

# **Can Heritage Be Artificial?**

A Qualitative Study of Consumer Perceptions of Luxury Heritage  
Storytelling in Relation to Generative AI

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# Abstract

**Title:** Can Heritage Be Artificial? A Qualitative Study of Consumer Perceptions of Luxury Heritage Storytelling in Relation to Generative AI.

**Course:** BUSN39 – Degree Project in Global Marketing – Master Level

**Keywords:** Luxury Heritage Brands, Luxury Heritage Storytelling, Generative AI, Authenticity

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore how consumers discuss the use of Generative AI in luxury heritage storytelling, and how such use influences perceptions of brand authenticity of luxury heritage brands.

**Research Question:** How do consumers discuss luxury heritage storytelling in relation to Generative AI?

**Theoretical Framework:** The theoretical framework used is Beverland's (2006) *Six Attributes of Authenticity*

**Methodology:** This study adopts a qualitative research approach, using focus group discussions. In total, three focus groups consisting of 15 participants aged between 18 and 30 were held. After transcription, the empirical data were analyzed using a thematic analysis, in line with Braun and Clarke (2006).

**Findings/Conclusion:** The findings identified three overarching themes showing the relationship between GAI and luxury heritage storytelling: (1) *Expectations of Luxury Heritage Watch Brands*, (2) *Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth*, and (3) *Conditional Acceptance*. The findings suggest that consumers evaluated GAI through what it signaled about the brand, rather than only through the content it produced. GAI seemed to weaken authenticity when it made the brand appear less sincere, less historically grounded, or less committed to high effort. However, GAI appeared to be acceptable when it supported an existing real foundation and remained transparent, rather than replacing the elements that made the heritage story feel authentic.

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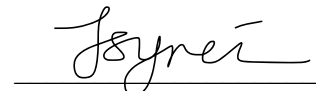
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# 1. Introduction

Throughout history, luxury brands have relied on factors such as heritage, craftsmanship, and authenticity to create symbolic value and meaning (Morhart et al. 2020). Stories about tradition, continuity, and human expertise have become central to how luxury heritage brands communicate part of their identity (Zhang & Müller, 2022). Simultaneously, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) is increasingly reshaping advertising and creative content production (Jung et al. 2025), which raises a new question for luxury heritage brands: whether stories built on history can remain authentic when produced by GAI.

## 1.1 Background

GAI, understood as artificial intelligence systems capable of producing new content such as text and images, has become increasingly relevant in advertising, where it enables new forms of content creation (Jung et al. 2025; Guo, 2025). As GAI expands into brand communication, it may also become relevant for luxury heritage storytelling, where brands communicate history, tradition, and values. Since this form of storytelling depends on credible links between a brand's past and present identity (Urde et al. 2007), the use of AI-generated content raises questions about how consumers would interpret such communication. In luxury contexts, this is particularly relevant because consumers may associate GAI advertising with reduced human effort, which can make the communicated brand narrative appear less authentic (Jung et al. 2025; To et al. 2025). Negative interpretations may therefore extend beyond the advertisement itself and shape perceptions of the luxury heritage brand's authenticity.

This phenomenon can be understood as part of the broader development of AI advertising, where AI technologies are increasingly used to support the creation, adaptation, and delivery of advertising content (Jung et al. 2025; To et al. 2025). This may influence not only how an advertisement is produced, but also how consumers interpret the meaning and credibility of the brand narrative.

Luxury brands and heritage brands are conceptually distinct, but they often intersect. Luxury brands create value beyond functional product attributes through symbolic meanings such as exclusivity, authenticity, and heritage (Kotler et al. 2022; Lin & Ku, 2023). Kapferer (2012) identifies heritage as a central component of luxury branding, while Urde et al. (2007) emphasize heritage as strategically relevant when a brand's history, longevity, core values, symbols, and track record form part of its identity and positioning. In this thesis, luxury

heritage brands (LHBs) are therefore understood as luxury brands that use heritage as a central part of their identity, communication, and value proposition.

Brand heritage is closely connected to authenticity, which is often associated with what is perceived as “real”, “genuine”, or “true” (Lehman et al. 2018). A brand’s heritage can strengthen perceptions of authenticity and credibility because it ties the brand’s past, present, and future together (Bansal et al. 2025). Heritage storytelling communicates this connection through narratives and symbols that express the brand’s history, origins, consistency, and values (Thieme et al. 2010). This is especially important in luxury branding, where heritage and authenticity are central to brand meaning (Guo, 2025). For LHBs, authenticity is therefore not only linked to product quality, but also to whether the brand’s heritage is perceived as credible and meaningful.

The luxury watch industry is a suitable context for this study because brand value in this sector depends on recognizable design elements, emotional narratives, historical continuity, and the ability to balance heritage with modernity (Zhang & Müller, 2022). Historical brands present themselves as “guardians of the fine watchmaking heritage”, using stories to communicate tradition, expertise, credibility, and authenticity (Philippe et al. 2022). Heritage is therefore a large part of how luxury watch brands communicate brand value and is relevant for examining how consumer interpretation of authenticity is impacted if heritage storytelling were shaped using GAI.

Taken together, this background shows why the possible use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling raises questions about authenticity. Since heritage storytelling depends on credible links to history and continuity (Thieme et al. 2010), AI-generated luxury content may affect how consumers interpret the brand narrative.

## 1.2 Problematization and Research Question

AI creates new possibilities for luxury advertising by supporting creative content production, personalization, and campaign development (Jung et al. 2025; Guo 2025). While Guo (2025) suggests that AI can support luxury brands through customer experience and marketing optimization, Jung et al. (2025) show that GAI has moved artificial intelligence beyond analytics and automation into creative advertising domains. At the same time, these possibilities create uncertainty in luxury communication; if LHBs seek to adopt this technology, they might need to consider how GAI can be integrated without undermining the heritage and authenticity on which their brand value depends. This tension is particularly

relevant because AI-generated luxury advertisements may be perceived as lower in effort and less authentic (To et al. 2025).

This uncertainty becomes particularly important in luxury heritage storytelling, which is a vital tool for activating and communicating heritage, as it helps express the brand's history, origins, consistency over time, and values (Thieme et al. 2010). In luxury branding, the use of AI tools is therefore sensitive because it must be integrated without compromising heritage, identity, and authenticity (Guo, 2025).

Existing research has examined authenticity, heritage branding, and heritage storytelling within the luxury industry, and consumer responses to AI-generated luxury advertising. However, these areas remain insufficiently connected. Luxury branding research shows that authenticity is central to luxury brand value and is closely linked to heritage, originality, and iconicity (Morhart et al. 2020). Research on heritage storytelling explains how luxury brands use narratives to communicate and manage heritage meaning, but this work mainly approaches storytelling as a corporate branding strategy (Donzé & Wubs, 2019), rather than as a consumer interpreted authenticity problem. Research on GAI in luxury advertising suggests that consumer responses depend on both disclosure and perceived qualities of AI-generated content. To et al. (2025) show that disclosing the use of AI-generated imagery can reduce perceived effort and advertisement authenticity in luxury advertisements. In contrast, Jung et al. (2025) show that perceived artificial creativity can increase trust in GAI and perceived humanness, which then shape evaluations of advertising attributes and purchase intention. Yet these studies focus mainly on advertisement evaluations, purchase intention, and advertisement authenticity.

The empirical problem is therefore that it remains unclear how consumers interpret the hypothetical use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling, and whether GAI can be perceived as compatible with this context. Moreover, it remains uncertain under which conditions consumers may accept GAI use, and when they may instead perceive it as weakening or destabilizing the authenticity of the heritage narrative.

A consumer perspective is necessary because authenticity is not determined by brands alone but is shaped through consumers' perceptions and interpretations of whether heritage claims appear credible and consistent (Rindell & Santos, 2021). This is particularly important in luxury heritage storytelling, because the study focuses on how consumers judge whether such narratives feel authentic in relation to the brand's identity. Since publicly available examples of GAI use in luxury heritage storytelling remain limited, this study does not examine



consumer responses to actual AI-generated heritage advertisements. Instead, a qualitative focus group approach is suitable because it allows participants to reflect on how they would interpret GAI use in this context.

The purpose of the thesis is therefore to explore how consumers discuss the hypothetical use of Generative AI in luxury heritage storytelling, and how such use might influence perceptions of brand authenticity, with a specific focus on LHBs. This leads to the following research question:

*How do consumers discuss luxury heritage storytelling in relation to Generative AI?*

### 1.3 Aimed Research Contributions

The research aims to provide theoretical and practical insights into luxury branding and AI in luxury advertising literature. The study contributes to existing literature by extending current discussions on GAI and brand authenticity within the context of luxury heritage storytelling for, to the best of our knowledge, the first time. In doing so, the thesis also responds to Brüns & Meißner's (2024) call for research to explore the effects of GAI adoption across follower segments and brand types. They suggest that GAI content may appear more fitting for innovative brands than for heritage brands, making the focus on young consumers' perceptions of LHBs a relevant context in which consumer responses may be particularly sensitive. Thereby, this research offers novel insights into consumer interpretations and discussions surrounding GAI, authenticity, and heritage storytelling.

Theoretically, the study contributes by showing how GAI may reshape authenticity evaluations in luxury heritage storytelling. The findings suggest that consumers evaluate GAI through what its use signals about sincerity, historical credibility, human effort, transparency, and justified use. This extends existing literature by showing that luxury heritage storytelling is a particularly demanding context for GAI, because consumer evaluations may extend beyond the advertisement itself to the credibility of the brand's heritage. The study also contributes to authenticity theory by suggesting that consumers seem to evaluate Beverland's (2006) authenticity attributes through a hierarchical structure. Specifically, *Heritage and Pedigree* and *Method of Production* appeared to be the most foundational attributes for LHBs, whereas the remaining attributes appeared more secondary in shaping perceptions of authenticity within this context.

On a practical level, the study provides guidance for LHBs on how GAI may be used in heritage storytelling without necessarily weakening authenticity. The findings suggest that GAI is more acceptable when it enhances an existing heritage foundation, remains transparent, and adds creative value that traditional production methods cannot achieve. In contrast, GAI becomes riskier when it replaces human presence, fabricates historical elements, or makes the brand appear less sincere and less committed to its heritage. For LHBs, this means that GAI should be used selectively and with attention to what its use communicates about the brand's priorities. Beyond luxury branding, the findings may also be relevant for cultural heritage communication, museum interpretation, and historical tourism, where credibility might depend on preserving links to history, place, and human experience.

## 1.4 Delimitations

This thesis focuses specifically on LHBs that utilize heritage-focused storytelling within the luxury watch industry. Within this context, hypothetical GAI use in luxury heritage storytelling is explored using advertisement-elicitation to prompt focus group discussions. This delimitation was made in order to focus on an industry where heritage and authenticity play a central role in brand communication.

Additionally, the study focuses specifically on perceptions of authenticity rather than consumer purchase intentions or broader behavioral outcomes related to GAI advertising. Finally, the sample is limited to consumers between the ages of 18 to 30, representing a younger demographic relevant to understanding contexts in which GAI is used.

## 1.5 Thesis Outline

The overall structure of the thesis is organized into seven chapters. The introductory chapter provides background to the topic and highlights the relevance of the study through empirical problematization and the presentation of the research question. The following chapter, Literature Review, explores and analyzes existing literature within luxury branding and AI in luxury advertising in order to identify the research gap. The third chapter, Theoretical Underpinning, introduces the theoretical framework *Six Attributes of Authenticity* (Beverland, 2006), which is used as an interpretive lens for analyzing the findings. This is followed by the Methodology chapter, which outlines the study's research design, as well as the data collection and data analysis processes. The Findings & Analysis chapter presents the

analyzed data and themes identified throughout the focus groups. The succeeding Discussion chapter examines how the findings contribute to existing literature and discusses their broader implications. Finally, the concluding chapter answers the research question and reflects on the study's limitations while suggesting directions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

This thesis seeks to gain deeper insight into how consumers discuss the hypothetical use of GAI in the context of luxury heritage storytelling, and its impact on their perceptions of brand authenticity. To guide this research, the following chapter will focus on two literature streams: Luxury Branding and GAI in Luxury Advertising. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the literature stream surrounding Luxury Branding, and how luxury brands use heritage in their storytelling to build authenticity. The second section focuses on the literature stream surrounding AI in Luxury Advertising, and how consumers perceive luxury brand advertisements' use of GAI. The third section examines the intersection between the two literature streams, exposing the gap between GAI advertising and luxury branding, and showing that GAI in luxury heritage storytelling remains underexplored.

