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FEIGNING OR FEELING? ON THE STAGING OF AUTHENTICITY ON STAGE[1]

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Deciding who or what is genuinely authentic cannot be the objective of an academic analysis of the value of authenticity. A binding, universally accepted measure will not be found, because the concept of authenticity addresses different, sometimes contradictory values, which are also subject to historical change and therefore cannot be reduced to a fixed common denominator. These conflicting values are the result of the various personal and social needs of the listener and are therefore all justified. The focus should rather be on documenting the various structures and attributes of authenticity and identifying recurring patterns in order to disclose the underlying ideals, needs, attempts to identify and to distinguish, etc., hidden behind them. This is linked to a cultural anthropological interest in understanding the social and individual functions of music. As an additional goal, by heightening an awareness of the staged character of authenticity structures transmitted by media, a contribution can be made towards a more enlightened handling of economically and/or ideologically motivated staging.

With these aims, I will first discuss the key terms of authenticity, liveness and staging, in order to then examine the commonly used authentication strategies based on current examples, especially live performances. It is the stage where the conflict between these three ideas becomes most evident.

1 This is the translation of an article that first appeared in German in *Wa(h)re Inszenierungen. Performance, Vermarktung und Authentizität in der populären Musik* (= Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung 39). Ed. by Dietrich Helms and Thomas Phleps. Bielefeld: transcript 2013, pp. 41-69. Translation by Marci Warner.

I. Authenticity—Liveness—Staging

Authenticity

Authenticity is an ethical ideal which is based on the values of sincerity, loyalty and consistency, both toward one's self and toward others. In terms of interpersonal relationships, it expresses the essential desire not to be deceived or disappointed. As an individual ethical aspiration, it is based on the need for self-realization and individual freedom and thus the desire to reach one's own potential, and to be able to behave according to one's personal ideals.

Within the context of music, at least the following four dimensions are of significance:

a) Personal authenticity

Those who are successful at aligning their inner convictions and their outward behavior are seen as authentic. People who follow their own inner compass in this way are perceived as sincere and reliable in terms of knowing what one can expect from them. Since the mid-1960s, this standard has also applied to rock and pop musicians. From that time on, these musicians were seen less as entertainers and more as artists, whereby the artist image — originally portrayed by British art schools and the role models of the Beat Poets as well as poets such as Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Keats or Blake — had a strongly romantic influence (cf. Frith/Horne 1987, Pattison 1987, Appen 2013). John Lennon, Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix—in contrast to the stars of the older generation—were seen as maladjusted individuals with unique personalities, who were driven only by their own convictions and who were realizing themselves independently from the authorities of society and the influences of market economics. In the context of the political discourse between the Baby Boomer generation and the »establishment«, this transformed them into future-oriented role models for a better society, in which the ideal of a people who have been freed from an authoritarian order and have a »liberated consciousness« would be realized, and in which one could lead a life »that doesn't involve the fulfillment of role expectations, compliance with behavioral conventions or the implementation of tradition-oriented

life plans«[2]. This alleged independence from social constraints was linked to the expectation that the musicians remain authentic, be radical in their self-realization, and embody this idealistic freedom, instead of succumbing to the same compromises that the audience must endure each and every day.

Since then, such ideals have become especially common in all varieties of popular music that attempt to be defined as being anti-cultural or rebellious against the so-called mainstream (on the definition of authenticity for Punk fans, see, e.g., Lewin/Williams 2009). In this case, the criterion of authenticity is of extreme importance, particularly because all music that strives for widespread distribution is bound by market-based structures and thus is always suspected of being driven by them. Therefore, it is deemed the greatest of all disappointments when musicians adapt their music or image to meet the expectations of the masses in an effort to achieve fame and commercial success (»selling out«, examples in Appen 2007: 118 ff.). In contrast, those who work outside the capitalistic structures with (alleged) independent labels and take responsibility for as many production-related decisions as possible are considered to be especially authentic (the »do it yourself« ideal).

But even outside this freedom-oriented rock ideology, fans show a great interest in the private lives of the stars and in the extent to which their publicly portrayed image and their »actual« personality coincide. People who choose stars as role models and identify with them find it particularly important to know exactly where they stand. Even pop stars with great mainstream successes are seen as authentic if they promote the impression of being »natural« and having stayed »true to themselves« in spite of their fame and wealth (see the section on Adele, pg. 60 ff.).

b) Sociocultural authenticity

The insistence that musicians remain loyal to the values of their audience, particularly to the local or social sub-culture of their origin, is also linked to the ideal of personal authenticity, but has a different motivation. Even if they achieve fame and success and increase their social status, they should still identify with this sub-culture, so as not to compromise the very people who feel represented by them. Naturally, this ideal is primarily (but definitely not exclusively) prevalent in bands and fans who want to disassociate themselves from the »mainstream« (cf. Appen 2007: 122ff.).

2 Original: »das nicht in der Erfüllung von Rollenerwartungen, der Entsprechung an Verhaltenskonventionen oder der Umsetzung von traditionell bestimmten Lebensplänen aufgeht« (Menke 2005: 309).

The conflict involving Bob Dylan's use of the electric guitar at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival is an example of how personal authenticity (= adhering to one's own values) and sociocultural authenticity (= the alignment with subculture values) are not always compatible. On the one hand, Dylan was perceived as being »true to himself« in terms of personal authenticity, because he didn't allow himself to be consumed by his fans, promoters and critics, but instead followed his personal convictions and pursued a path of artistic development. His rivals from the folk revival scene, who up to that time saw themselves as being represented by Dylan and the ones to whom he owed his career, interpreted this electrification as a financially-motivated attempt to build on the success of the Beatles and the Byrds. In their eyes, by following this superficial trend, Dylan betrayed the basic political and ethical values of the folk movement: distance from the entertainment industry and the establishment, earnestness, a strong sense of tradition, and above all, a social commitment (cf. Nelson 1965).

c) Authenticity of technical ability

In keeping with the original meaning of the Greek verb *authéntein* (= to accomplish oneself, to act autonomously; see Stimpfle 2011: 161) or the adjective *authentikós* (= done by one's own hand, ibid.), this aspect refers to the need to not be deceived about the authorship and technical abilities of musicians. Accordingly, plagiarism, and — depending on the situation and genre — lip synching, the use of playback or auto tune, and other pretenses of competence are rejected and sanctioned. Famous examples of this are withdrawing the Grammy award from Milli Vanilli in 1990 (see Friedman 1993) and the accusations asserted by the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* (N.N. 1995) that the Rolling Stones used playback recordings for their concerts. Likewise, the fact that the early Queen albums included a note claiming that the band did not use synthesizers of any kind for the recording can be seen as a rejection of »technical aids.« The sources of the indignation over the pretense of non-existent skill are, first, the work ethic of »true technical ability« which is commonplace in country, rock and especially heavy metal music (Diaz-Bone 2002: 408 and 410): esteem for one's work should be earned by its hard-won quality, and not obtained by false pretenses. Second, the identification aspect plays a role in this instance as well: how should one see oneself as being represented by a musician who himself cannot be fully identified with what he pretends to be, and whose own music does not even represent himself? Last but not least, »handmade« music is seen as a prerequisite for emotional authenticity.

