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Authenticity in Discursive Practices of the Online Market for Second-Hand Luxury Clothing

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Abstract

Authenticity is a particularly sensitive and salient issue in the online market for second-hand luxury clothing, and it is still little explored in the field of consumption studies. In this study we sought to analyze how authenticity is represented in discursive practices of the Brazilian online market for second-hand luxury clothing. The corpus of the work consisted of data collected through interviews in five stores of the Brazilian online market of luxury second-hand clothing. The data were analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), proposed by Fairclough (1992), articulated to the sociocultural perspective of consumption. From the discursive categories Subject, Interdiscursivity, Intertextuality, Transitivity System, and Appraisal System, we perceived that the process of legitimizing the stores and the representations of authenticity are overlapped and traversed significantly by historical, social, and cultural aspects. We conclude that insofar as it becomes difficult to ensure objective authenticity, an interpretative dimension emerges, elaborated from the influence of sociocultural factors that underlie the judgment on what is authentic luxury, which in the scenario investigated are indexes of expression of high luxury. In this case, the origins and trajectories that are recognized as references of elite distinction for Brazilian consumers are important elements for the interpretation of authenticity.

Keywords

Authenticity, Luxury Clothing, Second-Hand Consumption, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Brazilian Consumer

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Authenticity is a particularly sensitive and salient issue in the online market for second-hand luxury clothing, and it is still little explored in the field of consumption studies. In this study we sought to analyze how authenticity is represented in discursive practices of the Brazilian online market for second-hand luxury clothing. The corpus of the work consisted of data collected through interviews in five stores of the Brazilian online market of luxury second-hand clothing. The data were analyzed using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), proposed by Fairclough (1992), articulated to the sociocultural perspective of consumption. From the discursive categories Subject, Interdiscursivity, Intertextuality, Transitivity System, and Appraisal System, we perceived that the process of legitimizing the stores and the representations of authenticity are overlapped and traversed significantly by historical, social, and cultural aspects. We conclude that insofar as it becomes difficult to ensure objective authenticity, an interpretative dimension emerges, elaborated from the influence of sociocultural factors that underlie the judgment on what is authentic luxury, which in the scenario investigated are indexes of expression of high luxury. In this case, the origins and trajectories that are recognized as references of elite distinction for Brazilian consumers are important elements for the interpretation of authenticity. Keywords: Authenticity, Luxury Clothing, Second-Hand Consumption, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Brazilian Consumer

Introduction

Although second-hand trade has been developing widely and complexly for centuries, activities involving exchanges and relations between persons, goods, and objects have long been ignored by researchers in the social sciences (Lambert, 2004). It was not until the 1980s, when the industry began to experience unprecedented growth, that second-hand trade came to the attention of researchers (Franklin, 2011; Haggblade, 1990; Hansen, 2000; O'Reilly, Rucker, Hughes, Gorang, & Hand, 1984; Roux & Korchia, 2006). Similarly, the second-hand luxury market, a recent trend, has been ignored (Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015) even with its recent expansion, mainly on the Internet (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016).

In Brazil, in addition to the traditional thrift shops, as second-hand clothing stores are known, there are several online marketing platforms that have emerged as alternatives to the physical thrift stores and involve both business-to-consumer (B2C) and consumer-to-consumer (C2C) transactions. In this context of commercialization, there are also spaces and stores specialized in the luxury segment, where, in particular, contradictions and conflicts are manifested in discursive practices between consumers and sellers, which refer to the concept

of authenticity. These issues may in principle be tied to the characteristics of online transactions, such as the fragility of trust between consumers and sellers, especially in the C2C markets (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016), and the intensification of the falsification of luxury brands that cause suspicion concerning the authenticity of the products. On the other hand, empirical data of the research of Sihvonen and Turunen (2016) show social and symbolic aspects of luxury brands that extrapolate these assumptions and show nuances of the relations between persons, goods, and brands, particular to the context of Brazilian consumption.

Therefore, the articulation of these subjects (second-hand trade, online marketing platforms, virtual stores of luxury product, and the role of authenticity in this context) brings up some issues that have not yet been properly scrutinized by consumption researchers. In addition to the limited number of studies on second-hand trade, the literature on the consumption of second-hand luxury clothing is restricted to two works developed in Finland (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016; Turunen & Leipämaa-Leskinen, 2015). In these studies, besides being developed in a different context than the Brazilian market, authenticity is not a central issue, although they emphasize its importance in the online environment.

As the research on authenticity is very recent in the field of studies on consumption and brands, its concept is still imprecise (Morhart, Malär, Guèvremont, Girardin, & Grohmann, 2015), and studies on the nature of authenticity still represent an effort for delimitation in the field of consumption (Beverland, 2005, 2006; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2014; Leigh, Peters, & Shelton, 2006; Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland, & Farrelly, 2014; Spooner, 1988). In the scenario under study, in addition to objective authenticity, related to the inauthentic and authentic dichotomy, the interpretive construction of authenticity, based on attributes and dimensions related to brand, such as origin, availability, and quality, leads some brands to be perceived as more authentic (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016). Therefore, as the need for brands derives from the essentiality of luxury as a social marker (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), the construction of authenticity in the online market for luxury second-hand clothing becomes an important mechanism of materialization and expression of luxury, as well as the pretension to social mobility, manifestations of taste, and luxury consumption experience. Thus, for this work, authenticity is taken from Spooner's (1988) perspective, as a mechanism of cultural discrimination that is projected on the materiality of goods; however, it has implications for persons and their sociocultural demands.

In view of these previously presented aspects, the articulation between second-hand trade, online marketing platforms, virtual stores of luxury products, and the role of authenticity seems to reveal a theoretical gap in the field of consumption. In addition, it may bring new research issues still little explored by Brazilian researchers under the sociocultural perspective of consumption in Brazil. To fill this research gap, the objective of this study was to analyze how authenticity is represented in discursive practices of the Brazilian online market for second-hand luxury clothing.

The elaboration of this work presents some justifications that make it appropriate for the field of consumption studies. In addition to the lack of research that allows the dialog between authenticity issues in the context of consumption of second-hand luxury clothing in the online environment, the results of the study can shed light on the understanding of the symbolism existing in these relations and contribute to the construction of knowledge on the Brazilian consumer. The study can also contribute to the understanding of the concept of authenticity linked to the luxury clothing in an online environment in view of studies that address the subject in a functionalist perspective through experiments and surveys (Fritz, Schoenmueller, & Bruhn, 2017; Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli et al., 2014; Schallehn, Burmann, & Riley, 2014) in order to understand the dimensions of the construct of authenticity. Thus, by proposing the articulation between these subjects, the research gains contours of novelty and

can contribute to build "bridges" between the area of consumption research and other fields of knowledge, as proposed by McCracken (1988). It is important to note that the luxury second-hand clothing market has been growing consistently and contains interesting elements to understand the symbolism of products and brands.

To this end, we organized the text in the following sections. We first discuss issues surrounding the nature of luxury and then we comment on the market and the consumption of second-hand goods. We also include discussions about authenticity and luxury. Next, we present the research methodology. The results of the empirical research are presented under two topics: the first one addresses the discussions inherent to the demand for legitimacy of second-hand luxury clothing stores. The second one analyzes the processes of representation of authenticity in the context of second-hand luxury clothing stores. Finally, the general conclusions of the study are discussed, as well as some weaknesses of the work and possibilities for future research.

