Branding and liberal autonomy

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Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 I understand branding as the sum of activities that are intended to communicate a preconceived brand image. These activities include advertising, public relations, direct marketing, sales promotion, product placement, sponsorship and guerrilla marketing.

2 The section on autonomous mental state formation can be read as a response to skeptical remarks about the possibility of a normative analysis of autonomy and advertising (which is a subset of branding that influences consumers via the formation or reinforcement of mental states) that one finds in for example Joseph Heath, “Liberal Autonomy and Consumer Sovereignty”, in: John Christman and Joel Anderson ed., Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism (Cambridge 2005), 204-225, there 214. Heath argues that it would be “deeply implausible” that one could make a reasonable distinction between authentic and inauthentic desires, and that even if some such distinction could be made, there is no serious prospect of finding a consensus on how this is to be done. At this point I want to observe only that one ought to at least consider the proposed theories about authentic desires before making any judgments about their plausibility, let alone the prospects for reaching a consensus about any one proposal (or about shared aspects among proposals). This is what I will do in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 1

1 This means that the overall argument in this thesis does not speak to those who are committed to fascist, communist or a number of communitarian legitimations for state action.

2 See Ben Colburn, Autonomy and Liberalism (New York 2010), 45 ff.

3 See for example Galston, who says that “the promotion of personal autonomy, understood as choice based on critical rationalism, is not among the shared liberal purposes. Autonomy is one possible mode of existence in liberal societies – one among many others”, Liberal Pluralism. The Implications of Value Pluralism For Political Theory and Practice (Cambridge 2002), 24.

4 See Ibidem, 50 ff.

5 I will note one crucial condition under which this assumption is reasonable later on.

6 Ibidem, 58.

7 He also discusses relativism as a justification for anti-perfectionism, but this position is sufficiently implausible that nobody defends it, and I will therefore not discuss it here. See Ibidem, 61-62.

8 Weak pluralism cannot hope to do so, because it only maintains that there can be two options that are both worth pursuing. This does not get one to the position that perfectionism is wrong. Ibidem, 63.

9 Ibidem, 66.

10 In a similar vein, John Christman writes that “the claim that just principles must be accepted as legitimate by those living under them assumes a kind of being who makes such judgments of legitimacy. The precise conception of the autonomous person, then, will be crucial in the determination of the plausibility of principles of justice.” See Social and Political Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction (London and New York 2002), 119.

11 If this argument is correct than Rawls’ proposal not to construct a theory of justice as fairness on the basis of (comprehensive) autonomy because that value might not be accepted by all would amount to saying that the liberal state should not promote and protect (comprehensive) autonomy because by doing so it would fail to protect (comprehensive) autonomy. See for Rawls’ argument Political Liberalism (New York 2005), xlii-xlili and 78.


13 Colburn, Autonomy, 119.

14 One can also argue that diversity is valuable because of other values such as tolerance. However, if tolerance is said to be intrinsically valuable, then there is no way in which this value can be explicated without involving autonomy, and if tolerance is said to be of instrumental value, then we need another value. See Ibidem, 111.


16 Ibidem, 154.

18 Colburn’s own account of autonomy as hypothetical reflective endorsement of values certainly does little to disconfirm the suspicion that it is based on a first-order value, *Autonomy*, 25. He allows – officially – for unreflective lives to count as autonomous as well if people would endorse such a life if they were to reflect on it. However, this insertion does not make a practical difference because he fails to identify state policies that can distinctively foster hypothetical endorsement. Ibidem, 38. Thus, if it is true that the state should promote autonomy and it can do so only by fostering reflection (which may or may not foster hypothetical endorsement), then it will promote a controversial ideal of the contemplative life. Many will balk at this, and they may do so not only on the basis of first-order values, but also on the basis of a different account of (the second-order value) autonomy.

19 In this regard it will not do to claim that autonomy is different from rugged individualism, as in Robert Young, *Personal Autonomy. Beyond Positive and Negative Liberty* (London 1986), 5 and Gerald Dworkin, *The Theory and Practice of Autonomy* (New York 1988), 8. Dworkin takes his ‘ideological neutrality’ constraint on theorizing about autonomy to be a weak one, which in practice means that the theory should not appeal only to those who hold an individualist worldview. At least for a liberal conception of autonomy this constraint is too weak.

