

Chapter 2: Literature Review - Theoretical Framework and Contexts

The first part of this chapter reviews the various concepts and applications of authenticity, while the second section explores the contexts of Mosuo, Bhutan and Harris Tweed textiles.

2.1 Authenticity

Authenticity is widely defined as ‘of undisputed origin and not a copy, genuine, made or done in the traditional or original way, or in a way that faithfully resembles an original; based on facts, accurate or reliable’ (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.[a]). The origin of the word is from the Greek – ‘authentikos’ – meaning ‘principal, genuine’. The concept also denotes authority, ‘dictates from on high, and of “original”, something primordial and innate’ (Lowenthal, 1994).

2.1.1 Genesis of Authenticity

In 14th and 15th Century Europe, religious or secular powers decreed that if an object, for example a relic, emitted mysterious and miraculous powers, it was deemed authentic. Drawing on Christian dogma, these objects commanded respect and obedience with a veneer of legality. Such ‘truths’ were not challenged because of difficulties in travel, lack of access to knowledge and limited information - while religious institutions often determined an object’s fundamental quality. By the 16th Century, as society changed from feudalism to individualism, the idea of an ‘authentic and inauthentic self’ began to emerge, as a person’s identity was no longer tied to their ascribed social status (Trilling, 1972; Lowenthal, 1994).

With people becoming more aware of the ‘self’ together with the wider access to knowledge through the distribution of printed books, the 18th Century saw the notion of authenticity evolving into a concept that was based on analytical evidence and empirical facts. The theme of authenticity and its relation to nature reached a peak during the Romantic movement of the early 19th Century where physical materials were seen as more ‘trustworthy’ than the word; a notion that was further supported through the concomitant development of modern science and technology (Burke, 1985; Duroselle, 1990; Larsen and Marstein, 1994; Lowenthal, 1994; Leung, 2004).

Today, the foundation of the Western concept of authenticity is an amalgamation of such transformations and evolutions. It has been constructed and affected by the social, cultural, religious, philosophical, political and economic contexts and trends of Europe. Thus, historically (from the Western perspective), authenticity has always been linked in the physical manifestation of an object, which is identified through empirical facts and objective knowledge, verifiable through science, linked to legality and with more than a hint of authority.

2.1.2 Is Authenticity Important and Relevant Today?

At present, the concept of authenticity is widely debated with many authors such as Reisinger and Steiner (2006) believing that authenticity is irrelevant and ‘out of fashion’ (Pavesich, 2009;) while others such as Baudrillard (1983) and Eco (1986) do not consider inauthenticity a problem. ‘Hyper realities’ such as Disneyland and Disney World of post-modern societies have no original references, and technological development has reached such sophistication that artificial environments present themselves as more ‘real’ than reality itself. Thus, the principle of authenticity or ‘being true’ and ‘real’ to itself does not apply necessarily (Baudrillard, 1983).

Yet, other writers maintain that authenticity is still important in this day and age as it is part of the human condition; authenticity is a means for us to become ‘our own true selves’ (Golomb, 1995). Currently, the concept of authenticity is applicable to a wide range of subjects such as morality, philosophy, art, tourism, souvenirs, crafts, sociology and conservation of heritage.

2.1.3 Authenticity in Philosophy, Morality and Ethics

The vernacular notion of authenticity often conjures moralistic sentiments and this can be attributed to the philosophy of Existentialism. Existential philosophers such as Soren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905 – 1980), Abraham Maslow (1908 – 1970) and Albert Camus (1913 – 1960) do not believe in pre-determinism. Instead, central to their philosophy is that human beings have the freedom to ‘be’ good or bad. Because of this freedom to choose, when a person chooses to live his or her life reflecting his or her true values, including those affected or inculcated by experiences and social conditions, this person is deemed an authentic person. In this

way, the vernacular concept of authenticity is linked to the realm of morality and ethics, where being 'authentic' can be labelled as 'good' (Parks, 1996).