### 2.1 Luxury Branding

Luxury branding is a well-known concept lacking a singular universal definition, as luxury is ultimately determined through consumer evaluation rather than fixed product attributes (Ko et al. 2019). A new definition of luxury brands was proposed by Ko et al. (2019), in which they are perceived as: *(1) high quality; (2) offer authentic value via desired benefits, whether functional or emotional; (3) have a prestigious image within the market built on qualities such as artisanship, craftsmanship, or service quality; (4) be worthy of commanding a premium price; and (5) be capable of inspiring a deep connection, or resonance, with the consumer.* This definition is useful for the present study because it shows that luxury value is based on product features, as well as on how consumers perceive qualities such as authenticity and emotional connection.

Luxury brands often justify value through intangible meanings, such as heritage, meaning that authenticity becomes a central evaluative lens in luxury branding (Morhart et al. 2020). Furthermore, luxury is not only about selling products, but also about selling a story and emotional appeal (Zhang & Müller. 2022). Accordingly, this thesis focuses on the perceived authenticity of luxury heritage storytelling with discussion surrounding the hypothetical use of GAI, that is, whether consumers view heritage narratives as “real,” “genuine,” or “true” to the brand’s claimed past (Lehman et al. 2018).

This stream reviews luxury branding literature on heritage, storytelling, and authenticity to get an overview of which elements are central to luxury heritage storytelling and authenticity, and to understand what remains underexplored in research on luxury heritage branding.

### 2.1.1 Heritage Branding

Urde et al. (2007, p. 4) define brand heritage as a “*dimension of a brand’s identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in the organizational belief that its history is important.*” A central contribution is their distinction between history and heritage in corporate branding: whereas history is anchored in the past, heritage involves the strategic use of the past to create relevance in the present and future. Urde et al. (2007) therefore differentiate between a “brand with a heritage” and a “heritage brand”, where in the latter, heritage is central to the brand’s positioning and value proposition because it can add depth, authenticity, and credibility for the consumer. Building on this view, studies on luxury brands suggest that heritage elements can strengthen perceived authenticity, which is important for sustaining a premium market position (Bansal et al. 2025).

Zhou et al. (2026) distinguish between *Continuity Heritage* and *Integrity Heritage* as two ways luxury brands can reinforce perceptions of brand heritage. Continuity heritage refers to consistency with a brand’s origins and history over time, while integrity heritage concerns the brand’s underlying values, such as commitment beyond pure profit. Their findings suggest that continuity heritage can elevate perceived status by signaling timeless value, originality, and established legitimacy. However, their study focuses primarily on luxury status rather than on how consumers interpret the authenticity of heritage communication.

As a contrast, Cooper et al. (2021) argue that there is a tension between heritage and innovation, which requires that LHBs balance continuity and change. The authors developed a framework for LHBs to manage this paradox, saying that they should (1) *remain true to the authentic core*, (2) *innovate, especially using design innovation*, and (3) *embrace change to maintain relevance*. However, Cooper et al. (2021) focus on how Australian and New Zealand LHBs manage heritage and innovation from a managerial perspective, rather than specifically on authenticity or consumer interpretation.

Furthermore, research supports the importance of heritage on the consumer side. Across age groups, consumers associate LHBs with timelessness, high quality craftsmanship, and prestige. Additionally, consumers perceived that LHBs helped them maintain a bridge to their individual pasts and tended to appreciate LHBs more the older they got (Halwani, 2019).

This research, however, does not take authenticity into account, only focusing on how consumers make sense of and feel about LHBs.

### 2.1.2 Heritage Storytelling

Heritage is often communicated through meaningful stories (Varol & Çelik-Varol, 2026). The authors define storytelling as conveying a brand's "*value, history, and vision to its target audience through various narratives*", with the aim of building emotional connections with consumers, reinforcing belief in the brand's identity, and fostering loyalty. Building on this, Urde (2024) emphasizes the need for storytelling to be authentic, as well as resonate with the brand's communication and identity. Earlier literature further explains that "*Luxury brands must instead unleash the storytelling power of their history*" (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012, p. 163).

This supports the thesis' focus on luxury heritage storytelling, as storytelling is central to communicating heritage, cultural meaning, and enduring emotional ties with consumers (Varol & Çelik-Varol, 2026). While these narratives are used to reinforce heritage, Donzé and Wubs (2019) argue that storytelling is a corporate strategy that brands often use to construct and manage their heritage narratives. This is significant to the thesis because if heritage meaning is created and communicated through advertising narratives, then authenticity becomes a matter of how consumers interpret the cues and credibility of the heritage story presented. Overall, it is therefore relevant to examine how consumers discuss luxury heritage storytelling specifically, rather than another form of luxury communication.

### 2.1.3 Authenticity

This section examines how authenticity is understood and evaluated in relation to heritage. According to Morhart et al. (2020), authenticity is frequently treated as essential in luxury branding, though it is often conceptualized differently across literature. The authors suggest that consumers associate authenticity with heritage, craftsmanship, originality, and iconicity (Morhart et al. 2020).

Heritage branding can strengthen consumer appeal, but only when heritage claims are perceived as authentic. Authenticity in this context is primarily informed by consistency, including whether a brand remains true to its origins over time and whether it stays aligned with its underlying values (Han et al. 2021). The authors distinguish between *Continuity Authenticity* and *Integrity Authenticity*, which is relevant to this thesis as luxury heritage storytelling depends on whether consumers perceive the brand's history, values, and identity as credible within the story being communicated (Varol & Çelik-Varol, 2026). Nevertheless,

Han et al. (2021) focus on how specific heritage cues, such as longevity and values, influence consumer evaluations of product enhancements. Their quantitative study therefore offers limited insight into how consumers discuss authenticity in relation to luxury heritage storytelling.

Complementing these perspectives, Rindell and Santos (2021) studied consumer perceptions of authenticity in relation to corporate heritage, and from their understanding were the first ones to do so. They conceptualize authenticity as socially constructed, and found that uniqueness, credibility, and consistency were key dimensions consumers used when evaluating the authenticity of corporate heritage brands. Although Rindell and Santos' (2021) findings are relevant for understanding brand heritage, its applicability to the present thesis is limited as it was developed in relation to a non-luxury fast-moving consumer goods corporation within the food industry. Thus, it offers useful insight into heritage dimensions but does not directly address luxury brands or heritage storytelling.

## 2.2 AI in Luxury Advertising

This literature stream reviews existing research on the use of AI in luxury advertising. While AI is increasingly integrated into luxury brand communication, academic research on its role in advertising remains limited. In particular, few studies examine how GAI is used in luxury advertising or how such use may influence consumer perceptions. As a result, current knowledge is fragmented and primarily based on a small number of studies.

### 2.2.1 The Growing Role of AI in Luxury Branding

A large share of the existing literature on luxury and AI is situated within the luxury fashion industry. Within this domain, AI is emerging as a significant driver of change, influencing areas such as strategic planning, personalization, design processes, sustainability practices, and customer experience enhancement (Anubha, 2026; Ellahi, 2025). Tam and Lung (2025) argue that, to remain competitive, fashion practitioners should invest more in technologies such as Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, AI, and AI chatbots, while also strengthening their ability to implement these strategies effectively.

Research explains that brands across luxury industries increasingly experiment with AI-generated content (To et al. 2025) to maintain competitiveness and preserve brand authenticity (Jung et al. 2025). However, there is still limited research on the use and perceptions of GAI in luxury advertising. While this development indicates that AI is

becoming increasingly integrated into luxury brand communication, it also highlights the need for a deeper understanding of whether, and in which ways, the use of GAI in advertising may affect luxury brands.

### 2.2.2 Tension Between Luxury Values and GAI Advertising

Public responses to AI-generated luxury campaigns have been varied, with industry experts highlighting a potential tension between the exclusive essence of luxury and the automated nature of AI technology (To et al. 2025). Luxury brands derive value not only from premium pricing, but also from associations with high quality, craftsmanship, and perceived effort. These associations are relevant in luxury advertising, where consumers may evaluate whether brand communication reflects the essence, core values, and image of the luxury brand (To et al. 2025). From this perspective, the authors argue that AI-generated advertising may create tension in luxury contexts, since the disclosure of GAI use can signal lower effort, reduce perceived authenticity, and generate more negative responses.

### 2.2.3 GAI Disclosure Effects in Luxury Advertising

To et al. (2025) examines why using AI-generated advertisements can backfire for luxury brands. The research investigates how consumers respond to AI-generated visual advertising in luxury contexts, including both email-based advertisements and static advertisement images. The findings show that disclosing the use of AI-generated imagery may have a negative impact on consumer responses to luxury advertisements, whereas the same disclosure does not have the same negative effect on mainstream brands (To et al. 2025). This suggests that GAI disclosure is more problematic in luxury contexts, where luxury brand communication is associated with craftsmanship and effort (To et al. 2025).

The study further shows that this effect is driven by perceived effort and authenticity. When advertisements disclose that their images were AI-generated, consumers tend to assume that less effort went into producing them (To et al. 2025). In the case of luxury brands, this lower perceived effort weakens advertisement authenticity, which then leads to more negative advertisement evaluations. To et al. (2025) explain why GAI disclosure can harm luxury advertising and support their argument through a combination of a field experiment and laboratory experiments. Nonetheless, the study remains limited in scope. To et al. (2025) is a quantitative study that centers on craftsmanship, advertisement evaluations, and advertisement authenticity in luxury branding, rather than on heritage storytelling and LHBs.



## 2.2.4 Acceptance Boundaries and Consumer Authenticity Judgments

To et al. (2025) add an important nuance by showing that consumer resistance to GAI in luxury advertising is not absolute. Their findings suggest that highly creative advertisements can reduce the negative effect of GAI disclosures compared with more standard executions. In this case, stronger creativity appears to compensate for the lower effort consumers often associate with AI-generated content. As a result, the advertisement is judged as slightly more authentic and receives more favorable evaluations. The study therefore shows that acceptance boundaries depend not only on whether GAI is used, but also on how the advertisement is designed and whether the final output still signals originality, effort, and fit with the brand.

Similarly, Jung et al. (2025) offer a more nuanced perspective by showing that consumer responses to AI-generated luxury advertising are not solely negative. The study suggests that evaluations depend on how the advertisement is perceived. When AI-generated content is seen as creatively strong, consumers may become more confident in AI's ability to produce reliable and capable outputs and perceive the content as more humanlike. These perceptions can then improve evaluations of the advertisement. Jung et al. (2025) show that purchase intention was most strongly linked to perceptions of informativeness and novelty in AI-generated advertisements. Their research is therefore valuable because, even though it does not focus directly on authenticity perceptions, it shows how consumers evaluate AI-generated luxury advertising through perceived creativity, trust in AI, and perceived humanness. At the same time, its main emphasis is on purchase intention and advertising effectiveness rather than on storytelling.

However, neither study examines luxury heritage storytelling directly, which limits their applicability to this thesis. Both rely on AI-generated advertisements created by the researchers, rather than advertisements produced by luxury brands. As a result, the stimuli do not fully reflect how luxury advertising is developed, contextualized, and communicated in actual campaign settings. Consequently, the findings reflect consumer responses to experimental stimuli rather than actual luxury advertisements, limiting the extent to which the results can be generalized to real-world GAI advertising in the luxury industry. Overall, this suggests that current research on GAI in luxury advertising is still at an early stage and with limited connection to real market practices.

