INVESTIGATING AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURE FROM A SELF-APPROPRIATION PERSPECTIVE[1]

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ABSTRACT:
This article investigates the concept of authenticity. It proposes to go beyond the existent literature contributions based on self-authentication to study authenticity in its deep roots through the concept of self-appropriation. In order to make this analysis, we have focalized our attention on the relation between individuals (manager-artists/ consumers) and cultural products. The methodology is based on in-depth interviews with 7 manager-artists and 14 consumers.
Keywords: authenticity, culture, self-authentication, self-appropriation

(1) AUTHENTICITY: SELF-APPROPRIATION BASED ON SELF-AUTHENTICATION PROCESS

Authenticity is a topic that is generating great interest in marketing scholarship. It is considered one of the cornerstones of contemporary marketing (Grayson and Martinec, 2004; Beverland and Farrelly, 2010) and a pivotal attribute of contemporary life (Jacknis, 1990). Individuals intensify their search for authenticity reacting against the dominant postmodernism (Thompson et al., 2006) and unfolding what some philosophers define as new realism (Ferraris, 2012): they look for truth rather than fiction, mix reason with feeling as a basis of their daily behavior and build knowledge combining subjective and objective visions of reality. Authenticity is seen as a new way of approaching individual life in contemporary society. An increasing body of research studies authenticity in consumption processes and its marketplace manifestations combining consumer and company perspectives (Belk and Costa, 1998; Grayson and Schulman, 2000; Beverland, 2005; Kozinets, 2002; Beverland and Farrelly, 2010). Despite this intense attention the concept of authenticity resists universally accepted definition. It can be associated with the notions of genuineness, truth and reality (Thompson et al., 2006, Arnould and Price, 2000; Peterson, 1997), which, from an individual point of view, can assume heterogeneous meanings. Indeed, what is true and genuine for one consumer will not necessarily be so for another. Authenticity is a subjective, constructed interpretation of reality rather than a set of specific, identifiable properties of objects (Beverland, 2006; Thompson et al., 2006), so it does not exist collectively and universally. Consumers can find authenticity even in inauthenticity: more specifically

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authenticity may reside in original and real things but also in "something whose physical manifestation resembles something that is original" (Grayson and Martinec 2004, p.298) and consequently in authentic reproductions. Thus authenticity can be "indexical," if based on a search for originality, and "iconic" if based on a similarity emerging in the consumer's mind between a reality and its recreation. Authenticity is contained in the contrived objects of reality shows; in this case it will be the result of the paradox's negotiation between the individual subjectivity and an unreal reality (Rose and Wood, 2005). In other words, authenticity becomes a reflexive paradox negotiating: consumers blend fantastic elements of television programs with indexical elements connected to their lived experiences creating a form of self-referential "hyperauthenticity". It follows that what makes something authentic is the consumer's self-authentication process; consumers recognize authenticity in products, brands, experiences that are the result of their authenticating acts conceived as "self-referential behaviors that reveal or produce the true self" (Arnould and Price, 2000, p.8). The search for true self fosters the consumer's authentication as the basis for the identification of a personal dimension of authenticity; it implies a tension towards a self-consistency over time (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). The introspective dialogue between individual self and objects has become a key for interpreting authenticity in marketing (Boyle, 2003; Beverland, 2005; Gilmore and Pine, 2007) and organizational studies (Goffee and Jones, 2005; Liedtka, 2008). Applied to consumption experiences, it identifies consumers' personal goals underpinning self-relevant assessments of authenticity and orienting the search for true self in the actual society (Beverland and Farelly, 2010). Dominance, connectivity and morality are the feelings underlying the consumers' purposes in their authentication acts. In particular they find themselves in objects transferring the sense of control over life situations, of evocative and real connection to communities and of virtues corresponding to an ethical vision of life. On reflection, connectivity with an original productive location, expressivity of moral values together with genuineness make advertisements an expression of authentic brands (Beverland et al., 2008). An authentic brand image implies an authentic brand being and thus a real manifestation of an inner personal truth (Postrel, 2003). Like consumers, also brands can activate self-authentication by pursuing their coherence to an authentic core regardless of markets and times. Brand self-authentication is a complex process involving compromises between the re-interpretations of associations that mark the brand image and the brand aura, defined by Brown et al. (2003) as "a powerful sense of authenticity that original works of art exude" (p.21). The aura is the core value of brand and an expressive synthesis of brand authenticity. In organizations, authenticity can be interpreted as synonymous with the strategic intent at the base of business processes (Liedtka, 2008). Since self-authentication fosters a constant search for self, the strategic intent is an inner voice that acts as energy for change and as a way of defining the true self an organization aspires to be.