2.1.4 Authenticity and the Arts

According to Goodman (1976), authenticity matters when there is no notationality. Winget (2005) defines it as 'a system of symbols where each symbol corresponds to one item in the field of reference, and each item corresponds to only one symbol'. Goodman developed a scale for the arts where one end of the scale is pure notation, such as music, while the other end is purely analogue where there is no notation system, which Goodman terms 'autographic', meaning that there is only one instance of a work. In this meaning and application to the visual arts, authenticity is only applicable to autographic works where only the original counts.

The importance of authenticity in art is linked to its aesthetic value. When a forgery is shown besides its original, even if one cannot tell the difference, the aesthetic experience between the two differs. Sagoff (1978) endorses that 'authenticity is a necessary condition of aesthetic value' (p 453).

Begging to differ, Currie (1985) argues that the aesthetic value of a piece of artwork cannot be based on its authenticity, as defined by the historical and contextual nature of the object, or in the way the artist's skills and techniques are embedded in the work. Rather, when all things remain equal, what prevents us from appreciating the aesthetic value of a copy is not its authenticity but something more primordial - our intuition.

- Theories of Authenticity in Art

The understanding of authenticity in art can be approached through two principal theories. The first is known as Objective Authenticity (Trilling, 1972) or 'The Object Being' while the second is referred to as 'The Work Being' (Heidegger, 1971, p 36).

Objective Authenticity /The Object Being

From this viewpoint, authenticity can be identified through the physical characteristics of the object – materials, colour, size, shape, theme, etc. These are defined upon the act of creation and subsequently they are 'closed', as no more

characteristics can be used or added as markers of authenticity after the completion of the object. Sagoff (1978) explains that these technical and contextual characteristics of an artwork are objective because they are independent from those observing it, and can be used in tests for the authenticity of artworks.

Furthermore, this theory maintains that the authenticity of an artwork is fixed at its point of creation. If and when a piece of artwork undergoes change, such as environmental conditions affecting it, its authenticity may be threatened (Sagoff, 1978). Hence, it is important to avoid any changes after its completion in order to preserve the artwork's authenticity (Harbin, 2008).

This approach is mostly applied to objects with very clear and specific indicators of authenticity, used mainly in museum-like contexts by curators and ethnographers to determine the legitimacy of cultural products, artifacts and antiques (Trilling, 1972).

The Work Being

This term implies that a piece of artwork is more than its physical attributes. Authenticity in an art object is not static but is an on-going process related to the dynamic life of the artwork. Authenticity, which starts out at the point of creation, will continue over the lifespan of the work of art itself. Hence, rather than an artwork being a 'closed' artefact, as proposed by Sagoff (1978), such works in Heidegger's view are 'beings' in themselves where 'work' is a process of its existence. Authenticity from this perspective is process-orientated, of inclusion and not exclusion of its context, circumstances and environment, developing over time and space (Harbin, 2008).

- Application of the Concept of Authenticity in the Arts

The extension of the discussion of authenticity and art leads into the topic of forgeries and fake works of art. Quoting Lessing (1999), 'forgery can be defined only in reference to a contrasting phenomenon which must somehow include the motion of genuineness or authenticity'.

Two major theories have been developed to understand authenticity within the subject of forgeries: Nominal Authenticity and Expressive Authenticity.

Nominal Authenticity

As explained by Dutton (2003), Nominal Authenticity is ‘the correct identification of the origins, authorship or provenance of an object’. Hence, the empirical facts relating to the source of the art object are most important including how the artwork came into being which is often a reflection of the artist or creator’s intention.

Expressive Authenticity

The concept of Expressive Authenticity is a further development of Nominal Authenticity. This theory elaborates that a deeper understanding is needed than just the artist or creator’s intention. It is important also to take in the social and historical context of the creation of the object (Dutton, 2003).

Expressive Authenticity can be set within the framework of existential philosophy where the creator creates an object that is not only reflective of his or her true inner intentions, but also responds to, and is critical of, the times and context of their being. Therefore, Expressive Authenticity enables us to gain access into the creator’s mind as well as his or her community’s values at the point of creation (Geertz, 1983; Dutton, 2003).

