

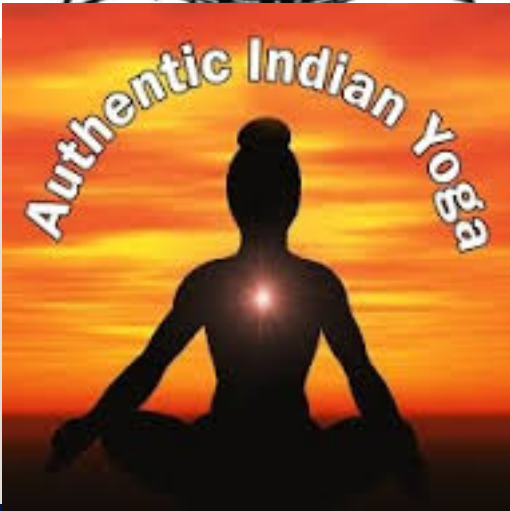
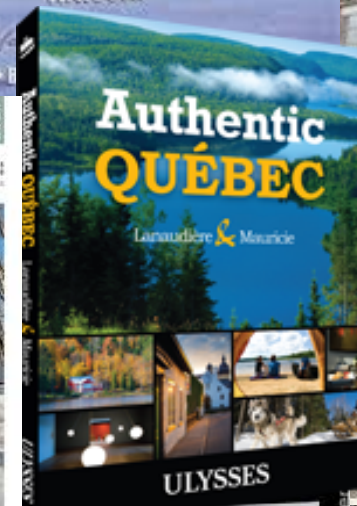


“Trust me, I am Authentic!”

Mediated Authenticity in Election Campaigns

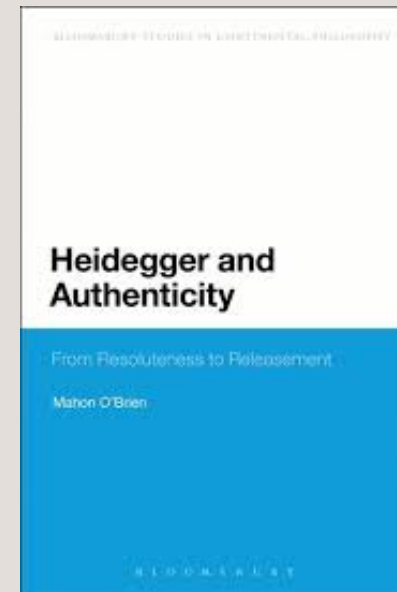
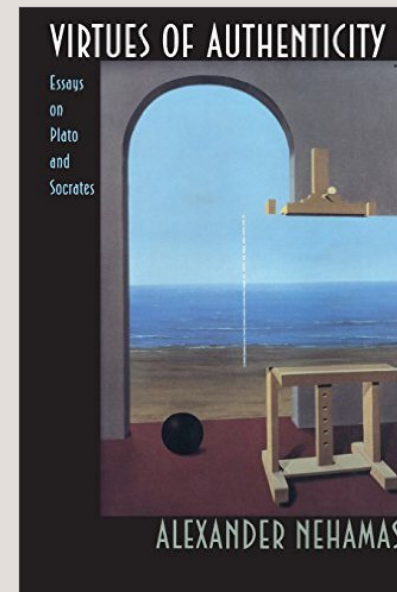
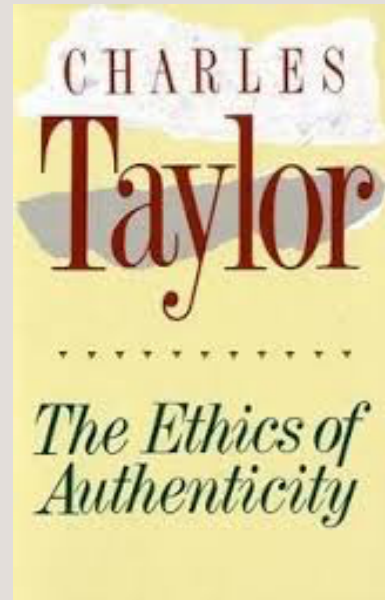
Université Laval
Quebec, April 23 2016

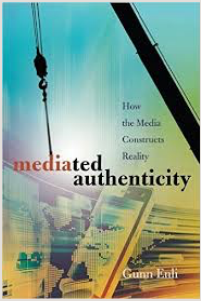
Gunn Enli, Professor
Department of Media and Communication
University of Oslo
@gunnen



Studies of Authenticity

- ✓ Philosophy
- ✓ Psychology
- ✓ Sociology
- ✓ Art history
- ✓ Tourism studies
- ✓ Music studies
- ✓ Anthropology





Mediated Authenticity

“Authenticity in the context of the media is a
communicative process.

The degree of authenticity depends on
symbolic negotiations

between the participants in the communication”.

The paradox:

“although we base most of our knowledge about the world on mediated representations of reality, we are aware that the media are constructed, manipulated, and even faked”

(sources: Boorstin, 1987; Weaver, 1994; Luhnmann 2000; McChesney 2013; Ladd, 2012, Enli 2015).



