

The Authentic Moment

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Question

In 'Tribute Bands and the Paradox of Authenticity', Georgina Gregory argues that "Notions of what is and what is not 'authentic' are not at all clear cut and are always dependent on the dominance of particular discourses." Apply this idea to a piece of popular Music.

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Introduction

The first music video by the contemporary American singer and songwriter Lana Del Rey I watched was 'Blue Jeans', captivating me totally from the second she started to sing. I was so certain, it is a cover of a song I already know. Surprisingly it is not. The same happened when I saw a recorded live performance of 'Without you' - again I was sure to know this song. Concerning popular music I never experienced this strong catchy tune character before, without the urge to turn it off. Rather more, I nearly felt to be addicted to watch these music videos again and again. As I read many confirming comments about that as for me dubious and interesting phenomenon on youtube.com, but also on other websites [kulturblog.com, 2012] with on going arguments about Lana Del Rey's fascination, I started to wonder: What is it?

Examination

Referring to her personal style but also the songs themselves, an elective drawing on characteristic elements and patterns of successful icons from the past is clearly recognisable and is already confirmed by interviews [Huber, 2012]. Playing with nostalgic yearnings for ideals, and for extreme emotional highs and depths, a strong symbolic textual and pictorial language is used within an expanded or flexible musical style, so that there occurs a huge variety or as one could say, something for every aesthetically aware seeker. As the special combination of proved ingredients works very well, the songs seem to be both, popular, and very individual or unique, holding a high recall value, at the same time.

Bearing the unclear influence and stake of a production company in mind, as the popular musician can have the function of a medium to send out messages to a receptive made public, here I want to direct the attention also to the fact, that being popular can be accompanied with selling the identity to the production company, adapting it to anticipated demands, and therefore, with loosing the own authenticity. After the break through, many musicians also loose their plot or even break down during the attempt and struggle of gaining back the lost integrity, while some of them try to play along, serving as a projection surface for their fans, and being an unreachable idol.

Regarding these viewings, the next arising question is, how far is Lana Del Rey as a singer and songwriter authentic? I can recognise a strong striving for the highest artistic, vocal and bodily potential, gaining artistically for aesthetical perfection and revealing the aim to be an object of desire, behind which I suspect the urge to have control, caused by fear or lost trust in the first place. Here I refer to the tattoo on her right hand which says 'trust no one'. It appears to me, that at least a certain calculation is resonating.

Also apparently is the combination of the perfect beauty made by plastic surgery, the knowingly charming and desirable manner and body language, to be completed by the full and warm voice with an unbelievable wide range. But, there is something else: A disclosed vulnerability and emotional openness, also appearing in the empathic behaviour with fans, which make her appearance as a person seeming very tangible, truly, and attracting, as this is a real market niche:

'[...] the social alienation produced under modernity, which appears to me the ideological root of such striving for the authentic, and of which we have been aware for decades, grows daily more apparent.' – wherefore terms like 'intimacy' and 'immediacy' are attributes to be connected to authenticity. [Moore, 2002, p. 210]

According to interviews I found during my research, Elisabeth Grant alias Lana Del Rey claims to be no good actress, which entails that her convincing performance in the music videos is no show but authentic. At the same time, I found claims that she denied any surgical treatments [Baker, 2011], which would be an obvious lie. How such statements are to be judged depends in my opinion on, how tolerantly one deals with her as an artist, who recreated herself or was recreated by the production company completely new, trying hardly to leave her past identity behind [Harris, 2012].

Subjective Relativisation

As Lana Del Rey is a human being with a personal experienced story in which one can't look in, I don't think other people than her are in the position to judge. Therefore and related to criticism on her person, I strongly plead for clemency as I would it in general, and furthermore for concentration on the musical utterances, so what the artist has to say.

My attempt will be to get to the bottom of this matter by first looking at authenticity itself and then examining one of the, as for me, meaningful music videos by Lana Del Rey. The circulating rumours of connections to the so called Illuminated and her personal past are considered as the analysed music videos seem to refer to it through the used symbolic language, of which interpretation is representing the dominant issue of actual discourses and should reveal underlying messages to exposure furthermore basic motivations, and so identify Lana Del Rey's authenticity in terms of the theoretical concept as examined below.