## 2.3 Intersection of Literature Streams

Taken together, the literature streams show that heritage storytelling plays a central role in luxury branding, and consumer responses to AI-generated luxury advertisements depend on how the content is presented and perceived. The first stream highlights the importance of heritage, storytelling, and authenticity in shaping luxury brand meaning and consumer perceptions (Urde et al. 2007; Morhart et al. 2020; Rindell & Santos, 2021; Varol & Çelik Varol, 2026). However, much of this research highlights heritage as a strategic tool to build authenticity (Donzé & Wubs. 2019), rather than examining how consumers perceive the authenticity of luxury heritage storytelling. The consumer perspective is especially important because the authenticity of a brand's heritage claims is shaped by consumer interpretation (Han et al. 2021), rather than controlled by the brand itself. It is therefore necessary for understanding how luxury heritage storytelling is evaluated. The second stream shows that GAI in luxury advertising can either weaken or support consumer responses depending on factors such as GAI disclosures and perceived effort (To et al. 2025), as well as creativity, trust in AI, and perceived humanness (Jung et al. 2025). However, perceptions of GAI use in relation to storytelling have not been previously studied.

The two streams, Luxury Branding and AI in Luxury Advertising, have not yet been brought together to research GAI luxury heritage storytelling. Pawar et al. (2026) suggest that elements from both streams should be understood in relation to one another. As a result, a gap is revealed where it remains unclear how consumers perceive luxury heritage storytelling in relation to GAI. This is important to address because evaluations of GAI advertisements may influence broader perceptions of the brand. Furthermore, studying an industry other than fashion can provide insight into whether GAI is evaluated differently in another luxury context where heritage and historical continuity are especially central to brand meaning (Philippe et al. 2022). For this study, it therefore becomes suitable to examine the luxury watch industry. Accordingly, this thesis aims to study how consumers discuss the hypothetical use of Generative AI in luxury heritage storytelling, and how such use might influence perceptions of brand authenticity.

### 3. Theoretical Underpinning

Authenticity is commonly associated with dimensions such as genuineness, truthfulness, and responsibility, though its meaning remains highly subjective and dependent on the consumer's point of view and truth (Södergren, 2021; Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). Grayson and Martinec (2004) argue that authenticity reflects a broader human concern connected to the ongoing search for meaning and belonging. Brand authenticity extends these concerns to market-related products, brands, and communities, and is defined as “*the extent to which consumers perceive a brand to be faithful and true toward itself and its consumers, and to support consumers being true to themselves*” (Morhart et al. 2015, p. 202). Within marketing and branding, brand authenticity has become increasingly important to consider (Stern, 1994), and Portal et al. (2019) mean that it “*positively influences trust and loyalty*”.

#### 3.1 Beverland's Six Attributes of Authenticity

As authenticity can be understood through different theoretical perspectives, this thesis draws on Beverland's (2006) framework. Beverland conceptualizes brand authenticity as multidimensional and identifies six attributes that contribute to how authenticity is constructed and perceived within the luxury wine industry. The six attributes are: (1) *Heritage and Pedigree*, (2) *Stylistic Consistency*, (3) *Quality Commitments*, (4) *Relationship to Place*, (5) *Method of Production*, and (6) *Downplaying Commercial Motives*. Since Beverland presents these attributes through findings from the luxury wine context rather than as fixed definitions, the following section explains how each attribute is understood and applied in this thesis.

*Heritage and Pedigree* refers to a brand's connection to its history, longevity, and proven track record over time. Heritage adds meaning to the brand, while pedigree reflects the status and credibility that come from consistently delivering quality across time (Beverland, 2006).

*Stylistic Consistency* is conceptualized through preserving an identifiable and coherent style over time rather than diluting it by conforming too much to trends. An authentic brand is expected to remain true to its established character and continue to deliver a consistent experience (Beverland, 2006).

*Quality Commitments* is described as the extent to which authenticity is strengthened by clear and uncompromising dedication to high quality in the product and its production process.

This relates to careful selection, technical expertise, effort, time investment, and the brand's devotion to its consumers (Beverland, 2006).

*Relationship to Place* is associated with the brand being meaningfully tied to a specific place, origin, or environment, so that the brand is viewed as rooted in something real and traceable. This entails both a tangible place of origin and the broader cultural and historical associations linked to the brand (Beverland, 2006).

*Method of Production* refers to how the final product is made and the extent to which the production process is seen as genuine, careful, and transparent. Authenticity is reinforced when consumers have all the information in regards to how the product is made, as it enhances interest and links the final product to the creative process (Beverland, 2006).

Lastly, *Downplaying Commercial Motives* refers to presenting the brand in a way that does not appear overly sales-driven, manipulative, or commercial. Authenticity is thereby weakened when branding feels overly marketized, while it is strengthened when the brand appears sincere, restrained, and more focused on the product than on selling (Beverland, 2006).

### 3.2 Relevance and Application of Theoretical Framework

This thesis adopts Beverland's (2006) framework to examine how consumers discuss Generative AI in luxury heritage storytelling, and how such use might influence perceptions of brand authenticity. Since authenticity is often understood as socially constructed (Södergren, 2021), Beverland's multidimensional framework aligns with the thesis' qualitative focus on consumer interpretation. The framework is particularly suitable because it was developed within a luxury context and captures authenticity through six attributes closely related to luxury heritage branding.

At the same time, the framework has limitations. Beverland's (2006) study was originally developed in the luxury wine industry, although he highlights its broader relevance across other luxury contexts. Even so, its attributes cannot be assumed to fully capture authenticity perceptions in luxury watch advertising or in relation to GAI. For this reason, the framework is not used as a measurement tool, but as an interpretive lens to support the analysis of themes emerging from the empirical material.

## 4. Methodology

This chapter outlines the study's methodology. It first presents the research design, including the choice of method, research strategy, and brand selection. It then describes the data collection process and analytic approach. Finally, the chapter addresses research quality, ethical considerations, and methodological limitations.

### 4.1 Research Design

In line with Halwani and Cherry's (2023) consumer-centered approach to brand authenticity, this study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how consumers discuss authenticity in relation to GAI. Like their study, this thesis treats brand authenticity as a construct shaped by consumer perception and uses focus group discussions to examine how consumers articulate and justify authenticity judgments. However, this thesis applies Halwani and Cherry's (2023) approach to the specific context of luxury heritage watch storytelling. Since publicly available examples of AI-generated luxury heritage storytelling remain limited, the study does not examine reactions to existing GAI advertisements. Instead, real luxury watch advertisements were used as elicitation material to stimulate discussion about hypothetical GAI use.

#### 4.1.1 Qualitative Research Approach and Strategy

Qualitative research is well suited to exploratory studies as it enables a nuanced examination of meaning-making, narratives, and personal interpretations (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). Given that this study aims to explore subjective perceptions and how consumers justify their evaluations, a qualitative design is appropriate (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). This approach enables an in-depth examination of discussions on hypothetical GAI use in relation to luxury heritage storytelling, and how such use might shape perceptions of brand authenticity. The use of focus groups further supports this aim by enabling participants to articulate, question, and develop interpretations through interaction (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021).

This study adopts an abductive research approach, allowing iterative movement between empirical data and theoretical concepts to develop interpretations (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). In this thesis, the initial themes derived from participants' discussions were compared with theoretical concepts and literature on authenticity, heritage storytelling, and GAI in luxury advertising. This approach is suitable because existing research provides limited

guidance on how GAI may interact with luxury heritage storytelling. The analysis therefore remained open to meanings, conditions, and contradictions that emerged from the data.

#### 4.1.2 Empirical Context and Brand Selection

The luxury watch industry was selected as the empirical context because it is strongly associated with heritage, tradition, and historical continuity (Zhang & Müller, 2022), attributes relevant for this thesis. Focusing on one industry also supported a coherent analysis of consumer perceptions within a clearly defined luxury category.

Cartier and Patek Philippe were selected as sources of advertisement stimuli rather than as cases for brand-level analysis. Case selection was guided by four criteria. First, the brands were required to be established actors within the luxury watch industry to ensure contextual consistency. Second, they needed to be categorized as luxury brands, characterized by high quality, exclusivity, and symbolic value beyond functional attributes (Kotler et al. 2022). Third, the brands had to qualify as heritage brands, meaning that their identity should be rooted in historical continuity and that their heritage remains an active part of how the brand is communicated and positioned in the present. Urde et al.'s (2007) *Heritage Quotient Framework* was used to assess this, which identifies longevity, track record, history, core values, and symbols as central indicators of a heritage brand. Fourth, their communication explicitly needed to emphasize heritage and innovation in order to be relevant for prompting discussions about authenticity of luxury heritage storytelling.

Based on these criteria, Cartier and Patek Philippe were considered suitable for selecting advertisement material. Cartier is named after its founder Louis-François Cartier, who established the French jewelry and watchmaker house in Paris in 1847. The brand emphasizes its heritage and core values through a commitment to excellence and creativity (Cartier, n.d.). Patek Philippe is a Swiss luxury watchmaker located in Geneva. The brand was established in 1839, and is named after two of its founders, Antoni Patek and Adrien Philippe. Moreover, the brand's values include quality and fine workmanship, innovation, and heritage (Patek, n.d.).

Together, these characteristics make the two brands relevant for the study. As luxury and heritage are central, they provide a relevant inspiration for discussions about luxury heritage storytelling in relation to GAI.

#### 4.1.3 Focus Group Discussion Design

Focus groups including advertisement-elicitation were chosen as the most appropriate research design. According to Bryman et al. (2024), there are two types of focus groups: focus group interviews and focus group discussions. The former is an interaction between the moderator and participants, while the latter is a discussion between the participants guided by the moderator who asks open-ended and follow-up questions. This study adopted a focus group discussion format because it enabled insight into how authenticity judgments of brands were formed and discussed socially. This included what participants said, how they motivated their viewpoints, how they challenged interpretations, and how they built on each other's reasoning (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021).

Furthermore, the format was particularly suitable because the study examined a hypothetical and emerging topic. Since GAI use in luxury heritage storytelling is not yet widely established, participants may not have had fully formed opinions before the discussions. The group setting therefore allowed participants to develop, question, and refine their views in response to others. This approach was relevant because prior research suggests a potential tension between GAI and luxury branding (To et al. 2025), making group discussion useful for moving beyond initial, fixed interpretations to more nuanced reflections.

The focus groups were designed to evoke both immediate reactions and more reflective interpretations of the luxury watch industry, which contributed to a richer and more layered understanding of the phenomenon (Bryman et al. 2024). Drawing on Slovic et al. (2007), the *affect heuristic* was treated as a lens for capturing rapid, feeling based evaluations before more elaborated reasoning emerged through discussion. This theoretical lens helped understand why consumers might react to or reason about GAI use in luxury heritage storytelling in a quick and emotional way rather than through careful analysis.

An interview guide structured into three parts was prepared in advance, comprising 12 questions: (1) some background including a warm-up question relating to the luxury industry, (2) viewing of the selected advertisements followed by questions on authenticity perceptions of heritage storytelling in relation to GAI based upon Beverland's (2006) framework, and (3) closing questions. All groups viewed the same two advertisements in the same order, beginning with Patek Philippe followed by Cartier; furthermore, all groups were asked the same set of core questions, while follow-up questions were used to deepen or clarify reasoning when needed (Bryman et al. 2024).

Focus group discussions were held in Swedish or English due to a wide range of participating nationalities. Two sessions were held in Swedish, based on participants' preference to express themselves in their native language, which contributed to a more relaxed environment, richer articulation, and mitigated the risk of language-related difficulties in group discussion (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021).

## 4.2 Data Collection and Sampling

This section explains how the empirical material was collected and how participants were selected for the study. The data collection was based on focus group discussions, supported by two luxury heritage watch advertisements used as elicitation material. Presented first is the advertisement selection, followed by the sampling strategy and the focus group procedure.