2.1.5 Authenticity in Tourism

With reference to the philosophical concept of Existentialism, MacCannell (1976) claims that in today’s pressurised world, people experience alienation in the repetitive daily routine of their lives. As a consequence, people from such alienated contemporary societies seek out ‘primitive’ places, developing a ‘touristic consciousness’ (MacCannell, 1976, p3), a desire to find authentic experiences through journeys and holidays. However, this quest for authenticity in cultural tourism is bound to fail because of its commercial and commodification process. Quoting Taylor (2001), ‘...the moment the culture is defined as an object of tourism, or segmented and detached from its indigenous sphere, its aura of authenticity is reduced’ (p15). Olsen (2002) states that authenticity today is out of date while Reisinger and Steiner (2006) call for the total abandonment of this theory as it is ontologically problematic.

Nevertheless, authenticity still plays a significant role in the tourism sector, especially in heritage tourism, (Belhassen and Caton, 2006; Apostolakis, 2003; Chhabra, et al.,

2003; Cohen, 1988[a], [b]). In practical application, authenticity is one of the key themes of the management and marketing of cultural heritage tourism sites, as described by Kola and Zabkar (2010).

- Theories of Authenticity in Tourism

The Tourist Experience

Handler and Saxton (1988) introduce this through defining ‘An authentic experience... is one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a “real” world and their “real” selves’ (p243). What is ‘real’ could be further analysed as ‘authenticity as knowledge’ which Selwyn (1996) terms as ‘cool authenticity’, in contrast with ‘authenticity as feeling’ and ‘hot authenticity’.

Toured Object

The Toured Object is well defined, objective, and structured. Writers like Kolar and Zabkar (2010) have even suggested that authenticity can be measured using an index based on tourists’ perceptions and psychological framework. This has already been tested on Chinese cultural forms such as ancient and historical sites, traditional songs and dance performances (Zhou, et al., 2013).

One of the notable Toured Object approaches was developed by MacCannell (1973), drawing on Goffman’s 1959 theory of front and back stage. This theory states that authenticity in tourism is ‘staged’. The front stage is ‘false reality’ where host meets guest for show and performances, while back stage is a ‘real reality’ for actors and performers (MacCannell, 1974, pp589 – 590).

This concept of authenticity has faced many challenges. One of the main criticisms is that it assumes and establishes authenticity in ‘black and white’ terms (Wang, 1999, p353) with Burner (1989) arguing that such a concept is too simplistic.

Constructive Authenticity

In this approach, authenticity is a historically, socially and culturally constructed notion. Authenticity is emergent rather than static (and hence, also known as ‘emergent authenticity’) (Burner, 1989; Huges, 1995, Cohen, 1988[a]; Olsen, 2002).

According to Olsen (2002), ‘authenticity is no longer seen as a quality of the object but as a cultural value constantly created and reinvented in social process’ (p163), and as a tradition invented (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Wang (1999) writes that this theory has its limitations as it only addresses ‘object-related’ authenticity. It fails to explain how and why authenticity motivates tourists to seek such experiences.

Existential Authenticity

Existential Authenticity as applied to cultural tourism does not consider whether an object is authentic or not, but rather it treats authenticity as tourists’ experiences triggered by tourist objects (Wang, 1999, p359). Hence, it does not matter if a ‘historical’ building is newly reconstructed or an annual ‘traditional’ ritual is staged on a daily basis; the essences of the authentic are the experiences these objects or events evoke in enabling the tourists to feel good about themselves. Thus, authenticity in this case is a feeling/experience, a response of a person/tourist towards an object or event.

Performative Authenticity

From this perspective, authenticity needs to be experienced through performing or ‘doing’ the ritual act itself. It is in the actions where the self (subject), encompasses both the intangible (beliefs, memories) and the tangible (the body’s physical action), and is integrated with the external world (object) – the physical setting, space and environment. Therefore, ‘becoming’ authentic is a dynamic process of action and performance where the subject and object are intertwined (Zhu, 2012).

2.1.6 Authenticity in Souvenirs and Crafts

Scholars examining the phenomenon of the souvenir have cited the importance of authenticity as a point of consideration for tourists in making their purchases (Wick, 2004; Asplet and Cooper, 2000). For example, tourists are more likely to purchase products with a traditional and cultural meaning and which are made by the local community. Fine (2003) explains that, ‘the desire for authenticity now occupies a central position in contemporary culture.... we search for the real, the genuine’. Felker, et al., (2014) found that makers’ experience of existential authenticity has a role to play in consumer’s choices. Significantly, this sense of authenticity is enhanced when the design of the product is explained to the buyer (Asplet and

Cooper, 2000; Notar, 2006). Carroll and Wheaton (2008) maintain, from the consumer's perspective, that labeling a craft object as authentic imbues it with a deeper meaning during the buying transaction.