All the contributions in the literature are focused on the relationships between the true self and objects, between a brand identity and its manifestations on the marketplace; they do not examine the process undertaken by consumers and brands to self-authenticate. In our work we intend to pass from a static to a more dynamic vision of self-authentication. We embrace the concept of self-appropriation, which has its roots in the existentialist philosophy of Sartre (1956) and Heidegger (1962). For both, the essential nature of authenticity is developmental and thus a process of continually becoming that marks human nature and leads to the attainment of true-self. Individuals undertake during their lives paths of self-appropriation ("eigentlich") (Heiddeger, 1962, p. 159) by authenticating in products, experiences and brands. Authentication is seen as a way of appropriating the true-self in a logic of self-consistency. More specifically, authentication acts are instrumental steps in a self-appropriation process. In self-appropriation, objects, experiences and brands are not external to the individual but rather become an integral part of the individual's self as the true- self finds in them its detection. They can be seen in a retrospective prospective, which includes paths the individual follows in the course of self-appropriation. The self-appropriation process implies choices, individual compromises and interior flights. Moreover, it can be articulated according to different life moments; in fact, in his life, the individual can show a tension in achieving different nuances of the true-selves that co-evolve while maintaining an internal coherence over time. This analytical approach opens towards a subjective and also an objective dimension of authenticity (Mancuso, 2009). A product is authentic if it is coherent with the self (subjective dimension) and if is part of a consumer true-self (objective); a brand is authentic if it respects its core brand values and if it becomes part of a consumer's identity; a consumer is authentic if he is coherent with himself and if this coherence is recognized by others. The analysis of authenticity implies a study of these twofold dimensions; it is their convergence that can reveal paradigms of the concept of authenticity. Our analysis will focus on culture where artists are emblematic examples of authenticity producers: their works are authenticating acts of their self-appropriation and their legitimation requires that the audience finds in them its true-self as a step in its self-appropriation. There emerges a convergent self-authentication area, which reveals authenticity's conceptual articulation. Before explaining the design of our research and presenting the preliminary findings, we review literature contributions on the role of authenticity in culture.

(2) INTERPRETING AUTHENTICITY IN CULTURE

In this section, we outline the main features of authenticity linked with culture, as seen in the literature. If the search for authenticity is gaining increasing importance in the contemporary marketing (Brown, Kozinets & Sherry, 2003) of convenience goods, durable goods and services, the same seems to be true also in many aspects of culture consumption. Peterson (2005) asserts that all products of cultural industry, in some way or another, are concerned with claims to authenticity. An authentic work can be seen as genuine and real if it comes from the artists' "soul", whether he be creator or performer. According to McCarthy (2009), authenticity is a particular language of the self, intensely sentimental and reflecting the artist's identity. Thus, our first observation is that authenticity in culture is primarily linked with the artist's expression of him or her self.
Holt (2002) and Fine (2003) point out how creative artists sometimes risk devaluing themselves by appearing as too commercial, i.e. they risk losing their authenticity. For Peterson (2005), authenticity is not equally important in all cultural contexts. For example, in the cases of opera and theatrical performances, the criterion of excellence is not whether an actor/actress is authentic but whether he/she can sublimate his/her own personhood in order to act in a particular role.

In many creative fields (music, painting, cinema, ...), authenticity is directly related with the status of the author of the work (Peterson, 2005). The value of the work of art depends on two elements: firstly, on the intrinsic quality of art, and secondly on whether the artist is untouched by influences from the artistic world (Peterson, 2005). The value of a work of art is determined both by the intrinsic quality of art and by whether the artist is untouched by influences from the artistic world.