Review of the Literature

Types of Appropriation and Dimensions of Luxury

After centuries being the prerogative of the aristocracy and the very rich and their predominantly ostensive use (Castarède, 2005), luxury has experienced a relative democratization. This phenomenon has extended the field of luxury, and today, at least in part, it is no longer reserved for the few aristocratic and bourgeois, that is, the elite of society. This is because the emergence of *nouveau riche* in the last decades, with important participation of emerging countries such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) which has enabled the creation of new categories of more accessible luxury, mainly with accessories, brand extensions, or lower-priced brands, from which less-affluent consumers can perceive a luxury consumer experience (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009; Kapferer & Laurent, 2016). These new consumers want to enjoy the pleasure provided by the highest quality products and services and the ability to communicate their good taste through the consumption of international brands, which symbolize success, power, and achievement (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975; Kapferer & Michaut, 2016).

Changes of this kind mean that both the field and the concept of luxury are permeated with paradoxes, and they have aroused the interest of researchers in recent studies (Chandon, Laurent, & Valette-Florence, 2016; Kapferer & Michaut, 2016). Two main trends, of opposing movements, one ascending and one descending, are responsible for much of the confusion that goes through the literature and gives rise to a variety of concepts. The first movement is characterized by the strategies of luxury brands directed to the mass market, creating brands positioned in a category called *masstige*, which is derived from mass + prestige. Called by Kapferer (2012) as an abundant rarity, this type of strategy proposes the delivery of perceptions of exclusivity through artificial rarity, evoked by limited editions and fragrance capsules, for example, and not real exclusivity.

The second movement, from the mass market, gives rise to the *premium* category, in which common products, through a trading-up strategy are positioned above others in a scale of prestige, having as reference the high price and higher level of quality, but even so, this category of products is not part of the universe of traditional luxury (Chandon, Laurent, & Valette-Florencer, 2016; Kapferer & Bastien, 2009). In this context, luxury is divided into three domains from the degree of accessibility: affordable luxury, intermediate luxury, and inaccessible luxury (Allérès, 2006; De Barnier, Falcy & Valette-Florence, 2012).

It's important to stress that debate for a more precise definition of luxury continues. Therefore, it is inescapable that the concept of luxury is essentially polysemous, making the

multidimensional concept proposed by Galhanone (2013) suitable for the purposes of this research. This model has five dimensions of luxury: social dimension, integrated by the factors of exclusivity, social distinction, and signaling of success or power; personal dimension, which emphasizes pleasure/hedonism, personal image composition, and personal reward; cultural dimension, which groups tradition and knowledge involved in the use and acquisition; dimension of the product's tangible characteristics, considering superior quality, refined aesthetics/design, rarity/scarcity; and dimension of the product's intangible characteristics, consisting of manufacturing know-how, innovation/creativity, strong brand, and country of origin. Since luxury goods involve a high symbolic weight, the concept of luxury is justified because "it is the nature of the symbol to have more than one meaning, even in a specific social context" (Spooner, 1988, p. 254). This allows us to affirm that the definition of luxury can be considered temporal, social, contextual, economic, and politically situated, and is always shifting.

Thus, in view of the distinct types of appropriation of luxury, potentially mediated by the social, economic, and cultural context of each consumer, it is appropriate to assume the imperative of class distinction proposed by Bourdieu and Delsault (1975) for the analysis of the luxury consumption by different categories of consumers. This posture may seem contradictory given the phenomenon of democratization of luxury and the tendency of omnivorous taste, which impels individuals of different classes to consume the same products (Friedman, 2012; Peterson, 1992, 2005). However, more recent evidence in the literature shows that it makes more sense to understand "how" products are consumed, rather than "which" ones (Jarness, 2015). In addition, although it seems to the contrary, the omnivorous taste also keeps the distinction by two mechanisms (Hedegard, 2015). The first one, related to cultural genre, implies the preference for specific versions, rarer and esoteric, therefore less accessible. The second one is related to the modes of consumption and styles of appreciation that are from the elite itself. Given this premise, we analyzed the dynamics of the dialectics of pretension and distinction (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975) in the discursive practices of the online market for second-hand luxury clothing, a locus of pretension, which manifests itself prominently on issues related to the concept of authenticity.

Market and Consumption of Second-Hand Clothing

Although the growth of specialized second-hand stores in North America and Europe has been observed since 1980 (Hansen, 2000), as well as the expansion of the sector in the 1990s (Franklin, 2011; Hansen, 2000; Roux & Korchia, 2006), this trade has been developing significantly for centuries (Lambert, 2004). Records show that between the mid-1660s and 1830s in the north of England, the activity contributed significantly to the rise of the most modern urban economy of the 19th century (Lambert, 2004). In Paris in the 18th century, Roche (1996) argued that this trade allowed the less affluent classes to follow the new taste conventions with more moderate financial efforts, while allowing high-class consumers to aim for distinction, vary appearance, and change their wardrobe at smaller intervals.

Despite the economic and social advantages mentioned above, the image of this activity is affected by negative perceptions. The rejection of the consumption of second-hand goods is based on the fear of contamination, that is, of incorporating a degraded image of the old owner of the object, related to death, illness, and even bad vibrations (Roux & Korchia, 2006). Since objects are considered constituents of the self, the consumption of goods that belonged to other persons raises the perception of risk of contamination in physical and symbolic terms (Belk, 1988). Considering Goffman's (1971) perspective, negative contamination translates into a violation of the personal space of the individual by others through conversations, visual, body, sound, and excrement contacts. In the context of the consumption of used clothing, the taboo

is associated with the risk of contamination from signs of the body in the clothing (Roux & Korchia, 2006), which, according to Goffman (1971), can be real (sweat and odor stains) or imagined, perceived as a territorial invasion of the former owner, restricting this consumption.

These negative perceptions have been softened by the growth and greater popularization of the sector, driven mainly by the recent appreciation of vintage fashion, but they persist in many cases (Palmer & Clark, 2005a). In Brazil it has not been different; however, the stores of the sector are very recent in our culture, compared with the United States and Europe. In addition to its history predominantly associated with poverty and charity, the image of the thrift store for many is still often related to a dirty, moth-filled, moth-smelling place, whose products are characterized as dirty, old, associated with disease and death (Ricardo, 2008). In a recent study that analyzed discursive practices of promotion of thrift stores in the online environment, evidence was presented that the attempt to change the status of the thrift stores is selectively directed to stores that sell famous designer items, reinforcing the rejection of the traditional thrift store because of its context still stigmatized in Brazil and associated with less economically privileged classes (Zampier, Farias, & Melo, 2018).

On the other hand, the transfer of meanings materialized into goods (McCracken, 1988) can establish a positive contamination by establishing an interpersonal connection intermediated by second-hand objects (Belk, 1988; Palmer & Clark, 2005b). A type of transfer for this purpose can be operationalized by endorsement, as McCracken (2005) explains. Celebrity endorsement is a strategy widely adopted by advertisers in the first-hand market, and it is an instrument that facilitates the transfer of meanings, such as gender, age, class, personality, and lifestyles, which are brought to the lives of consumers. Although, Pizzinatto, Lopes, Strehlau, and Pizzinatto (2016) have not found significant influence of endorsement by celebrities for luxury brands in the market of new objects, McCracken (2005) argues that celebrities have a greater potential to transfer meanings than anonymous models because they provide consumers with both example and material.

Given these assumptions, it makes sense to open a discussion involving the concept of authenticity in the context of consumption of luxury goods, under which they have implications, especially from the perspective of authenticity adopted in this study to investigate the consumption of second-hand luxury clothing on the internet.

Authenticity and Luxury

Consumer interest in authenticity has existed for centuries, although it has only recently attracted more attention from academia (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). In recent years, the impacts of the demand for authenticity for marketing and brands seem to have become more salient and elicited the interest of researchers in the field (Beverland, 2005, 2006; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kovács et al., 2014; Leigh et al., 2006; Morhart et al., 2015; Napoli et al., 2014), whose studies represent an effort to delimit this concept, which, given its polysemous nature, is apprehended by different approaches. Moreover, what is often considered authentic has an ideological or arbitrary effect (Beverland, 2005). Therefore, Morhart et al. (2015) have observed that the different current conceptualizations can be grouped into three perspectives: (a) objectivist, (b) constructivist, and (c) existentialist.