d) Emotional authenticity

The insistence that emotionally moving music should stem from the personal life of the musicians is also romantic in origin. This desire for authentic emotional expression is based on three basic assumptions:

First, music is understood as a cultural medium (more or less consciously), which serves to communicate important life experiences. People use music to relate their own emotional experiences to those of others, to imagine how it would feel to be in certain situations, to feel less alone with their feelings, to experience how others deal with their joys and sorrows. If the emotional dimension of music becomes so important for one's own life, then one needs to be able to rely on the fact that this preferred music actually conveys something genuine and true about life and is not just born of mere fiction.

This is especially feasible when, as with the second assumption, the emotional expression has autobiographical roots. Unlike actors, one rarely believes or demands that pop artists and rock musicians slip into different roles for different songs, but rather that the emotional expression of their songs stems from their own emotional life, thus expressing actual facets of their personality (for pertinent statements from musicians and fans, see Appen 2007: 129f.). Accordingly, in many styles, performers are expected to write their own songs or at least put their own personal mark on cover songs. The knowledge transferred by media about drug addiction, life in the ghetto, unhappy love affairs or experiences involving death, serve to additionally authenticate musicians like Kurt Cobain, German singer/songwriter Herbert Grönemeyer[3], 50 Cent or Johnny Cash. It eliminates the suspicion that someone is lamenting a hardship that they have not actually experienced, and therefore are not really able to provide any insight into essential life situations that is worth considering.

Third, a considerable part of the audience is still convinced of the romantic idea that emotions are more likely than language and reason to convey something genuine about human relations in the world, »that ›real truth‹ only exists in feeling and not in thought«[4]. Emotions expressed through gestures, facial expressions and the music itself are regarded as an immediate, unadulterated expression of one's self: »Feelings and emotions are keys for unlocking

3 Grönemeyer is a German singer/songwriter, whose album *Mensch* (2002) is considered the best-selling German album in history. In this album, he processes the loss of his wife and his brother, who both died within a few days of each other in 1998.

4 Original: »dass es eine ›echte Wahrheit‹ nur im Fühlen und nicht im Denken gibt« (Funk 2011: 231).

who I am, my authenticity, how I perceive and how I discover my ›real self‹« (McCarthy 2009: 241). This conviction is accompanied by a rejection of technical aids and the idea of applying an inordinate cognitive influence on the creative process: The emotional impact should not be spoiled by too much perfection, by auto-tune or by other computer technology; it is preferable that music sounds unpolished and »natural« rather than smooth, robotic and expressionless.[5] Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters summed up this value system in his acceptance speech for the 2012 Grammy in the »Best Rock Album« category:

> This is a great honor. Because this record was a special record for our band. Rather than, rather than go to the best studio in the world down the street in Hollywood and rather than use all the fanciest computers that you can buy, we made this one in my garage with some microphones and a tape machine. ... To me this award means a lot because it shows that the human element of making music is what's most important. Singing into a microphone and learning to play an instrument and learning to do your craft, that's the most important thing for people to do. It's not about being perfect, it's not about sounding absolutely correct, it's not about what goes on in a computer. It's about what goes on in here [pointing to his chest] and what goes on in here [pointing to his head] (Grohl 2012).[6]

Further dimensions of authenticity are conceivable, such as »cultural authenticity« (Barker/Taylor 2007: X) or »third person authenticity« (Moore 2002: 214-218), which promise »true« insight into a specific historical or ethnic culture tradition. But they play a lesser role in a live situation, and therefore may be disregarded in this case.[7]

5 The idea that intimacy and a feeling of close proximity could only be imparted to recording devices through the invention of the microphone (see Dibben 2009: 319-321) or that a lot of technical effort is often needed to create the »natural« illusion has not yet been accepted outside of professional circles.

6 Accordingly, the Foo Fighters previously released an online video in which they play the entire *Wasting Light* album live in their studio without an audience, to demonstrate the authenticity of their technical ability (see Foo Fighters 2011).

7 Other systematizations of various authenticity dimensions can be found in Fornäs (1994: 168: »social«, »subjective«, and »cultural or meta-authenticity«), Moore (2002: »authenticity of expression«, »of execution«, »of experience«), and Barker/Taylor (2007: X: »personal«, »representational«, and »cultural authenticity«). Although there are some identical designations, the ascertainments found there differ in content from the dimensions proposed here.

Liveness

A performance, as defined by Erika Fischer-Lichte, is an »event ... that arises from the confrontation and interaction between two groups of people who assemble in one place at the same time in order to experience a situation together in the form of a bodily co-presence.«[8] Although the primary actions in a performance are those of the actors on the stage, viewers in this co-presence play a constitutive role, as their responses (interjection, singing along, clapping in rhythm, dancing, murmuring, holding up lighters, taking pictures with their cell phones, laughing, leaving the hall ...) or their unexpected absence directly influence the experience and actions of the other spectators and the actors. »In this sense,« says Fischer-Lichte (2004: 59), »performances are generated and determined by a self-referential and ever-changing feedback loop.«[9]

These unique experiential qualities of performances sum up the term liveness.[10] Most importantly, the fact that such events are transiently and essentially characterized by the interaction between audience and performer, and that they can be influenced at any time by mistakes or unforeseen events and therefore cannot be completely planned or exactly reproduced, provides suspense and elements of surprise, and thus creates an intensified experience of one's own presence (cf. Kolesch 2005: 188f.). *New York Times* critic Jon Pareles (1990) succinctly sums up the appeal of a live concert: »If I wanted flawlessness, I'd stay home with the album. The spontaneity, uncertainty and ensemble coordination ... are exactly what I go to concerts to see; the risk brings the suspense, and the sense of triumph, to live pop.«

8 Original: »Ereignis ..., das aus der Konfrontation und Interaktion zweier Gruppen von Personen hervorgeht, die sich an einem Ort zur selben Zeit versammeln, um in leiblicher Ko-Präsenz gemeinsam eine Situation zu durchleben« (Fischer-Lichte 2005a: 16).

9 Original: »In diesem Sinne läßt sich behaupten, daß die Aufführung von einer selbstbezüglichen und sich permanent verändernden feedback-Schleife hervorgebracht und gesteuert wird« (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 59).