The Concept of Authenticity

"It is used to determine the supposed reasons she [the artist] has for working, whether her primary felt responsibility is to herself, her art, her public, or her bank balance. It is used to bestow integrity, or its lack, on a performer, such that an 'authentic' performer exhibits realism, lack of pretence, or the like." [Moore, 2002, p. 211]

As we discussed the term of authenticity in the lectures, the appearing accordance is, that an artist is not authentic, if the basic and main reason for his or her acting is money. Related to people in general, I would claim that the bigger part of the human kind is in trouble.

To extend this thought further in order to examine this trouble, I say that one is not authentic as one is driven by fear, because this leads to a quest for control and power, which money is associated with. But, what fear am I talking about?

In my opinion all fears have their source in the fear of death, which definitely triggers the inherent instinct to survive, or to express it more positively, the instinct to live. Since today psychologically violated integrity through experienced traumatisations is more a general than an exceptional condition, there is a huge lack of trust to oneself, and so to the environment or also to life itself. As for me this is a main basic reason, why people are gaining for control, power, and therefore for money, which makes it, beside Allan Moore's mention of alienation, hard to find authenticity in a globalised world, and furthermore hinders many people from living with abandon.

Looking for authenticity in an idol in order to find confirmation, that there is finally a reason to trust in life, and so to trust in oneself again, is the act of projecting or outsourcing the unfulfilled demand for the own authenticity, which is required in two ways. On the one hand there is a recognisable need for an outer, authentic experienced reflection of ones accepted or aspired aspects as self-affirmation, on the other hand there is also a need for an outer authentic reflection of ones own rejected aspects in order to have a convenient scapegoat outside oneself.

Being aware of this human tendency, music and art in general - and especially from the artist's point of view, as it is a catalyst for authentic expressions - can be seen as a positive result of the human kind's search for the authentic moment, and so for the moment of the aspired unity, where fear is overcome, as I will explain below.

The Authentic Moment in a Piece of Music

My approach to authenticity is that it can be regarded on different levels and that it can be divided in an active part, which means the one who creates a piece of art and transmits a message, and a passive part, as the one who receives and interprets it.

Levels

The emotional level - including both the active and the passive part - can be explained by the example of a guitar player doing a live performance in front of an audience: Imagine he or she is doing the solo and is fully concentrated on playing, so forgets completely the outer environment including circumstances, aims regarding the concert, or other people's expectations, but also the own established inner identity including doubts or other thoughts, and is in this moment the solo itself. One might experience that as a musician him or herself, or also in the passive form as a part of the audience. Then, there is this moment, when the player is in that condition and one or more people at the same time, as the audience, just recognize this unity of the player and the solo itself. That moment, before the audience's mind adds thoughts to it - which might be a very short moment - also the audience becomes a unity with the solo. So, one could say, the solo, the musician, and the listener are then a unity, and therefore one. That represents emotional authenticity in its purest form, active and passive.

Regarding the authenticity of recorded music, but also the song's content like lyrics, melody, rhythm, or a whole music video, it is more complex to find out, if the piece - or the artist (as the piece of music represents or expresses one of the artist's aspects) - is authentic. If one starts to analyse a piece of music with its different contents related to the indicated or supposed musician's character, the circumstances, and the supposed purposes, instead of just feeling or perceiving the piece of music, I suggest to call this level the rational authenticity.

But, I would doubt that one can recognize emotional authenticity, which in short means "Not thinking", through the act of thinking, or in other words, by the means of rational analysis and reflection - taking time and causing distance. Also, I claim that emotional authenticity can be seen as independent from the question if a musician interprets a piece of music of his own or not. A musician can be emotional absolute authentic while he or she performs a cover as own interpretation, a tribute as appreciation and imitation of not only another one's composition, but also identity, or just a piece where he or she is not the songwriter of, but the interpreter.

It seems, the transition to Moore's third person authenticity, as he quotes from Coleman's 'Clapton: the Authorized Biography': 'I didn't feel I had any identity, and the first time I heard blues music it was like a crying of the soul to me. I immediately identified with it' [Moore, 2002, p. 215], is flowing. Though, in my point of view, one has to differ clearly between a tribute band overtaking another band's identity in general (which I perceive altogether as inauthentic, as for me, an autonomous artistic identity is vital), and an artist, holding an autonomous identity and interpreting another one's song. Clapton's specific statement I would count to neither of them, but see him as an autonomous artist, who recognised his own identity in the genre of blues.