From the objectivist perspective, Morhart et al. (2015) state that authenticity is understood as the quality related to the physical dimension of the object, and therefore can be attested by specialists, as for example with works of art. This perspective converges with the notion of indexical authenticity, of Grayson and Martinec (2004), in which the perception of physical attributes and verifiable information of the object or brand work as indexes, giving the consumer the possibility of distinguishing the genuine from the copies. From the constructivist perspective, authenticity is perceived from socially or personally constructed

interpretations of what reality appears to be. Given this perspective, authenticity can be embodied in reproductions of the past or commercial creations that represent authenticity, such as Disneyland, in line with what Grayson and Martinec (2004) call iconic authenticity. In the context of brands, the perception of authenticity is based on abstract impressions about the brand. The existential perspective assumes that authenticity is linked to the idea of being true to itself; therefore, it consists in providing an authentic experience of persons with themselves, through which they can reveal their true selves, and/or feel to be true to themselves. In this sense, authenticity is related to the ability of a good to provide clues about the identity of the individual (Morhart et al., 2015).

Converging with previous perspectives, but with more significant advances on social and cultural aspects and the nature of the demand for authenticity, the anthropological perspective of Spooner (1988) is complementarily in line with the objectives of this study. For him, faced with the complexity and instability of society, the person experiences a dialectical process between the need to participate in something more orderly and secure and to express herself freely. With this, products are used to negotiate both the social status and the quality of the person, that is, how it should be perceived and appreciated by others. For these reasons, authenticity has become a growing concern. Therefore, objective material attributes are not enough to determine authenticity, since besides legitimacy and its relation with nominal value, we also need to consider the interpretation of legitimacy and the desire of persons for it. Thus, as Spooner (1988) describes, authenticity is an elusive genuineness, inadequately defined, culturally specific, and socially ordered, which is configured as a mechanism of cultural discrimination that is projected on the materiality of goods, but it also has implications about persons, classifying them.

As the symbolic nature of luxury has significant potential to confer the desired authenticity to persons, Dion and Arnould (2011) mention that the most successful luxury brands are auratic, thus, they have an aura of authenticity similarly to works of art, but they cannot be reproduced mechanically. Thus, insofar as legitimacy cannot be won by self-celebration, the power of the brand is constructed by the mobilization of the symbolic energy produced by the field agents, which Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975) call social alchemy[1]. In this sense, the artistic director, emblematic luxury stores, journalists, co-creators, celebrities, key clients, and the broader consumer who appropriates the symbolic power of luxury mainly from the purchase of accessories, are mobilized to build and legitimize the power and prestige of the brand (Dion & Arnould, 2011). The presence of the less affluent consumer, in this case, is important for the sacralization of brands in a context of democratization of the desire for luxury (Kapferer, 2014), which contains a construction of selective authenticity of brands, which helps to operate the cycle of consecration and strengthening of the legitimacy of the privileged few (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975).

However, for the consumer less familiar with the codes of the universe of luxury, especially those located in areas peripheral to luxury, as in Brazil, references to determine the authenticity of the pieces come from clearer indications such as elite culture references that are valued in the country, such as European classical culture and popular and high American culture (Hedegard, 2015). This is in keeping with Spooner's (1988) claim that concern for authenticity stems from the dialectical and ambiguous relationship between persons' needs to express themselves freely and to be part of something more orderly and secure. In this last impulse the Brazilian references of elite culture are used as an emblem of distinction and more

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1 For Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975), social alchemy consists of a process of symbolic transubstantiation, that is, a radical change in the social quality of the product, in which its economic and symbolic value are simultaneously transformed. In this process, journalists, intermediaries, customers, and competitors, committed to the field operation, are responsible for the production of the symbolic energy that produces the conditions for the effectiveness of the brand and the transmutation of a good into a luxury good.

solid locus for the perception of authenticity. Therefore, the origin of brands plays an important role in the second-hand market (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016), although Pizzinatto et al. (2016) indicate that the country of origin does not have a significant influence on the consumer's perception of luxury brands in the market of new goods.

From the discussions about the nature of luxury, second-hand market and consumption, and authenticity and luxury, which make up the theoretical core of this study, we present the methodological procedures that guided the empirical research and analysis of the results.

Methodological Procedures

In this study we aimed to analyze how authenticity is represented in discursive practices of the field of consumption of second-hand luxury clothing in the Brazilian online environment. It is important to consider that these constructions occur through discursive practices and that discourses are social practices, potentially invested politically and ideologically (Fairclough, 1992), we developed this exploratory research from a qualitative approach and under the Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA), from the British side of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposed by Fairclough (1992).

We chose this method because it allows interlocutions with consumption studies that are oriented by the sociocultural perspective (Pinto & Freitas, 2017). Faircloughian CDA can offer a useful lens to analyze consumption from this perspective, as the CDA address the "ideological effects" that the meanings of texts, as instances of discourse, can have on social relations, actions, interactions, people, and the material world (Ramalho & Resende, 2011). In Fairclough's (1992) proposal, language is understood as a type of social practice. Therefore, his analysis approach is oriented to the social nature of texts, as social issues and discursive issues are mutually constitutive (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Thus, we can see the convergence between CDA and the sociocultural studies on consumption. Therefore, as consumption (McCracken, 1988), language in its dialectic relation with social structure is the practice and agency of persons on the world and other persons, building and creating the world in meaning, as well as representing it (Fairclough, 2003).

As Fairclough (2003) points out, the interesting point of this perspective is that it assumes that social practices do not articulate only discourse, but the elements: action and interaction; social relationships; people with their beliefs, attitudes, stories; the material world; beyond discourse. In addition, operationally, the perspective is composed of three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. In this sense, the model brings together three analytical traditions: the tradition of textual and linguistic analysis; the micro-sociological tradition; and the macrossociological tradition. With this, the methodological proposal of the research is adequate to analyze the processes related to the discursive practices on authenticity in the online market of second-hand luxury clothing, as a social element, closely linked to the linguistic element.

We collected data collected between January and July of 2017 in five online stores in the Brazilian second-hand luxury clothing market. We collected institutional descriptions, advertisements, posts, and communications between sellers and consumers through comments in the marketing platforms. Altogether, 1,750 advertisements and posts were recorded, as well as 179 pages of text and images related to the institutional descriptions of the stores and conversations.

To choose the stores, we first considered the criterion of popularity and comprehensiveness in the second-hand market and especially in the luxury segment. From the search for virtual stores of second-hand luxury clothing on the internet on news pages and fashion blogs and following consumer comments in the same environment, we identified and

selected three stores from the most referenced websites, which can therefore be considered the most expressive in this segment.

Considering the representativeness of the second-hand luxury clothing trade in social networks, we searched and explored virtual stores on Facebook and Instagram. However, we realized that the activities of many stores on Facebook, when they existed, were discontinued or inexpressive in relation to Instagram. Therefore, to confirm the inclination of stores to operate on Instagram over other social networks, we contacted owners of five selected virtual stores for the convenience of the researchers, who admitted their preference or exclusive use of Instagram and reported that the same happens with their customers and competitors. In view of the fact that Instagram is the preferred social network for the trade of second-hand luxury clothing in Brazil, we selected two stores in this platform based on the criterion of accessibility and convenience. Thus, the corpus of the research was formed by the stores present in Table 1.