10 Philip Auslander's theory (1999: 32-35, 50 & 85-94) on the peak period of music in television, which states that experiences of authentic liveness are no longer possible in our heavily »mediatized culture« because our perception of them is inevitably contaminated by our experience with technical media, does not seem particularly convincing to me in its claim to exclusivity in light of one's own concert experiences. Even if this were true, it does not change the principal interactivity of performances described by Fischer-Lichte—an aesthetic appeal that Auslander apparently overlooks (cf. ibid.: 54-58). For criticism of Auslander, also see Pattie (2007: 21-39).

Applied to the various dimensions of authenticity, the live performance offers the rare opportunity to encounter the musicians fairly close-up and in person and to be able to examine their promise of authenticity in a unique way:

- The *sociocultural authenticity* of the musicians and the sharing of common values can be manifested by the close proximity between the stars and the fans, the communication with the audience, the musicians' clothing, the ticket prices, and the song selection.
- The length of the concert, the narration, and the behavior of the musicians on the stage allow one to draw conclusions about their *personal authenticity*, for example, when it seems that they are enjoying performing and having fun interacting with the audience.
- The *authenticity of technical ability* is easier to assess when the musicians' performance can be observed directly, and the safety net and double floor of the studio production are eliminated (referring to Heavy Metal, see Diaz-Bone 2002: 409).
- And in the (relatively) close-up encounter with the musicians, one believes one can better assess the *emotional authenticity* than in stylized studio productions, for example by observing the voice, and the facial expressions and gestures.

Lawrence Grossberg is placing particular focus on the last two aspects when he emphasizes the importance of live concerts for the authentication of musicians:

> The importance of live performances lies precisely in the fact that it is only here that one can see the actual production of the sound, and the emotional work carried in the voice. The demand for live performance has always expressed the desire for the visual mark (and proof) of authenticity (Grossberg 1992: 208).

Staging

Fischer-Lichte differentiates staging from performance as the conceptual planning process which must precede every performance:

> Staging can be described ... as the process in which the strategies are gradually developed and tested, based on what, when, how long, where and how it should appear to the spectators. Staging can therefore ... be seen as a creation strategy. ... This also leads to the conclusion that one absolutely must differentiate between staging and performance. It is only the audience's perception and their reaction to what they have perceived that constitutes a performance.

Therefore, what is planned and defined in the staging process will by no means be repeated exactly the same way every evening.[11]

That staging is essential »anywhere where a performance is to take place«[12] (ibid.), because performances involving multiple actors must be carefully prepared and rehearsed, does not mean, however, that all performances are equally as predetermined by the planning process. It may be precisely the aim of stagings to create moments of indeterminacy, so that »the unplanned, the un-staged, and the unpredictable in the performance can occur during the performance, even if some ... staging will attempt to minimize that experimental space as far as possible«[13].

When this determination is transferred from the theater stage — the aspect Fischer-Lichte is discussing — to music performances, one must bear in mind that the required rehearsals and creation strategies do not necessarily have to extend to the visual sector, as Martin Seel pointed out. Therefore, in the case of a music performance, the term ›staged‹ should only be used »if its performance is linked to visual movement that is relevant to its character as music — as is nearly always the case in popular music, and frequently the case in avant-garde music.«[14] In addition to the stage design, movements, poses, and gestures of the musicians, the lighting, clothing or even costumes, video recordings, props and choreography can be seen and interpreted as meaningful. However, in order to determine when this visual layer is staged, and based on creation strategies, one must take into account that not all visible elements are necessarily a part of a conscious strategy, as is ultimately also the case with the theater stage, which Seel points out in his definition of staging: »Stagings are affected, artificial behavior and occurrences that

11 Original: »Inszenierung lässt sich ... als der Prozess beschreiben, in dem allmählich die Strategien entwickelt und erprobt werden, nach denen was, wann, wie lange, wo und wie vor den Zuschauern in Erscheinung treten soll. Inszenierung lässt sich entsprechend ... als Erzeugungsstrategie bestimmen. ... Daraus folgt auch, dass zwischen Inszenierung und Aufführung unbedingt zu unterscheiden ist. Es sind erst die Wahrnehmung der Zuschauer und deren Reaktion auf das Wahrgenommene, welche die Aufführung entstehen lassen. Das, was im Prozess der Inszenierung geplant und festgelegt ist, wird sich daher keineswegs allabendlich genau gleich wiederholen« (Fischer-Lichte 2005b: 148).

12 Original: »überall da gegeben [ist], wo eine Aufführung stattfinden soll«.

13 Original: »Nicht-Geplantes, Nicht-Inszeniertes, Nicht-Vorhersagbares in der Aufführung ereignen kann, auch wenn manche ... Inszenierung versuchen mag, diese Frei- und Spielräume so weit wie möglich einzuschränken« (Fischer-Lichte 2004: 327).

14 Original: »wenn ihre Aufführung mit einer für ihren Charakter als Musik relevanten szenischen Bewegung verbunden ist—wie es in er populären Musik fast immer, in der Avantgarde-Musik nicht selten der Fall ist« (Seel 2007: 79).

differ as such from merely contingent, merely conventional, or merely functional executions«[15] (ibid.: 71).

In terms of concerts, for example, the layout and the movement radius of the musicians on the stage may be seen as less of a factor in the visual staging concept, and more as being necessary to the *functionality*, as they have to be able to see, hear and communicate with each other. Therefore, instruments, clothing, amplifiers, monitor boxes, etc. can only be partially seen as strategically staged props. Stage behaviors and designs which are so commonplace that they can hardly be seen or interpreted as deliberate staging, or that become conspicuous as such only when consciously abandoned — such as bowing and thanking for applause, the separation of the encore from the main show, typical audience animation gestures, the spotlight on singers or soloists — can be established by *convention*. And the audience can only decide whether a performance was influenced by *coincidence* if it has seen several performances (a fact that is made relative in the age of YouTube).

This variety of interpretive possibilities means that — as with everyday life — it can never be definitively determined whether and to what degree one is dealing with a staged event (cf. ibid.: 81). Conversely, this means that even the actors on the stage cannot be certain as to whether and to what extent the performance is perceived as a staged production. This has two very important consequences: first, the actors have the option of staging in such a way that the creation strategy is not obvious to the audience, that is, that all the actions on stage are perceived as spontaneous and natural. Especially in terms of the authenticity structure, the most effective stagings are certainly those that are not obvious as such. And second: even if the musicians make an effort not to stage anything and behave as spontaneously and naturally as possible on stage, this does not guarantee that the audience does not perceive the activity as a staging. Therefore, even the most precise definition of staging does not help with discerning whether and to what extent a specific case was staged. That remains a matter of interpretation.