UGC as the ‘authentic’ content?

- ❑ New media (radio, local tv, internet, blogs and social media) have repeatedly been expected to be more participatory.
- ❑ The promises of ‘new media’ to be more authentic, true, genuine, and less controlled by ‘cynical media owners’.
- ❑ Authenticity puzzles – requires a new type of media literacy to decode, and interpret media content as real/fake.



The Authenticity Contract

- ❖ Compensates for the void between the sender and the receivers.
- ❖ Guarded by codes of ethics, media law, regulators + best practice.
- ❖ Based on an irrationality: ‘suspension of disbelief’, we want to believe.



Authenticity Scandals

- ❖ When the agreement collapses; contract is broken.
- ❖ Miscommunication; deceptions beyond the accepted level.
- ❖ Miscalculated (mass) audiences 'media literacy'



Authenticity as Political Marketing

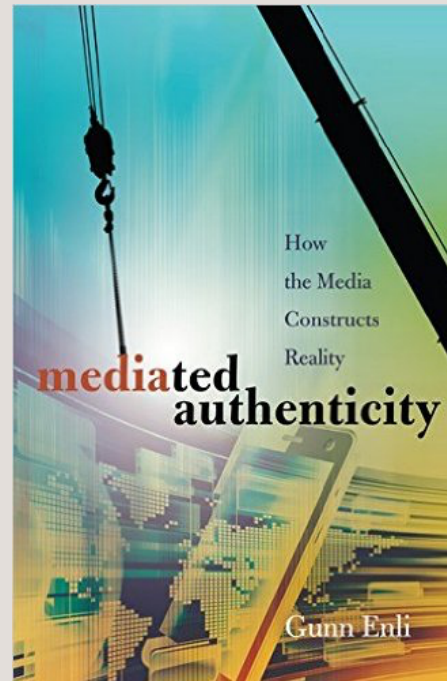
- Marketing is about adding a symbolic value to a product.
- Brands try to behave like people. Candidates try to behave like brands. Both: construct authenticity to seem 'real'.
- Before the latter half of the 20th century, the question of whether a candidate was 'authentic' was rarely raised

(source: Hall Jamieson & Waldman 2004)



7 Strategies to Construct Authenticity

1. Predictability
2. Spontaneity
3. Intimacy
4. Confessions
5. Ordinariness
6. Amateurism
7. Imperfection



I. Predictability

- ❑ Repeating arguments: Bush – ‘Mr. Consistency’
- ❑ Consistent views: Sanders – ‘constant warrior’
- ❑ Breaking the rules: Trump – ‘true to himself’



3. Intimacy



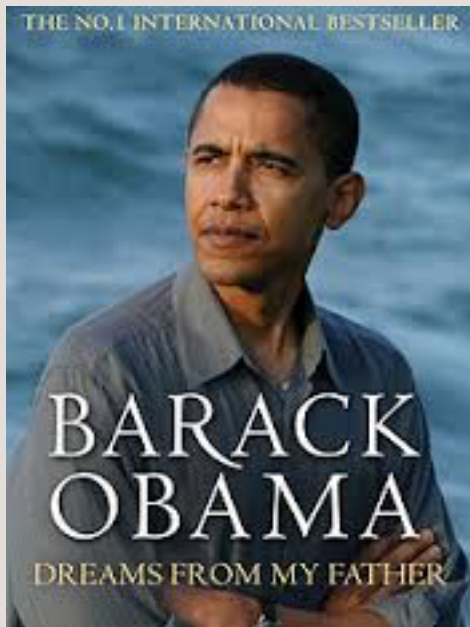
2. Spontaneity

- ❑ Unscripted or unplanned (errors, speaking without teleprompter)
- ❑ Uncontrolled emotions (anger, tears, insults)
- ❑ Personal autonomy and breaking social norms ('a true inner self')



4. Confessions

- ❑ Stories about childhood, poor background (autobiographies)
- ❑ Confessing to rumors can build an image as authentic (secrets)
- ❑ Tell parts of the story, but adjust major parts (half-truths)



5. Ordinariness

- ☐ Everyday people
- ☐ Anti-elitist
- ☐ Average lifestyle



Negotiating Ordinariness



Hillary Clinton ✓
@HillaryClinton

Follow

Pausing backstage in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to capture the moment.

9:29 PM - 31 Jan 2016

1,227 3,712



TankDatingSimulator
@grahamvsworld

Follow

look everyone, they're human just like you and not at all super rich servants of wall street
twitter.com/HillaryClinton...

9:43 PM - 31 Jan 2016

7 6



Atest Zen For 1 mnd siden

I will vote for my dog's dung before the fraudster Hillary gets a vote from me!

Svar • 23

[Skjul svarene](#)



Chuck Ross
@ChuckRossDC

Follow

Looks very natural. twitter.com/HillaryClinton...