Table 1 Description of the Stores

Store	Transactions	Platform	Products/Brands	Price range (R$)
S1	B2C and C2C	Website	Several*	56.00 – 23,650.00
S2	B2C	Website	National and international luxury brands	59.00 – 17,100.00
S3	B2C	Website	National and international luxury brands	435.00 – 28,265.00
S4	B2C	Instagram	National and international luxury brands	180.00 – 18,800.00
S5	B2C	Instagram	National and international luxury brands	On request

Since a variety of brands and products can be marketed in S1, ranging from clothing to home appliances and cars, but which still has a significant environment for the context studied, an additional step was taken to focus our attention only on luxury garments. To avoid manipulating data that was beyond the scope of this work, such as non-luxury brand items such as Marisa, Hering, Zara, etc. we performed the data collection in the other stores to verify the brands with greater presence in the investigated locus. With the information from this step, we established the research filter by brand for data collection in S1. The brands of the ranking elaborated in the previous step, which were not found in S1, were replaced by the subsequent ones. Therefore, in this store, data collection was restricted to the brands: Chanel, Prada, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana, Fendi, and Givenchy.

For purposes of analysis and interpretation of data, the following categories of linguistic-discursive analysis were used, selected according to their relevance, as evidenced by the previous examination of the data: (a) Subject, to identify the aspects underlying the subject choices and the textual construction ordering (Fairclough, 1992); (b) Interdiscursivity, aiming at understanding how and which discourses are articulated in the text; (c) Intertextuality, to identify and analyze which voices and texts are included and/or excluded and how; (d) Appraisal system to analyze how valuation positions, determined socially, are adopted by stores, sellers, and consumers, characterizing affiliation or distancing of interest groups associated with the communication context (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2004), in which players negotiate their identities and aspects about the categorization and authenticity of the goods; (e) Transitivity system, which allowed us to analyze how authenticity is represented in discursive practices in the online market for second-hand luxury clothing.

In summary, the process of organization and preparation for the analysis followed the orientation inherent in the method adopted. In this sense, there is no clear distinction between this stage of organization and the stage of analysis. That is, to organize the data means to manipulate them theoretically, to question them and to confront them with the theory used in the study. And it is in this process of readings, of comings and goings, that the categories are identified, and the analysis begins. The analyst has the role of looking for the discursive marks

used by the enunciator, the images constructed and sustained in the text, manifested in linguistic materiality, which point to what one wishes to find.

Many categories emerged from the analysis. Given the results of the research, it was useful to divide them into two sections, considering the two discursive categories that emerged in the analysis and aggregated the results of this study: (a) Store legitimacy demands and (b) Representations of authenticity of the pieces. Therefore, the results that will be discussed below follow this order: (a) Between stigma and legitimacy: contextual tensions and placement strategies of second-hand luxury clothing online stores and (b) Authenticity in discursive practices of the online trading for second-hand luxury clothing.

It is important to consider that the researchers have an interest in the luxury clothing market theme because they have already dedicated their efforts to other research whose theme was to understand luxury consumption in other product contexts. Thus, the motivation to understand the luxury second-hand clothing market complements the findings of our previous research (Zampier, Farias, & Melo, 2018).

Analysis and Discussion of the Results

Between Stigma and Legitimacy: Contextual Tensions and Placement Negotiations of Stores

Notably, the discursive practices of second-hand luxury clothing stores seek to distance themselves from the image of traditional thrift stores. Even the apparent interdiscursive approach through the interconnected values of "conscious consumption" and "sustainability," very present in the discourses promoting consumption in traditional thrift stores, emerge ambiguously in this context, such as calls from one of the stores to encourage consumption of second-hand luxury:

> The platform has the largest online collection of original second-hand luxury products, which *shows* the importance of *conscious consumption* for a more *sustainable* life and also *reinforces* the importance of giving up items that are no longer used to make room for *new items* (S2).

Although the discursive appeal may seem paradoxical, by the double incentive, "conscious consumption" and consumption of "new items," and because the discourse of conscious consumption is not a recognized part of the luxury universe, it has practical meaning for the field in question. In addition to the sustainability discourse being one of the most recurrent appeals in the traditional second-hand market and especially for its consumers and enthusiasts who are more committed to the environmental cause, it contributes to the later argument that encourages detachment from goods and sustains the second-hand clothing market with the supply of items. Therefore, the interdiscursive relation reveals a potentially ideological practice, because, by encouraging detachment and conscious consumption, it attempts to channel the circulation of goods through the desire for consumption, supported by different meanings. However, the approximation between the discursive practices of the traditional and luxury segments is limited to the interdiscourse of sustainability and conscious consumption. It is perceived here that there is no change in the discourse between the traditional and luxury segments because both maintain the idea of sustainability and conscious consumption.

When analyzing the institutional descriptions and proposals of the stores, we can see that the term "thrift store" is often avoided, which is shown only in store S5, which is identified as a luxury thrift store, followed by the name in English "Thrift & Consignment Store." S2, in turn, seeks an international aura using the designation Authentic Second Hand Luxury below

its name. Considering the appreciation of the North American and European culture in Brazil, as Hedegard (2015) indicates, and the potential of lexical choices to represent elite tastes and luxury in a context of lesser tradition in this field, these designations indicate the demand for the legitimization of these stores, seeking to fix their images next to a prestigious universe of luxury, and at the same time to move away from negative evaluations provided by the term "brechó." Additionally, the Portuguese designations reinforce this notion by highlighting the effort of distancing and refusing the term "brechó" (thrift store) by identifying themselves as an "online platform," "website," or "app."

In this sense, the lexical choices used to position the supply of products also reveal a context of claiming legitimacy alongside the universe of luxury and distancing from traditional thrift stores. The following excerpts express the identificational and relational meanings elaborated in this context, where lexical-grammatical resources are highlighted in bold:

> [The store] is an online platform that offers *authentic semi-new* luxury items [...] (S2).

> *New and semi-new ORIGINALS* (S4).

> *AUTHENTIC* luxury items, national and imported, *new* and *semi-new* (S5).

With the exception of S1, which is not a specialist in the luxury segment, in all other stores the emphasis on the description of authentic products is used as an argument to give force to the process of building the legitimacy of stores and transmitting confidence to consumers who perceive risk in this context, as shown in the studies of Sihvonen and Turunen (2016) and Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015). In this sense, the "authentic" and "original" lexical items, in thematic and emphasis positions, are used as evaluation resources to give to the objects the expressive genuineness of luxury, thus legitimizing their positions as authentic representatives of luxury and offering more evidence of safety to the consumer, which highlights the perceived risk of inauthenticity of goods in the online second-hand luxury market.

Although new products are not the majority among the data collected, we noted the interdiscursivity in the product offer with the fashion system and the consequent appreciation of the new and rejection of the used, anchored by the lexical choice "semi-new," often preceded by term "new" that refers to the notion of little use and good conditions of the object. At the same time, the lexical choice of the term "semi-new" reflects less contact with the self of the former owner, thus lessening the fear of contamination present in the consumer imagination (Goffman, 1971; Roux & Korchia, 2006), and the association of these stores with the traditional thrift stores.

Therefore, the appreciation of the vintage and nostalgic character of the clothes used significantly present in the discourses related to consumption in traditional thrift shops do not echo in the investigated segment, although Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015) have noted the importance for them in the Finnish context. In this research, among the 1,750 product advertisements, only five of them (0.29%) had the goods highlighted as vintage. Given this, we see that the emphasis on the new is more salient, which reinforces the guidance from the fashion system in this market, even though one of the hallmarks of luxury that makes the object a sacred good is the timelessness of the iconic pieces (Kapferer, 2012, 2014). In S2, for example, "never used" products are valued as "unmissable opportunities" and are highlighted on the page, where the consumer can access them separately from others. Similarly, among the advertisements collected, vintage products with greater use are less privileged, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Classification of Products by the Situation in Advertisements

Classification	Frequency	Percentage
Semi-new	1,125	64.28
No information	385	22.00
Used	112	6,40
Never used	88	5.03
Used only once	33	1.88
Vintage	5	0.29
From 2012	1	0.06
Obvious scratches	1	0.06
Total	1,750	100.00

From its prominence shown in Table 2 and in the previous excerpts, it is pertinent to think of the interdiscursivity of the "semi-new" item. The term is an expressive part of the semantic field of the Brazilian second-hand car market, where constraints and prejudices are not intensified as in the clothing market. Therefore, it can be considered an interesting resource to soften the taboo under consumption in this segment.