20 Although the main debate on the issue over autonomy and advertising is played out in this journal, there are noteworthy contributions in the business ethics literature that have appeared elsewhere. Richard Lippke argues in *Radical Business Ethics* (Lanham 1995) that persuasive advertising (as distinguished from informational advertising) “suppresses” autonomy because it keeps consumers from reflecting on choices by “implicit” persuasion (108). Although Lippke lists some intrusive phenomena such as group pressure and emotional appeals, this list is argumentatively fruitless, as he has not specified what level of autonomy ‘suppression’ is normatively relevant, nor how this level is to be defined. Moreover, the distinction between informational and persuasive advertising is underdetermined, which impairs the practical relevance of his argument.


22 Ibidem, 7.

23 Ibidem, 8.

24 A better defense of Arrington’s position would be to claim that heuristic decision making can be rational as well (and hence autonomous), and that puffery offers valuable input to such mechanisms.

25 Ibidem, 10.


27 Arrington elsewhere argues that subliminal influence need not worry us because “most of us have a benevolent subconsciousness which does not overwhelm our ego and its reasons for action”, see his “Advertising”, 10. I have no idea what ‘subconsciousness’ refers to here, but I will show later on that scientific psychology demonstrates that unconscious influences on action are real (see especially chapter 2.2).

28 Ibidem, 11.


30 Ibidem, 29.

31 Ibidem, 29 and 31.

32 Roger Crisp, “Persuasive Advertising”, 418.

33 Ibidem, 414-415.

34 Crisp could alternatively make the definition of a good reason dependent on normative standards for judgment and decision making in a specific domain. Making good aesthetic decisions may not be hampered by the unconscious arousal of desires whereas good economic decision-making may be hampered by manipulation. However, it seems problematic for a theory of autonomy to stipulate which type of decision making is appropriate in a certain domain and what counts as appropriate input to it.


36 Ibidem, 21.

37 Ibidem, 22.

38 I discuss the merits of this critique in chapter 2.


40 Ibidem, 233.

41 See chapter 2.4.

42 Ibidem, 234.

43 The latter point counts not so much against Cunningham’s assertion as against Noggle’s original theory.

44 These doubts about the desirability of this standard of autonomy are discussed in chapter 2.4.
45 In the context of the normative analysis of manipulation Eric Cave in “What’s Wrong With Motive Manipulation?”, in: Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, vol 10 (2007), 129-144, there 133-134, has called this the discrimination principle.

CHAPTER 2

1 It can be objected that not all intuitions about autonomy should be weighed equally. Although I agree with this objection in principle, I also believe that a minimal approach should not take differences in weight as a starting point. Instead, it should first distinguish intuitively plausible conceptions of autonomy from obviously implausible ones that are confused with it. The plausible conceptions, among which some are prioritized by different lines of thought, should be treated equally, even if lines of thought have not been equally influential. Only in case of conflict between such conceptions should different weights be allocated. This should be done by means of thought experiments in which variables are switched until conceptions make contradictory evaluations about such cases. The evaluation (and its supporting conception) that is best in line with intuition should win out. In sum, differences in weight between plausible conceptions of autonomy are in order, but they should be the outcome of analysis, not its starting point. Note also that my approach is different from the approach to minimal liberal autonomy taken by Veit Bader, who maintains that all conceptions about which controversy exists (such as the split-self view of autonomy) are to be avoided. I have decided against such an approach because the resulting notion of “minimalist individual agency” that figures in Bader’s account is so minimal that I am afraid that few would still recognize it as being about autonomy.

2 These two criteria – of consistency and empirical feasibility – were introduced as conditions for the adequacy of a theory of autonomy in general by Dworkin, The Theory and Practice of Autonomy, 7. Another one – ideological neutrality – was already discussed in chapter 1 and is understood stricter in the form of the first principle of maximal inclusiveness outlined above. The subsequent relevant criteria that Dworkin mentions are already met. The normative relevance of the theory is guaranteed by its role in legitimizing the liberal state; the value of the concept of autonomy (for this end) was demonstrated in chapter 1; and “judgmental relevance” (or reflective equilibrium) is part of my first principle. Judgmental relevance is used throughout this chapter but especially and explicitly so in section 4.