It appears that authenticity is closely linked with originality and genuineness, as well as with discrete, unique objects: a painting by Leonardo da Vinci, a sculpture by Rodin, etc. In this perspective, reproductions, copies, imitations cannot be considered as "indexically" authentic (Grayson and Martinec, 2004). For fine arts, experts generally agree upon the appropriate procedures and techniques to be used for testing the authenticity of works. However, there are many cases in which people do not accept the judgments made by experts, e.g. in country music where authentication is made by fans (Peterson, 2005). The reproduction of works may constitute a limit to authenticity: Benjamin (1969) argues that works of art have lost something of their sacred aura in the present industrial era because they can be easily reproduced. On the other hand, we can assume that reproductions of fine art (books, postcards, websites, CDs, etc) can encourage people to discover the originals.
For Jones, Anand and Alvarez (2005), two distinct strategies may be used for claiming authenticity. One is the perpetuation of tradition by copying works as exactly as possible, such as classical symphonies. A second way is to be original and offer a distinctive and personal approach in reinterpreting existing works.

Authenticity in culture does not seem to inhere in an object or performance, but should be understood as a claim made by or for an artist, thing or performance, a claim that can be accepted or rejected (Peterson, 2005). Therefore a key observation is that authenticity in culture must be evaluated not only from the artist's or performer's perspective but also from that of audiences. Jones et al. (2005) identify three dilemmas of how creative voices and authenticity are crafted in cultural industries. The first dilemma is whether authenticity comes from deliberate as opposed to emergent strategies, since it evolves and changes over time. The second is how categories of understanding are managed by artists, before which audiences, and with what ability to transcend categories. For example, the pop star Madonna has reinvented herself every few years in moving from one category of music to another one, remaining authentic for certain audiences, and inauthentic for others. Finally, the third dilemma of authenticity is whether it is primarily a property of the output of an individual or whether it is a social phenomenon.

Our conclusion to this section is that authenticity in culture is a concept, which is linked simultaneously with the artist and the audience, perhaps mediated by the acknowledgement of the media and critics. Taking the example of art and manufacturing in the Swiss watch industry, Jeannerat (2010) develops the concept of "conventions of authenticity" between producers and consumers. He defines authenticity as a result of conventions of specific and legitimate quality concerning the "genuine" and the "fake" within a production-consumption community. However, this concept of authenticity is not static, but moves and evolves over time depending on the conditions of the cultural and sociological environment, e.g. trends. The territorial anchorage (e.g. Italy for opera, England for pop music, Japan for kabuki) can also play an important role in the perception of authenticity.

(3) METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH AIM

We propose to study authenticity as a process of self-appropriation for an artist as well as for a consumer of culture. A cultural product is for the artist an expression of his personality and also a way to self-appropriate; the authenticity (subjective dimension) is thus what an artist pursues with his artistic work. This authenticity exists, however, only if it is legitimated by market: consumers search in cultural products for their true-self (objective dimension), discovering in them their identity and individual values. Through a process of self-appropriation cultural products become the true-self of the artist and of the consumer; they are an integral part of their deep identity. Thus self-appropriation produces dominance and control over objects that identify individuals as constitutive components of their self (Heiddeger, 1962). Leveraging on this concept of dominance, we have decided to investigate the self-appropriation of manager-artists who have a particular artistic experience and of expert consumers who possess a high level of cultural knowledge. These artists and consumers consider art as a part of their life and they have appropriated in art their true-self. We analyze them in a specific moment, aware, however, that their true-self unfolds in a coherent co-evolution along the course of life assuming new nuances and reaching other levels of self-appropriation. Our research remains static even though it is based on a twofold prospective. In accordance with our analytical approach we focus on performing arts (opera and drama) and visual arts (sculpture, paintings in museum) to identify areas of convergence between manager-artists' and consumers' self-appropriation focalizing our attention on what makes them survive both over time and across different generations. The identification of these areas represents a way to exploit culture to define the components of authenticity.