### 4.2.1 Advertisement Selection

The two selected video advertisements were used as elicitation material to stimulate focus group discussions about luxury heritage storytelling and hypothetical GAI use. The videos were published on Cartier's and Patek Philippe's Instagram pages and offer suitable material for examining how heritage is visually communicated through storytelling. Instagram was selected due to its global reach and central role in luxury brand communication; it is among the most used social media platforms worldwide (Statista, 2025a) and is frequently used by luxury brands to present and communicate their brand identity (Statista, 2022).

The advertisements were selected based on the criterion that heritage formed the central element of the narrative. To ensure this, a systematic and transparent selection of two relevant heritage storytelling advertisements was conducted, applying the *Heritage Quotient Framework* developed by Urde et al. (2007). It is important to note that this framework was originally developed to identify heritage brands, and not specifically to analyze advertisements. In this study, it is therefore also adapted as a selection tool for advertisements.

More specifically, the practical selection criterion for advertisements was based on Urde et al.'s (2007) understanding that a heritage brand is one in which history is central to the brand's identity, rather than merely serving as background information. The framework identifies five main elements that indicate the extent to which heritage is present within a brand: track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols, and history as important to



identity (Urde et al. 2007). The authors further argue that the stronger the presence of these dimensions, the higher the brand's heritage quotient. At the center of the framework is brand stewardship, referring to the management of the brand in ways that preserve and carry its heritage forward (Urde et al. 2007). Accordingly, the selected advertisements were assessed and selected on the basis of whether they reflected all five key heritage dimensions.

Table 1 below presents the five elements of the two brands' heritage quotient and explains how these are interpreted in the context of this study. In addition, the table identifies specific features visualized in the two selected heritage storytelling advertisements that can be categorized within each of the five elements.

| <b>Elements of Heritage Brand Quotient<br/>(Urde et al. 2007)</b>                                            | <i>Cartier</i>                                                                | <i>Patek Philippe</i>                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Track record:</b> A history of consistently delivering value and building trust over time                 | Delivering quality, value and excellence over time.                           | Tradition of quality. Product follows generations.                |
| <b>Longevity:</b> A sense of continuity and enduring presence across time                                    | History through decades/times.<br>High presence.                              | Family history through generations.                               |
| <b>Core values:</b> Long-standing values that continue to shape the brand's identity                         | Innovative.<br>Quality Dedication.<br>Tradition.<br>Elegance.                 | Empathy, trust and emotion.<br>Generations.<br>Traditions.        |
| <b>Use of symbols:</b> Heritage expressed through recognizable symbols, design elements, or visual codes     | The Watch.<br>Founders, Logo, Iconic hallmarks in Paris (ex. eiffel tower).   | The Watch.<br>Black and White.<br>Stylish, minimalistic clothing. |
| <b>History as important to identity:</b><br>History presented as central to the brand's identity and meaning | Shows and explains the evolution of the watches throughout the advertisement. | "Begin your own tradition".<br>Celebrating fatherhood.            |

*Table 1: Heritage Quotient elements (Urde et al. 2007) and their interpretation in the selected advertisements*

#### *Cartier Heritage Advertisement*

Included in the selected material is a video advertisement of approximately one minute and eight seconds presenting the history of the Santos de Cartier watch (see video [here](#)). Through animated storytelling, the advertisement communicates several heritage-related elements, such as references to the founder and the internal and external design of the watch. This is accompanied by a voice-over describing the watch as having embodied a technical and aesthetic revolution since 1904. (Cartier, 2025)

#### *Patek Philippe Heritage Advertisement*

As described in the caption, “exploring and celebrating the nature of a modern relationship between a father and his two sons,” the advertisement portrays an intimate narrative centered on family, tradition, and intergenerational connection (see video [here](#)). Presented in black-and-white scenes, the 45-second-long video emphasizes emotional continuity and heritage. Accompanied by uplifting cinematic music throughout, the narrative concludes with a subtle presentation of the watch, followed by the brand’s iconic advertising slogan, introduced in 1996: “You never actually own a Patek Philippe. You merely look after it for the next generation”. (Patek Philippe, 2019)

### 4.2.2 Sampling

The participants selected to partake in the focus group discussions were 15 university students from different countries and backgrounds (see appendix A). The participants were selected through our contact network based on specific criteria relating to the research question, making it a purposive sampling (Bryman et al. 2024). Furthermore, they were expected to be between the ages of 18 to 30 years old, have GAI familiarity, and have awareness of the brands and the luxury industry.

In addition to the selection criteria, the composition of each focus group required careful consideration. Focus groups depend not only on who participates, but also on the social dynamics between participants (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). Participants were therefore grouped with at least one person that they already knew, as this was expected to create a more comfortable setting and encourage open discussion.

The selected age group was chosen due to its high level of social media engagement on a global scale. Recent data show that individuals aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 represent the largest shares of Instagram users worldwide, accounting for approximately 29.7% and 33.3% of the global user base, respectively (Statista, 2025b). As the study included participants from different countries, this global distribution makes younger consumers particularly relevant, as they are highly active on social media platforms. Their familiarity with digital content and social media environments made them well suited to engage with and evaluate advertisements.

The age criterion was also based on the evidence that younger consumers have high GAI familiarity (Manolică et al. 2025), which is crucial when asked to discuss advertisements in relation to GAI. If participants had not understood what GAI was, there is a possibility that they might have discussed the topic without fully understanding its implications.

Furthermore, the selected age group is the luxury industry's future consumers, emphasizing the importance of their opinion on, and perception of, the current and future development of luxury heritage advertising. The client base for the industry has become increasingly diverse in recent years (Balchandani et al. 2025), giving further incentive to explore a younger generation rather than the "typical" luxury customer.

Lastly, participants were selected as ordinary consumers rather than experts, as the study aims to explore consumer perceptions of authenticity. To reduce brand-related bias, they were not existing customers of the two selected brands but potential future customers. At the same time, participants were required to have prior awareness of the brands, as this was considered to be favorable for providing meaningful reflections.

#### 4.2.3 Focus Group Procedure

Three focus group discussions were conducted in April and lasted approximately one hour each. Group size was set to five participants per session, aligning with Easterby-Smith et al.'s (2021) suggestion that focus groups should include four to ten participants. Slightly smaller groups were considered more appropriate for this study, as they were expected to foster a more comfortable discussion environment and allow participants greater space and time to articulate their views in depth (Bell et al. 2022). Saturation was reached across the three focus groups, as the discussions provided sufficient data to address the study's aim and research question (Bell et al. 2022).

Each session followed a consistent structure. Participants were welcomed, and a brief introductory conversation was used to establish trust and a comfortable tone (Easterby-Smith et al. 2021). Next, the general topic area was introduced, followed by viewing of the two advertisements. Participants watched the Patek Philippe advertisement first and then the Cartier advertisement. The advertisements were used solely as elicitation prompts to help participants understand what luxury heritage storytelling can contain and how it can appear in luxury watch advertising, to initiate discussion about the topic. Afterwards, we told participants to imagine that similar advertisements had been created by GAI, and to discuss this in relation to the luxury watch industry in general instead of the specific advertisements and brands.

Across the three sessions, we were both present and divided responsibilities: one moderated the discussion, while the other handled notetaking, recording and supported at times with follow-up questions (Bell et al. 2022). The distribution of these roles depended on the session language, resulting in one of us moderating two focus groups and the other moderating one. The level of moderator involvement attempted to be neither too intrusive nor too structured as recommended by Bell et al. (2022); the moderator used mostly open-ended questions to guide the discussion, allow it to flow freely, and at times intervened to refocus the conversation. Follow-up questions were used for needed clarification and for deepening reasoning (Bell et al. 2022).

All sessions were audio-recorded and later transcribed and translated into English using Whisper (OpenAI, 2022). The recordings and transcripts were stored and processed locally in accordance with LUSEM's GDPR guidelines (LUSEM, n.d.).

### 4.3 Data Analysis<sup>1</sup>

A thematic analysis was considered suitable for the study as it provides a flexible method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases: (1) *familiarisation with the data*, (2) *generation of initial codes*, (3) *searching for themes*, (4) *reviewing themes*, (5) *defining and naming themes*, and (6) *producing the final analysis*.

The analysis was primarily guided by the research question and concepts from the literature, including authenticity, heritage storytelling, and GAI. Simultaneously, it remained open to

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<sup>1</sup> A coding table can be found in Appendix D

recurring meanings developed through participants' discussions. Analytic notes were used throughout the process to document initial ideas, coding decisions, and developing interpretations, which is consistent with Braun and Clarke's (2006) view that writing and note-taking form part of the analytic process. These notes also supported reflexivity by helping us consider how our own assumptions may have influenced the development of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

First, the transcripts were read several times to become familiar with the data. Initial notes were made to capture early impressions and recurring points in the discussions. Next, initial codes were generated by labeling meaningful segments of text related to participants' perceptions of authenticity, heritage storytelling, and GAI. The coding focused primarily on what participants explicitly expressed, while also allowing for interpretation of how these statements contributed to broader meanings of authenticity. Further on, related codes were grouped into potential themes through an abductive process, where participants' statements, emerging patterns in the data, and relevant theoretical concepts were compared. These themes reflected recurring patterns in how participants evaluated the possible use of GAI in luxury heritage watch advertising.

The following phase reviewed the themes against both the coded extracts and the wider dataset to assess whether they formed a coherent account of the material. During this process, overlapping themes were refined, combined, or removed. Afterwards, the final themes were defined and named by clarifying the central meaning of each theme and how it contributed to answering the research question. Finally, the analysis was written up by connecting the themes to selected quotes from the focus group discussions and to the wider aim of the study. In line with the view of thematic analysis as recursive, the analysis involved movement between phases rather than a strictly linear progression.

## 4.4 Research Quality

To assess the quality of the study, criteria suited to qualitative research were applied. Rather than relying on traditional measures of validity and reliability which originate from quantitative research, this study follows Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework of trustworthiness.

#### 4.4.1 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be assessed through four criteria: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

*Credibility* refers to the extent to which the findings are plausible and convincing interpretations of the empirical material (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, credibility was strengthened through the use of advertisements to prompt focus group discussions, as these provided participants with concrete material to respond, question, and interpret in interaction with others. The moderator used follow-up questions to clarify participants' reasoning and ensure that participants' perspectives were correctly expressed. In addition, the analysis remained closely connected to the data by linking interpretations to participants' discussions of authenticity, heritage storytelling, and GAI.

*Transferability* concerns the extent to which findings may be relevant beyond the immediate study context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since this study focuses on context-specific consumer interpretations within the luxury watch industry, transferability was supported by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, data collection, and analytical process. This enables readers to assess whether the findings may be relevant to other contexts.

*Dependability* relates to the consistency and transparency of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, dependability was supported through the use of a semi-structured focus group guide (see Appendix B), a consistent focus group procedure, and systematic documentation of data collection and analysis. Audio recordings, transcripts, and a transparent account of coding and theme development helped create an audit trail. This made it possible to trace how the study moved from empirical material to final themes.

*Confirmability* refers to the extent to which findings are shaped by the empirical material rather than by researcher bias or unsupported assumptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, confirmability was strengthened through an audit trail, analytic notes, and continuous reflection on potential preconceptions related to LHBs and GAI. These steps increased transparency in how interpretations were developed and helped ground the findings in participants' accounts.

## 4.5 Ethical Considerations

All focus groups were conducted in a quiet and secluded setting to support a comfortable environment where participants could reflect and speak freely (Bell et al. 2022). Prior to participation, individuals received general information about the study and provided informed consent, including consent for audio recording, in line with ethical research principles (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014). To reduce the risk of socially desirable responses, the full research aim was disclosed after the sessions.

To protect participant confidentiality, an important ethical consideration in qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014), all data were handled in accordance with LUSEM's GDPR guidelines (LUSEM, n.d.), and identifying information was removed during transcription. However, as focus groups involve interaction between multiple participants, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Participants were therefore reminded not to share identifiable information discussed during the sessions outside the group setting.

The study was assessed as low risk, given the non-sensitive nature of the topic. Nevertheless, measures were taken to minimize potential discomfort. Participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers, that they could refrain from answering any question, and that they were free to withdraw from the study without consequence.