5 Daniel Dennett argues that such brainwashing thought experiments are inconsequential, because they might be psychologically impossible. And even if they were possible, he continues, we might be able to quickly regain the capacity to relate to the world autonomously. If so, then history might matter only “because in the actual world only certain sorts of historical processes can create what really matters: the set of competences implicit in the total structure of an embodied nervous system.” Dennett, “Natural Freedom”, in: Metaphilosophy, vol 36 no 4 (2005), 449-459, there 450. I address these concerns extensively in section 2.2 and argue that they are not justified.

6 Christman describes this view in “Introduction”, 13.


8 Let me briefly elaborate this claim. First, there are conceptions that clearly carry first-order values into the definition of autonomy and hence fall outside of the scope of this chapter. In this category one finds conceptions of the heroic person (Nietzsche), the rationalist person (Kant), the creative-expressive person (Von Humboldt) and the individualistic person (Mill). Second, in non-liberal conceptions of autonomy, such as anarchism, no authority can be acknowledged except for one’s own, and this is incompatible with liberalism’s commitment to state institutions. See Marina Oshana, Personal Autonomy in Society, 15-19 on types of political autonomy. Finally, there may be some relation between moral autonomy (understood as responsibility) and whatever liberal autonomy may turn out to be, but such a relation should not be presumed at the outset.

9 Intuitions 3, 4 and 5 are identified as the three central ideas for thinking about autonomy in the overview given by Sarah Buss; Marina Oshana identified 1, 5, and 7 as central intuitions (among others that I will discuss shortly), Personal Autonomy in Society, 76 ff; on the list compiled by Nomi Arpaly in “Which Autonomy?” we find the intuitions 4, 5 and 7 (again, among several others that are not relevant to liberal autonomy). The intuitions that autonomy is about a point of view – intuition 2 – is shared by Gary Watson, Harry Frankfurt,
Michael Bratman, David Velleman and others but does not figure explicitly in the above reviews. Similarly, that autonomy involves self-control understood as impulse control – intuition 6 – is taken for granted in all accounts (but most extensively so in Mele, *Autonomous Agents*) and cannot be reduced to one of the other intuitions.


12 Such an argument has been developed by Joel Anderson and Axel Honneth, “Autonomy, Vulnerability, Recognition and Justice”, in: Joel Anderson and John Christman, *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism*, 127-140. Anderson and Honneth in fact distinguish three types of self-esteem – drawing on earlier work by Honneth – which are yet to be empirically validated.

13 A more comprehensive assessment of branding and liberal autonomy could pursue this line of argument and might significantly strengthen my conclusion on the nature of autonomy violation in branding.

14 Marina Oshana for example argues that self-esteem (or “self-respect”) understood as the “inherent dignity or worth” of humans would be constitutive of autonomy and that a number of social-relational properties such as security and financial self-sufficiency would do so as well, see *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 81 and 86-87 respectively.

15 Intuitive support for thinking of positions in social relations as being constitutive of autonomy comes from cases such as voluntary slavery which are supposed to show that such restrictive social relations impede autonomy. This intuition is not decisive however, because one can imagine a slave who resists her fate by the small opportunities for resistance that are open to her. Thus, it seems more parsimonious to say that autonomy is what an agent exercises given the social relations that she finds herself in (as long as the seven core components are not interfered with by others). See Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 43 ff. The resisting slave example is presented in Berofsky, *Liberation From Self*, 22. Diana Tietjens Meyers makes a related point in “Personal Autonomy in Society (review)”, in: *Hypatia*, vol 23 no 2 (2008), 202-206.

16 Oshana believes that this is not a problem, because she thinks that the liberal state ought to be legitimated on the basis of a perfectionism conception of autonomy, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, 105. I have rejected this view in chapter 1.