Our research questions are the following: (a) What makes a cultural product a constitutive part of the true-self in manager-artists and consumers? (b) Which are the self-dominant assessments of cultural products converging in manager-artists and consumers? (c) What meaning can authenticity assume through a self-appropriation analysis? The research is based on different steps and methodologies: (I) an analysis of secondary literature contributions concerning authenticity in cultural organizations, see sections (1) and (2) above; (II) in-depth interviews with manager-artists working in cultural organizations; (III) in-depth interviews with consumers who participate in the cultural organizations whose managers have been interviewed. The interviews were based on the methodology of the in-depth interviews (Legard et. al., 2003) and were carried out in Neuchatel (Switzerland) and in Florence (Italy) in February-March 2013. They have involved 7 manager-artists and 14 customers who were selected on a convenience basis due to their educational background and their knowledge of the artistic world (see table 1). We posed a mix of prepared questions and floating prompts; we investigated the personality (personal evolution) of the individuals interviewed; their relationship with their identity and cultural products and their ideas about authenticity. Informants selected personally lived experiences to describe their co-evolution with the artistic world identifying indirectly in what they find themselves and thus what is authentic from their perspective. Only at the end of the interviews were they invited to explain their concept of authenticity. This procedure allowed us to verify the existence of a match condition between the concept of authenticity defined directly and indirectly. Interviews lasted on average one hour, although several lasted considerably longer; they were audio recorded and transcribed. Then we analyzed the transcriptions of the interviews, employing a horizontal content analysis (by themes). This analysis was followed by a cross interpretation of the results (Spiggle, 1994) to come to a discussion in the next sections.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF INFORMANTS INVOLVED IN THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

	ROLE IN THE INTERVIEW	INFORMANTS	PROFESSION		NATIONALITY	AGE	FAMILY STATUS	EDUCATIONAL
1	Manager-artist	Riccardo (M)	Theater (drama) Manager		Italian	46	Single	Postgraduate
2	Manager-artist	Marco (M)	Museum Manager		Italian	55	Married	Postgraduate
3	Manager-artist	Antonio (M)	Museum Manager		Italian	60	Married	Postgraduate
4	Manager-artist	Paolo (M)	Theater (lyric) Manager		Italian	52	Married	Undergraduate
5	Manager-artist	Yves (M)	Opera Manager		Swiss	40+	Married	Postgraduate
6	Manager-artist	Marc (M)	Museum Manager		Swiss	40+	Married	Postgraduate
7	Manager-artist	Robert (M)	Theater (lyric) Manager		Swiss	40+	Single	Graduate
	Role in the interview	Informants	Profession	Attended organization	Nationality	Age	Family Status	Educational
1	Consumer	Giulia (F)	Artist in troupe	Theater (drama)	Italian	35	Single	Undergraduate
2	Consumer	Francesco (M)	Festival Manager	Theater (drama)	Italian	28	Single	Undergraduate
3	Consumer	Francesca (F)	Professor	Theater (drama)	Italian	48	Single	Postgraduate
4	Consumer	Stefania (F)	Theater actor	Theater (lyric)	Italian	55	Married	Undergraduate
5	Consumer	Fulvio (M)	Professor	Museum	Italian	48	Married	Postgraduate
6	Consumer	Carolina (F)	Student	Museum	Italian	21	Single	High School
7	Consumer	Emanuele (M)	PhD Student	Museum	Italian	32	Single	Postgraduate
8	Consumer	Donato (M)	Theater critic	Theater	Italian	36	Single	Postgraduate
9	Consumer	Sara (F)	Student	Theater (lyric)	Italian	22	Single	High School
10	Consumer	Claudia (F)	Student	Theater (lyric)	Italian	20	Single	High School
11	Consumer	Fred (M)	Independent	Theater (lyric)	Swiss	48	Married	Postgraduate
12	Consumer	Claude (M)	Pensioner	Classical music	Swiss	71	Married	Graduate
13	Consumer	René (M)	Director of a music school	Classical music	French	50	Married	Graduate
14	Consumer	Claudine (F)	Specialized employee	Theater (drama)	Swiss	46	Married	Graduate