When the ideals of authenticity and liveness coincide with strategies of staging in a pop concert, a conflict inevitably arises: the demand for authenticity infers the liveness ideals of spontaneity, uniqueness and immediacy. In contrast, staging generally involves planning instead of spontaneity, reproducibility instead of uniqueness, and a conceptual strategy that stands between the actors and the audience rather than immediacy. Consequently, staging is

15 Original: »Inszenierungen sind ein künstliches, ein artifizielles Verhalten und Geschehen, das sich als ein solches, von bloß kontingenten, bloß konventionellen oder bloß funktionalen Vollzügen unterscheidet.«

often viewed as something negative. It is critically evaluated as audience manipulation, as trickery, and as a visual distraction from music, or, as Fischer-Lichte overstates for purposes of argumentation, as the production of a mere illusion, »of deception, lies and deceit«.[16]

When it comes to the ideals of personal, sociocultural and emotional authenticity in a concert, to the ability to identify with the people on stage, to the feeling of being represented by them and learning something truthful about life from them, one does not want to encounter actors, but instead »real people«, because one does not identify with actors to the same degree. In this respect, musicians would have to avoid all possibilities of staging anything on stage — which, as mentioned before, does not protect against the fact that even this can be interpreted as a statement, or as a strategy. Even understatement is still a statement.

On the other hand, the medium of the stage offers not only the opportunity to present an »illusion«, but also »reality.« Staging does not necessarily involve »feigning,« it also offers the possibility of revealing an actual, true state of feeling, unadorned, slightly filtered or even striking, i.e. »allowing authenticity to appear«[17]. Staging can help—or even be necessary—to demonstrate true existing qualities, to establish a framework on stage in order to present one's best side to the world, in the best light—and to hide the other side in the stage darkness.

The following shows several examples of how musicians deal with this conflict—or challenge—on stage. Which staging strategies can be identified, which markers are used, to simulate or express authenticity—depending on the interpretation?

II. Staging of authenticity

As indicated, the most widespread strategy is to stage in such a way that authenticity effects are created without the staging character being conspicuous, so that the events on stage appear as natural and spontaneous as possible. An excellent example of this is the staging of the Metallica World Tour of 1996/7, documented in the concert film *Cunning Stunts*, for which director Wayne Isham used the recordings of two performances in Fort Worth, Texas.

Since 1983, Metallica concerts have generally begun with a recording of the Ennio Morricone piece »Ecstasy of Gold« from the Western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, which builds dynamically throughout. At the climax, the

16 Original: »von Täuschung, Lug und Trug« (Fischer-Lichte 2005b: 151).
17 Original: »Authentizität zur Erscheinung zu bringen« (Fischer-Lichte 2000: 40).

band would walk unnoticed onto the still dark stage and—generally without any further announcement—start playing a hit, often accompanied by pyrotechnic effects and a light show. Not so on this tour: without any audible or visual announcement and without turning off the house lights, the band members walk through the security pit between the stage and the audience and clap the outstretched hands of their fans. In the concert film, drummer Lars Ulrich drinks from a plastic cup, spits his drink at the fans several times and then passes the cup to the audience. This demonstrates a closeness to the fans and shows that the band has no fear of close contact. Food-sharing can be seen as a symbol of an intimate community, the spitting signifies the band's and the fans' mutual rejection of civic or parental control conventions. Arriving on the stage, the musicians hang their instruments over their shoulder and tap their fists in a friendly manner, apparently to wish each other good luck, which makes it clear that they are not behaving coolly professional, but rather, that they are also anticipating something exciting. Their clothing does not reveal the fact that the musicians are multi-millionaires. Quite the opposite: the bassist wears a tour T-shirt of the band, as does most of the audience; Ulrich in boxer shorts and undershirt, and later bare-chested, portrays an intimacy throughout the entire concert, as if among close friends. This outfit appears to be purely functional and proclaims the anticipated physical exertion. The musicians seem open and unpretentious, do not stand out as stars—and thus convey personal and sociocultural authenticity. Ulrich throws drumsticks at the crowd before the band starts to jam for about 90 seconds. Once again, Ulrich steps away from his drum set in order to have contact with the audience. Front man James Hetfield then starts the song »So What«, a B-side of the British punk band Anti-Nowhere League from 1981, which Metallica had also released only as a single back in 1993—a gesture for the »real« connoisseur, not for the casual fans. Not until well into the piece is the house lighting turned down and the light show begins. The stage is at the center of the hall and is visible from all sides. Even backstage activities can be observed by the audience, which is intended to demonstrate the authenticity of their technical abilities; the band has nothing to hide, there is no synthesizer, no extra musician or playback devices hidden anywhere.

Overall, this opening is characterized by understatement and an effort to appear natural and spontaneous. It is to be understood as a demonstrative rejection of the convention of overwhelming the audience right from the start with a carefully staged surprise, spectacular light effects and a big hit. Instead, there is an attempt to clearly indicate that no distracting show is to be expected, just »the real thing« (which, however, will prove to be inaccurate). Everything is supposed to appear as unstaged as possible — and this

clearly follows a staging strategy, which is to be understood within the context of the commercialization allegations with which the band was repeatedly confronted in the face of great mainstream success and the corresponding stylistic evolution in the 1990s.

Other strategies for demonstrating authenticity can be found in the example of the German punk-now-mainstream band, Die Toten Hosen. In keeping with the old punk tradition, singer Campino does some stage diving at every concert, and sometimes also the bass player—with his instrument. The bath in the crowd suggests that there is a desire for immediate physical contact and communication with the fans. It also creates a moment of spontaneity, as it is unpredictable when, where, and in what condition the audience will release the singer back onto the stage. This is even more pronounced if this activity is preceded by a risky jump from the top of the stage construction, showing that the singer trusts that the audience will catch him safely. Campino is well aware of the symbolic character of stage diving in terms of sociocultural authenticity:

> I think that is exactly what they like about *us*. I mean…they really appreciate it when you don't see yourself as too good for something, right? And we give them this unconditional commitment. What else could it mean, when you throw yourself into the audience from the stage! What else could it be about? It's just a gesture, a helpless gesture to show people: despite this barrier and the pit, somewhere we are on equal footing.[18]

In this sense, the relatively moderate ticket prices of Die Toten Hosen, which are not scaled according to their location quality, can be seen as a gesture of sociocultural authenticity toward the fans.[19]

Mistakes or forgotten lyrics are not ignored at their concerts, but instead deliberately exposed and commentated. For example, the band interrupts the song »Paradies« on 7/3/2009 in Berlin at the beginning of the second verse: »I have to admit that you all know the lyrics better than I do. I think the rest of the audience deserves a proper version! Who knows the second

18 Original: »Ich glaub, das is auch das, was die an uns gut finden. Also... die schätzen das sehr, wenn man sich nich für irgendwas zu schade ist, ja? Und diesen bedingungslosen Einsatz, den liefern wir denen ja auch. Was soll denn das anderes sein, wenn man sich ins Publikum schmeißt von der Bühne! Was soll das sein? Das ist doch nur 'ne Geste, 'ne hilflose Geste, um den Leuten zu zeigen: trotz dieser Barriere und dem Graben sind wir irgendwo auf Augenhöhe mit euch« (in Kablitz-Post 2009 bei 19:00).