17 See on the problems of defining which social relations are relevant for autonomy also Meyers, “Personal Autonomy in Society (review)”. For an account of the complexity involved in specifying social roles see Veit Bader and Albert Benschop, *Ongelijk-heden. Sociale ongelijkheid en sociaal handelen* (Groningen 1988), 120 ff.

18 See for other accounts of such a distinction between freedom and autonomy Berofsky, *Liberation From Self*, 16 ff and Christman, “Autonomy, History and the Subject of Justice”, 20.

19 Some intuitions in my taxonomy may be seen as having nothing to do with autonomy (which is ultimately a matter for experimental philosophy to deal with) and it is of course also possible that I failed to see an intuition underlying conceptions of autonomy (or that the philosophers who figure in reviews have yet to come to grips with such an intuition). The best I can do is point out in response to the former concern that I include intuitions on the importance of which at least philosophers agree (which is admittedly a highly unrepresentative sample) and that I rely on thought experiments to bring out intuitions for the reader in case there is disagreement.


23 Before I move on, it is instructive to stress that I use self-control differently from its typical meaning in social psychology. The latter meaning, which also figures in Alfred Mele’s discussion of the concept for example, refers to the opposite of weakness of will. Thus, self-control in this sense is but a component of the way in which I use the term here. A much more closely related meaning is ascribed to self-control by Julius Kuhl. In his theory, self-control refers to two subsystems that he locates in the left hemisphere and that I describe in more detail in section 3.1. Although self-control in his theory refers to similar processes that I describe here my use of self-control leaves open the precise instantiation of these functions.


25 Watson in fact speaks of free actions instead of autonomous actions, but what he refers to is what I take to be autonomy (and so is his theory interpreted generally in philosophical discussion of autonomy).


27 Ibidem, 208.


47 Ibidem, 234.
48 Ibidem, 232. Bratman moreover argues that such feelings must have the support of higher-order attitudes in favor of treating a feeling as a reason for action, but that is a claim that we discuss in the next section.
50 If this correct, then Bratman’s argument for “a kind of identification” of the two pressures in “Autonomy and Identification, Decision, and Treating as a Reason”, in: Ibidem, 80.
51 Dworkin, “Reflection, Planning, and Temporally Extended Agency”, in: Taylor ed., Personal Autonomy, 33-57, there 46. However, Bratman acknowledges that such identity conferral is a property of policies in general (and not a prerogative of self-governing policies). Thus, on Bratman’s account a policy that tells us which considerations are justified reasons for action (as opposed to which desires are justified reasons for action) would also confer autonomy. Bratman, “Planning Agency, Autonomous Agency”, 48. And such policies do not have a conative hierarchy. Bratman’s reply to this objection is to point to the role of self-governing policies in self-management, which would exert pressure in the direction of the formation of self-governing policies and hence autonomy. But I argue below that this pressure does not amount to much.
52 See Colburn, Autonomy, chapter 1.
53 See Also Oshana, Personal Autonomy in Society, 78 and for a more extensive discussion Berofsky, Liberation From Self, chapter 6. The precise limits of minimal rationality do not concern me here because there is no relevant disagreement on the issue in the literature on autonomy and because we saw in chapter 1.2 that a critique of branding that is based on standards of rationality does not have realistic prospects of success.
54 Carruthers, The Architecture, 391-393.
55 It is not clear what is going on when rival desires are suppressed, but social psychologists have quite recently found that when people exert self-control – in terms of inhibition of action programs – across very diverse tasks (e.g. attention control, thought suppression, emotional regulation and pro-social behavior) we may tap into a single resource. That is, if we exert self-control in resisting the temptation to eat a pudding, then that effort reduces our ability to exert self-control in solving a puzzle in a follow-up task. See Mark Muraven and Roy Baumeister, “Self-regulation and Depletion of Limited Resources: Does Self-Control Resemble a Muscle?”, in: Psychological Bulletin, vol 126 (2000), 247-259 for a review of evidence for the limited resource model of self-control.
56 It is not clear what is going on when rival desires are suppressed, but social psychologists have quite recently found that when people exert self-control – in terms of inhibition of action programs – across very diverse tasks (e.g. attention control, thought suppression, emotional regulation and pro-social behavior) we may tap into a single resource. That is, if we exert self-control in resisting the temptation to eat a pudding, then that effort reduces our ability to exert self-control in solving a puzzle in a follow-up task. See Mark Muraven and Roy Baumeister, “Self-regulation and Depletion of Limited Resources: Does Self-Control Resemble a Muscle?”, in: Psychological Bulletin, vol 126 (2000), 247-259 for a review of evidence for the limited resource model of self-control.
56 Mele’s account in Autonomous Agents is of no use in this regard, as he is interested in the criteria for perfect self-control rather than a threshold value.