Legend: M= Male; F = Female

(4) FINDINGS

(4.1) Authenticity through manager-artists' self-appropriation

In this section of our study, we propose to identify what leads an artist to self-appropriate in cultural products. To this end we examine the perspective of seven expert manager-artists interviewed during our empirical research.
(A) *Unrestricted freedom to express oneself*. The artist, according to the managers interviewed, feels free to express himself in what he creates. He lives in time, but what he creates lives regardless of time, crystalized for future generations. "The true artist is one who lives in his time and ahead of his time producing ideas that become eternal" (Antonio). These ideas become significant regardless of media effects. "What is authentic is considered so regardless of the influence of the media" (Paolo). Freedom is to be understood as a source of eternity that is not conditioned by the media. "As a creator, the artist wants to be seen by a large number of people, whether consumers or not" (Robert). An artist recognizes himself in freedom, even if he must sometimes respect certain constraints, namely a financial budget or the image of the institution, if he is a manager or an employee.
(B) *Depth*. The artist dominates himself and expresses himself in the contents rather than in the form of his works. "The artist is like the poet: he expresses contents and thus essences rather than forms" (Antonio). "The artist makes me shudder more for the manifestation of certain concepts rather than for the composition of certain expressions: behind Botticelli's Venus in the Uffizi in Florence there is a concept of beauty" (Antonio). The depth of the artist and thus his search for self in art is an expression of its complexity. "The artist is the one who has within a complex of things and feelings" (Riccardo). Authenticity is creativity based on depth (Paolo) and "the achievement of cultural projects correspond to my deep personality" (Yves).

(C) *Creativity based on instinctive genius*. The artist searches for self-control through his creativity, his instincts and his genius. "Authenticity is the unrepeatable act of the creativity of an artist" (Marco). Authenticity is creativity, instinct and genius. "Certain actions of players are in this sense authentic ... recall Maradona, Rivera .... they were able to create, follow their instincts and perform unpredictable acts" (Antonio). Creativity fosters the curiosity of spectators, listeners or visitors; in this sense that "it is important to open the game" (Marc) and generate a mind opening.

(D) *Projection of himself*. The artist self-appropriates (this happens in the show) identifying himself in the object/person he creates (mediated projection of himself). As director, he can also choose his own role in the casting (Robert). "The theater stages the authentic figure of the man based on a strong process of identification between the artist and the person he wants to represent" (Riccardo). This identification can take place through an ongoing and shared process of self-transformation involving third parties (progressive and collective transformation). "The director, in order to express himself, drives the singer to immerse himself in the identity of the character ... leaves him free to make his own interpretations, and then elaborates them with him, trying to filter out what is good, identifying himself day by day in the character until achieving the interpretative objective... ultimately the singer becomes transformed" (Paolo). Self-appropriation can pass through external desires (the commissioner of the work) or through the materiality and functionality of the work. "The cross of Giotto in Santa Maria Novella presents a humanized Christ ... this Christ reflects certain tendencies of the Dominicans to portray Christ with a certain humanity" (Marco). The authenticity must be maintained in its materiality and functionality: authenticity is not only self-expression, but also the expression of materiality and functionality. "Raphael's painting is authentic if it has been given all the strokes, and if it reflects certain materials; a product in the Museum of Sciences is an expression of a certain functionality typical of the time and of its creator"(Marco).

(E) *Renewal based on the self*. The artist searches in his work for a progressive self-renewal. As a result he may produce different artistic interpretations in different periods, and this is because his being is evolving. This is reflected then in his interpretations. "The score is reinterpreted, you choose the timbre, dynamics, so as to give the piece a different flavor ... the piece is transformed and reflects the inner reading that one is able to give" (Paolo).

(4.2) Authenticity through consumer self-appropriation

We propose now to concentrate our attention on the self-appropriation of fourteen expert consumers of cultural products. We then compare the results with the self-appropriation of the seven manager-artists to identify a convergent area concerning the meaning of authenticity.

(A) *Complexity*. In cultural products, consumers search for depth in the artistic language expressing the complexity of the elements that constitute it. This complexity identifies the real essence that the artist wants to transfer. An authentic product consists more of content than form and is a conceptual synthesis. "What I like in a concert is a series of elements" (Chiara). "This exhibition is an array of fine pictures, but there is an underlying

idea that links concepts in a consistent manner" (Fulvio). "Behind the works of Michelangelo I search for the painful vision of the work based on the relationship between the finite and the infinite ... "(Emanuele).
(B) *Stimuli and unpredictability*. The expert consumer finds himself in a cultural product that is able to transfer unpredictability, stimulation and new ideas. Standardization and predictability are the antithesis of authenticity. "I do not love homologated art devoid of stimuli and new interpretative ideas... We are witnessing the approval of languages. In cinema, for example, there are genre films that are all alike "(Fulvio). "I am attracted by novelty in theatrical performances produced by a combination of the artist's personality and a particular text" (Simona). Predictability is sometimes experienced as a condition of cultural choice. "Due to family constraints, I often decide to go to the cinema or visit a museum at the last minute" (Claudine).