Given that focus group discussions can be influenced by social dynamics, the moderators actively encouraged balanced participation and sought to reduce the influence of dominant voices. This was done by inviting quieter participants to contribute and by asking whether others wished to add perspectives before moving to the next question. Efforts were made to create a respectful and open discussion climate, in line with the researcher's ethical responsibility to facilitate inclusive and fair participation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014).

## 4.6 Methodological Limitations

While the methodological choices made in this study enabled an in-depth exploration of consumers' discussions of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling, several limitations should be acknowledged.

First, the choice of research method may have influenced how participants expressed their views. Focus groups create group dynamics that may lead to conformity, social pressure, or dominant voices. This could have shaped the discussion so that some perspectives were

softened or underrepresented. Although steps were taken to encourage balanced participation, the findings should be understood as co-constructed through group interaction rather than as purely individual evaluations.

Second, the use of advertisement-elicitation may have influenced participants' reflections. Although the advertisements were intended as prompts for broader discussion about the LHWBs, their content and order may still have shaped how participants interpreted the topic. As all groups viewed the advertisements in the same sequence, earlier advertisements may have influenced later evaluations. To mitigate this, participants were explicitly encouraged to move beyond the specific advertisements and discuss luxury heritage storytelling more generally. In addition, the hypothetical use of GAI is a limitation, as participants discussed how they expected to respond to AI-generated luxury heritage storytelling rather than reacting to actual brand advertisements produced with GAI.

Moreover, language and translation may have affected the data. The focus groups were conducted in both Swedish and English, and the Swedish discussions were translated into English for analysis. Some nuance in meaning may therefore have been lost during translation, despite careful review of the transcripts. Although participants were generally able to speak in a language they felt comfortable with, three participants did not speak in their native language. This may have affected how precisely they expressed their views.

Finally, the sampling strategy may have influenced the findings. Although participants were selected according to the criteria outlined in the sampling section, they were recruited through personal networks, and most had business-related backgrounds. This may have shaped the concepts they drew on and the analytical depth of their discussions of luxury heritage storytelling and GAI. In addition, the study was based on a small and context-specific sample, meaning that the findings should be understood as situated interpretations rather than as representative of consumers more broadly. These sampling characteristics may limit the extent to which the findings are transferable to other consumer groups or luxury contexts. Nevertheless, the study provides relevant exploratory insight, as limited prior research has examined this specific context.



## 5. Findings & Analysis

The following chapter presents the findings on perceptions of luxury heritage storytelling for LHWBs in relation to GAI. The analysis consists of three main themes that were identified from the focus group discussions: (1) *Expectations of Luxury Heritage Watch Brands*, (2) *Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth*, and (3) *Conditional Acceptance*.

The themes identified in the analysis were developed from the empirical material through Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. In line with the abductive approach, Beverland's (2006) *Six Attributes of Authenticity* and the *affect heuristic* (Slovic et al. 2007) were then used as interpretive lenses to explain, challenge, and extend how and why participants understood the use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling as more or less authentic.

Across the focus group discussions, participants often developed their interpretations in response to each other. When one participant expressed skepticism toward GAI in luxury heritage storytelling, others frequently expanded on this concern by adding related arguments. Similarly, when one participant identified a possible positive use of GAI, others often built on this perspective. This interactional dynamic shows that the findings reflect not only individual evaluations, but also meanings developed through group discussion.

The findings should also be understood in relation to the study's hypothetical design. They do not reflect participants' responses to real GAI storytelling advertisements. Rather, they are based on participants' reflections in group discussions about how they would perceive LHWBs' storytelling if it had been AI-generated.

### 5.1 Expectations of Luxury Heritage Watch Brands

GAI was not evaluated in isolation, but against participants' expectations of how LHWBs should behave. Across the findings, participants expected these brands to act responsibly, invest effort, and appear sincere. GAI therefore functioned as a signal in luxury heritage storytelling, where its use shaped whether the brand was perceived to meet or fail these expectations. Authenticity was therefore judged by whether the use of GAI aligned with what participants expected from LHWBs.

### 5.1.1 Responsibility

Participants evaluated the authenticity of LHWBs based on whether the brands were perceived to act in line with the responsibilities associated with their luxury and heritage status. In this context, participants evaluated GAI as an indicator of whether LHWBs fulfill expectations tied to their heritage, consumers, and sustainability. The use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling was therefore interpreted as a signal of whether the brand behaves in a responsible manner.

Participants consistently positioned luxury brands as subject to higher expectations than mainstream brands. As Katarina stated, *“It feels like they have greater responsibility than a fast fashion company.”* This highlights that authenticity is tied to how luxury brands are expected to act differently due to their status and resources. Julia expressed that brands have *“some kind of obligation to follow their line... to build on that heritage”*, indicating that authenticity depends on maintaining consistency with the brand’s historical identity. This reflects what Han et al. (2021) describe as *Continuity Authenticity*, where authenticity is grounded in consistency over time. Responsibility was also framed in relation to the consumer. As Lydia noted, *“you’re paying not only for the heritage, but you’re paying for the brand and what it stands for”*, suggesting that consumers evaluate authenticity based on whether the brand reflects values they consider worth supporting.

Responsibility was further extended to sustainability-related concerns. Participants highlighted environmental implications of GAI use, with Adam stating, *“It is also the case that one knows how AI affects the environment.”* Sarah added to this saying that *“... they do have some kind of responsibility”*. In this context, GAI use was evaluated as part of a wider ethical assessment. As Rachel explained, *“it reduces the whole reason why heritage would have been something impressive”*. These perspectives suggest that heritage loses value when brands adopt practices perceived as environmentally harmful, as these practices conflict with expectations of responsible behavior and thereby weaken the perceived authenticity of the brands.

These arguments suggest that authenticity is judged based on whether the watch brand acts in line with expectations tied to acting responsibly as a LHB. GAI becomes problematic when it signals a deviation from these expectations, as it is interpreted as inconsistent with the responsibility and commitment such brands are expected to uphold. In this sense, GAI functions as a signal through which participants assess whether the brand remains aligned with its heritage, consumers, and sustainability.

These findings relate to Beverland's (2006) attribute of *Heritage and Pedigree*. Participants linked authenticity to continuity with the brand's historical identity, particularly through the expectation that brands should "follow their line" and build on their heritage. Heritage was therefore treated as a standard for evaluating whether the brand behaves consistently over time. At the same time, the findings suggest that Beverland's (2006) framework does not fully capture how authenticity is evaluated in relation to sustainability, as participants extended their judgments beyond the brand's communication to include ethical concerns such as environmental impact.

### 5.1.2 High Effort

While human effort functions as a key indicator of authenticity, participants also articulated why such high effort is an expectation for LHWBs. Since these brands possess significant resources, they are expected to invest a greater amount of time and labor into their storytelling. The use of GAI therefore reduced the high-effort signal expected from LHWBs. Rachel noted:

*"Now we're talking about heritage brands, which often have the possibility ... because they often have money and they often have competence."*

This assumption suggests that not using the resources that they have is perceived as a choice rather than a necessity. Lydia further linked this expectation of effort to the LHWBs positioning:

*"They've proven to consumers why it costs so much because of the quality that it exhibits, right?"*

These insights indicate that high effort is an expected requirement used to justify luxury pricing. It can be understood that participants associated authenticity with visible investment and time-intensive processes, positioning shortcuts as incompatible with what LHWBs are expected to represent. Authenticity is therefore evaluated by whether the brand appears to meet expectations of high effort.

In this context, GAI affects authenticity by altering how effort is perceived. Building on To et al. (2025), who show that disclosed AI-generated imagery can signal lower perceived effort, our findings suggest that this reduction occurs because GAI makes the brand appear to have invested fewer resources in the storytelling process. This creates a tension with

expectations that LHWBs should demonstrate visible effort in order to justify both their heritage status and premium positioning.

This extends Beverland's (2006) attribute of *Quality Commitments*, where authenticity depends on visible dedication to the quality of the product through time investment, expertise, and effort. The findings suggest that participants applied a similar logic to brand communication, as luxury heritage storytelling was also expected to reflect effort and investment. However, some participants distinguished between the perceived effort of the advertisement and the perceived effort behind the product itself. While GAI could make brand communication appear less effortful or less authentic, this did not necessarily lead participants to question the quality of the product. For established LHWBs, accumulated expertise and credibility appeared to function as a buffer, allowing trust in the product to remain relatively stable.

At the same time, the findings relate to Beverland's (2006) attributes of *Downplaying Commercial Motives*. Visible effort signals that the brand is not simply prioritizing efficiency, cost reduction, or profit maximization. In this context, GAI risks being interpreted as a shortcut, suggesting that the brand has failed to meet the level of effort expected from LHWBs and thereby weakening authenticity.

### 5.1.3 Sincere Motives

Beyond expectations of responsibility and high effort, participants expected LHWBs to appear sincere. Across the focus groups, authenticity was often associated with LHWBs appearing committed to their heritage and consumers. GAI conflicted with this expectation when it was interpreted as cost-saving, making the brand appear more profit-driven. This shows that GAI use does not align with *Integrity Heritage*, where heritage is linked to the brand's underlying values and commitment beyond pure profit (Zhou et al. 2026). Maria articulated clearly:

*“It becomes cheaper for them to make things ... which symbolizes that they just want to earn more money ... it feels very ingenuine.”*

Participants similarly linked GAI use in luxury heritage storytelling to a shift in brand priorities, where lower investment in storytelling made the brand appear less committed to consumers and more profit-driven. Lydia described this concern clearly:

*“If they were to shift towards more of a monetary reasoning, then I think that they would miss the consumers and the priorities that they give to them”*

These responses indicate that GAI functions as a cue through which participants infer whether brand motives match their expectations. In this sense, GAI is associated with efficiency and profit orientation, values perceived as misaligned with the heritage narrative expected from LHWBs. These interpretations also appear to be shaped by the *affect heuristic*. (Slovic et al. 2007), where quick emotional responses shape subsequent interpretations. Participants’ immediate impressions suggested that the brands were guided by commercial motives despite not having any knowledge of how GAI had actually been used in the production process.

Authenticity is therefore influenced by whether the brand appears genuinely committed to its values rather than motivated by optimization or convenience. However, this interpretation was not universal. Sarah offered a contrasting perspective, arguing that efficiency and profitability are not inherently problematic if accompanied by high levels of investment and quality, because *“then it is just good”*. This suggests that participants evaluated whether it compromised the quality, investment, or value delivered by the brand.

This can be interpreted through Beverland’s (2006) attribute of *Downplaying Commercial Motives*, which shows that the presentation of the brand should not be overly marketized or sales-driven. GAI becomes problematic in this context because it conflicts with what consumers expect the brand to show: commitment to its heritage and consumers. The findings extend this attribute by showing that consumers may judge a brand’s motives based on how the advertisement is made, not only on what the advertisement communicates. In other words, the use of GAI itself became a signal of commercial motives, regardless of the advertisement’s actual message.

## 5.2 Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth

While the first theme focused on consumer expectations of LHWBs, the following theme concerns how GAI destabilizes the perceived historical truth of luxury heritage watch storytelling. Across the findings, participants’ responses often moved from initial skepticism toward the use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling, to epistemic uncertainty regarding the brand heritage’s connection to reality, and ultimately to a broader distrust of the brand. Together, these reactions show how GAI can weaken the authenticity of the brand’s heritage.

### 5.2.1 Immediate Skepticism

During the focus group discussions, many participants reacted with immediate skepticism when asked to imagine that the luxury heritage storytelling advertisements were created using GAI. This reaction was characterized by the reflexive mistrust in GAI as an appropriate tool for luxury heritage storytelling, revealing its use as a negative authenticity cue. In fact, the mere mention of GAI seemed to trigger a skeptical reaction before participants had engaged more deeply with the heritage story.