Though, the question of emotional authenticity lies beyond the question of reproduction, both are connected in that way, as for example the recording of an original live performance, can not reproduce the complete atmosphere of the certain emotional authenticity which could be perceived live by the audience. And, the more copies are made and are available, the more the atmosphere of emotional authenticity gets divided and lost. This is an assumption based on my own experience and might be related to Walter Benjamin's cult value of a work [Benjamin, 1936, Ch. V].

If emotional and rational authenticity, which means of the level of perception and of analysis, are both given, the result is the experienced moment of authenticity in a very high form. Here appears the question if there exist also other levels, like a spiritual one, of which dimension could depend on how far the perceiver is aware of the certain authentic moment. For this essay and for my approach I will stay with the already discussed two levels.

Perspectives

It is to consider that in everyone's view the significances of the different levels to induce the subjective experienced highest form of authenticity will differ. For example, one person estimates the emotional level is more than the rational level, where furthermore the significances of the analysed contents can differ as well. Regarding this, Allan Moore refers furthermore to cultural and social positions as follows: "Whether a performance is authentic [...] depends on who 'we' are. [...] it is a construction made on the act of listening" [Moore, 2002, p. 210].

Even when the musician's authenticity is not directly given, the authentic experience of the listener can be enormous, because the song reflects, and so authenticates or affirms exactly the audience's emotional condition or attitude. Then, the audience projects the momentary reactive own authenticity.

It becomes apparent that one has not only to differ between emotional and rational authenticity, and active and passive part, but also and maybe foremost, to consider the subjective perspective, which influences besides the significances of the levels and their contents, also their reception and interpretation in the first place, and so the subjective experienced grade of authenticity. Though considering Allan Moore's different approach to authenticity, as he is analysing genre specifically, sociologically and culturally, I can recognise here accordance to his first and second person authenticity. [Moore, 2002, p. 220]

In the case of, that songwriter and singer are not one person, there are then two active parts, whereby the singer is both active and passive, since there is a written text's or song's certain potential of authenticity as the songwriter's, to be maxed out, but also ruined by the grade of the emotional authentic interpretation or by an actual specific context (as an example for the rational level). However, from a more subjective point of view and based on experience, the interpretation can mean everything and so, the origin authenticity of the songwriter becomes literally void. Therefore, not only the audience but also the singer can project his or her reactive momentary authenticity, to enhance the song's authenticity, if not being it at all.

It looms, that the perceived authenticity is in the eye of the beholder or listener, and therefore depends on the certain perspective and its inherent projection of authenticity or inauthenticity - which means, the perceived authenticity actually tells one more about one's own attitude on authenticity, than about the artist's.

Ideals

So and just theoretically, if one holds the ideal of absolute authenticity as a basic condition, it enables him or her to perceive without any projection the disclosed true self of an artist or a piece of art, where there is nothing left, but authenticity: No demand or need for outer affirmation, no just reactive authenticity, or scapegoat as the own inauthenticity to be projected, and therefore no more dependence on outer authenticity or inauthenticity to affect the experience, which amounts to the abolishment of these opposites and this question, and so again to the already mentioned aspired unity. As it appears, the perspective on the experienced authenticity can change everything and refers always to its own origin, namely to itself.

Now, outgoing from an artist as active and thus transmitting part, holding the ideal authenticity which includes a true kind of message, then the musical utterance can reach even for the most unapproachable listener's heart, which means it is again independent from the, of the artist's perspective, outer authenticity or inauthenticity.