19 Die Toten Hosen set a uniform price of about 40 Euros in 2012, while a Herbert Grönemeyer concert cost 60 Euros, and Westernhagen charged 71 to 95 Euros (research at eventim.de and ticketmaster.de on 8/21/2012).

verse? Give it a try, come on stage!«[20] A fan is brought up onto the stage and introduced, and the band starts again, laughing and letting him sing the song. That clearly demonstrates a liveness character, the failure even proves the authenticity of technical ability, and it all appears to be open, sincere and spontaneous. But it isn't: as a short YouTube search revealed, during the tour concerts in Langenselbold, Losheim, Ludwigsburg, etc., there was also an interruption at precisely the same moment with the exact same activity. Nonetheless, this type of staging creates an opportunity for unpredictable interactions and emphasizes that the band and the fans are less interested in a perfect performance than they are in a unique, shared experience. For the same purpose, items thrown on the stage are commentated immediately, songs are played on demand or dedicated to specific members of the audience. Another indication of authenticity is the extreme physical exertion of the musicians: sweat—as with Metallica on bare chests—does not lie; it signalizes that the musicians are not taking it easy and are working hard for their audience with extreme physical effort, instead of just carrying out some compulsory assignment. If necessary, two-hour performances are also endured with a freshly torn cruciate ligament (at Rock am Ring 2000) or with a foot in a cast and crutches—without canceling the jump from the stage into the audience for that reason (at Rock am Ring 2008, see Die Toten Hosen 2008).

As a substantiation of personal authenticity, expressions of enjoyment and fun are conveyed on stage, which the musicians can signalize with gestures and communication among themselves. It seems particularly authentic when the fans are given the impression that the band is playing extra long, regardless of the pay (only this evening!), because they are having so much fun. With his announcements, which are localized autobiographically, Campino attempts to convey that songs which have been played every night for many years still mean something personal to the band. Cover songs are not so much reminiscent of the early days, but rather portray the band as fans and connoisseurs who are willing to pay homage to their idols. In addition, cover versions place the group within a specific tradition. For example, Die Toten Hosen frequently play songs by The Clash and the Ramones, which places them within the punk tradition, or more recently by Hannes Wader, to establish a connection with the sociocritical left-wing songwriter tradition (as with Rock am Ring 2012).

20 Original: »Ich muss zugeben, dass ihr die Texte allemale besser drauf habt als ich. Ich finde, der Rest des Publikums hat eine ordentliche Version verdient! Wer hat die zweite Strophe drauf? Probier's, komm rauf!« (see Die Toten Hosen 2009).

Reduction strategies

As popularity increases, the stages and auditoriums become larger, and the performers must go to greater lengths to performatively establish a liveness character and give the impression of closeness. The large screens that are commonly used for this purpose do succeed at making even the smallest gesture visible in the last row, but the experience threatens to feel more like passively watching television than actually being there live. In order to provide a visual spectacle to the fans in the rear sections of a 60,000-seat stadium, special light configurations, pyrotechnics, inflatable puppets, etc. are used, which are controlled by computer programs and thereby hinder spontaneity in the order of the concert program or during the songs. The stage height requirement and the large distance between the audience and the stage for security reasons severely limit the possibilities of interaction between the performers and the spectators. Since the 1990s, two further concepts for staging liveness and authenticity have been observed, which are intended to counteract this development: on the one hand, the paradoxical MTV Unplugged scenario, which promises a »more authentic« live experience in front of the television than can be provided in a stadium concert (see Auslander 1999: 96-111). The idea is to downsize the stage and the auditorium—still recorded by countless cameras, illuminated by a myriad of spotlights, and using no fewer wires and plugs than any other concert—in order to create closeness and intimacy. In addition to the »more intimate« framework of a television studio, there are three strategies used for simulation with respect to the presentation of authenticity in the unplugged scenario. First, the visual spectacle aspect of the stadium concert can be omitted; sometimes even the light show is »unplugged« if one wishes to interpret the use of candles on stage in this way. Without visual distractions, the band has to impress the audience with their musical abilities alone. Secondly, the supposed omission of electronically processed and amplified instruments should also make the music seem more straightforward, and »more sincere« in terms of emotional authenticity. By allegedly eliminating technical aids, the »true core« is supposed to reveal itself in »handmade« music, and the authenticity of the technical ability can also be better demonstrated. Thirdly, the repertoire of the unplugged concerts is largely made up of quiet ballads, which are supposedly more suitable for highlighting emotional authenticity than loud and fast pieces, especially since there is a belief that emotional expression can be conveyed unobstructed, or more intensely and more genuinely without technical aids.

The second staging concept for enhancing the liveness character of concerts in the age of large-scale stadium events is the B-stage: a much smaller, fully surrounded stage in the middle of the stadium, which the band reaches about two thirds into the concert—by walking a catwalk while shaking hands, to continue the concert for the next three pieces with a reduced light show from there. This stage space reduction is often combined with the unplugged concept, and ballads with acoustic guitars are performed from there (see Coldplay 2009). Alternatively, the B-Stage can also be used to demonstrate that the band has remained true to their roots and has not changed in their core, despite their great success: the first hits or—as if back in the garage—cover versions are played (not infrequently done by the Rolling Stones).

Metallica also used a perfidiously staged version of the B-Stage on the tour described above: at the end of the song »Enter Sandman«, a lighting fixture in the upper stage construction seems to suddenly lose its hold during a pyro effect, swings upside down on a safety rope above the stage, and then crashes. Numerous other explosions occur, apparently unplanned. Security personnel rush onto the stage, the singer has apparently been hit by an object, holds his head and falls to the ground. The band stops playing, the PA hisses and hums chaotically, more lights fall from above, a roadie runs across the stage in flames. First there is an ambulance, fire extinguishers, flashlights, revival attempts, twinkling headlights and the collapse of part of the stage construction, then smoke covers the view. Shortly thereafter, the band members return to the stage and pretend to be surprised (»What the fuck happened?«). Small combo amplifiers are carried on stage seemingly spontaneously, exposed light bulbs lowered from the ceiling provide minimal illumination in place of the destroyed lighting system. After briefly testing the new equipment with a jam, the band plays a cover version and a song from their debut album in this reduced setting—in accordance with the B-Stage convention. In this way they build on their various attempts to portray themselves as a simple garage band despite the millions in revenue (for example, on the B-side of the maxi single *Creeping Death* (1984), titled »Garage Days Revisited«, the EP *The $5.98 E.P: Garage Days Re-Revisited* (1987) and the double CD *Garage Inc.* (1998), all of which contain cover versions only). As revealed in the ›Making-Of‹ of the *Cunning Stunts* DVD, this process was meticulously planned, thoroughly rehearsed, and repeated every night. Still, most viewers in the live situation were convinced the staged accident was real, and local radio stations reported the injuries the next day. At least the extent of the staging remained unclear, as some participants actually were seriously injured on individual evenings.