(C) *Independence*. Authentication itself in the cultural product does not pass through the brand and communication media. Authenticity is something profound that exists apart from its being a brand or a media phenomenon. "Institutions invest in cultural brand to be safe ... exhibitions of Caravaggio, or the Impressionists are organized... but we have to identify new, less branded themes" (Fulvio). "I avoid media-intensive exhibits, which today are overabundant" (Stefania). "I find myself in something limpid, clear, transparent, which has a very solid structure and is not the result of the strength of the media. I love free interpretation, without compromise" (Sarah). It is not the commercial dimension of the cultural product that attracts me... I appreciate exhibitions with less impact and more linked to the territory" (Emanuele). Authenticity is extraneous to media cultural products that are fashion inspired. "I don't like trendy musicals heavily advertised in the media, like Mamma Mia: I have the impression that I am manipulated by such a product" (Claude). "My search for culture is free, I don't have the impression that I am oppressed by society" (René).

(D) *Dialogue (interaction).* The expert consumer finds himself in those artistic products in which multiple elements are combined, thus creating a reciprocal participation. He seeks dialogue between art forms and the components within a single art form. "Instead of the usual Impressionist exhibition, I'd like to see an exhibition on a vision of the city in the nineteenth century in which there is a dialogue between painting, photography and even cinema" (Fulvio). "I am curious to see how innovation can be the result of elements that are not necessarily coherent ... that interact together such as a particular artist's personality and the script he has to represent" (Francesca). The dialogue can concern a natural relationship between a territory and its cultural offerings. "The Uffizi contains masterpieces conceived and born in Florence, so the dialogue between them and the city is vital ..." (Emanuele). Authenticity is linked to a territory, even to a *terroir* where artistic dialogues have been rooted over time. "The quattrocento in Florence is for me typically authentic: I always visit this city considering its history and local products. Where there is a good wine, there is a good culture!" (Claude). The dialogue can also assume an introspective dimension and generate a discussion with oneself. "Even if I find a concert boring, I can learn something: I perform with myself a task of interpretation, emotion, that leaves me with something" (René).

(c) *Involvement*. The consumer takes possession of his self in those artistic forms that create emotional involvement. It is not the kind of involvement, positive or negative, that generates authenticity but intensity of the involvement. "In a concert what is important is the direction, the scenic aspect and the conductor ... all three create emotional involvement ... I prefer to leave a concert feeling in pieces rather than to feel nothing" (Sara). The intensity of involvement depends on the active participation of the artist and especially on the naturalness of his participation and his interpretive skills. The greater the naturalness, the more intense the involvement. "I like the passage of emotional communication between actor and spectators.... this requires the use of techniques of acting: if the actor is experienced and masters them, they become imperceptible. The greater the naturalness of the actor, the more the spectator-actor relationship is direct and generates emotions..." (Francesca). "What matters is the interpretation, that is the artist's ability to express himself in what he does" (Sara). The involvement leads consumers to live the cultural experience profoundly. "During my cultural consumption, I am intensively alive, but I don't necessarily express my feelings; later on, I like to speak about them and to share my feelings" (Fred).

(E) *Truth*. Authenticity is like a path in the search for truth through self-seeking. "A true picture is one step in an artist's path in search of himself. It is expression of an author who lives, suffers and makes mistakes along a path of self-discovery" (Fulvio). "The real masterpiece is that in which the self-seeking artist converges" (Emanuele). "I saw the Walkyrie at the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and it was horrible, fake and not real" (Sara). "Mozart, as played today, is authentic; the film Amadeus by Milos Forman is perceived as a fake compared with Mozart but is authentic compared to Forman" (Claude). What makes an artist authentic also in more commercial music is the search by the artist for a true-self. "For me, Carla Bruni, who always sings the same things, is less authentic than

Rod Stewart, who has evolved towards a jazzy style" (Fred). "What is inauthentic is hollow, nonsensical" (Claudine). "Inauthenticity is doing art for art, without the expression of a desired conscience" (René). A person is authentic when his personality is not ensnared in the superstructures of the culture in which he lives, when the relationship between his personality and the way to express it is not squeezed by anything external. "An artist is authentic when he brings himself on the stage to the point of giving himself up, stripping and then re-appropriating the character...it is a process of emptying and turning something inside out"(Francesca).