Echoing the concept of Existential Authenticity, Honer (1992), Swanson and Timothy (2012) propose that inherent authenticity is not as important as the consumer/tourist developing a personal relationship with the object; the produce gains authenticity through this personal identification or relationship. Expanding further on this theme, Healy (1994), and Carroll and Wheaton (2008) note that authenticity is not necessarily 'real' and does not mean total faithfulness. Rather, it is a belief or a perception that is considered the 'real thing'. From this perspective, authenticity is a dynamic process, constructed by both parties – the maker/seller and the consumer/tourist (Cohen, 1988[a]). Furthermore, it is an active and ever-changing concept through time and space (Maruyama, et al., 2008).

Hyde (2006) proposes that authenticity in the craft domain is a paradox. This is because through foreign consumerism, the context and the nature of the craft itself changes. The craft is removed from its original context, being made with the foreign consumer in mind. Often, such distancing is further exacerbated with middlemen determining which aspect of the product is to determine authenticity (p19).

Beyond commercialisation, authenticity in crafts is also connected to politics and its dynamics. Wherry (2006) asserts that the judgment of authenticity is a social act by those in power who decide on what is to be authentic or inauthentic in craft works, thereby conferring (or withholding) the status of authenticity on them. However, Wherry also found that artisans themselves can be as empowered in the identification of what is authentic in their own products and confer the status of authenticity on them. Through self-empowerment, they are able to free themselves from the clutches of globalization and give meaning to their products.

Artisans articulating a sense of identity and asserting their concept of authenticity is important, as we learn from Cohodas (1999). Such self-definition, naming and construction of authenticity is termed 'Reverse Orientalism', a phrase borrowed from Abu-Lugbod (1991). From an industry perspective, the maker's voice in articulating

authenticity is most crucial when formulating policies for conserving, protecting and promoting indigenous products. If the makers' views are not included, such programmes will alienate the artisan and may even be counter productive in disempowering these communities (Maruyama, et al., 2008). Unfortunately, according to Felker, et al., (2014), there are relatively few studies conducted on how makers themselves conceptualise authenticity (p94).

Both Wherry (2006) and Kettler (n.d., 2007) approach the question of authenticity from a psychological perspective, believing authenticity is associated in both the making of the object and the object itself. Craft is a vehicle to enable both the maker and the viewer to experience authenticity, assuming that this engagement is critical and the observer is sensitive to these multiplicities of engagement channels. As a result, an authentic craft object will offer the observer different types of stimulation both cognitive as well as sensual.

Beyond the physical making of the craft itself, Picton (1995), Jones, et al., (2005) and Cohen (2007) who maintain that authenticity is intrinsically linked to creativity, innovation and development. Hence, there is a divide between 'creating' and 'making' craft as there exist a deeper relationship between the creator and the work than the maker and the product.

Littrell, et al., (1993) described some characteristics of inauthentic souvenir products, for example, uniformity as in mass-manufactured goods, which are available at every shop in the resort. With specific reference to hand-woven textiles, Carroll and Wheaton (2008) state that variations and imperfections in such textiles makes it authentic. Nortá (2006) begs to differ contending that instead of 'placing commodification within a process that authenticates culture, we should place authentication within the larger global process of commodification' (2006, p79). Building on this concept, when authentic crafts are framed within the global market, authenticity can be recognised through differentiation of production, the method used for exchange/trade, the relationship between the artisan and the craft, and the craft object with the end user (Wherry, 2006).

Inevitably, authenticity in craft is inter-twined with its commercial value (Maruyama, 2008). As explained by Wherry (2006), those crafts that match the buyers' idea of 'authentic' will be preserved regardless of what it means to the artisans. Thus, citing Graburn (1976), authentic cultural forms have now become the 'Arts of Accommodation' adapting to whatever that is commercial and profitable. Wherry observes that artisans can become victims of their own success when their 'authentic' crafts become 'inauthentic' after becoming too commercially successful.