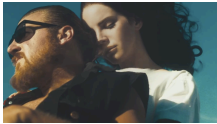

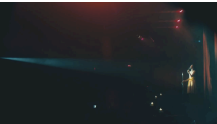


Considering the artist therefore as a medium to send out messages, the question of his or her authenticity is connected to the origin source of a message, as it could be created out of other's people ego (driven by fear, gaining for control - money), the artist's own ego, but also out of a source beyond any ego, as one could say: Out of the individual soul or out of the collective soul of a society. The artist is then not only authentic but also a pure medium, or as it Allan Moore phrases:


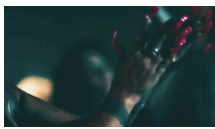
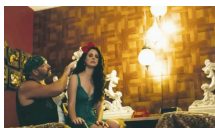
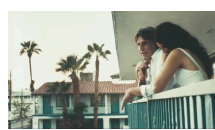
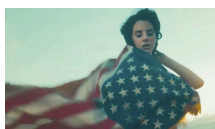
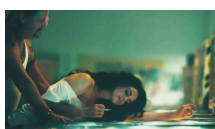
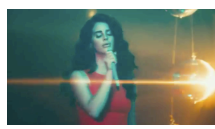
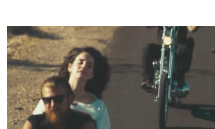
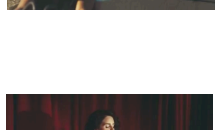
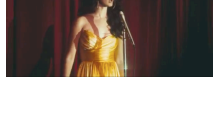

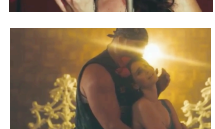
'[...] artists speak the truth of their own situation; [...] they speak the truth of the situation of (absent) others; and [...] they speak the truth of their own culture, thereby representing (present) others.' [Moore, 2002, p. 209]







Analysis

In order to put my discussed analysing theory into the framework of this essay, appropriately to the more common spontaneous perceived condition of unity inherent to the authentic moment of a musical experience, I consider the emotional level, as it is the first perceived one to influence the possibly following rational level, used to explain and confirm it, as the crucial.

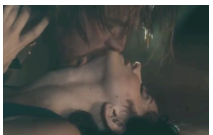
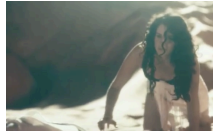
Continuing my approach with the following analysis of 'Ride', I will divide the material into appropriate sequences and then examine the lyrics and the musically mediated mood connected to the involving visual images, but also address the imitated characteristic elements of successful icons or the usage of proved ideas. In order to cover the emotional level, my subjective view on the emotional experienced authenticity will be included.

Time and Part	Action and direct Interpretation	Lyrics
<p data-bbox="248 264 344 315">0:00-3:24 Prologue</p>       	<p data-bbox="427 315 954 517">The string-drenched Intro includes acoustic atmosphere and sound effects related to the seen pictures, as e.g. the first heard sound is wind, so that the audience gets more involved with the experience of the events, than it would be only with music. First expressed emotion: the heart touching feeling of relief. When Lana starts to talk: deeper tones, accompanying the reflection.</p> <p data-bbox="427 544 954 745">The opening scene shows the Nevada's Valley of Fire, the principle location of the video, with Lana entering and leaving the image, swinging on a suspended tire. Generally mentioned as 'the men' who were her 'only summer' during an 'endless world tour' as a 'not very popular' singer, the biker gang and her three lovers ('dancing and laughing, and crying') are shortly introduced.</p> <p data-bbox="427 772 954 925">A solitary scene in the night on the street starts. The generally repeated usage of very short flashes, as hints and signs for following scenes, but also in order to implant characteristics, like weakness, insecurity, or even a victim's role, to the identity, becomes gradually noticeable.</p> <p data-bbox="427 952 954 1176">Lana as a singer lost on a stage and further short flashes to demonstrate her lowest point connected to the death of her dream of being a poet: a fired weapon, etc. Meanwhile the strings are moaning. The lyrics implement that Elisabeth Grant was homeless, which can be related to the period of living in a caravan and its controversial motive concerning the very wealthy family background, but also to an inner feeling of homelessness.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1202 954 1377">The solitary scene continuous in front of a wall showing a graffiti that contains inter alia the text 'money orders' above a pack of eggs, which are symbols of resurrection, but also for the birth of a god or hero [Tresidder, 2000, p. 11] – both linked, one could interpret: Money decides, who has a chance to transform into an idol.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1404 954 1579">Helpless after the lost struggle (of gaining success autonomously and by own means) she is waiting for 'safety', overlooks the warning stop sign, and reacts relieved, when a dubious but at the same time pleasant man in a car catches her, as the strings again change to deeper tones, of which easing supports his saviour status.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1606 954 1736">This scene and the simultaneous monologue suggest her as selling herself, while stating to have 'a chameleon soul' and 'no moral compass', strengthening men's fantasies, and referring to a split personality, as a clear confessional statement follows:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1762 954 1937">'And if I said I didn't plan for it to turn out this way I had been lying - because I was born to be the other woman.' – who is the created identity of Lana Del Rey, then to see on stage in the golden dress ('who belonged to everyone'), as the product of the motivation to gain attention and appreciation as an artist or even as an object of art.</p>	<p data-bbox="981 544 1524 696">I was in the winter of my life - and the men I met along the road were my only summer. At night I fell asleep with visions of myself dancing and laughing, and crying with them. Three years down the line of being on an endless world tour and memories of them were the only things that sustained me, and my only real happy times.</p> <p data-bbox="981 772 1524 974">I was a singer, not very popular one, who once had dreams of becoming a beautiful poet- but upon an unfortunate series of events saw those dreams dashed and divided like a million stars in the night sky that I wished on, over and over again - sparkling and broken. But I didn't really mind because I knew that it takes getting everything you ever wanted and then losing it to know what true freedom is.</p> <p data-bbox="981 1202 1524 1332">When the people I used to know found out what I had been doing, how I had been living - they asked me why. But there's no use in talking to people who have a home, they have no idea what its like to seek safety in other people, for home to be wherever you lie you head.</p> <p data-bbox="981 1404 1524 1512">I was always an unusual girl. My mother told me I had a chameleon soul. No moral compass pointing due north, no fixed personality. Just an inner indecisiveness that was as wide and as wavering as the ocean.</p> <p data-bbox="981 1762 1524 1870">And if I said I didn't plan for it to turn out this way I had been lying - because I was born to be the other woman. Who belonged to no one, who belonged to everyone, who had nothing, who wanted everything.</p> <p data-bbox="981 1897 1524 2004">With a fire for every experience and an obsession for freedom that terrified me to the point that I couldn't even talk about, and pushed me to a nomadic point of madness that both dazzled and dizzied me.</p>