Adam illustrated this rapid shift in perception when the GAI disclosure was mentioned: *“When you said that, about writing AI, I immediately felt like ‘no, I don’t believe it.’”* This immediacy was similarly expressed by Oliver who, talking about authenticity in heritage storytelling, voiced: *“as soon as you know it [is AI] ... it would significantly weaken it for me.”* Notably, participants did not pause to evaluate the extent of GAI’s role, the possible reasoning behind its use, or whether the core historical facts remained accurate. Instead, the knowledge that GAI was involved was sufficient to instantly decrease the authenticity of the luxury heritage storytelling.

This pattern suggests the presence of the *affect heuristic* (Slovic et al. 2007). In such circumstances, participants seemed to rely on instinctive judgments of disapproval over thorough evaluations of the content. This indicates that in luxury heritage storytelling contexts, GAI weakens authenticity because its presence disrupts the assumed connection between the narrative and historical reality that luxury heritage storytelling depends upon. Nonetheless, while the affect heuristic was a dominant pattern, it was not universal; some participants reflected more carefully on the role of GAI before forming a judgment, suggesting that it does not only function as a negative cue, but may depend on the depth of consumer processing. This immediate skepticism sets the stage for a more deliberate thought process, which is explored in the next subtheme.

### 5.2.2 Epistemic Uncertainty

Although participants’ first reactions to the thought of GAI being used in luxury heritage storytelling were skeptical, reactions often evolved into a more reflective sense of doubt, namely epistemic uncertainty. In this stage, participants started questioning whether the stories could be trusted as real representations of the LHWBs’ past. Katarina expressed this clearly, questioning whether what was depicted had actually occurred:

*“Are these real images I’m seeing? Did this actually happen, or are they trying to make me believe that it did?”*

This suggests that GAI introduces uncertainty about whether the origins, events, and representations shown are historically grounded or artificially constructed. In doing so, the storytelling risks losing its function as heritage, as it no longer operates as a credible link to the brand’s actual past.

Luxury heritage storytelling seems to be particularly vulnerable to epistemic uncertainty because it depends on belief in a historical past that participants could not directly verify themselves. Unlike factual claims that can be independently confirmed, heritage narratives rely on participants accepting that what is presented authentically reflects the brand’s past, which aligns with Han et al. (2021). When GAI introduces doubt into these representations, the function of luxury heritage storytelling changes from communicating a credible past to presenting a narrative that must be critically evaluated. As a result, the connection between the brand and its historical reality becomes unstable, introducing epistemic uncertainty into how the story is understood.

This connects to Beverland’s (2006) attribute *Heritage and Pedigree*, as a luxury brand is portrayed as authentic when it shows its connection to history and reflects credibility. GAI may weaken this connection between story and reality, extending Beverland’s framework by showing that Heritage and Pedigree becomes particularly fragile when production technology introduces doubt about historical credibility.

The finding also connects to Beverland’s attribute *Relationship to Place*, which ties a luxury brand’s authenticity to real geographical origins and roots. Maria captured this concern directly, noting that GAI could be used to “*manipulate us as consumers into getting these feelings around a certain place or country or so*” suggesting that AI-generated locations risk creating a false sense of geographical authenticity. If the geographical grounding of the brand is artificially constructed, LHWBs may risk weakening the link to the physical places and origins that luxury consumers value.

The central issue at this stage was uncertainty about what could still be considered historically credible within the brand narrative, which sets the stage for the following subtheme extending into broader distrust of the brand itself.

### 5.2.3 Broader Distrust of the Brand

For some participants, this uncertainty introduced by GAI did not remain isolated to the advertisement itself but evolved into broader distrust of the brand and its heritage claims. Participants expressed concern that using GAI in luxury heritage storytelling weakened its function as reliable evidence of the brand's past, leading participants to question the authenticity of the LHWBs more broadly. This was reflected in statements from Sarah and Lukas:

*"... Okay so is everything here fake now?' that you don't have the same trust in the brand."*

*"If it had been fake, I think it would have weakened my sense of authenticity toward the companies. It feels like it should be real and how things are actually done, to show that this is how we genuinely do it and that it's authentic ... If they had faked it, it would feel like you're being a bit deceived."*

These responses indicate that artificial elements can create doubt about the reliability of the brand's heritage claims. When GAI was perceived as fabricating or altering historical material, participants became less willing to trust the brand's broader connection to the past. In this sense, distrust does not remain limited to the specific advertisement but can extend to the heritage identity that the brand communicates. Since luxury heritage storytelling depends on historical credibility, this distrust is particularly damaging for LHWBs, as it may destabilize the perceived authenticity of the brand itself.

This aligns with Beverland's (2006) attribute *Heritage and Pedigree*, where authenticity depends on the perception that a brand's history is credible and real. The findings further extend this attribute by showing how GAI can destabilize the function of heritage storytelling, as doubt surrounding the representation of heritage may spread beyond the advertisement itself to the brand's broader historical narrative.

## 5.3 Conditional Acceptance

Although the findings overall suggest that GAI can weaken perceived authenticity in luxury heritage watch storytelling, participants did not reject its use unconditionally. Instead, they identified specific circumstances under which GAI remained acceptable. This theme therefore shows that its acceptability depended on whether it enhanced an existing authentic



foundation or replaced it, whether it was used in informational rather than emotional heritage storytelling, and whether its artificiality appeared transparent and creatively necessary.

### 5.3.1 Enhancement of the Real Foundation

Participants expressed a clear condition under which the use of GAI remained acceptable within luxury heritage storytelling. Acceptance depended on whether GAI built upon an existing, real foundation rather than constructing the story independently. This distinction was illustrated by Maria, who stated:

*“But if they fix the sky a bit, fix a little extra, then they have actually been there. The foundation is there, it is not just a green screen... I have no problem with them adjusting it a bit...”*

Similarly, Sarah highlighted how GAI can be used to improve existing heritage material:

*“You can take old videos and generate them so that they look like they are of a slightly higher quality. For example, that could perhaps help with the storytelling.”*

Both statements emphasize that the presence of an authentic base legitimized GAI as a supportive tool. In this interpretation, GAI can be used while still maintaining the authenticity of luxury heritage storytelling when it enhances material that is already grounded in reality. By improving visual quality or refining details, GAI may support the communication of heritage without weakening its historical grounding. The positive role of GAI therefore depends on its function as an enhancer of existing heritage material rather than as the source of the heritage story itself.

In contrast, participants also drew a clear boundary between acceptable enhancement and unacceptable replacement. Most participants rejected the use of GAI when it involved human elements in the storytelling. In these cases, enhancement is no longer perceived as acceptable. This finding became evident when participants evaluated scenes involving human subjects, where the condition of building on a real foundation was no longer approved. Maria stated that *“the people need to be real...”*, which positions human presence as a non-negotiable element of authenticity. Teresa’s argument added to the perspective by saying: *“keep the human shots human, and then the rest, you can use gen AI”*.

These statements reinforce that real human representation functions as part of the authentic foundation, which should not be modified or replaced. When GAI replaces humans, it no

longer enhances an existing reality. This reduces the credibility of the brand's connection to its real past, as authenticity depends on whether the content is perceived to be grounded in actual human presence.

While most participants rejected such replacement, Mark expressed a more flexible view. He suggested that an AI-generated person could still convey some authenticity, but less than a real human. This indicates that replacement reduces perceived authenticity rather than eliminating it entirely. Thus, the boundary for acceptable use remains clear, but it is not absolute.

These insights extend Beverland's (2006) *Heritage and Pedigree* attribute by showing that authenticity depends not only on a credible brand history, but also on how that history is represented. GAI seems to be accepted when it enhances existing heritage material while preserving its link to reality. However, when GAI replaces real elements, especially human presence, this link becomes less credible and perceived authenticity becomes weakened.

### 5.3.2 Informational Rather Than Emotional Heritage Storytelling

Acceptance of GAI was not only shaped by whether it enhanced or replaced a real foundation, but also by the kind of heritage being communicated. GAI was more acceptable when heritage was presented through informational rather than emotional narratives. Participants used the advertisements as examples to explain how GAI could be used without undermining authenticity. This distinction was illustrated by Mark, who stated that:

*"I felt like it didn't matter as much for the Cartier Heritage ad, because it was a different type of heritage. It had more to do with the historical facts and information as opposed to generational heritage [Patek Philippe ad] between parenthood and child ... so in terms of just relaying more factual information about how it's made, like in little intricate details, Gen AI didn't necessarily weaken my interpretation of it."*

This distinction shows that authenticity is evaluated differently across forms of heritage storytelling. When heritage is communicated through factual information, GAI can support the message without substantially weakening perceived authenticity. This logic was further articulated by Oliver, who stated that:

*"Gen AI is not applicable when it's about emotions, and it's more applicable when it's about informing."*

This supports the previous finding that GAI is less acceptable when it replaces real human presence. The evidence further suggests that the acceptability of GAI depends on how central human presence is to the heritage narrative. Informational storytelling appears to tolerate GAI more easily because it is mainly tied to factual credibility. Emotional storytelling seems less appropriate because it relies on human relationships and creating emotional connections, in line with Varol & Çelik-Varol (2026). In these cases, GAI weakens authenticity when it makes the human connection appear artificial rather than genuinely grounded.

These findings extend Beverland's (2006) *Heritage and Pedigree* attribute by showing that authenticity may depend not only on whether heritage is present, but also on whether the form of storytelling preserves its credibility.

### 5.3.3 Transparent Artificiality and Creative Necessity

Participants also expressed a more nuanced form of acceptance, where GAI was accepted when it contributed imaginative or creative value while remaining transparent about its artificiality. Rather than rejecting GAI, participants evaluated authenticity based on whether its use appeared creative and honest about its artificial nature. Rachel articulated this clearly:

*"It should be very clear if it is fantasy. Then it might as well be fantasy to one thousand percent. Like when you watched those old movies where they tried to make a dragon and they made it with paper. Go ahead and do that with AI as much as you want because I know that dragons don't exist."*

The argument suggests that participants distinguish between artificiality and deception. AI-generated content is not necessarily perceived as inauthentic when it is clearly fantastical or impossible for humans to create on their own. Resistance emerged specifically when GAI attempted to imitate real narratives or conceal its artificiality, as participants appeared more concerned with deceptive realism than with artificiality itself. Participants were therefore more accepting of GAI when the luxury heritage storytelling content was clearly detached from reality and openly embraced imagination.

Transparency was accompanied by a second evaluative logic: whether there appeared to be a genuine need for GAI in creating the luxury heritage storytelling. Here, participants questioned whether its use contributed something meaningfully different from what could have been achieved through traditional production methods. Maria articulated this directly:

*“If you use AI then you have to in some way do things better than what you have done before. You cannot do the same thing but just use AI. Because then it just feels like you have found an easier way...”*

This indicates that participants evaluated something more specific than the overall creativity of the final advertisement output. While Jung et al. (2025) and To et al. (2025) suggest that creativity can reduce negative reactions toward GAI advertising, the present findings indicate a more specific evaluative process. Participants assessed whether GAI expanded the creative possibilities of the advertisement in a way that justified its use, rather than merely reproducing what traditional heritage storytelling could already achieve. Participants therefore appeared to assess the authenticity of GAI use in luxury heritage watch storytelling as such: whether it was required to use GAI to contribute meaningful creative value, and whether the LHWB remained transparent about its artificiality rather than mimicking reality.

These evaluative patterns extend Beverland’s (2006) Attributes of *Method of Production* and *Stylistic Consistency*. First, the findings align with Method of Production in that participants expected a credible and transparent reason for GAI to be used, extending this attribute beyond the product itself to include how and why the luxury heritage storytelling is produced. Second, the findings partially challenge Stylistic Consistency regarding the continuous delivery of a consistent experience. If GAI was used for clearly fantastical luxury heritage storytelling, participants indicated that full commitment to artificiality was preferable rather than make the content look real. This suggests that transparency about artificiality can function as an alternative route to authenticity when realism is abandoned altogether.