Related to this lead on commodification, Benjamin (1936) proposed that the difference between singular and mechanical reproduction of works of art is the loss of 'aura', explaining the term as 'genuineness' 'singularity' or 'the here and now of the work of art'. Hence, as crafts are hand-made and each product is singular in nature with no two objects being the same, it is this quality – aura - that renders crafts as authentic.

However, Benjamin's concept of aura is challenged when applied to non-Western concepts of art and crafts. For example, in some craft traditions, it is the production of multiple copies and not singular pieces that gives craft objects their aura. These are particularly true if the artwork or craft embeds a strong notation system in which anything that deviates too far from the accepted canons of a particular ethnic style is judged as inauthentic (Steiner, 1999, Cant 2012).

The UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicraft programme defines authenticity as 'expression of cultural identity and traditional aesthetic values'. It continues by noting that they can be perceived and demonstrated through 'well-achieved application of aesthetic and cultural expression or traditional crafting techniques' (UNESCO Bangkok, n.d.). Supporting this perspective are Wherry (2006) and Felker, et al., (2014) who note that in order to produce authentic craft objects, artisans usually use pre-modern equipment and techniques, engage in the collaborative work arrangements and replicate traditional forms and design. Reinforcing this view, Postrel, (2003) defines authenticity as the traditional concept of a singular authenticity, characterized by purity, bounded by tradition, marking a particular time and place. Mauss (1990) and Littrell, et al. (1993) state that cultural and historical integrity are important signifiers of authenticity.

Picton (1995) however argues that it is a mistake to equate the traditional with the authentic. This is because 'traditional' signifies a practice of the past and is essentially unchanging which is not necessarily true in the case of authentic artefacts. Furthermore, Gassier (1995), Cohodas (1999), Grunewald, (2002), Maruyama, et al., (2008) and Moreno and Littrell (2001) believe that innovations in traditional crafts do not necessarily jeopardize the authenticity of the object or endanger the producer's cultural traditions. Rather, changes are pragmatic and necessary, responding to the macro changes of the situation and demands of the product. Hence, according to Graburn (1976), Ettawageshik (1999) and Neissen (1999), any modification of techniques and innovation of the product is not considered to be an adulteration of the genuine, authentic, true form. Dubin (2001) and Hoerig (2003) voice that 'pure' art without the influences and effects of the market and economic forces are the fantasy of white men.

This contention that authenticity of a craft is linked to a geographical site is supported by Notar (2006), Love and Sheldon (1998) and Revilla and Dodd (2003). Harkin (1995) and Jones, et al., (2006) found that when crafts are created and produced within its own environment, authenticity is enhanced. Hence, authentic souvenirs are those that reflect the geography and the culture, and are made and sold in the place which they represent.

Beyond geography of manufacture, Wick (2004) associates authenticity with the individuals who make them - and hence to having the product made by the 'producer's own hands' (Wick, 2004; Kettler, 2007; Falls and Smith, 2011). Littrell, et al., (1993) elaborate that authenticity is further enhanced when the purchaser watches the artisan at work, while the quality of product reflects the maker's skill.

Other elements of authenticity of crafts include design, aesthetic, function and cost (Littrell, et al., 1993; Revilla and Dodd, 2003).

Summarising, authentic crafts appear to have to be made by the people, from the land of the people and for the people (Lindholm, 2008) while Cohodas' study (1999) suggests that crafts could be employed as a mirror, reflecting the nature of society.

There exist varying degrees of authenticity in crafts and souvenirs. Products with high levels of authenticity seem to be characterized by the clear reflection of the destination they represent and are often ‘one-of-a-kind’ (Wick, 2004), while mass produced souvenirs may not even provide the impetus for the buyer to recall where the product is made or bought (Stoffle and Evans, 1990; Macintosh and Goeldnber, 1995; Love and Sheldon, 1998; Revilla and Dodd, 2003). According to Cohen (1979), different levels of authenticity are related to the different types of buyers. Shen (2011) suggests that there are two major groups: the ‘Serious Tourist’ will seek a high level of authenticity of souvenir products while low level of authenticity souvenir products cater to ‘Pleasure Tourists’.