<p>3:25-8:06 Song</p>	<p>The beginning of a new and glamorous period is initiated with a choir: A star is born in white: yet clueless and therefore innocent, but the name of the theatre 'Neptune' and the fog on stage warns against aberrations. Short flash of applause as a foreshadowing: hands with extremely long fingernails and jewellery, symbolising greed, which can be related to money, and furthermore to the music business.</p>	
	<p>A Lover sequence alternates with the stage image, though in short scenes, the music and the used warm and soft light provide a nostalgic and comfortable touch, as also the characters themselves are shown from a very human, soft and intimate way. The lover's roles are getting more exposed, while a second whispering echo is used to underline the intimate atmosphere:</p>	<p>I've been out on that open road You can be my full time daddy White and gold Singing Blues has been getting old You can be my full time baby Hot or cold</p>
	<p>The first one, who bought her, is nice and funny but uses her at the same time. The second one seems wise but alcohol addicted, and gives her advice. The third lover, whose tattoo 'the wall' is might be used as reference to Pink Floyd's movie, and so to its theme of isolation, is a shelter for Lana as a vulnerable girl, epitomising perfectly the Lolita image. In between, also the gang and the first image with Lana, wrapping herself in the American flag, appear.</p>	<p>Don't break me down I've been travelin' too long I've been trying too hard With one pretty song</p>
	<p>As it switches back to the now more obvious abuse scene, she begs 'Don't break me down, I've been travelin' too long. I've been trying too hard with one pretty song.'</p>	
	<p>Turning point 1: Commercialised</p>	
	<p>But, after a last white dress scene, it is to read inter alia: 'fatal charm' and the audience is enthusiastic: With the beginning of the refrain, she is no more in white, but in red. The wise lover observes the progress silently.</p>	<p>I hear the birds on the summer breeze, I drive fast I am alone in the night Been tryin' hard not to get into trouble, but I I've got a war in my mind</p>
	<p>With 'I just ride' starts a sequence, where the gang drives with their motorcycles on a highway through the Nevada's Valley of Fire, giving Lana a ride, as a member of them. Firing guns and having fun scenes alternate with shots where Lana holds the American flag in the wind. The transported feeling is freedom and affiliation, while flying the flag of America.</p>	<p>So, I just ride Just ride, I just ride, I just ride</p>
<p>Turning point 1: Commercialised</p>	<p>The next verse induces back on stage: Since Lana transformed and has been joining the club, now she is dressed in gold - appreciated, also by the gang members. The lyrics make clear, that her father and alcohol have an explicit role in the story, while, again vulnerable, she seeks shelter in the arms of the third lover.</p>	<p>Dying young and I'm playing hard That's the way my father made his life an art Drink all day and we talk 'til dark That's the way the road doves, do it, ride 'til dark.</p>
	<p>In between, a shot on stage shows her, making the mano cornuta which can be interpreted as protection symbol, or contrary, and nowadays more common: as devil's hail, while singing about darkness and 'playing hard'. Continuing, that she doesn't want to be left now, "high and dry", could mean a fear of falling at the (purchased) height, when the criticism of her also grows, which is definitely hard to take, since the exposed position.</p>	<p>Don't leave me now Don't say good bye Don't turn around Leave me high and dry</p>
		