58 Ibidem. 343.

59 Ibidem. 344.

60 To be precise, the authors do not require every neurochemical to be in a preset range, but merely require a control space condition to be satisfied, so that there are many combinations of levels of neurochemicals that fall within this range.

61 I do not think that self-control, understood as the opposite of weakness of will, is a phenomenon that is usefully defined without any reference to causality. This is the proposal of Dorothee Horstkötter, who argues that if we want to maintain a viable concept of self-control in light of automaticity research – which shows that much of our behavior is triggered outside of our awareness – we must define self-control normatively. That is, if our behavior happens to cohere with a goal that we have set ourselves, then we exercise self-control irrespective of the causal chains that led to the behavior. Although setting a goal is certainly a necessary condition for exercising self-control, so are the causal links between the goal state and the activation of the motor schema. Otherwise we would have to say that we exercise self-control if a (benign) mindreading genius reads our goals and activates the relevant motor schema with the help of some futuristic remote controlling devise. And that seems wrong. See Dorothee Horstkötter, Self-control Revisited. Varieties of Normative Agency (Enschede 2009).

62 Dennett, Elbow Room, 52 ff. I diverge substantially from Colburn’s definition of independence, which does not allow for agents to act on reasons they are not aware of. See his Autonomy, 28. This position is not tenable if the research on awareness discussed in section 2.3 is correct.


64 This is the case at least until consciousness is understood.

65 See Ibidem, 95 ff. for a discussion of this experiment and similar experiments.


68 Mele, Autonomous Agents, 182-185 even talks about manipulating the reasoning process by instilling habits of thought by means of conditioning.


71 See Kathleen Taylor, Brainwashing. The Science of Thought Control (Oxford 2004), 204 on the threats of manipulating reactance. She understands reactance as a feeling of not being in control of actions, which refers to a different cluster on questionnaires. The point on manipulation carries over however.

72 Berofsky, Liberation From Self, 185 ff. See also Dennett, Elbow Room and Freedom Evolves.

73 I also understand epistemic competence differently from Oshana, Personal Autonomy in Society, 76-78, who stresses the supportive role of motivations for epistemic competence with regard to self-assertive agency.

74 Alfred Mele has helpfully distinguished three types of such control. A controller may influence another agent by controlling information, by instilling or changing pro-attitudes or by impairing the agent's reasoning system.

75 See Daniel Dennett, “Natural Freedom”, 450.

76 See for a discussion of these issues Mele, Autonomous Agents, 179 ff. For a discussion on natural defense mechanisms – in terms of vigilance towards both the source and the content of messages – against self-control loss by belief induction see Daniel Sperber, Fabrice Clément. Christophe Heintz, Olivier Mascaro, Hugo Mercur, Gloria Origgi and Deirdre Wilson, “Epistemic Vigilance”, in: Mind and Language (2010) in press.

77 The journalist Naomi Klein reports on these experiments extensively in The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism (New York 2007), 25 ff.

78 Attitude change effects by means of subliminal influence have been reported with regard to the mere exposure effect – where we like an object, in this case a subliminally presented one, more when we are confronted with it more often – and to evaluative conditioning. Dijksterhuis et al., “The Power of the Subliminal”, 84 and 90 ff.


99 M. Olson and R. Fazio, “Implicit and explicit measures of attitudes: The perspective of the MODE model”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol 96 no 5 (2009), 933-948, there 936 f. More evidence for the IMM comes from several manipulations in which the US and CS were flashed in an alternating pattern (facilitating eye shifting between the two), in which the space between US and CS was decreased and in which the temporal overlap was increased, all of which correlated with greater EC effects. Ibidem, study 2 and 3; Jones et al., “Evaluative Conditioning”. It not clear whether alternative EC mechanisms could also explain these effects however.

