, relying on natural metaphors (Handler and Linnekin 1984) to naturalize timeless and static truths (Herzfeld 1997). As an antidote to naturalization, the irony of invention—applied as an analytic concept—penetrates the solid defenses of essentialist ideologies and makes more evident their political motivations.

Yet, despite the analytic propensity of the concept, the term "invention" offends local groups and threatens particular (vulnerable) authenticities. In one of the first discussions of this problem, Linnekin (1991) refers to the agitation expressed by the Maori, who see the academic version of "invention" as an anti-native category with negative implications for indigenous authenticity. Here, the irony of invention is perceived as denigrating indigeneity, cultural distinctiveness, indigenous rights achieved through struggle, and the history of this very struggle. It is for this reason that the notion of the invention of tradition would benefit from some critical reconsideration.

Sahlins (1999), for example, objects to the cultural invention thesis on various grounds, including its instrumentality and implicit reductionism—evident in presenting culture as a smokescreen of underlying interests or a fabrication legitimizing political objectives. Another problem with the notion of cultural invention is its indirect presupposition of inauthenticity. When Hobsbawm (1983), to use another example, juxtaposes invented with genuine traditions, he indirectly associates the invented with the inauthentic.

To evade some of these problems, we can easily replace "invention" with alternative terms, at least in those analyses that discuss politically vulnerable and minoritized authentiticities. Examples of such alternatives are "revitalization," "revival," and "revaluation" (Theodossopoulos 2011, this issue), or even more broadly, terms that allude to social change, such as "transformation" (Gow 2001) or "restructuring," used by Charles Stewart (2007:18) to describe the internal reorganization of cultural elements in creolization. Sahlins (1999) suggests one more term, "inventiveness," which recognizes that "invention" is constructed, but is more sensitive to agency and appreciative of indigenous creative accomplishments. Unlike "invention," the term "inventiveness" does not offend and can be used not only to describe politically vulnerable indigenous traditions, but also the rhetoric developed by local actors who improvise upon (or oppose) national ideological paradigms.

Therefore, by substituting "invention" with "inventiveness," we open the way for acknowledging the authenticity of local transformations—where "authenticity" is understood as spontaneity and agency—while retaining a sense of the deconstructive irony of Hobsbawm's original use of "invention." Take Greece for example, a nation-state with a national consciousness that so heavily relies, as many anthropologists have demonstrated, on an "invented" continuity with classical antiquity (Herzfeld 1986, 1987; Just 1989; Stewart 1994; Hamilakis and Yalouri 1999; Sutton 1998; Theodossopoulos 2007). In everyday life, however, inventive local Greek actors use this history of continuity with the past to explain the present (Sutton 1998) or to exonerate themselves from their nation's shortcomings (Herzfeld 1982, 1992). Here, we see that "invented" traditions can inspire "inventive" local responses, such as rhetoric, developed in response to nationalist narratives, but in terms of local "authentic" adaptations (where authenticity is understood as agency and rhetorical flexibility). Thus, more nuanced terms, such as "inventiveness," can restore those elements of authenticity rejected by

the concept "invention," without compromising the analytical propensity of Hobsbawm's original conception.

Materiality, Classification, and the Authentication of Objects from the Past

As is often the case in authentication debates, the particular conceptualizations of authenticity contested in the present often assert their authority with some reference to the past. The past, and a connection with it, is introduced to legitimize claims, establish relationships, and set the boundaries or origins of identities—often in politically charged processes—in which authenticity plays legitimizing roles. At other times, however, the politics or disputes of authenticity focus more directly on the criteria of authentication and the legitimization of authenticity itself. Such is the case when the authenticity of particular objects is called into question, and, more specifically, the connection of these objects with the past.

Cornelius Holtorf (this issue) is concerned with the attributes of material objects that establish the condition of being past, the qualities that signify—as Holtorf puts it—"pastness." His attention to those qualities—"clues that indicate wear and tear, decay, and disintegration"—intends to provide a creative solution to the broader theoretical tension between materialist and constructivist archaeological approaches to object authenticity (see also Jones 2010). As Holtorf persuasively explains, both approaches have their strengths and shortcomings. On the one hand, the materialist approach identifies authenticity in the material substance of objects (thus, acknowledging their materiality), but is often confined to a static expectation of the authentic: intrinsic to the object and inherently essentialist or based on assumptions. On the other hand, the constructivist approach traces the parameters of object authenticity in its social signification (thus, acknowledging context specificity and variability), but it often neglects or undermines the object's materiality.

Holtorf attempts to overcome such limitations by extending the constructivist appreciation of the social to the material. He looks at the particular qualities of an object that inspire the recognition of authenticity, the perceptual clues that indicate pastness. "Authentic archaeological objects," he maintains, are those "that possess pastness," and pastness liberates authenticity from the constraints of inherent material substance. Pastness, however, is also intimately dependent upon the perception or

experience of an object's material construction. The role of the analyst who studies object authenticity is to interrogate the conditions that instigate the perception or experience of pastness. These include, Holtorf explains, material clues (traces of wear and tear), some sense of correspondence with socially defined expectations, and a persuasive narrative explanation of authenticity.