Considering also that the "used" classification is used exclusively in S1, where the products are categorized as "never used" and "used," the information in Table 2 reinforces the thesis that the emphasis on new products is an important resource for the field under study. In rational terms, the emphasis on the good condition of the goods under the "semi-new" (64.28%) and "never used" (5.03%) lexicalizations may signal to the consumer the expectation of good deals considering the useful life of products in relation to their prices, similarly to what has been elaborated in the real business construct of Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015). Together with the orientation of the taste for fashion, this notion can still bring the less well-off consumer to a more complete luxury consumption experience in its own way (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975), to the extent that the product is new or seems to be new. Therefore, evaluative attributes that highlight this condition are recurrent in product descriptions, as illustrated by the following two quotations:

NEEEEW with tag (S4)

Celine Trapeze *BEAUTIFUL, TO DIE FOR* and *FLAWLESS NEW*. I'm *IN LOVE* with this bag!!! (S5)

To increase the strength of the markedly positive evaluation of the new product, several amplification mechanisms of such qualification are used, beginning with the description in capital letters. The repetition of the vowel in attributes such as "new" are also recurrent. In addition, sellers/stores use the "beautiful," "flawless" evaluative epithets and mental phrases that express the degree of emotion/affection toward the product, as exemplified in the "in love" affective mental process. According to Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975), stores have their share of contribution in the cycle of consecration of these materials, which simultaneously produces the legitimacy and sacredness of these goods and the desire of consumers for them.

To instigate the desire of consumers, the stores ensure access to the main national and international brands. In this sense, the presence of a portfolio with the "best brands in the world" (S2), or the "leading international brands such as Chanel, Prada, Hermès, Gucci, Dolce & Gabanna, Alexander McQueen, and Louboutin" (S3), is part of the store legitimization project, helping to form a luxurious aura around their images. Therefore, as shown in Table 3, most of the products advertised (48.83%) are concentrated on 10 European luxury brands, which are recognized as among the most desirable worldwide. These evidences highlight the

demands of legitimacy and pretension underlying the field of consumption of luxury clothing that find greater strength in dominant brands, building a type of ranking of prestigiousness and luxury levels that keeps and reinforces the polarization in the field (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975).

Table 3 Brands with the Highest Number of Advertised Products

Brand	Participation (%)	Country of origin	Foundation	Founder(s)
Chanel	9.70	France	1909	Coco Chanel
Gucci	7.36	Italy	1921	Gauccio Gucci
Louis Vuitton	5.50	France	1854	Louis Vuitton
Prada	5.50	Italy	1913	Mario Prada and Marino Prada
Louboutin	4.75	France	1992	Christian Louboutin
Dolce & Gabbana	4.68	Italy	1985	Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana
Fendi	3.58	Italy	1925	Adele Casagrande and Edoardo Fendi
Valentino	3.09	Italy	1959	Valentino Clemente Ludovico Garavani
Dior	2.41	France	1946	Christian Dior
Cèline	2.27	France	1945	Céline Vipiana
Total	48.83	-	-	-

The selectivity shown in Table 3 reflects not only the symbolic power of brands but the demands of legitimacy underlying the field of second-hand luxury clothing, which finds greater strength in dominant brands, as they have greater potential to transfer symbolically the luxury aura to the stores. This further strengthens the symbolic power of some brands, building a type of ranking of prestige and luxury levels, which keeps and reinforces the polarization in the field (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975). For this reason, some brands are considered more authentic than others (Morhart et al., 2015).

International brands are more prominent, as shown in Table 2, because they are, in the words of Dion and Arnould (2011), more auratic. They can project auras of luxury and authenticity, demanded by consumers and especially by stores in the segment that need to reflect this aura to assert themselves as legitimate representatives of luxury. To that end, the countries of origin of the brands, traditionally associated with luxury (Table 3), play an important role in the context researched, corroborating Sihvonen and Turunen's (2016) statement, unlike what happens in the first-hand market, as shown by Pizzinatto et al. (2016). This difference may be associated with the need for symbolic anchoring to a more expressive luxury, to strengthen the connection of stores with luxury. In this sense, the culture of Western Europe can be considered more effective, since it continues to be a reference of elite distinction for Brazilians, as state by Hedegard (2015).

As authenticity is a critical factor in the context investigated and the aura of the brand seems not to be enough to overcome the insecurity of the consumers, the stores manifest the attempt to operate a symbolic alchemy (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975) through a discursive mobilization of agents. Thus, as a first layer of action, the stores resort to the power of field agents in two ways, initially, seeking to position themselves as experts:

> Upon receiving a product, the team *evaluates*, *authenticates*, *cleans*, and then *exposes* the item on the website. [...] After being approved in all issues, the item *gets* a seal of *authenticity* and *quality* with a coded seal. (S2)

As there are no authorities to authenticate the goods, the stores present themselves as experts, attributing to their staff the power and responsibility for the authentication and curation of the items, materialized in the process of "evaluation," "authentication," "cleaning," and "exposure" after which the item "gets" a seal that accredits it to be marketed as an original luxury good. In addition to the demand for legitimacy and the inexorable need to reduce types of contamination (Roux & Korchia, 2006) from the cleaning of the items, the notion of process given by the characterization and order of the tasks in the excerpt refers to the treatment given to works of art. This interdiscursivity is convergent with the dialectic between art and luxury analyzed by Kapferer (2014), who understands it as a way of positioning luxury in contemporaneity and legitimizing luxury brands socially. In the context investigated, this connection can help position the stores as authorities and representatives of luxury in the segment.

Nevertheless, the legitimization process is delicate even in stores specializing in luxury clothing. The high degree of perceived insecurity in the market requires additional actions by the stores. One of them is the discursive mobilization of field agents, as in the following example:

> *Fashion journalists*, *bloggers,* and *opinion formers* from the lifestyle market all over Brazil are part of the group of *personalities* that *know* and *have made* their wish list a few times. (S3)

The excerpt shows that the store discursively mobilizes the power of fashion experts, identified as "personalities," used as a type of validation and argument of authority. They, according to the phrase, are not only aware of the existence of the store, but are in fact consumers of it, as the material process "have made" expresses, whose "wish list" goal also suggests the offer of a category of items that manifested desire in the consumers, intensified by the symbolic potential of the terms used in English, as proposed by Hedegard (2015). It is important to note that by mobilizing such personalities, a type of social alchemy (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975) is operated discursively, very particular to the field under analysis, in an attempt to foster the symbolic capital of the store through the prestige and value that these figures can transfer to the business and ease the perception of consumer insecurity.

Given the importance of this discursive mechanism, the symbolic mobilization of field agents, in this case, the digital influencers (fashionistas, bloggers, and celebrities), have shown to be a relevant discursive practice, and which is important in articulations aimed at the qualification of the products offered, as presented in the quotations below:

> Miss Sicily *is a classic of the brand*, *it bag* between *fashionistas* of the *whole world*! (Seller, S1).

> Givenchy Nightingale, *THE FAVORITE* OF *CELEBRITIES*, one of the *MOST SOUGHT AFTER* bags (S5).

> A *blogger's* bag - same *limited edition* model used by *Lala Rudge* (Seller, S1).