		
		
		
		

 <p>Turning point 2: Integrity</p>     	<p>The next refrain and night scene starts at the station with Lana smoking, and exposes a self-destructive mood. But, the motorcycle gang catches her out from the melancholic, risky situation and the mood turns again into a desire for freedom.</p> <p>Here comes a significant turning point comparable to the switch from the white into the red dress:</p> <p>The transition shot shows again Lana with the American flag around her shoulders (wrapped into a certain concept and system), as then, a fooling around campfire sequence is initiated with setting the flag (system) on fire, since the gas station scene had foreshadowed a necessary act of liberation - but here instead out of isolated frustration, united in a community, who want to be independent from an people exhausting system, where money orders.</p> <p>The involvement of the system, ambivalent to the shared wish for independence, which Lana and the gang members unifies, is a result of one of two inner forces: The motivation to get attention and appreciation, which might be connected to a high yardstick from the father's side and which lead to a very high, pressuring demand towards herself.</p> <p>Since the transformation from Elisabeth Grant into the art object Lana Del Rey was accompanied with the act of selling herself to the music business, and therefore with belonging to the production company, the fans, the critics - and not to forget: her father's money, which was necessary for the whole process in the first place - this inner war, repeatedly mentioned in the song's refrain, is caused: The measures taken to get to the golden status, are ambivalent to this other clear pronounced strong, inner desire of independence.</p> <p>The lyrics 'I'm tired of feeling like I'm fucking crazy. I'm tired of driving 'till I see stars in my eyes. I look up to hear myself saying: Baby, too much I strive, I just ride.' expresses the decision, to no longer be driven by an excessive and exhausting pressure. The native American war bonnet symbolises her native self, as the one who wants to be independent and autonomous. The camera's angle and framing emphasise the abandon and the inherent vulnerability.</p> <p>When Lana aims a revolver at her temple, singing 'I've got a war in my mind', she signals her willingness to end this war, while the high pitch of the voice, from minute 7 on, exposes a discharge from inside out.</p> <p>The last and peaceful image from this sequence reflects a released calm expression, enhanced by the backlighting grounding finger and the concluding sound, as then, on last time, the swinging scene is, as the result from this story, is shown. During the transition to the epilogue, the director and Lana Del Rey as the writer are already credited, to underline the personal reference and her autonomy as an artist.</p>	<p>I hear the birds on the summer breeze, I drive fast I am alone in the night Been tryin' hard not to get in trouble, but I I've got a war in my mind I just ride Just ride, I just ride, I just ride</p> <p>I'm tired of feeling like I'm fucking crazy I'm tired of driving 'till I see stars in my eyes I look up to hear myself saying, Baby, too much I strive, I just ride</p> <p>I hear the birds on the summer breeze, I drive fast I am alone in the night Been tryin' hard not to get in trouble, but I I've got a war in my mind I just ride Just ride, I just ride, I just ride</p>
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8:07-9:44
Epilogue



Acoustically trimmed back to strings again, but more animating than during the prologue, the sequence shows Lana, the gang, and the lovers, crawling and fooling around - still in the night but on an enlightened and windy sandy soil. Since my first association is the ending scene of the Rocky Horror Picture Show, it seems to reveal the shattering impact of a liberating revelation.

The relation to the second lover has changed: The encounter is more relaxed or reconciling, while Lana acts more autonomously.