- Theories on Authenticity of Crafts and Souvenirs

Two distinct theories of authenticity are proposed by Love and Sheldon (1998) as they apply to the realm of crafts and souvenirs. They are:

Conspicuous Authenticity

Conspicuous Authenticity souvenirs are those that originate from the place where the produce is made, reflecting clear characteristics of the place (Love and Sheldon, 1998). The markers of authenticity are manifested in the physical construct including colour, materials, design, motifs, etc. with a clear notationality system. Examples include religious icon crafts where new pieces need to be copied as closely as possible to classical works. Jones, et al., (2005) explains that authenticity of a newly crafted object can be claimed if it reflects and perpetuates traditional forms.

Idiosyncratic Authenticity / Type Authenticity

Idiosyncratic Authenticity is a representation of the place (from which it was created or purchased) and is more conceptualized and abstract. The marker of authenticity is hidden within the product, often manifesting in the meaning of the place and relates personally and subjectively to the purchaser. Baugh (1988) calls it ‘artistic authenticity’, being an idealized representation (Grazian, 2003).

- Evaluation of Authenticity of Crafts

Authenticity in crafts are commonly evaluated by the following methods:

Conservative Conception

Authenticity is evaluated by examining the resemblance between the newly produced craft and its traditional forms (Cohen, 1988[b]; Cohen, 1993). This method is subjective as it varies according to the observer and members need to seek consensus (Douglas, 1986; DiMaggio, 1987; Carroll and Wheaton, 2008). Disagreement is mostly focused on the criteria used and their application to the specific object.

Liberal Conception

According to Cohen (1988[b]; 1993), this technique is focused on the production process, skills, technics and tools used to make the craft rather than its external physical form and appearance. However, Carroll and Wheaton (2008) and Jones, et al., (2005) believe that an object is authentic only when it truly expresses the maker's values, beliefs and creative voice/self-expression, and reflect the maker's personality.

- Validation of Authenticity in Crafts and Souvenirs

Wick (2004) states that there are various methods of verification of authenticity for souvenir craft products such as signing and dating of the product by the maker. Other forms of validation include explanatory notes and labels (Halewood and Hannam, 2001; Chang, Wall and Cheng, 2012). Lindholm's (2007) opinion is that photography is one of the strongest medium to carry the message of authenticity. In Gowlland's view (2008), he finds that the best vehicle of carrying the message of authenticity is when both the customer and artisan interact.

Beyond the maker's validation, the formal legalisation and protection of artisans' work can be executed through 2 major channels. The first channel is the establishment of a Seal of Authenticity/Origin by individual bodies (such as associations or governments). Another channel is through the various protection regimes established, for example, by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). WIPO has developed a wide range of programmes to safeguard the reputation, external appearance or know-how of crafts, depending on the applicability of each type of craft.

However, Cant's study (2012) reveals that such manifestation is much too simplistic. Rather, the actual purpose for such a seal underlines a complex and convoluted

intersection whereby the concept of authenticity, authorship and the 'aura' of crafts converge.

2.1.7 Authenticity and Sociology

According to Trilling (1972) the concept of authenticity can be extended from individuals to communities through the collective identification known as 'authentic culture'. Cohen (1979; 2007) has identified 'authentic culture' as customary practice and a continuous flow of life without interruptions or intrusion. Thus, it is an inter-generational binding element of a group and becomes 'real' when members of the group vocalise and practice it. Vannini and Williams (2009) found that the concept of authenticity is often linked to myths, traditions and spirituality but the observations and practices of these are not dogmatic. Rather, they are constantly renewed through intergenerational dialogues and intercultural exchanges. They also maintained that as culture changes, what constitutes authenticity for a group of people will also change. In many ways, the ideological representation of authenticity is more important than the attribution itself Grünewald (2005/6). Therefore, authenticity, as a social experience, is fluid rather than one that is written in stone. However, once it is constructed, it needs to be verbalised and practiced in order to be validated.