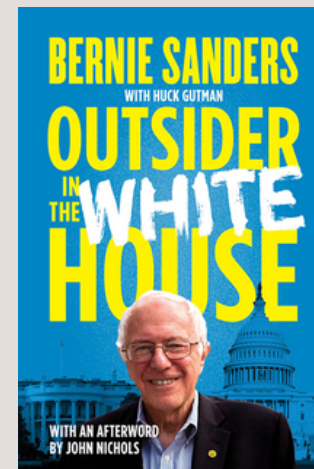
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6. Amateurism



- ☐ Professionals are regarded as cynical and calculated
- ☐ Amateurs are regarded as genuine & 'loving what they do'
- ☐ The outsider image – promises a degree of authenticity



7. Imperfection

- ❑ Display selected weaknesses / imperfections.
- ❑ Makes the politician seem authentic.
- ❑ The imperfections might be real or staged.



Erna Solberg
@erna_solberg



Følger



@estermoe @byskog @mammafugl
@kjetilba selvfølgelig skrive jeg selv, ingen
andre har ansvar for mine skrivefeil:)

↩ Svar ↻ Retweet ★ Favorittmarker *** Mer

Kort tid senere varslet statsministeren at hun måtte avslutte twitterdebatten og prioritere potetskrelling.



Erna Solberg @erna_solberg · 38 min

@kjetilba tar det som en invitt, må nå konsentrere meg om potetskrelling får
gjester om 2 timer.

↩ Svar ↻ Retweet ★ Favorittmarker *** Mer



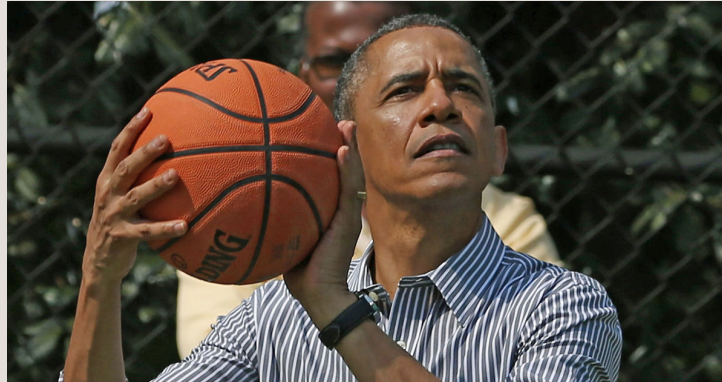
- ❑ The ‘authenticity contract’ is renegotiated with every new media technology
- ❑ Intimacy at a distance: New media technologies represents new opportunities for candidates to create a shared experience and a sense of togetherness.
- ❑ Franklin D Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats: *“I never saw him—but I knew him. Can you have forgotten how, with his voice, he came into our house, the President of these United States, calling us friends...?”* (quoted listener Carl Carmer, April 14, 1945)



Franklin D. Roosevelt having a fireside chat in Washington, D.C, April 28, 1935.

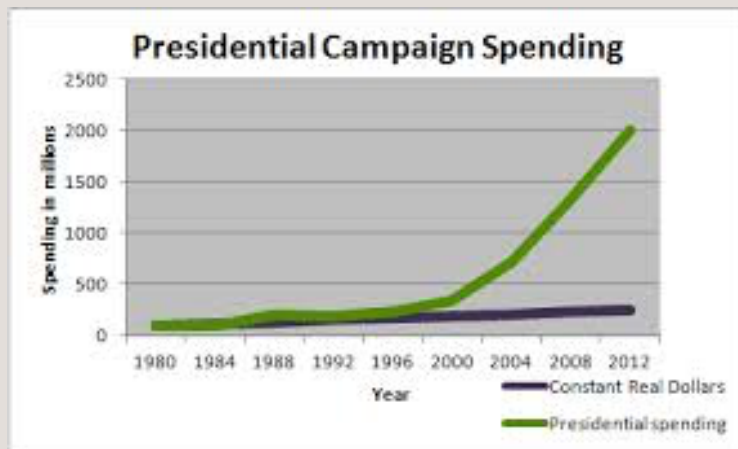


Cultural perspective



Implications for election campaigns

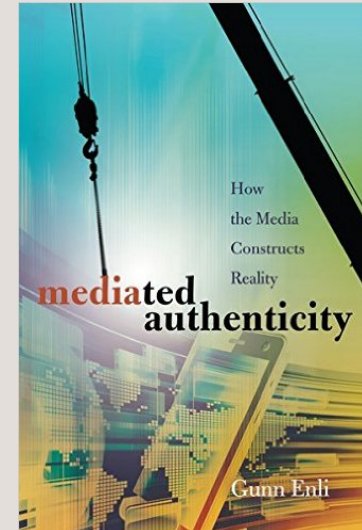
- ❑ Authentic politicians – a contradictory normative ideal.
- ❑ Being ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ – a required qualification.
- ❑ Celebrity coverage – personalized election campaigns.



Thank you!

Professor Gunn Enli,
Department of Media and Communications,
University of Oslo

gunn.enli@media.uio.no
@gunnen



“Sincerity - if you can fake that, you've got it made” (George Burns)