

# BUSINESS, SOCIETY & ETHICS

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## Autonomy & Advertising

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the reading:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

### Reading

- Crisp, R. J. (1987, July). Persuasive Advertising, Autonomy, and the Creation of Desire. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 6(5), 413–418.
- *Optional*: Poppick, S. (2014, December 3). 10 Subliminal Retail Tricks You're Probably Falling For. *Money*. Retrieved August 26, 2016, from <http://time.com/money/3069933/ways-companies-trick-you-into-buying-more/>.
- *Optional*: Vranica, S. (2002, July 31). Sony Ericsson Campaign Uses Actors To Push Camera-Phone in Real Life. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved August 14, 2016, from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1028069195715597440>.

### Questions

1. According to Crisp, what is the difference between an autonomous purchase and a subliminally-inspired purchase? (While Crisp's example of subliminal advertising in a cinema for ice cream has been shown false, see the optional article by Poppick for better examples of subliminal advertising.) How is this difference explained in terms of Crisp's distinction between first-order and second-order desires?
2. Why reasons and arguments does Crisp provide to justify his claim that persuasive (as opposed to informative) advertising is immoral? (Hint: Crisp's organization is extremely awkward—do not write your papers like this!—so just try to figure out how his various claims are supposed to show the immorality of persuasive advertising.)
3. Towards the end of the article, Crisp considers Phillip Nelson's argument that persuasive advertising is not immoral when it is done for products the consumer would have bought anyway. Why does Crisp believe that even in those circumstances, persuasive advertising is still immoral?
4. In 2002, Sony Ericsson implemented a marketing campaign called Fake Tourist, where trained actors pretended to be tourists in large cities. These "tourists" would ask regular people to take their picture using their new T68i mobile phone. (For more details, see the optional article by Vranica.) The actors would then talk about the phone's features. How do you think Crisp would assess this "stealth" form of advertising?