In the relational processes of the verb "to be," suppressed or not, items receive characteristics of product classes positively valued through the "classic of the brand," "most sought after" and "limited edition" attributes. To reinforce these positive aspects of the items and their purchase, they are also associated with the identities recognized as influential in the field of luxury fashion, "fashionistas," "celebrities," and "bloggers," such as the well-known "Lala Rudge." In addition, the use of the lexical "it bag" and "THE FAVORITE," which in this context have

positive connotations, intensify the positive evaluation, as postulated by Martin and White (2005).

Besides being a simple incentive to consume, the normative nature of the texts, indicated by the representations that can be the basis for the orientation of the taste, reveals the didactic function in the discursive practices of the stores. They, by reinforcing the iconic identities of the items (Kapferer, 2012, 2014) contribute to the sacralization of the items (Bourdieu & Delsaut, 1975), especially in the second-hand market where there is significant potential for consumers to be converted. For this reason, it seems imperative to articulate the symbolic energy of digital influencers in this context, which according to McCracken (2005) facilitates the transfer of meanings to consumers, especially regarding class, gender, personality, and lifestyles. Thus, the data show the conformation of a practice of taste orientation that contributes to the legitimation of the stores as representatives of the field where they operate.

Equally important, celebrity endorsement is embodied in the discursive practice of the stores under the lexicon of "inspiration," followed by photos in which celebrities appear in daily life using the products that the stores sell, in an attempt to operate positive contamination (Belk, 1988; Palmer & Clark, 2005b). Although the use of celebrities is not a more effective option than the use of non-famous models in the first-hand market, as pointed out by Pizzinatto et al. (2016), in the context studied, besides being an incentive for consumption, it seems to be part of the didactic and normative function operated by the stores. Thus, the most coveted products and brands are marked through these processes, instigating the desire of consumers while helping them to understand the social classification of brands and legitimizing the prestige of second-hand luxury stores as sellers of dreams, experience of luxury, and authenticity, in contrast to the traditional thrift shops that articulate more functional aspects of consumption.

The process of legitimizing the second-hand luxury clothing stores is relevant to the field because it becomes the basis for the credibility not only of the stores, but of the products marketed in the online platform. In this sense, the representations of authenticity in this market, analyzed in the next section, have as reference the legitimacy of stores and sellers as authentic intermediaries of luxury.

Representations of Authenticity and their Challenges

The perception of risk on the authenticity of products is more significant in the C2C transaction environments, as in S1, where several vendors, experts or not, are concentrated in specific segments such as luxury brands. Thus, consumers are faced with replicas and original products in the same space, making their perception of risk more accentuated.

In this context, we observe that the physical elements are taken as a priority to attest to the authenticity of the products. Therefore, when not mentioned in the descriptions of the goods by sellers, physical and legal indications are required by consumers to ensure a safe business, as shown in the following excerpts:

> Hi! How high is the heel? And do you *have a receipt* or any *proof*? (Customer, S4).

> *Does it have a certificate* and *box*? (Customer, S4).

> Please can you DM the price please! Does it have a receipt? (Customer, S5).

In relational ownership processes, marked by the verb "to have," consumers claim that items bear attributes such as "receipt," "certificate," or even elements that make up the product when

it leaves the store, such as a "box," as signs of authenticity. However, in many cases these elements are not available, and even when present they still raise doubts about the authenticity of the product, because even replicas are often announced followed by "dust bag," "certificate of authenticity," and "box," which can be purchased separately on the internet, original or not. Therefore, in the absence of more solid evidence to attest the objective authenticity of the product, the origin of the purchase plays a relevant role in this market, corroborating the observation of Sihvonen and Turunen (2016). By pointing out where the purchase took place, vendors give clues about the trajectory of the products, which can increase consumers' confidence in their authenticity, as the excerpts below show:

> [...] I can guarantee the authenticity because I *bought* it myself at Bal Harbour in *Miami*! (Seller, S1)

> Gorgeous earrings from chanel, original. Unfortunately I don't have the certificate anymore, but I *bought* it at *London's chanel* [London] in 2013. They're *wonderful*! (Seller, S1).

> Yes, original*!* I *bought* it at Prada in *Miami* at Bal Harbour Shops (Seller, S1).

> Hi taty. The Bag was bought *abroad*. Specifically *in France*, in the store itself, at the Bordeaux airport. That is, they don't issue a certificate of originality. (Seller, S1).

> Bought *abroad.* No box (Seller, S1).

In these examples, the signs of authenticity extrapolate the objective dimension, emphasizing its discursive construction under the interpretative dimension, related to the trajectory of the object. To this end, the material process "bought" in the first person is a resource to inform that the origin of the goods is not only known but also was acquired by the seller herself, offering more credibility to her and the product. In addition, exclamation marks mark the attitude of the sellers, intensifying the idea that the product is "original," has a guarantee of "authenticity." Other potential effects of the texts, linked to statements about the social biography of objects, may be the decrease in consumer concern about the physical and symbolic conditions of the items that refer to the fear of negative contamination (Belk, 1988; Goffman, 1971), which can be greater when the social biography of the object is more extensive, which would configure the contact with physical and symbolic traits of the persons who possessed that object previously.

Evaluation also happens in the statements, through (explicit and implicit) valuation assumptions. In the first case, the "gorgeous" and "wonderful!" evaluative epithets reinforce the aesthetic qualifications of objects and brands. However, following the material phrases, the implicit information of valuation gains specific sociocultural contours that favor the construction of the aura of authenticity around the products. Through the circumstances of place (origin of the purchase), "Bal Harbour in Miami," "chanel [Chanel] in london" [London] and "Prada in Miami," sellers implicitly give the validity of the authenticity of the products tied to the countries where they were acquired as legitimate sources of luxury (Hedegard, 2015).

In this sense, these meanings are potentially transferred to the products, as McCracken's (1988) model indicates. Although the brand can continue to be the vector of demand for products (Pizzinatto et al., 2016), in the online market for luxury second-hand clothing the mention of these places as the origin of the purchase broadens the perception of authenticity in

the interpretive dimension. In this way, it corroborates Spooner's (1988) perspective that the foundation in the sociocultural comparison and admiration, in this case, based on the credibility and prestige of the country of origin, which has a greater tradition in the universe of luxury, has greater potential to represent it. Therefore, when stating that the origin of the purchase is "abroad," the semiperipheral position of Brazil in terms of identification with elite culture (Hedegard, 2015) is implicit. In this sense, it is also implicit to anchor in the genuineness of countries that are considered the traditional locus of luxury, such as the main European countries and the United States. This reinforces the idea that the country of origin of the purchase has an effect on the construction of authenticity in the analytical perspective proposed in this work.

In fact, the emphasis on the country of origin of the brand, loaded with valuation presumption, reveals its importance as an ideological mechanism in the texts that contribute to the discursive construction of the authenticity of the goods in the second-hand market, as evidenced by the excerpts below:

> An *Italian* shirt *has its power*. Prada with tone sur ton [*ton sur ton*] stripes (white background and off-white stripes) and a fit model. *Pure elegance.* (Seller, S1).

> Beautiful bag, *Italian* brand prada; *entirely in leather*, mustard color with brown accents and hardware. (Seller, S1)

> The watch is *original* from the *Italian* brand Dolce & Gabbana and has rhinestones all around the display and also inside it (Seller, S1).

Faced with the brand itself, the country of origin is evoked to transfer its prestige and credibility in the universe of luxury and build an aura of luxury and authenticity for the items offered. The attitude is built on material phrases whose "power," "beautiful," "entirely in leather," "original," and "pure elegance" attributes intensify the positive valuation of the country of origin primarily. Thus, they emphasize the asymmetric relations of power and prestige of the country of origin of the brand, used as a resource for the symbolic construction of authenticity in the investigated context. In addition to reinforcing the legitimacy assumption of "Italian" origin as the locus of luxury, as Hedegard (2015) analyzes, and its importance for the notion of authenticity of the goods under the perspective of Spooner (1988), the finding is contrary to what was observed in the study by Pizzinatto et al. (2016) for the new market, in which the country of origin of the brand was considered insignificant. This difference may be related to the heterogeneity of consumers in this market and the access of less informed consumers to the brands, provided by more affordable prices and the possibility of paying in up to 12 monthly installments. For this reason, sellers would be compelled to exercise a didactic and normative role, reinforcing the aura of authenticity promoted by the country of origin of the most renowned luxury brands.