81 See on this assumption Betram Gawronski, “Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Implicit Measures and Their Frequently Supposed, But Not Entirely Correct Answers”, in: *Canadian Psychology*, vol 50 no (2009), 141-150, there 144.


83 Other evidence for this view comes from eye tracking measurements and a number of manipulations. The pattern of eye movement expected to facilitate EC effects would, according to the IMM, be one in which the eye gaze was fixed on the US and then shifted to the CS (or the reverse) without intermediate fixation. If eye gaze can be assumed to indicate the internal representation of stimuli, then this pattern should lead to a temporally proximate representation of US and CS, which should in turn facilitate EC effects. The latter effect did indeed correlate with the described eye pattern. Christopher Jones, Russell Fazio and Michael Olson, “Implicit Misattribution as a Mechanism Underlying Evaluative Conditioning”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol 96 no 5 (2009), 933-948, there 936 f. More evidence for the IMM comes from several manipulations in which the US and CS were flashed in an alternating pattern (facilitating eye shifting between the two), in which the space between US and CS was decreased and in which the temporal overlap was increased, all of which correlated with greater EC effects. Ibidem, study 2 and 3; Jones et al., “Evaluative Conditioning”. It not clear whether alternative EC mechanisms could also explain these effects however.

84 Jones et al., “Implicit Misattribution”, 942 f.


87 Jones et al., “Evaluative Conditioning”.


89 Whether scientifically less well informed controllers can be said to have such knowledge as well would have to be established on a case by case basis.


92 Alan Ware argues that for manipulation to occur it must be true that the manipulator “could reasonably have been expected to know” that her actions would have manipulative effects. See “The Concept of Manipulation: Its Relation to Democracy and Power”, in: *British Journal of Political Science*, vol 11 (1981), 163-181, there 175.

93 Other evidence for this view comes from eye tracking measurements and a number of manipulations. The pattern of eye movement expected to facilitate EC effects would, according to the IMM, be one in which the eye gaze was fixed on the US and then shifted to the CS (or the reverse) without intermediate fixation. If eye gaze can be assumed to indicate the internal representation of stimuli, then this pattern should lead to a temporally proximate representation of US and CS, which should in turn facilitate EC effects. The latter effect did indeed correlate with the described eye pattern. Christopher Jones, Russell Fazio and Michael Olson, “Implicit Misattribution as a Mechanism Underlying Evaluative Conditioning”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol 96 no 5 (2009), 933-948, there 936 f. More evidence for the IMM comes from several manipulations in which the US and CS were flashed in an alternating pattern (facilitating eye shifting between the two), in which the space between US and CS was decreased and in which the temporal overlap was increased, all of which correlated with greater EC effects. Ibidem, study 2 and 3; Jones et al., “Evaluative Conditioning”. It not clear whether alternative EC mechanisms could also explain these effects however.


101 See Mele, *Autonomous Agents*, 153-154 on the concept of sheddability. Mele does not detail the nature of the objects of such shedding, nor the conditions under which shedding can be successful.

102 Bertram Gawronski, Roland Deutsch, Sawsan Mbirkou, Beate Seibt and Fritz Strack, “When ‘Just Say No’ is Not Enough: Affirmation Versus Negation Training and the Reduction of Automatic Stereotype Activation”, in: *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol 44 (2008), 370-377, there 374. It must be noted that this study also shows that implicit attitudes can be changed by building rival associations. This may work to some extent for stable stereotypes, such as racism, but it is not a practical strategy if one does not know which implicit attitudes have been changed (as is the case, I will argue, in branding).


104 Ibidem, 1104.

105 Surprisingly, the effect occurs mainly in the case of tasks that were ascribed by the experimenter (and not in the case of the left over items). It is not clear why this should be so.


107 See for example Ibidem, 170, 171, 178 and 186.


110 This overview is based on Peter Carruthers, “How We Know Our Own Minds: The Relationship Between Mindreading and Metacognition”, in: *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, vol 32 (2009), 121-138. See 138-182 for extensive open peer commentary on Carruther's discussion and the latter's rebuttal.