## 6. Discussion

This chapter connects our findings to broader literature on luxury branding and GAI in luxury advertising. In doing so, it emphasizes how the study contributes to existing theory by extending, refining, and challenging current understandings of how AI-generated storytelling advertisements influence consumer perceptions of authenticity in luxury heritage branding.

A summary of our key findings is presented first, followed by our five main contributions organized around our two literature streams. Lastly, broader practical implications are discussed.

### 6.1 Summary of Key Findings

Although GAI has become increasingly relevant in luxury advertising (To et al. 2025), it remains unclear how consumers discuss luxury heritage storytelling in relation to GAI, and whether evaluations of GAI advertising may extend to broader perceptions of the brand. This gap is particularly relevant in luxury heritage watch storytelling, where historical continuity and emotional narratives are central to how heritage contributes to brand meaning (Zhang & Müller, 2022; Varol & Çelik-Varol, 2026). The problem is therefore to understand whether, and under what conditions, GAI weakens, destabilizes, or can still be accepted within luxury heritage storytelling. This thesis therefore explored how consumers discussed the use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling and how such use affected perceived brand authenticity.

The findings indicate that participants did not evaluate GAI as a technology in itself but rather interpreted what its use implied about the brand. GAI was assessed indirectly, as a signal through which participants inferred whether the brand acted in line with the expectations associated with LHWBs. Across the findings, these brands were expected to act responsibly, invest high effort in their storytelling, and appear to be driven by sincere motives. When GAI was introduced, participants perceived the brands as not taking responsibility for their heritage and consumers, taking shortcuts, and being profit-driven. This shows that the perceived risk of GAI lies more in what its use may say about brand priorities.

Another central finding was that GAI weakened authenticity by destabilizing the perceived historical truth of luxury heritage watch storytelling. Initially, the mention of GAI seemed to trigger a skeptical reaction before participants had engaged more deeply with the heritage story. This immediate skepticism often developed into epistemic uncertainty, as GAI introduced doubt about whether the events, origins, or representations shown were real. In

some cases, this uncertainty extended beyond the advertisement itself and led to broader distrust towards the brand and its heritage claims. The findings therefore suggest that GAI may not merely threaten visual realism but may also weaken the perceived credibility of a luxury brands' heritage and the trustworthiness of its historical narrative.

Although GAI was often perceived as problematic, participants also identified specific conditions under which its use remained acceptable. Participants discussed GAI as more acceptable when it built on an existing real foundation, when it supported informational rather than emotional luxury heritage storytelling, and when its artificiality was transparent and perceived as creatively needed. In contrast, it became less acceptable when it replaced real human presence, emotional meaning, or tried to conceal its artificiality. The findings therefore suggest that participants did not judge GAI as simply authentic or inauthentic, but in terms of whether it preserved or replaced the elements they considered essential to authentic luxury heritage storytelling.

## 6.2 Reassessing Luxury Heritage Storytelling

The findings contribute to literature on luxury heritage branding and brand authenticity by showing that consumers evaluate luxury heritage storytelling not only as communication, but also as evidence of historical credibility. With the use of GAI, credibility seems to become fragile, as consumers question whether the narrative remains connected to the brand's actual past. Consequently, GAI reveals both the validating function of heritage storytelling and the hierarchical nature of authenticity judgments.

### 6.2.1 Heritage Storytelling as Historical Validation

The findings suggest that consumers evaluate luxury heritage storytelling not merely for its symbolic and emotional value, but as a tool for validating the brand's historical claims. In the context of LHWBs, where brand value is closely tied to continuity and historical grounding (Zhang & Müller, 2022), this validating function becomes particularly important. While existing heritage branding literature has primarily focused on storytelling as a resource for building emotional connections (Varol & Çelik-Varol, 2026), this study suggests that consumers also use these narratives to verify the credibility of the brand's historical claims.

This observation provides a critical counterpoint to Donzé and Wubs (2019), who argue that luxury brands often strategically construct and shape their heritage narratives rather than present a fully objective and true representation of their history. Such strategic shaping has

largely functioned as a normalized and implicitly accepted part of luxury branding, and consumers have not directly questioned the construction of the heritage story. The introduction of GAI changes this dynamic by making luxury heritage storytelling more open to suspicion because consumers may begin to question whether the history presented by the brand is actually true due to its production method. Consumers may no longer treat the heritage narrative as something that can be accepted blindly, but instead begin questioning and inspecting whether the events, origins, and representations presented are real. In this sense, GAI appears to make the constructed luxury heritage story more exposed and potentially weakens trust and authenticity in the heritage being communicated.

### 6.2.2 Authenticity as a Hierarchical Construct

The study further implies that while Beverland (2006) conceptualizes authenticity through six separate attributes, consumers distinguish between foundational and secondary attributes when evaluating the potential use of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling. Findings show that GAI exposed which attributes were perceived as non-negotiable, and which were considered more flexible. This was an unexpected finding, as the analysis initially approached Beverland's attributes as equally relevant interpretive attributes. Specifically, *Heritage and Pedigree* along with *Method of Production* emerged as the two non-negotiable pillars, as they were very closely linked to the brand's history, status, human effort, and truthful representation. These attributes appeared particularly central, as they became destabilized when GAI introduced uncertainty into the heritage narrative.

In contrast, *Downplaying Commercial Motives* and *Relationship to Place* appeared important but more dependent on the two former attributes. Concerns regarding brand motives and geographical origins often emerged only after participants had already begun questioning the credibility of the heritage narrative and production method. Most notably, *Stylistic Consistency* suggested the highest degree of flexibility. Participants were willing to accept GAI for fantastical storytelling when the artificiality was obvious, and its use appeared necessary to achieve creative outcomes not otherwise possible. Similarly, *Quality Commitments* also appeared less vulnerable to GAI use, as participants often distinguished between the authenticity of the advertisement and the perceived quality of the product itself.

This hierarchical observation extends Beverland's (2006) framework by demonstrating that authenticity attributes seem to not carry equal weight in all luxury industries. The findings therefore suggest that authenticity attributes become hierarchically prioritized under potential GAI use, where attributes tied to historical credibility and production method appear more vulnerable than attributes related to stylistic presentation.

## 6.3 Reassessing GAI in Luxury Advertising

This study contributes to GAI and luxury advertising literature by showing that consumer responses to GAI depend on more than disclosure, creativity, and advertisement quality. In luxury heritage storytelling, consumers evaluate GAI through what its use implies about the expectations of the brand's priorities, its role in the storytelling, and its effect on heritage credibility. The section therefore argues that GAI is interpreted as a brand signal, that acceptance relies on meaningful enhancement rather than substitution, and that luxury heritage storytelling functions as a demanding context for GAI advertising.

### 6.3.1 GAI as a Signal of Brand Priorities

The findings show that, in luxury heritage storytelling, consumers interpreted GAI as more than a production method, as its use appeared to communicate something about the brand itself. This suggests that production choices form part of the authenticity signal. For LHBs, the use of GAI is therefore not only a question of whether the technology can produce high-quality advertising content, but whether it aligns with the values on which the brand's heritage is built.

This refines prior research on GAI in luxury advertising. To et al. (2025) show that AI-generated luxury advertisements can reduce perceived effort and weaken advertisement authenticity. The present study extends this by suggesting that reduced effort is not only interpreted as a feature of the advertisement, but as a possible indication of the brand's priorities. GAI can therefore move from being an advertising cue to becoming a brand-level authenticity signal.

This is relevant for understanding how GAI may be evaluated within luxury heritage branding. If GAI is associated with efficiency or cost-saving, consumers may interpret its use as inconsistent with expectations of responsibility, high effort, sincerity. This concerns not only whether GAI aligns with the brand's own values and identity, but also whether it aligns with broader values that consumers expect LHBs to uphold. Negative reactions may therefore reflect wider meanings attached to AI, including concerns about environmental impact. Even when sustainability is not central to the brand's own values, use of GAI may become risky if it appears to contradict these broader consumer expectations.

### 6.3.2 GAI as Meaningful Enhancement Rather Than Substitution



The findings further suggest that consumer acceptance of GAI in luxury heritage storytelling is more conditional than existing research implies. Acceptance seemed to depend on whether GAI was perceived as a meaningful enhancement of existing heritage material, rather than as a substitute for the real elements that made the story authentic.

This partly supports prior literature, which suggests that resistance to GAI in luxury advertising is not absolute and that highly creative images can improve consumer evaluations (To et al. 2025; Jung et al. 2025). In this sense, the finding that creativity can improve acceptance of GAI use in luxury contexts was not unexpected. However, our findings extend this explanation by showing what kind of creativity may make GAI more acceptable. For instance, using GAI to create luxury heritage storytelling content that is fantastical or impossible for humans to create on their own. This suggests that acceptance depends on whether GAI expands the creative possibilities of the advertisement. This evaluation is important because if GAI does not add a sufficiently distinct creative contribution, it may introduce authenticity risks rather than strengthen the heritage narrative. This extends existing literature by showing that positive evaluations may be shaped not only by the quality of the final output, but by whether GAI is understood as a meaningful enhancement of heritage storytelling rather than a simulated substitute for it.

### 6.3.3 Luxury Heritage Storytelling as a Demanding Context for GAI Use

Luxury heritage storytelling appears to require more deliberate assessments of GAI use than current literature implies. Findings demonstrate that resistance may increase when GAI replaces human presence or fabricates reality or relationships, which weakens the sense that the story is grounded in truth. This indicates that luxury heritage storytelling constitutes a particularly demanding context for GAI use, as it carries historical and emotional meaning, causing consumer evaluations to extend beyond the advertisement itself to the credibility of the brand's heritage.

These findings extend earlier literature beyond its current focus on advertisement evaluations and purchase-related outcomes. Existing research by To et al. (2025) and Jung et al. (2025) has mainly examined static, as well as email-based advertisements for luxury brands created by the researchers themselves, with limited attention to brand authenticity. Therefore, this study goes beyond describing consumer perceptions of GAI use by explaining how and why these perceptions are formed in the specific context of luxury heritage storytelling. It suggests that when advertising communicates heritage rather than only luxury products, as previous literature does, consumer evaluations may extend beyond the advertisement itself to the credibility of the story and the authenticity of the brand. This implies that conclusions from

more general luxury GAI advertising studies should not be transferred too easily to heritage-based storytelling contexts.

## 6.4 Managerial Implications

This study provides relevant guidance for LHB communication sectors seeking to understand where GAI can support heritage storytelling and where its use may undermine perceptions of brand authenticity.

First, consumers interpreted GAI as a signal of the brand's priorities, effort, sincerity, and responsibility. LHBs should therefore recognize that decisions about GAI should not be operational or cost-saving decisions. The use of GAI may influence how consumers evaluate the brand's values and commitment to heritage. Before implementing GAI, managers should consider what the technology communicates about the brand, not only what it helps produce.

Second, LHBs should be cautious when using GAI in communication that relies on historical credibility. The strongest authenticity risks emerged when GAI was perceived as fabricating history, replacing human presence, or weakening the connection between the story and reality. LHBs can use GAI in ways that preserve verifiable links to the brand's past. Historical events, archives, founders, traditions, and human stories should be handled with particular caution because consumers may use these elements to validate the credibility of the brand's heritage. Overall, LHBs should ensure that historical narratives remain clearly grounded in real brand heritage.

This does not mean that GAI must be excluded from luxury heritage storytelling altogether. Rather, the findings suggest that GAI may be more acceptable when it enhances an existing heritage foundation instead of replacing it. LHBs may therefore benefit from using GAI to enhance existing archival material, aesthetic visuals, or creatively stylized scenes, rather than fabricating large parts of a brand's heritage storytelling. This is because consumers appear to evaluate whether GAI adds a meaningful creative contribution. In addition, consumers do not seem to limit acceptable GAI use to cases where it enhanced an existing heritage foundation. Findings also imply that openly stylized or fantastical executions, for instance clearly AI-generated fictional scenes involving the brand's products, may be perceived more positively. For LHBs, this means that GAI can be used in heritage storytelling if its artificiality is transparent. Consequently, LHBs should therefore consider whether the creative possibilities enabled by GAI offer something beyond what the brand's own resources could already achieve.