The country of origin of the brand is also the main attribute in the texts related to the offer of imitations, which are evidenced in the advertisements and conversations with consumers, articulations that confuse and approximate copies and originals, as exemplified by the following excerpts:

> *Increeeedibly luxurious* prada wallet! *With Italian saffian leather! Like all* prada, *very stylish!* (Seller, S1).

> No. *Italian premium line. Identical to the original.* With certificate, dust bag. And box. (Seller, S1).

Hi, *Italian replica* in *real leather* (Seller, S1).

The valuation presumption, marked by the evaluation resource instilled under the "Italian" attribute, gives a positive value to the evaluated products. To reinforce these aspects, the "increeeedibly luxurious," "very stylish," and "real" evaluative epithets, which in the first example are intensified by the exclamation point and repetition of the letter "e," echo and emphasize the statement about the copy of the "prada [Prada] wallet" (it is very luxurious). In addition, in the field of valuation, that is, in the construction of the evaluative meanings of products, as in the first excerpt, the copy is compared to the originals by the expression "Like all prada [Prada]," followed by the "very stylish" evaluative attribute, whose suffix strengthens the positive evaluation, and together they mark the ideological operation by dissimulation, operated by the strategy of displacement/concealment of the nature of the object (copy).

This process is relativized in the following two examples, by identifying the items as copies, "Italian premium line" and "Italian replica." However, the attributes "identical to the original" and "in real leather" give distinctive characteristics to the copies, whose ambiguous nature promotes representations with reduced physical and symbolic distances from the original items. When considering the categories of imitations existing in the bag market, which is more pronounced by the expressive value of the products, it becomes evident the intention to disguise the inauthenticity and to identify with the copy of better quality and prestige, among the main ones.

As Turunen and Laaksonen (2011) suggest, imitations may not be perceived as opposed to authentic luxury items, but unbranded products are so. Copies also have distinctive categories in terms of quality and prestige. Replicas from China have been on the market for very long and are classified in three categories: "second line," "AAA first line," and "premium." In 2014, the Italian line, of superior value and quality and with more limited production and greater visual approximation with the original items was created, as explained by a seller interviewed by UOL (2015). As they are not all Italian replicas, physically closer to the original and more expensive items, the aura of the European country in these cases is evoked to operate an attempt at symbolic transfer of the prestige of both the more faithful copy and the Italian origin itself, to copies of lower categories, as in the contradiction presented in the second example "Italian premium line."

However, as Spooner (1988) states, we must distinguish issues of authenticity and quality, as they tend to be confused. In addition, in the case of imitations, the heart of the issue lies in the quality of the product and not in the authenticity, as, objectively, they are not authentic. Therefore, when it is not associated with a concealment project about the authenticity of the products, the symbolic effect of the country of origin is limited to identifying them as products or categories of better quality among the imitations and make them discursively closer to the categories of authentic luxury. For this reason, the dialectic between the genuine and the copy is kept, especially considering that in this context consumers have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge about brands and their corresponding copies, when selecting quality imitations, as Strehlau and Peters Filho (2006) argue.

Together with these aspects, when considering that counterfeits can be the luxury of the poor and how they adhere to the social norm (Kapferer, 2014), we can admit the projection of an aura of luxury to copies of prestigious brand products. To this end, dissimulation, which is a mechanism of concealment, negation, or obscuring of relations of domination (Thompson, 1991) is used as an ideological mode of operation of resistance, seeking to soften the stigma of forgery. Thus, for a more effective discourse, the strategy of contextual displacement, materialized in the lexical choice "replica," comes into play. The term is part of the semantic field of the arts, whose interdiscursivity contributes to soften the negative evaluation, since it refers to the reproduction and trustworthiness to the original work. Therefore, it can be

interpreted as an homage to the original item, which corroborates the notion of a *continuum* between unbranded products and the most expressive authentic luxury items, in which imitations appear in an intermediate area, as proposed by Turunen and Laaksonen (2011), relativizing the stigma of counterfeiters in the Finnish context.

In stores specializing in second-hand luxury clothing, omission of this information and even product or brand details is institutionalized and appears to be part of the selectivity strategy of the store regarding its customers. S5 chooses not to inform the price of goods, which is provided only by private message on WhatsApp, direct message on Instagram, or by phone, which also favors the selection of consumers. Nevertheless, questions arise, whose answers in material phrases, as in the conversation below, are operated to reinforce the legitimacy of the store and consequently to promote the perception of authenticity of the product:

> Is it an original [Store name]? (Customer, S4).

> We only work with originals [Name of the customer] (S4).

The tension over the authenticity of the items and the need for particular knowledge of brands generate conflicts between sellers and consumers, highlighting the drama of the purchase of second-hand items in the online market, especially in environments of lower level of thrust between field agents, as in S1, which corroborates the studies of Sihvonen and Turunen (2016) and Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015). Thus, the doubt about authenticity, as in the following conversation, cannot be neutralized only by the cultural capital of the seller. Therefore, she uses intertextuality, including the explanations of an expert website to substantiate her statement:

> LV *would never* sell a bag with the monograms all upside down... (Customer, S1).

> *Below* there is an excerpt from one of the websites used to "identify false LVs." So if you are interested in the bag, *please* inform yourself *better*. The back of the bag *usually* has the LV upside down because they always use the same fabric, with no cuts to make the bag. (Seller, S1)

Situations of conflict that arise in a context of uncertainty about the authenticity of objects are characterized by the dialogic contraction in the texts, as in the example above. Through the approach of appraisal and particularly regarding the subsystem of engagement, the observation of the dialogic effects in the texts allows us to analyze the functionality of resources, such as the "never" and "usually" adverbs presented in the previous excerpts, and to understand how the authors commit with what is written and other voices and positions in the texts, as reported by Martin and White (2005). In the first excerpt, the "never" resource marks disagreement over the authenticity of the item in a high degree of engagement, based on the supposed technical knowledge of the consumer about Louis Vuitton products. On the other hand, the salesperson's answer ratifies the proposition of authenticity by endorsement, characterized by the intertextuality evoked to give legitimacy to her statement. The seller also disputes the consumer's knowledge about the characteristics of the genuine product by the "please inform yourself better" adverbial expression, and then resume the engagement using the "usually" lexeme, in accordance with her proposition of authenticity that is strengthened by the endorsement/intertextuality. Such contrapositions give the tone of the texts, whose irony used insinuates the asymmetry of cultural capital among the agents, in the terms of Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975).

This evidence reinforces the discriminatory notion of genuine luxury and its boundaries that constrain persons less familiar with the consumption of such objects, who have not sufficiently assimilated the complex set of elements that make up the notion of authenticity of luxury clothing, and particularly the anti-counterfeiting features developed by each brand. The negotiation of knowledge status evidenced from the subsystem of engagement makes clear the dialectical relationship between the instances of distinction and pretension, which are manifested in the relation between classes and make up the antagonistic but complementary demands that produce and reproduce a type of recognition and exclusion, as proposed by Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975). On the other hand, the studied environment is a suitable space to obtain knowledge about the field, especially for new consumers.

In summary, the presented results reveal that the perception of authenticity extrapolates the objective dimension to a symbolic conception, based on connections of the object with atmospheres emanating luxury auras. Thus, from an interpretive perspective, even non-original articles assume contours of relative authenticity, attributed by the mechanism of concealment, enabling economically less privileged person to enjoy luxury in their own way, through second-hand and/or counterfeit objects.