For those who feel the unplugged staging scenario seems too clichéd, they should refer to National Public Radio, where—as a part of the »Tiny Desk Concerts« series (http://www.npr.org/series/tiny-desk-concerts)—bands are regularly invited to the editorial office to demonstrate their live qualities without a stage, in front of the crew and two cameras, though not unplugged, but without the aid of any kind of stage machinery. There is no room for a drum set there, so (as in the case of the Wilco performance) ordinary desk utensils must also serve as percussion instruments. And even more extreme: for the English series »Black Cab Sessions« (http://www.blackcabsessions.com), musicians are asked to play a song during a taxi ride through London. It's not possible to limit the stage space more than that, which also unfortunately reduces the live audience to the taxi driver and the cameraman. These two formats are also stagings in this sense, because conditions are deliberately being created under which a real feeling rather than a deceptive feigning should be exposed, where the musicians can actually show how much of their appeal remains intact when they only have two cubic meters, a tambourine and an acoustic guitar at their disposal. These performances are published on the Internet and thus serve mostly musicians from the »independent« sector as particularly credible promotional instruments. How many failed takes it took to make the published clip is naturally something the audience never finds out.

Die Toten Hosen have also developed their own version of a reduction strategy. Apart from major tours, even after 15 million albums sold, they occasionally appear— »like they used to« —in the living rooms or party cellars of fans who can apply to host such concerts. The band forgoes their fee on these occasions, plays for food and lodging at the host and pays for the travel themselves. In 2012, for their 30th anniversary on the stage, they undertook a tour with sixteen such performances. For all of these events, several cameras filmed before, during, and after the shows, so that every phase—including images of the musicians just waking up on the floor of an unfamiliar shared apartment with disheveled hair—is documented on the homepage (see Die Toten Hosen 2012). Everyone can convince themselves of the musicians' personal, sociocultural and technical authenticity, and, at the same time, the band can effectively promote the new album in the media—a marketing gimmick that the band carries out »so warmly that it does not stand out in a negative way,«[21] as reported by the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. Even ZDF (Second German Television station) is convinced: »You can feel it at every moment

21 Original: »so herzhaft, dass es nicht negativ auffällt« (Arnu 2012: 9).

that this tour is not a demonstration of their fan loyalty, but still just boys really having fun.«[22]

The staging of authentic inauthenticity

In addition to all of these sometimes more, sometimes less obvious efforts to make the staging of authenticity inconspicuous, there has been a counter-offensive since the early 1970s: an attempt to offer such an obviously staged show that no one would even think of coming here to learn something private or undisguised about the musicians. This postmodern tradition spans broadly to include David Bowie's theatrical Ziggy Stardust tour (see Jooss-Bernau 2010: 240ff.), Roxy Music, which parodied the rock authenticity of its time in 1972 with effusive costumes, a sarcastic stage show, and exaggerated artificiality (see Pattie 2007: 84f., and Roxy Music 1972 and 1973), the Pet Shop Boys, and U2 (Zoo TV or Zooropa and Popmart tours, see Jost 2011), as well as Madonna and Lady Gaga. They all demonstratively emphasized the staging character of their concerts and at the same time rejected the conventional methods of the staging of authenticity.

As an example, I would like to point out the Pet Shop Boys, who were founded in 1981 but did not go on tour until 1989. (»It's kinda macho nowadays to prove you can cut it live. I quite like proving we can't cut it live. We're a pop group, not a rock and roll group,« according to Neil Tennant in Goodwin 1988: 44). When they finally did appear live, they reversed all the previously established markers of authenticity. What is played live at their concerts and what is pre-programmed remains unclear: Chris Lowe apparently plays some of the melodies and chords on his keyboards, but the majority of the backing tracks are played by various MIDI-controlled sequencers (»Call it performance / Call it art / I call it disaster / If the tapes don't start« are the sarcastic lyrics of their song »Electricity«). Improvised moments or spontaneous variations are neither possible nor intended. One will not see emotional gestures, jamming, stage-diving, schmoozing with the audience, or sweaty and bare chests, but instead, there are many synchronized video sequences and elaborate choreographed moves with several dancers. At the start of their *Pandemonium* tour concerts (2009/10), the heads of the musicians were masked in white cubes, and as the concert progressed, they wore dark suits with bowler hats, military winter coats, ski jackets and purple fur caps or king's crowns, while the dancers appeared in Christmas tree or skyscraper costumes. Absolutely

22 Original: »Dass diese Tour keine Beweisshow ihrer Fantreue ist, sondern immer noch echter Jungens-Spaß, das spürt man in jedem Moment« (ZDF Aspekte 2012 at 6:40).

nothing in this carefully staged show attempts to suggest personal, sociocultural, or emotional authenticity, or authenticity of technical ability. Instead of the usual downplaying of the creative division of labor, the band does not even claim the authorship of all of the visual aspects of the show: »Quite honestly, things often just occur, without us really making any contribution«[23].

The term »authentic inauthenticity,« coined by Grossberg (1992: 226), attempts to express that musicians like the Pet Shop Boys can be seen as all the more authentic by their demonstrative rejection of any effort to portray authenticity. Their performance is seen as an ideologically critical refutation of the pervasive staging of authenticity. This even applies to the disallowance of emotional authenticity: »In [Tennant's] flat, regular delivery, especially when this is combined with his generally static posture, the refusal of emotional involvement he conveys is widely perceived as a refusal to ›cheat‹ the listener« (Moore 2002: 214). Therefore, authenticity remains an important criterion in this case as well: the Pet Shop Boys are certainly not considered inauthentic by their fans because they adopt a clear position that they consistently uphold, and because they convey a realistic rather than a romanticized worldview. In the conservative critics' canon, as is, for example, effectively represented by the *Rolling Stone*, the bands with this attitude have not yet truly made it to this day (see Appen/Doehring 2006).

