Consumer Behavior
(SOSK-508)

Craving authenticity!

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Eric Arnould’s (2.5.) lecture updated

Few words about the ‘group work’
What does authenticity mean to you?

What makes something ‘authentic’?
“the cult of authenticity pervades modern life”
   (Lowenthal, 1992: 184)

“authenticity is a general preoccupation of modern western culture”  (Jacknis, 1990: 9)

“the key to the development of the modern world”
   (McCannell, 1999: 145)
Product attribute?

Cultural, fluid conception?
Consumption object vs. brand

Indexical/Iconic (Grayson and Martinec, 2004)
Movie time!


https://vimeo.com/65496321

A response to:

Thoughts? Comments?

Modernity’s disenchantment of the world, rationalization, marketization and mass production

Brands are ‘enchantment processes’ that need constant ‘enchantment acts’

Vocation – Dedication – Tradition – Mystification – Association

To ’authenticate’ is a constant act of co-production and co-creation
Paradoxes of luxury (*branded luxury* in particular)

“uniqueness and ubiquity”

“heritage and cutting edge”
Now, let’s try to figure this one out together…
THIS IS A FAKE.
SO, WE LOVE IT.

(Nakassis, 2012)
What’s going on here?

Why would this be popular?

Why would this be worth desiring?
Authentic and counterfeit often continue to be written as a *binary*

The consumer is obliged to be moral by only desiring and purchasing the authentic products of brand houses.
Do companies themselves take counterfeit seriously?

Outsourcing (quality issues), night shifts, segmentation, allowing fakes
Fashion industry – indeed the very logic of fashion cycles themselves

Top-down cyclicality to reproduce the latest fashion

Mimicking
In a commodity:

Which one is the ‘original’ or ‘genuine’ article?

“The modern sign dreams of its predecessor, and would dearly love to rediscover the obligation in its reference to the real”
(Baudrillard, 2007: 51)
Is the search for authenticity in consumer behavior the last grand myth of our times?

Without counterfeit, how can the genuine speak for itself?
“This would make perfect sense as the possibility of emerging beyond the system that is embedded in ubiquitous commodities and commodification is exactly the relation it cannot deliver”