(5) DISCUSSION: CONVERGENCE BETWEEN MANAGER-ARTIST AND CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES

The comparative analysis (Table 2: sections 1 and 2) highlights elements marking authenticity as self-appropriation from the perspective of artists and consumers. Now we propose to investigate the semantic fields emerging from the convergence of the two different perspectives (Table 2: section 3) in order to identify the constituting elements of this concept of authenticity.

TABLE 2: CONVERGING SEMANTIC FIELDS IN THE AUTHENTICITY AS SELF-APPROPRIATION

Manager-artist perspective (1)	Expert consumer perspective (2)	**Authenticity as self-appropriation: main contents (3)**
Depth	Complexity	**Essence**
Freedom	Independence	**Autonomy**
Creativity	Novelty and unpredictability	**Creative force**
Self-projection	Involvement and dialogue	**Participation**
Renewal	Truth	**A process of change**

Essence. The artist as well as the expert consumer authenticates himself in everything that expresses depth: the concepts become more important than the form, standardization, like approval, is not sought. The artist expresses what he really is, searching for his essence in the depth of concepts. This depth, which marks the artistic language, is an expression of the complexity of the artist who makes conceptual essences unique. Authenticity is essence (reality as it really is) expressed in complexity.

Autonomy. Authenticity is independence, self-expression free of constraints. It is freedom from a brand and media. Authenticity does not necessarily dwell in the brand and it is not a product of media. It is something that emerges in an unconditional way, as an expression of one's self, and precisely for this reason it can bear the characteristics of eternity. What is authentic remains unconditional in time and then can live beyond the present times.
Creative force. The artists and expert consumers of cultural works recognize themselves in the creativity underlying a cultural product. Authenticity is seen as an unrepeatable act resulting from the creativity of an artist who is inspired by his instinct, who expresses his genius. The consumer who dominates the cultural offer is attracted by this creativity as a new stimulus and a synthesis of emerging interpretative ideas of reality. The creative force is the result of an artistic act and expression of the complexity of its creator.

A process of change. Authenticity is a process based on the constant renewal of the individual in search of truth as self-concept. Authenticity is a process composed of steps each of which is characterized by a level of one's self. Therefore it requires the identification of a self-concept and actions for its achievement; such actions are accompanied by choices where you question your *temporal self* to reach your *objective itself*.

(6) CONCLUSION, LIMITS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Our explorative research has studied authenticity going beyond the existent literature contributions based on self-authentication; it has investigated authenticity in its deep roots through the concept of self-appropriation. Authenticity does not only imply the identification in something, but also the domination of that something, which becomes part of self. In order to carry out this analysis, we have focalized our attention on the relation between individuals (manager-artist/consumer) and cultural products; the individuals analyzed exert dominance over cultural products and make culture a significant reason for their existence. In other words they search in culture their self-appropriation. According to the manager-artist perspective, authenticity is born in the depth of the artist, it is an expression of his freedom and creativity, and implies a self-transformation in a continuous process of self-renewal. Self-appropriation is realized in cultural products that express conceptual depth, are creations of the freedom and creativity of the artists and are a step in a path based on the search for self. According to the consumer perspective, authenticity is an independent complexity that produces novelty and participation in a constant search for truth. Consumers recognize themselves in products that are conceptual syntheses, are the result of a free, original artistic mind, and generate immersion as expression of a search for truth pursued by the artist. The two perspectives converge in similar semantic fields marking authenticity as self-appropriation; these fields are essence, autonomy, creative power, participation and a process of change. Depth, free ideology, geniality, immersion and progressive self-transformation to reach a self-objective are what characterize self-appropriation and thus authenticity. This is the principal result of our explorative research. We propose to enlarge our research realizing other qualitative interviews not only in Italy and in Switzerland, but also in other countries marked by their cultural heritage. Besides we would like to deepen our analysis by comparing the convergence with the divergence emerging in the two perspectives investigated. This deeper analysis is, for us, essential to face in a more critical way the relation between self-authentication (as it is studied in literature) and self-appropriation (as it results from our research).

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