While there is still recognizable criticism of the authenticity ideology among the authentically-inauthentic musicians mentioned above, there are and have always been musicians and musical genres whose fans care little or nothing about emphasizing authenticity and liveness on stage. For example, the Black Eyed Peas (2011) or Kanye West (2012) can perform on stage without any instruments, using Auto-Tune for voice disguising without alienating their audiences. Katy Perry does six costume changes in four minutes during her song »Hot N Cold« as part of the California Dreams tour (see Perry 2011). Her fans by no means criticized the highly choreographed show, in which every movement on the stage is predetermined, as being over-staged and inauthentic: in 2011, Perry was awarded »Best Live Act« at the Teen Choice Awards and MTV Europe Music Awards.

However, if you look at the lists of the most commercially successful tours of 2010 and 2011 as compiled by Billboard and Pollstar, they are dominated by Bon Jovi, AC/DC, U2, Taylor Swift, Metallica and James Taylor & Carol King, musicians who continue to rely on the established markers of authen-

23 Original: »Ehrlich gesagt, entstehen Dinge oft, ohne dass wir selbst wirklich etwas dazu beitragen« (Tennant in Bönisch 2009: 9).

ticity (cf. Reinartz 2010, Smith 2011, Billboard 2010 and 2011). At least for the affluent and presumably somewhat older public there is obviously still an unabated desire for this form of authenticity.

Adele live

Finally, I would like to reinforce the assessment that the general appreciation of authenticity in the 21st century is by no means passé or just a matter of male-dominated rock aesthetics, by taking a look at the staging of Adele, one of the world's most commercially successful musicians in the early 21st century.

On her Adele Live tour (2011), even the stage decoration suggests intimacy and a rejection of conventional hi-tech show staging. The ordinary lamp shades, in whose illumination she performs, the floral arrangements, and the lack of a video screen are intended to evoke a private living room atmosphere, as if the singer had invited her audience to her home. This downplaying of the distance between the star and the audience is a central element of her performance; time and again she strives to create the impression that she is a best friend or »the girl next door«, and not a multimillionaire. In the ›Making-Of‹ of her *Live at the Royal Albert Hall* DVD, on the morning of the concert, that is exactly how she presents herself: down to earth, in the kitchen of her own apartment, where she — utterly unlike a star — makes an instant tea in a bathrobe and curlers in the company of her dachshund. »I wanna make them feel like they *know* me. They *do* know me, but I want 'em to feel like we're just here and that we're just having a cup of tea and a take-away or something like that on a Saturday night,« she explains as the camera sweeps across her bed and bookshelves (0:20-0:30). Later, in the make-up room before the concert, she makes it clear that nothing about her is made up: »It's not a persona because it's completely me but it's like ... I'm a bit more of, like, kind of *to myself* and *shy* in a way, like *normally*. I don't know what possesses me to chat so much *shit* on stage, I really don't« (2:47-3:06). In fact, she does: on stage she behaves so candidly, as if she knew everyone in the audience personally and was talking to them in a pub. She laughs loudly at her own jokes, snorts into the microphone and calls herself a »chatterbox«. She does not try to hide her nervousness at the beginning of the concert, but rather reveals it to the audience:

I'm still shitting myself. I haven't settled down yet. I'm not sure if I'm gonna, actually. I'll probably go home, going home on my own to my empty flat, I'll probably always be buzzing [unintelligible mumbling] and I don't know what to do with myself (Adele: *Live at the Royal Albert Hall*, 25:53).

Adele speaks in broad Cockney about how she admired the Spice Girls in the Royal Albert Hall as a fan and comments on the ambiance with the eyes of an enthusiastic fan: »It's so posh here, isn't it?« (1:07:12). Between songs she drinks honey-milk from a mug with a dachshund motif, waves repeatedly to the audience, outs herself as a »Sex and the City« viewer and chats about her visit to the hairdresser the day before, not without recommending an article she read there in a magazine to all those present. She greets her friends in the audience and tells detailed stories from their shared private life, which they confirm with a nod and a smile, captured by the audience cameras (31:32).

More importantly, however, Adele uses her announcements to pinpoint the origin of her songs in autobiographical experiences. Time and again she talks of the relationship upon which almost all the songs of the current album *21* were based after its painful failure, and asserts that she still thinks of those experiences at every performance: »When I'm singin' my songs I vision the person, I vision my ex who this song is about — like all the other songs — and I vision him and I sing them out to him« (52:19). By doing so, she slips in the fact that she wrote the songs herself, although her actual role is not entirely clear, as the liner notes name various other composers. Completely in line with the McCarthy quote on emotional authenticity (see pp. 6), Adele explains that she only recognizes herself in her songs:

> This song just sort of came out of me and I was really surprised [about], you know, the contents of this song 'cause I never know how I feel, I never let myself know how I feel. I kinda put it to the back of my mind and I only find out what I'm thinking and what I'm feeling in my songs, but I didn't realize I was feeling like this (37:00).

She conveys that her songs move her personally, and not only through her announcements (»Always makes me sad that one, doesn't matter where or when I sing it«, 42:46): for »Someone Like You,« intimacy is portrayed by dimming the lights and having all of the other musicians stay backstage except for the pianist. There is no distracting show, only total concentration on the singing, with many melismas and rubato passages, which she performs with a solemn expression or closed eyes. She deliberately starts several phrases prematurely, lingers on many long notes, phrases each line individually and strives to assume the most intensely emotional expressions as possible with her face and gestures. At the end of the piece, she bursts into tears, overwhelmed by her own song and the standing ovation of the audience, in which the cameras also find tearful faces. Adele has a handkerchief quickly at hand, does not turn away, but immediately reiterates her feelings on the

subject: »That song makes me sad anyway and it takes my breath when you sing it like that back to me ... it's all a bit much« (1:32:32).

As the encore section approaches, she uses this again for a rejection of show conventions and to demonstrate her sincerity:

This next one that I'm gonna do for you is gonna be my last song tonight [booing]. I'm joking! I'm adding some drama to my show! I don't dance, ain't no fire, ain't no greased up men nowhere .... Anyway, now I'm just gonna pop offstage and pretend that I'm not coming back. But I will! I won't be gone very long, I normally just gonna take my shoes off and take a sip of water, then [unintelligible] back on. ... I really don't enjoy encores, by the way. I think unless you're Dylan, or Paul Simon or Madonna or something like that, you should stay on the fucking stage [laughter]. I don't have a catalogue of music yet. When I do, I'll keep you waiting for sure (1:16:00-1:16:40 and 1:23:15).

Less surprisingly, Adele's concerts also have a reduced »unplugged« part including a cover song, for which the musicians gather in a semicircle in the middle of the stage. And even a false start—affirming the liveness and technical authenticity—was deliberately not cut out of the concert film (»That was a shit note, let's start again«, 38:40).