Very noticeable is the numbness of the first lover (prostitution): He stands and looks more absent than present, while Lana seems also here to take responsibility.

The third lover, as part of the gang, is joining the general high spirit together with Lana - now at one eye-level. Again firing weapons, but also a demonstration of provoking, offensive sexuality, including tongue-poking, which expresses challenge and defiance [Tresidder, 2000, p. 17] are shown.

Related to the so far interpretation, the epilogue refers to the found companions (see next chapter), and addresses the audience directly and offensively.

The 'country, America used to be' is definitely not the America nowadays, which is the mentioned capitalist system, where the music industry can be counted to. So it might mean the idea of an America, from the 1960's etc. era, when poor musicians tried to make it in clubs, and finally got success, because of their steady and ambitious live practice, and realised opportunities. Also the line of the first strophe 'Singing Blues has been getting old' points to this nostalgic melancholy.

The 'kindness of strangers' is a necessary condition for travellers, which I would trace back to a generally controversial human kind's matriarchal, nomadic era, since human settledness and the sense of ownership are accompanied by the patriarchal power structure [Schwindewolf, 2012, p. 16] - which on the other hand, is a basic condition for capitalism. Therefore I interpret this part of the epilogue also as a criticism of the nowadays, capitalist system, of which the music business is affected.

This might farfetched seeming conclusion I see again confirmed, as the last address calls for the integration of 'dark fantasies', which relate to the female principle [Tresidder, 2000, p.12], and therefore, also to a matriarchal conception.

After a last pictorial recapitulation, a short flash from Lana, holding her hand over her mouth, while saying 'But I am free.' is seen, like she can't believe both, what she has done and what she just said about it - since it is daring, especially after the yet short time of experienced notoriety.

The epilogue's ending picture is the same as the prologue's beginning: Swinging on a suspended tire in the windy Nevada's Valley of Fire.

Every night I used to pray that I'd find my people - and finally I did - on the open road. We have nothing to lose, nothing to gain, nothing we desired anymore -

- except to make our lives into a work of art. Live fast. Die young. Be wild. And have fun.

I believe in the country, America used to be. I believe in the person I want to become, I believe in the freedom of the open road. And my motto is the same as ever: I believe in the kindness of strangers. And when I'm at war with myself, I ride. I just ride.

Who are you? Are you in touch with all of your darkest fantasies?
Have you created a life for yourself where you can experience them?

I have.
I am fucking crazy. But I am free.

General Interpretation

Referring to the lyrics, I mainly assess them as a poetic euphemism of an honest, personal confession about the perception of an experienced past, to induce and justify actual circumstances and conditions, answering and addressing both – fans and critics.

The cinematically aesthetic fortifies the expressed idealising reflection of a personal story, which undergoes a flowing connection with cliché plots of certain archetypical (anti) heroic figures, e.g. the used idealised image of prostitution (first visual association: Julia Roberts in 'Pretty Woman'), which serves as a further addition to create a mystified identity for the fans, and exposes or suggests a naive attitude, since here the concept of the passive woman, who leaves the steering wheel (leadership) to men, is represented. So, until the turning point, marked by setting the American flag on fire, passivity is given in at least two ways: Responsibility lies within fate (circumstances) and men.

Since the role of womanhood gets labelled with the standing out main demand of being pretty, satisfying and entertaining for men, but also competitive, if not better at all, compared with other woman, the objectification of herself and woman in general is strengthened, while confirming her own sight on herself as an object of art and desire.

Beside this critical view, my approach to the biker's gang is, that it represents other, as independent perceived, artists, who Lana Del Rey met and who she found helpful and encouraging. Therefore I separate the biker's gang as positive and protective seen allies, from at least two lovers: The first (men in car) represents the prostitution for success, while the second man (the most respectable appearing) refers to the relationship to her father. The third lover, as part of the gang, stands for the affiliation or feeling of home, she found through the other artists and their appreciation. The noticeable change in the relationship to all lovers, since Lana gets autonomous, signifies the personal progress and indicates the aim, examined as follows.

The used image of swinging on a tire functions as allegory to represent the condition of being reconciled with the own fate (hanging from the sky) and willing to take the own destiny in hand, as a present state in the personal journey through 'getting everything you ever wanted and then losing it to know what true freedom is'. Transmitted through the repeated use of the image beyond the rest of the plot's timeline, this implied present condition is the result of it, enabled by a necessary confession.