The perception of the antiquity of objects and the criteria that render them persuasively "ancient" also concern Roy Ellen (this issue), who explores the mis-authentication of "eoliths"—chipped flints mistaken for man-made tools—which, from the 1860s to the 1930s, attracted the attention of museums and specialists until subsequent discoveries established their non-human origin. Ellen approaches the eolith controversy from cognitive anthropology, a perspective yet unexplored in authenticity studies. His attention on particular mindsets can help us appreciate the subtle nuances that inform authentication. Belief in the man-made origins of eoliths, for example, was based on a particular way of thinking that encouraged the selective simplification of evidence and its over-optimistic (mis)interpretation. Thus, "claims for authenticity," Ellen maintains, "are inextricably and profoundly 'cognitive' in their enactment, and no more so than in the realm of science."

As with Holtorf, who adds an appreciation of materiality in his constructivist explanation of object authenticity, Ellen's cognitive approach similarly acknowledges the material existence of objects. The eoliths provide material clues and have certain characteristics, which inspire their classification by inquisitive minds striving for order or desiring to reduce the fuzziness and complexity of data from the empirical world. It is this very desire to reduce fuzziness through classification that can help us explain the persuasiveness (in the first place) and resilience (despite contradictory evidence) of the earlier misinterpretation of the eoliths. A combination of Holtorf's and Ellen's perspectives can help us appreciate the authentication of objects as a social and cognitive process, which responds to material clues (the properties of objects that invite interpretation), but also social standards of persuasiveness.

Therefore, by adding an appreciation of materiality to the study of object authenticity, we escape the unproductive opposition between subjects and objects, persons and things (Miller 2005, 2010). We also come closer to a comprehensive analysis of object authentication that evades the illusory tentacles of singular visions of authenticity. Ellen's (cognitive)

and Holtorf's (materiality-sensitive/constructivist) approaches provide valuable insights that point in this direction. If objects (through their materiality) inspire their own classification, authentication can be seen as a complex negotiation of social expectations that corresponds (in its meaningfulness) to a world not so rigidly divided by the social and the material. Material traces of wear and tear are, very often, traces of sociality, indicating social engagement with the object: labels signposting authenticity in museums impose social meaning through their (officially endorsed) material presence; eoliths, now accepted as "inauthentic" prehistoric tools, excite the curiosity of a contemporary public as weird material "authentic" objects, previously mistakenly considered to be prehistoric tools.

Authenticity's Simultaneity

As has become apparent so far, a rigid conceptualization of authenticity is not suitable for anthropological analysis. In fact, the analytic potential of the concept relies on the recognition of its context-specific signification—which might be defined by essentialist criteria, but encodes complicated meanings and intentions. Very often, the antidote for the conceptual paradoxes of authenticity is a flexible approach that acknowledges this complexity. Acknowledging authenticity's flexibility might necessitate an engagement with its non-flexible, very specific, local conceptualizations, which, as we will see in the following examples, often co-exist—and reveal themselves simultaneously—within the same processes or negotiations.

Marcus Banks (this issue) provides us with examples of how different conceptualizations of authenticity can unravel simultaneously in the same disputes. To demonstrate this, he explains the point of reference of the particular types of authenticities contested using Dutton's (2003) analytic distinction between "nominal" authenticity (acquired through confirmation of origin) and "expressive" authenticity (referring to an object's true nature as an emerging value of its representation) (see also Phillips 1997). Banks introduces a third analytic category, "instrumental" authenticity, to account for a strategic orientation in the pursuit of authenticity, which indicates a desire to achieve some material, political, or social benefit from the negotiation of authenticity. This category supplements Dutton's nominal and expressive authenticities by referring to processes—rather than properties inherent in objects—such as the politics of authentication.

Equipped with these analytic categories, Banks discusses the British Museum's repatriation of cremated remains of Tasmanian Aboriginals claimed by contemporary Tasmanian groups. The remains are claimed because they are Tasmanian in origin (nominal authenticity), by mostly white descendants of the indigenous ancestors, who declare a relationship with the claimed object (expressive authenticity), and pursue the repatriation and the burial of the remains as a political goal (instrumental authenticity). In another example, Banks identifies similar parallel authenticities at play, this time in the politics of authenticating visual material from Colonial Indian cinema. Indian scholars and film specialists claim this material because it is Indian in origin (nominal authenticity) and representative of authentic Indian identities and the struggles of the nation in the past (expressive authenticity), but also because the particular material authenticates Indian filmic heritage as an original art genre or field of academic enquiry (instrumental authenticity).