The audience is convinced and inspired by Adele's openness, sincerity and genuineness, as the short fan-statements in the ›Making-Of‹ should clearly demonstrate:

»It touches a part in you, doesn't it? It's honest and it's credible« (2:14).

»Beautiful love songs, right from the heart« (6:54).

»She talks the way she wants to talk, she says the things she wants to say« (6:58).

In addition to the regular concerts, Adele visited numerous radio stations to promote the *21* album (usually with cameras in tow), including NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts, where she sang live with minimal instrumentation to show that she needs no visual staging and no technical equipment, that her voice is »real« and can impress audiences in any situation. By placing this emphasis on the authenticity of her technical ability and the downplayed visual stagings, she sets herself apart from costumed and highly eroticized rivals, as she points out in a *Rolling Stone* interview:

Even if I had a really good figure, I don't think I'd get my tits and ass out for no one. I love seeing Lady Gaga's boobs and bum. I love seeing Katy Perry's

boobs and bum. Love it. But that's not what my music is about. I don't make music for eyes, I make music for ears (in Touré 2011).[24]

Framework

Authenticity is currently being extensively discussed in nearly all fields of the humanities; the spectrum of relevant fields include politics, religion, history, teaching foreign languages, advertising, tourism, food, fashion, pornography, the fine arts, theater, film, reality TV, literature, and, of course, music (in summary: Funk/Krämer 2011, Vannini/Williams 2009, Amrein 2009, Lindholm 2008). Although scientists have been attempting its deconstruction for some time (e.g., Frith 1987, Weinstein 1999), Michael Rössner and Heidemarie Uhl (2012) are observing a »renaissance of authenticity« and Charles Taylor (2007: 473) characterizes our age as the »age of authenticity.«

There can be no doubt that the ubiquitous search for authenticity represents a key desire of our time. This heightened need for the genuine, the down to earth, the immediate, the credible, is often explained with a reference to profound societal, economic and technological processes of change which, with the blurry label of postmodernism, can be more likely characterized as helpless and unfocussed rather than actually enlightening. In conclusion, I would like to point out three theoretical starting points that can stimulate further reflection on the background of the desire for authenticity:

1. Self-fulfillment and personal authenticity have been essential values of Western culture since the Age of Enlightenment and particularly the Age of Romanticism; however, according to Christoph Menke (2005: 309), they experienced a boom as an »ideal of a radically individualized way of life,«[25] starting with the youth and student movements of 1968 and »with its depoliticization into a culture of individualistic hedonism.«[26] However, the desire not to have to conform and to lead a self-determined life can only actually be realized by a very select few. Freelance artists, especially successful musicians today, serve as enviable role models and as an object of projection for the ideal of a non-alienated, »authentic life«—because they do their ut-

24 By the way, this authenticating understatement already revealed itself in the naming of her albums *19* and *21* (which correspond to her age at the time of the recordings) and her tours, which were titled »Adele live« and »An Evening with Adele.« Adele is also her real first name, which in turn portrays her genuineness and openness—in contrast to, say, Lady Gaga.

25 Original: »Ideal einer radikal individualisierten Lebensführung«.

26 Original: »mit deren Entpolitisierung zu einer Kultur des individualistischen Hedonismus«.

most to convey to the music and tabloid press and (auto-)biographical releases that they lead such a life. Although they know better, many do not want to let go of the belief that, despite the predominant logic of capital, it is still possible to lead a self-determining life that rejects the rules of economics (cf. Chiapello 2010: 38f.). The perfidious thing about it: the arts and entertainment industry is happy to promote this belief, because authenticity creates revenue.

2. Music serves the identity-seeking process and social distinction, and shows us and others what kind of people we are (cf. Kotarba 2009). The more music fulfills these sociopsychological functions, the more important the criterion of authenticity becomes for its evaluation. Any person who identifies themselves through their taste in music will thoroughly examine whether the musicians really represent the community values they claim to stand for, and whether their commitment to them is really likely to be worthy of distinction—otherwise such a person may suffer embarrassment and the unsettling questioning of their own position. Music primarily fulfills these functions in a developmental nature during adolescence, but also in subcultures that do not identify with the majority culture due to their ethnicity, sexual orientation or political convictions.

Many sociologists and psychologists concur that working on a stable identity has become more and more of a challenge over the last several decades. »Identity, it seems, is becoming an ongoing topic in everyday life and science, because the traditional social and cultural foundations for stable social positioning and the integration of people are steadily deteriorating,« claim Rolf Eickelpasch and Claudia Rademacher[27].

> The increase in the number of choices and options for shaping one's ›own life‹ is offset by a diminished sense of collective security and sense of belonging. The societal demand to construct one's own biography and one's own identity out of prefabricated fragments and set elements presents an exhausting, delicate and risky undertaking for the individual[28].

27 Original: »Identität, so scheint es, wird in Alltag und Wissenschaft zum Dauerthema, weil die tradierten gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Grundlagen für eine stabile soziale Verortung und Einbindung der Menschen zunehmend wegbrechen« (2004: 5).

28 Original: »Dem Gewinn an Wahlmöglichkeiten und Optionsspielräumen für die Ausgestaltung des ›eigenen Lebens‹ steht ein Verlust kollektiver Sicherheit und Zugehörigkeit gegenüber. Die gesellschaftliche Forderung, sich aus vorgefertigten Fragmenten und Versatzstücken eine eigene Biografie und eine eigene Identität zu konstruieren, stellt für den Einzelnen ein anstrengendes, störungsanfälliges, riskantes Unterfangen dar« (ibid.: 7).

This postmodern identity-crafting can be perceived as liberating and can be celebrated with appropriately selected music. However, those who find it fundamentally unsettling are probably searching for reliable identification options, at least in terms of culture:

> Individuals celebrate authenticity in order to balance the extreme dislocation that characterizes life in the postmodern world, in which traditional concepts of self, community and space have collapsed. This collapse has led to a widespread internalization of doubt and an obsession with distinguishing the real from the fake (Lewin/Williams 2009: 66).

3. Since the introduction of realistic audio-visual recording and transmission media, and especially since the comprehensive expansion of the Internet, our way of relating to the world is increasingly impacted by media and virtualization. The desire for liveness and technical and emotional authenticity is a reaction to this development. It grows in proportion to the rarity with which one can still encounter an immediate experience today. It is significant that specifically television and Internet, the symbols of this development, now hold the greatest potential for authenticity—experiencing something live, being up close, getting a voyeuristic peek behind the scenes. As the number of such processes increases, it not only becomes more difficult, but virtually impossible to find anything »real«. Today, anyone wanting to show that they have something authentic to offer must go to great lengths to stage it for the media, in order to even be noticed.

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