Final Remarks

This work was developed in order to analyze how authenticity is represented in the discursive practices of the Brazilian online market for second-hand luxury clothing. In previous research, authenticity was studied from the perception of consumers about brands (e.g., Garçon & Yanaze, 2017; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Kovács et al., 2014; Napoli et al., 2014) or as a secondary issue for luxury brands (Turunen & Laaksonen, 2011), all in the first-hand market in an international context. In this way, a theoretical gap was evident, which this work intended to advance. With this study, we sought to contribute to the understanding of issues involving the articulation of the subject until then not studied by researchers on the consumption of second-hand luxury clothing in the Brazilian context.

When we assumed the scenario investigated as a field, according to Bourdieu and Delsaut (1975), we first concluded that, underlying the tensions related to the authenticity of the items, there are challenges related to the legitimization of stores that reverberate in the mechanisms and effects of the discursive attribution of authenticity of the marketed products, making these processes overlapping. Corroborating a study developed in Finland (Sihvonen & Turunen, 2016), we found a high level of insecurity regarding the authenticity among consumers of second-hand clothing in the Brazilian online environment, which was marked in C2C transactions, which reaffirms the interrelation between the legitimacy of the stores/sellers and the perception of authenticity in objective terms. In this sense, particular sociocultural aspects of the researched context become salient.

The results of the study showed that the need for stores to identify with high luxury becomes a delicate problem that is evidenced in ambiguous discursive articulations, which are, however, situationally pertinent to the demand of legitimation. Despite avoiding association with the depreciated image of the traditional segment, the interdiscourse of sustainability, which is the only form of approximation observed with brechós, is used as a discourse resource by luxury second-hand clothing stores. But the main purpose is to channel the disposal of prestige goods to make their portfolios. Therefore, the contrast with the emphasis on the new evidence in the studied segment reinforces the distancing proposal of traditional brechós and the historical-cultural stigma they still carry in Brazil.

We also found that the discursive resources used by the stores show weaknesses in the construction of legitimacy, mainly because it is operated by self-celebration. However, due to the incipient nature of the field, the didactic-normative function emerges in a pronounced way,

showing the preponderance of their role for the segment and as part of the products and brands consecration cycles. Thus, despite the incompleteness, this discursive practice especially provides to new consumers, less familiar with the luxury universe, a clear, ordered, and safe vision, as indicated by Spooner (1988). Thus, the field becomes a privileged locus of manifestation of pretension, which not only promotes and democratizes the desire for luxury but also the access to it, under specific sociocultural conditions. In fact, the field becomes a space to negotiate social identities, mediating both access to products and knowledge on the field of luxury. In other words, the study suggests that when creating the cycle of consecration, the online market for second-hand luxury clothing leans to the conversion of consumers, not only of luxury products and brands but also to an order operated by a specific cultural situation, whose cost, according to Spooner (1988), is a certain degree of inhibition of local culture self-expression, as the results of this study demonstrate.

In this context, the representation/negotiation of authenticity is carried out predominantly under parameters of social comparison, since more abstract aspects gain importance as there is a lack of objective signs to attest the authenticity of the items. Therefore, as observed by Sihvonen and Turunen (2016), this study indicates that the origin of the purchase, the trajectory of the objects, the country of origin of the brand, and the reason for the sale are important factors to mediate the perception of authenticity in the context under study. The valuation of these elements in the analyzed discursive practices demonstrates the relational dimension of the field under investigation, in which prestige contexts are used as indexes, enhancing the positive valuation of both stores and products, in an attempt to build an aura of authenticity in the objects offered. This set of elements and meanings used to signal authenticity and luxury, linked mainly to cultures that have greater ability to transfer the aura of luxury, compared to the Brazilian culture, in line with Hedegard's (2015) statements, reinforce the idea that authenticity in the context researched converges with the perspective proposed by Spooner (1988).

As a theoretical contribution, this study presents results that support research on luxury, second-hand goods sold in the online environment, and the importance of the role of authenticity in this scenario, according to studies by Sihvonen and Turunen (2016) and Turunen and Leipämaa-Leskinen (2015), but it also enriches them by presenting particular contributions to the Brazilian context and the relative appropriations of theoretical assumptions pertaining to the first-hand market.

Consequently, as the most important contribution of this study, we conclude that although authenticity is a multidimensional concept, its interpretive dimension should be considered predominantly in the context studied. There is a need for a relative interpretation of the influence of sociocultural factors, given the social and symbolic aspects that underlie the judgment of what is authentic luxury, and which, in the scenario investigated, is based on indexes of expression of high luxury, which in this case refer to the origins and trajectories that are recognized as references of elite distinction for Brazilian consumers. Therefore, in the specific context under study, the notion of authenticity is elaborated in the discourse of stores with greater emphasis on the symbolic effect of the tradition and legitimacy of countries in the context of luxury, which is more related to country social differences, given the semiperipheral position in which Brazil is situated in terms of social development and more specifically in the universe of luxury. Thus, the valuation of environments, trajectories, and experiences linked to some European countries and the United States are distinctive aspects that are used as resources to represent authenticity in the scenario investigated. This articulation reveals the didactic-normative nature of the activity of trading second-hand luxury goods, and its important role in the cycles of consecration of the objects and brands involved.

We also observed that the field studied presents some peculiarities that distance it from some theoretical assumptions adopted for the context of consumption of luxury clothing in the

first-hand market. Thus, among the contributions of this study, we suggest that the effects of the country of origin and endorsement by celebrity, pointed as not significant for the communication of the luxury brand in the first-hand market, as found by Pizzinatto et al. (2016), are not fully valid for the context of online consumption of second-hand clothing. This is because given the social and symbolic nature of these elements in the Brazilian context, these factors, besides being a guidance for taste, facilitate the transfer and perception of the aura of authenticity and luxury.

The analysis of the discursive mechanisms used as attenuators of the stigma of imitation and discursive approximation of the notion of authenticity, although by concealment and contextual displacement, also brings a theoretical contribution to the field. The relativization of falsification in the context investigated corroborates the idea that in the realm of luxury, the real and the imitation do not oppose each other, assuming polarized positions, as it is often admitted. Instead, as proposed in the study of Turunen and Laaksonen (2011), the copy assumes an intermediate position, while the contrast of luxury would be unbranded products. In view of this, we can infer that, as presented in the results, imitation is inserted in the context of luxury, and can be understood as representations and forms of appropriation of luxury, as suggested by Kapferer's (2014) perspective, and, therefore, it must not necessarily be seen as a threat to genuine products, but sometimes the opposite as they may be bridges or tributes.

It is worth pointing out some limitations of the work. The first one is related to the methodological "design" adopted. The choice of working with only stores kept in the virtual environment ends up limiting the corpus to the descriptions and comments posted, without the physical contact with products, managers, and mainly consumers. Therefore, the conclusions do not cover the outlook of the entire Brazilian second-hand luxury clothing market and its products. In addition, the lack of second-hand luxury studies carried out in Brazil may be a limitation, since it hinders the comparison of results, considering the particularities of the consumption context.

Finally, it is important to point out that the results of the research uncover other concerns that may support other studies. The discarding of clothing, even if they are luxury clothes, seems to have some influence on conscious or responsible consumption behavior. We should not forget, however, that it also has support in forms of collaborative consumption, which is a subject that still needs further study in the field of consumption studies. It would also be appropriate to research other contexts of the sale of second-hand luxury clothing, such as trading sites. Linked to the subject of material culture, there are still possibilities for research: the understanding of the socially constructed relationships in the activities and experiences of luxury product exchanges, and the authenticity of goods considered more sophisticated, such as jewels, furniture, and other artifacts of greater symbolic value.

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