The sharing of such an 'authentic culture' by a defined group of people is an ideal that is highly valued and sought after as an evolutionary process of 'becoming' (Vannini and Williams, 2009, p3). It could be argued that authenticity as a social phenomenon could be viewed as a group ideology, a form of social control and marker of status; the key to membership of a particular group is the adoption of the ideology of the group and observation of its codes of behavior. According to Grana (1989), the baptism of authenticity gives a person more credibility as a representative of a group. However, according to Gates (1991), this type of membership through authenticity is limiting while Paterson (2005) believes that group identity based on authenticity is 'elastic' (p1087).

Because of the openness of social and cultural authenticity, it is necessary to examine the source of authority, power and the right to authenticate (Burner, 1989; Appadurai, 1986; Burner, 1991; Taylor, 2001). Burner (1991) supports the view that authenticity is dependent on those who use the expression and thus, the community has the right

of determination of authenticity. However, Paterson (2005) proposes a more sophisticated methodology whereby those who are most visible in the creation of collective memory such as historians, archivists, teachers, documentary makers, etc., are deemed as the most credible people to be involved in authentication. Moreover, membership to this group is also not closed but may change over time (p1092).

2.1.8 Authenticity in Conservation

- Tangible Heritage

The genesis of modern conservation of historic monuments is to be found in Europe during the 18th and 19th Centuries. During this period, the focus was on materials with the French and English adopting opposing views (Leung, 2004). For example, the French was primarily interested in ‘Stylistic Restoration’ which led to liberal reconstructions where existing materials were often discarded and substituted with newer ones while the English strongly responded with the anti-restoration movement where monuments were encouraged to be left as it was (Leung, 2004). A cohesive global conservation movement was not initiated until 1964 - with the formation of The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites. According to Leung (2004), during these formative years, the issue of authenticity of historical monuments was not an important consideration as conservation was based upon the European-Latin concept ‘unity of human values’, focusing on the restoration of post-war Europe.

The word ‘authenticity’ was first used at the World Heritage Committee in 1977 to formulate the criteria of assessing cultural property. In 1994, the concept of authenticity was explained in the Operation Guidelines as a set of measurement criteria: testing of authenticity in terms of design, materials, workmanship or setting (World Heritage Committee, 1994). However in practice, the test of authenticity was not universally applicable to all sites such as historical gardens (because plants are living organisms that are constantly renewing themselves).

The views of non-occidental cultures need to be considered, as these communities see architectures as ‘living’ entities that warrant re-consideration. Peleggi (2002) explains that the non-occidentals’ view of preservation, conservation and protection of cultural objects is to actively restore rather than execute faithful conservation. Furthermore,

many conservationists from these communities find difficulties in comprehending the essence and application of authenticity (Larsen and Marstein, 1994).

In 1994, the World Heritage Committee affirmed the changing conception of authenticity towards a more flexible and global approach. At Nara, Japan in 1994, a conference was held to re-define authenticity by linking its definition and application to the cultural contexts of communities. This view is reflected in the Nara Document on Authenticity, an international declaration that marks a watershed in the institutional debate on authenticity. In the document, Article 11, xxiii, states that:

‘All judgments about values attributed to heritage as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgments of value and authenticity on fixed criteria. On the contrary the respect due to all cultures, requires that cultural heritage must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which it belongs’ (The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994)

- Intangible Heritage

Lui (n,d,) identifies ‘fundamental authenticity’ as the main principle when considering the protection of intangible heritage. This term refers to the unique characteristics and the essential criteria to assess whether or not this matter has evolved into another totally different entity. The basic elements consisting of the fundamental authenticity are:

- Fundamental characteristics
- Fundamental structure
- Fundamental functions
- Fundamental morphology
- The evaluation of individuals, communities and ethnic groups as the owners.

While ‘fundamental authenticity’ recognizes that cultures change and transform, such changes are strictly maintained within the stated cultural boundaries, ensuring that ‘sameness’ is retained. Thus, this concept ensures consistency of cultural entities and continuous legitimate efforts are carried through transformations without jeopardizing the fundamental authenticity of the cultural entity.

Grünewald's (2005/2006) writes that authenticity does not depend on time or history but rather on how the experience is understood by those experiencing it. Hence, the importance of understanding another perspective of authenticity is to relativize the academic or Western authority in the authentication of such traditions.