## 6.5 Implications for GAI in Cultural Heritage Communication

The analytical relevance of the findings may extend to cultural heritage management, museum interpretation, and historical tourism, where communication may also depend on links to history, place, and human experience. These contexts were not examined empirically in this study, but they seem to similarly rely on communication that should appear historically grounded.

In such contexts, GAI may be evaluated as a signal of institutional priorities. If it appears to replace exhibition work, human expertise, or historical evidence, it may be interpreted as an efficiency-driven shortcut. This can weaken institutional credibility by creating uncertainty about what is factual, reconstructed, or artificially produced.

The findings therefore suggest that GAI is more likely to be accepted when it enhances an existing real foundation, such as improving quality on archival material or supporting educational reconstructions in a creative way. It becomes more problematic when it substitutes for real human presence or narratives that depend on historical and emotional grounding. In cultural heritage communication, GAI acceptance may therefore depend on whether its use preserves truthful representation and transparency about where historical grounding ends and artificial reconstruction begins.

## 7. Conclusion & Research Considerations

This chapter consists of the conclusion of the thesis, as well as research limitations and proposals for future research.

### 7.1 Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how consumers discussed luxury heritage storytelling in relation to Generative AI. Through focus group discussions based on advertisements from Cartier and Patek Philippe, the study explored how hypothetical GAI use within luxury heritage storytelling influenced perceptions of brand authenticity.

The findings suggest that consumers may not evaluate GAI solely as a technological tool, but through expectations of how LHWBs should behave. Across the findings, discussions indicated that consumers expected these brands to act responsibly, invest effort, and appear sincere. When GAI was introduced, participants perceived the brands as not taking responsibility for their heritage and consumers, taking shortcuts, and being profit-driven. The findings further indicated that GAI frequently weakened authenticity because it introduced initial skepticism towards the heritage storytelling, which often developed into epistemic uncertainty regarding the brand heritage's connection to reality and broader distrust of the brand. Nonetheless, consumer responses toward GAI were not uniformly negative, but depended on specific conditions. Acceptance seemed more possible when GAI built on an existing real foundation, supported informational storytelling, was used transparently, and was perceived as creatively justified.

The thesis contributes to existing literature by showing that GAI use becomes particularly sensitive in luxury heritage storytelling. This context requires more careful assessment than general luxury advertising because heritage storytelling carries historical and emotional meaning. As a result, consumer evaluations may extend beyond the advertisement itself and affect the perceived credibility of the brand's heritage.

Overall, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how GAI may shape authenticity perceptions within luxury heritage storytelling. The findings suggest that GAI can be used without necessarily undermining authenticity, but that its use requires deliberate evaluation. This may be because authenticity also depends on consumer expectations that LHBs cannot fully control. For instance, consumers appear to expect LHBs to represent values that are not necessarily central to the brand itself. Deciding whether GAI is worth using in heritage

storytelling may therefore require thorough managerial consideration. While GAI generates new creative possibilities, LHBs should approach its use carefully and may apply it selectively where it supports, rather than substitutes for, the heritage foundation on which brand authenticity depends.

## 7.2 Limitations and Future Research

Several broader limitations and directions for future research emerged from this thesis. First, the findings should primarily be understood within the context of luxury heritage storytelling. Therefore, they may not be fully transferable to other forms of luxury communication that rely less heavily on heritage. Future research could therefore further examine how consumers evaluate GAI across different forms of luxury storytelling, such as between heritage-focused and craftsmanship-focused narratives. Such studies could therefore explore whether consumers apply different authenticity expectations depending on what the storytelling emphasizes.

Another limitation concerns the study's industry focus. By specifically examining LHWBs, the findings may not fully represent how GAI is evaluated across the broader luxury industry. Luxury industries differ in their products and values, which may influence how consumers interpret the use of GAI within storytelling. Future research could therefore investigate whether the authenticity concerns identified in this thesis emerge similarly across other luxury industries and market categories. Comparative studies between luxury sectors, as well as between luxury and premium brands, could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how context shapes consumer evaluations of GAI within high-end branding environments.

The findings should also be understood in relation to the participant context of the study. Since the sample mainly consisted of younger consumers situated in Sweden, future research could extend this thesis by examining groups with stronger existing relationships to luxury brands, such as highly involved, or older, luxury consumers. Such perspectives may provide deeper insight into how prior knowledge, brand involvement, and cultural understandings of luxury influence evaluations of GAI in heritage storytelling.

Finally, the findings should also be considered in relation to the rapidly evolving nature of GAI and its current role within luxury branding. Since fully AI-generated luxury heritage advertisements remain relatively uncommon, consumer evaluations may partly be shaped by the novelty and uncertainty currently associated with GAI. Consumers' skepticism may also reflect broader public narratives about AI and its role in society. As AI becomes more

integrated into everyday life, consumers are likely to become more familiar with AI-generated content and industry practices. Perceptions of authenticity may therefore shift over time. Future studies could revisit these questions using real AI-generated luxury advertisements to examine how consumer responses develop within a more mature GAI landscape.

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## **Declaration of AI Usage**

Throughout this thesis, AI has been used in a supportive manner, aligning with Lund University's principles of transparency and responsibility (Mansfeld, 2026). ChatGPT, Gemini, and Whisper were all consulted to get differing perspectives. ChatGPT was used for language revision and enhancement, as well as idea generation. Gemini was used for feedback on the thematic analysis process and for help with how to structure up the method and analysis chapters. Whisper, which is part of OpenAI, was used to support transcription of the interviews. We remained responsible for the final content, as all interpretations, assessments, and final formulations were made by us.

# Appendix

## Appendix A – Focus Group Participants

| Participants<br>(fictional names) | Age | Nationality |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------|
| Lisa                              | 23  | Swedish     |
| Rachel                            | 25  | Swedish     |
| Lukas                             | 26  | Norwegian   |
| Maria                             | 24  | Swedish     |
| Frida                             | 24  | Swedish     |
| Adam                              | 25  | Swedish     |
| Leo                               | 25  | Swedish     |
| Julia                             | 23  | Swedish     |
| Katarina                          | 26  | Swedish     |
| Sarah                             | 22  | Swedish     |
| Mark                              | 28  | American    |
| Lydia                             | 22  | Canadian    |
| Teresa                            | 23  | Mexican     |
| Jorge                             | 27  | Mexican     |
| Oliver                            | 23  | German      |

## **Appendix B – Focus Group Discussion Guide**

The following focus group questions were developed based on the study's research question, Beverland's (2006) authenticity framework, and the literature review.

### **Warm-up: general meaning of authenticity in luxury**

1. What makes a luxury brand feel authentic to you?

### **Info before asking questions:**

If possible, you don't need to talk about the brands or ads specifically but discuss luxury brands more broadly in this sector in the context of heritage storytelling.

Show the heritage-storytelling ad from Cartier and Patek Philippe.

Patek Philippe Heritage Storytelling: [https://www.instagram.com/p/B2jvstgg6\\_t/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B2jvstgg6_t/)

Cartier Heritage Storytelling: <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DPEPZ8Hk8C8/>

### **Post-Advertisement Questions**

1. Would the use of GAI strengthen, weaken, or not affect that sense of heritage? Why?
2. If a luxury brand used GAI for heritage storytelling, what would need to stay the same for it to feel authentic?
3. Would GAI use in heritage storytelling affect your sense that the brand is committed to quality?
4. How would you feel if a luxury brand used Gen AI to create or enhance a particular place/origin/culture?
5. If heritage storytelling would be produced by generative AI and not human made, would that change how authentic you see the luxury brand?
6. How, if at all, would use of GAI in heritage storytelling affect how you view the brand's intentions or priorities?

### **Comparative and closing questions**

7. In what kinds of situations, if any, do you think GAI could be used within luxury brand storytelling to keep authenticity?
8. What do you think Luxury brands gain or risk by using GAI on a heritage-focused ad?
9. How do you think luxury brands should balance innovation with maintaining their heritage focus?
10. Does it feel more or less authentic using GAI in ads in other certain luxury industries?
11. Is there anything we didn't ask that you think matters for how authentic using AI in luxury contexts feels?



## Appendix C – Consent Form

Below is the consent form we sent out to all participants prior to the focus group sessions. It is called “lusem-bachelor-master-thesis-consent-form-2” and was found through LUSEM’s website.



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick the appropriate box):

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | I understand the information about the project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 2.  | I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 3.  | I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 4.  | I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 5.  | The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 6.  | If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 7.  | The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 8.  | I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.                                                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |
| 9.  | Select only <b>one</b> of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised.</li> <li>I do not want my name used in this project.</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/><br><input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>                             |

**Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Researcher:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix D – Coding Table

The data analysis process followed an abductive approach and was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework. Coding combined inductive engagement with the empirical material and theory-informed interpretation. The table below illustrates how selected data extracts were developed from data extracts to initial codes to potential themes or patterns to final themes. The final column links each data extract to selected theoretical interpretations, namely Beverland's (2006) framework *Six Attributes of Authenticity* and Slovic et al.'s (2007) *affect heuristic*. The table does not include all coded material but provides examples of how the final themes were developed from the empirical data.

| Data extract                                                                                                                                  | Initial code                                     | Potential theme or pattern                       | Final theme                            | Theoretical interpretation                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| "Some kind of obligation to follow their line... to build on that heritage."                                                                  | Brand should remain consistent with its heritage | Responsibility to maintain historical continuity | Expectations of Luxury Heritage Brands | <i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)  |
| "Now we're talking about heritage brands, which often have the possibility ... because they often have money and they often have competence." | LHWBs are expected to invest resources           | High effort expected from resourceful brands     | Expectations of Luxury Heritage Brands | <i>Quality Commitments</i> (Beverland, 2006)    |
| "It becomes cheaper for them to make things ... which symbolizes that they just want to earn more money ... it feels very ingenuine."         | GAI signals cost saving                          | Profit driven motives weaken sincerity           | Expectations of Luxury Heritage Brands | <i>Downplaying Commercial</i> (Beverland, 2006) |

|                                                                                                                       |                                                             |                                                                           |                                            |                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| “When you said that, about writing AI, I immediately felt like ‘no, I don’t believe it.’”                             | GAI triggers instant disbelief                              | Reflexive skepticism toward GAI in heritage storytelling                  | Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth | <i>Affect heuristic</i> (Slovic et al. 2007)<br><br><i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)   |
| “Are these real images I’m seeing? Did this actually happen, or are they trying to make me believe that it did?”      | Uncertainty about whether heritage representations are real | Doubt about historical credibility and factual grounding                  | Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth | <i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)<br><br><i>Relationship to Place</i> (Beverland, 2006) |
| “‘... Okay so is everything here fake now?’ that you don’t have the same trust in the brand.”                         | Distrust spreads from advertisement to brand                | Doubt about GAI extends to brand heritage                                 | Destabilizer of Perceived Historical Truth | <i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)                                                       |
| “But if they fix the sky a bit, fix a little extra, then they have actually been there. The foundation is there.....” | GAI accepted when it enhances existing reality              | Enhancement of a real foundation                                          | Conditional Acceptance                     | <i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)                                                       |
| “...it was a different type of heritage. It had more to do with the historical facts and information as               | GAI more acceptable in factual heritage storytelling        | Informational storytelling tolerates GAI more than emotional storytelling | Conditional Acceptance                     | <i>Heritage and Pedigree</i> (Beverland, 2006)                                                       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                    |                                            |                           |                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| opposed to<br>generational<br>heritage ...”                                                                                                                                                  |                                    |                                            |                           |                                                         |
| “If you use AI<br>then you have to<br>in some way do<br>things better than<br>what you have<br>done<br>before...Because<br>then it just feels<br>like you have<br>found an easier<br>way...” | GAI needs to add<br>creative value | Creative<br>necessity and<br>justified use | Conditional<br>Acceptance | <i>Method of<br/>Production</i><br>(Beverland,<br>2006) |