Elisabeth Grant didn't work out to get the aspired attention and notoriety by the own autonomous, independent means like her voice, creativity, and willpower. She had to go back to dependence on her father, and so on money and the whole music business program, to create the identity of Lana Del Rey. In order to overcome the accompanying inner conflict, as it is described above at the campfire scene, she wants to accept and integrate this fact and leave it behind, to finally feel free as a recognised artist. This production is a confession and a call.

The message, particularly to her critics, is clear: She wants them also to accept her past, so that she gets the chance to be respected as an, finally autonomous, independent artist.

Conclusion

Reflecting key issues of everybody's life, such as struggling for independence and freedom, or abandoning dreams and accompanying depressive phases, which are all connected to adolescence, with the use of expressively strong images, triggering nostalgia, to touch emotional, the audience's involvement, in any way, is for sure. But, the individual assessment of these given impressions at the audience's side, depends more exactly on the certain approachability to result in the emotional experienced authenticity, and the reflection or rational experienced authenticity.

Based on the experienced emotional authenticity as the first intuition, as for me, the aesthetic standard, achieved by the mentioned means, and all artist's performances work very consistently and trigger, related to music videos, a rarely experienced emotional involvement, while at the same time, the Lolita's – and the women's role theme in general, but also the transmitted image of America – are casting a shadow of doubt and inner grumble. Really striking and offsetting is here the sensitive and soulful exposition of all characters, so that I have to wonder, what next can be sold in that way?

So, in general it is to differ between a well produced and emotional authentic experienced component of a piece of art, and the inherent ideas and concepts, which, in that case, I would count to personal and maybe naive ideas, which influenced the choice of the used symbols, and for which a second subplot or message in the story gets noticeable, so that overall, one can recognise three plots: the first obvious action, the decoded subplot, and the represented ideas or messages.

The fortifying effect of emotional authenticity for the acceptance of generally controversial ideas and concepts by the audience is here undisputed. It appears, that the rational approach, to reflect the experienced emotional authenticity, is vital to get to the bottom of the all together ambivalent impressions. The expressed ideal of 'America it used to be' is in conflict with two also transmitted, and with each other connected, basic messages in the video - namely the claim 'Money orders' and the meaning of 'Ride', as it can be interpreted as taking chances offered by fate (and maybe passing on responsibility), instead of struggling.

Since many other artists have not the choice to buy their access to a career, Lana del Rey took here advantage of social and economic inequality, to overcome - and corroborate at the same time - the questionable hurdles of the music business. So it turns out, that for Lana Del Rey money is not the end but the mean - at least in the first place - while the recognisable personal ends are already identified as being recognised as an artist, but also as an perfect, desired object of art.

Since this successful establishment and use of Lana Del Rey as an emotional authentic experienced idol is accompanied by the option to implant ideas and concepts, but also by a cash flow, the synergy of Lana Del Rey's aims and the aims of a production company, which is making profit, complements each other, and should be beard in mind as the critical point, where the circle of cash flow closes, and the system with questionable hurdles sustains, financed by fans.

In order to decide what to support and what not, I consider this more comprehensive view, but at the same time, the attempt to approach the artist's specific work itself unbiased, meaning e.g. not to reject, just driven by the emerge of envy - which might is prevented by the visually strong expressed victim's role or issue of abuse anyway.

While I separate my decision of affirming or supporting the used means and ends, I consider Lana Del Rey's authenticity as given, since I deem both, the performance and the lyrics, as daring but truly, and would concede to her the decision to create an identity according to her ideas and opportunities. This also, since I came during this essay to one more side conclusion: Authenticity, as it is approached in this essay, as a moment of the aspired unity, where fear is overcome, can also be recognised in another one's effort itself to reach it, since it might reflect and authenticates our own effort.

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The mentioned songs 'Blue jeans' and 'Without you' are by Lana Del Rey from the debut studio album 'Born to die' [2012] Interscope, Polydor, Stranger. The song 'Ride' is from the album's EP Edition called 'Paradise'.

Blue jeans: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRWox-i6aAk>

Without you: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9zj3EAZAzg>

Ride: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Py_-3di1yx0