2.1.9 Occidental and Non-Occidental Views of Authenticity

A divide exists between the perceptions and understanding of authenticity in occidental and non-occidental cultures. Occidental Cultures are those that are of Western, Central and Southern European heritage, and look back to Greco-Roman and Christian references. Non-Occidental Cultures include Native American, African, Arabian, Indian, Tropical Asian, Far Oriental, Australian Aboriginal and other peripheral European cultures such as those of a Nordic or Celtic past (Campbell, 1972).

The occidental perspective on authenticity has been associated with the concept of 'imperialistic nostalgia' (Rosaldo, 1989), the search for a nostalgia (Grünewald, 2005 – 2006) of the 'Primitive Other', articulated in opposition to modernity (Cole, 2007). In a similar vein, Taylor and Johnson (1993), and Burner (1994) make the link of a Western meaning of authenticity to historical verisimilitude while Burke (1985), Duroselle (1990), Burner (1994), Larsen and Marstein (1994), and Leung (2004) believe that Western approaches to authenticity stem from its historical and philosophical roots as described previously in Section 2.1.1.

However, according to Fine (2003) this desire for authenticity is not restricted to the West; rather, it is a condition of contemporary society. Latour (1993) refers to Existential philosophy with Existential Authenticity (Wang, 1999) as the course for modern man seeking authenticity. For the Western world, their First World cultures are already accepted as 'modern and contemporary' (Cheng, 2004, p3).

Non-occidental cultures offer a different perspective to authenticity. Both Leung (2004) and Notar (2006) have stated that in some cultures, there are no exact expressions of the word, 'authenticity'. At best, formulations such as 'genuineness' 'reliability', 'credibility' and 'truthfulness' (Leung, 2004), 'knowing' and

‘discernment’ (Larson and Marstein, 1994; Notar, 2006) are used in place of authenticity.

When discussing authenticity and authority, the Chinese refer to nature, traditions or the concept of righteousness rather than legal documents to settle doubts on the subject. In this view, authenticity and legality are not linked in Chinese culture, as pointed out by Leung (2004). Also, Chinese culture does not necessarily equate ‘original’ with ‘authentic’. Rather, all copied works are considered authentic as long as the copying is executed in the similar ‘spirit’ and ‘style’. Hence, fidelity in spirit, style, design and techniques are markers of authenticity rather than particular physical attributes (Leung, 2004).

The search for authenticity also differs between Occidental and Non-Occidental cultures. In Eastern philosophy, the search for truth and authenticity is more often a collective process within the community rather than the isolated, individualised process adopted in Occidental cultures. Hence, truth is attained through more experiential means and derived from the cultural and religious context; a ‘lived truth’ is neither separate nor disconnected from the context and community (Kreiglestein, 2008).

Another marked difference is the notion of authentic and notationality systems. In Occidental cultures authenticity is only applicable to autographic objectives with no clear notationality system. However, in Non-Occidental cultures, authenticity need not be linked to singularity and indeed, it is the notationality systems that enable multiple copies to be reproduced while still rendering the product as authentic (Steiner, 1999; Cant, 2012; UNESCO Bangkok, n.d.).

As a means to embrace and bridge such a diverse range of meanings of authenticity, global organizations such as United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Heritage Committee have developed a more inclusive concept. This is expressed in the Nara Document of Authenticity (1994), within which considerations of authenticity include aspects as diverse as:

- Form, Design

- Material, Substances
- Function, Use
- Context, Setting, Spirit
- Techniques, Traditions, Process.

To date, this document is the most comprehensive statement on authenticity, covering pan-cultural views on the subject. Authenticity is thereby explicitly linked to individual communities' interpretation of 'credibility' and 'truthfulness', shaking off its historical Euro-Latin centred framework and thereby acknowledging cultural relativism (Larsen, 1995).

Finally, it must be noted that all communities have the right to express their own culture as seen in The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression (2005). Hence, the ways in which authenticity is expressed by the owners of the culture and authors of the expression (in goods and services) must be protected and promoted with the principle of equal dignity and respect to all cultures. It is in this spirit that this research aims to uncover the unheard voices of weavers in understanding the markers of authenticity of their own textiles so as to carve a space for them to express, develop and protect their work.