Thus, Banks' comparative perspective makes visible the multi-dimensional and polysemic uses of authenticity as they reveal themselves in parallel, an example of what I refer to as authenticity's simultaneity. A second example will allow us to appreciate how different conceptualizations of authenticity reinforce claims of social distinction. The lifestyle migrants that Benson (this issue) presents chose to move from Britain to rural France, appropriating the region as the rural idyll, an image redolent with a sense of authenticity (see also Osbaldiston 2012). Coming mostly from middle class backgrounds and from another country, the migrants face some difficulty in establishing claims to the rural landscape (nominal authenticity), but they do try to identify strongly with the local rural lifestyle and its representation, attempting, through engagement with "authentic" rural practices, to establish a relationship with it (expressive authenticity). The perception that they could uniquely attain a sense of "authentic" living in rural France provides a rhetorical justification for the decision to migrate. But in life following migration, their persistent pursuit of the authentic serves a further purpose, acting as a measure of success and a criterion of social distinction (both examples of instrumental authenticity).

Those lifestyle migrants who succeed in establishing their "expressive" authenticity are in the position to argue persuasively that their move to rural France was worthy, and that their new "more authentic" life is a "better" life. This narrative's evaluative tone—a better, more authentic way of life—indicates their comparisons with the lives and choices of relatives and friends

in England, or other lifestyle migrants in France or Spain who have failed to connect with authentic rurality. Here, expressive authenticity opens the way for instrumental authenticity. As Benson maintains, the pursuit of an authentic life is intimately connected with the establishment of subtle distinctions between themselves and other migrants, articulated in terms of more or less authentic lifestyles. This process of lifestyle authentication—an example of "distinction" in Bourdieu's terms (1984; see also Benson 2011)—plays a profound role in the articulation of a new post-migration identity, and sets up new challenges and goals, for an even more authentic life in the future. In this context, the "authentic" can never be authentic enough, while "authenticity emerges as a measure of taste" (Benson this issue).

As these examples indicate, the contested nature of authenticity, its temporal simultaneity, and its plural conceptualizations entail valuable lessons for those analysts who liberate themselves from the expectation of singular authenticity and embrace analytically more than one parallel claim of the authentic. In most everyday life situations, more than one type of authenticity is articulated simultaneously—directly or indirectly—and these types are compared to each other during this process. In the everyday negotiation of the authentic, people hold—to paraphrase Bender's (1993) point about landscapes—many authenticities in tension, often as many as the related processes of authentication.

Instead of a Conclusion

In this special collection, we understand authenticity's conceptual imprecision—its blurred, context-specific, often undefined (or indefinable) semantic boundaries—to be indicative of its dynamic and flexible nature. In some cases, this imprecision, we recognize, can work to the advantage of situated actors, who stretch or adapt its existing conceptualizations—or "inventively" create new ones (Sahlins 1999)—in rhetorical tactics or during the restructuring and reorganization of local cultural practices. In this respect, peripheralized groups can turn the ill-defined application of authenticity to their advantage, as they sometimes do with other ill-defined terms that represent processes (e.g., globalization, see Theodossopoulos 2009). At the same time, it also should be recognized that the very advantages of authenticity's semantic flexibility can lead to further peripheralization, social exclusion, denial of indigenous rights, or the denigration of cultural expressions that are deemed not authentic enough.

These qualities of authenticity—its potential to denigrate, but also inspire new creative cultural expressions and tactics—invite analytical engagements that move beyond the appreciation of authenticity's philosophical or existential dimensions (Adorno 1973) to encompass its social implications and context-specific conceptualizations. Instead of shying away from authenticity's inherent essentialism, the contributors to this special collection confront particular (and often dichotomous) meanings of the authentic, in an attempt to understand and make visible the comparisons of value these meanings entail. Considering that local authenticities are predicated upon evaluative criteria, the study of authenticity as a process necessitates an engagement with those criteria. Given that authenticity is a relational concept, its study will benefit from comparative ethnographic analysis.

With these considerations in mind, we have adopted a perspective that prioritizes the exploration of authenticity's multidimensional potential, its simultaneity, and its processual, authenticating dynamic. There is more work that needs to be done in this direction, new authenticities to be explained, and since their meaning is context-specific and begs for ethnographic attention, new ethnographies of authenticity will eventually be written. The articles that follow take a first step in this direction and explore particular categories of the authentic in processes of authentication, shedding some light on how people construct identities for themselves and others—and for artifacts and practices too—through the continuous, relentless negotiation of authenticity. ∎

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文化真实性的争辩：五个人类学的两难困境
[**关键词**：真实性，验证，被发明的传统，过往性，共时性]

Пересматривая понятие аутентичности: Пять антропологических дилемм
[**Ключевые слова:** Аутентичность, пересмотр понятия аутентичности, выдумка традиции, архаичность, одновременность]

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[**Palavras-chave:** Autenticidade, autenticando, invenção da tradição, passado, simultaneidade]

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