111 Ibidem, 137. Autists are for example worse at assessing their own success in a ball game.

112 Ibidem, 125.


117 Does this mean that consciousness can no longer play a role in a theory of autonomy? Matt King and Peter Carruthers go a long way in this direction by arguing that the lack of consciousness settling anything in decision-making would be evidence against the endorsement approaches of Frankfurt and Watson. It is intuitively plausible to argue that second-order desires and best judgments make an agent autonomous on the basis of cases such as the addict who rejects her addiction. On Frankfurt's account, if the addict acts on the desire to take drugs against her best judgment (or second-order desire), then she does not act autonomously. King and Carruthers assume that this intuition is plausible only if the decision not to take drugs was made consciously. For if the decision-making itself were unconscious, then what remains is the conscious action of rehearsing in inner speech that it is not a good thing to take drugs. And if that would suffice, then as long as the unconscious decision-making process is caused by some conscious action we are autonomous. This would imply that if the addict’s choice to take another shot would be caused by a conscious thought about her problems, she acted autonomously. And that, King and Carruthers argue, seems wrong. The problem with this argument is that it treats all actions as equal whereas they are not. If rehearsals that result in a best judgment can cause actions (when they are coupled with the desire to act on one’s best judgments), then it can be argued that what makes a person autonomous are decisions which are the result of (conscious) best judgments that together with auxiliary innate desires outcompete others motivations. If this is correct, then there is a role for consciousness in a liberal theory of autonomy, be it a much more restricted one than is commonly assumed. Matt King and Peter Carruthers, “Moral Responsibility and Consciousness”, in: *Moral Philosophy*, vol 7 (2010), forthcoming. http://www.philosophy.umd.edu/Faculty/pccarruthers/Accessed September 22, 2010.

the self as a connectionist network Julius Kuhl, Motivation und Persönlichkeit. Interaktionen psychischer Systeme (Göttingen 2001), 716 ff and 760 ff.


120 Berofsky makes such a point in relation to endorsement approaches to autonomy. He argues that if unconscious mental states are out of sync with a person’s explicit endorsement, and such unconscious states are thought to be a bona fide part of the self, then the endorsement theorist must take recourse to unconscious endorsement. However, it would according to Berofsky be impossible to distinguish cases in which unconscious endorsement occurred from ones in which it did not, so that this approach is a dead end. See Liberation From Self, 100. The same argument can be made if we replace endorsement with retrieval mechanism. At least with regard to unconscious retrieval I will argue that there is evidence from psychology for distinguishing cases of valid unconscious retrieval from invalid ones (as well as for conditions under which valid retrieval is inhibited). Whether such unconscious retrieval can count as a case of endorsement is a matter that I leave open.


122 In an earlier account, Velleman proposed that the spontaneity of the generation of predictions would account for the autonomy of agents. However, randomly generation is unlikely to count as a source of autonomous behavior on most people’s intuition, while this account is also unable to distinguish regular action from autonomous action.

125 Velleman, “The Self as Narrator”, 69.


127 See section 2.3.


129 This is in fact a disconcerting finding from the perspective of autonomy, as experienced difficulty in effectively carrying out an action like an experimental task is related to a readiness to take on higher level identities of the act, such as participating for selfish or altruistic reasons. Ibidem, 12.


132 The psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci suggest that nonautonomous decisions which are unrelected would be followed by “guilt or shame”, but such emotions seem to be able of indicating many different things, see “Autonomy is No Illusion. Self-Determination Theory and the Empirical Study of Authenticity, Awareness and Will”, in: J. Greenberg, S. Koole and T. Pyszczynski ed., Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology (New York 2004), 440-479, there 468.


134 This point is made by Berofsky, Liberation From Self, 102.

135 Note that claiming that a liberal theory of autonomy should not privilege the reflective processing mode (against nonreflective processing modes) is different from claiming that it should not privilege reflective utterances (against body language). The truth of the second claim does not imply that the first is true as well, since a reflective utterance can be informed by a reflective and a nonreflective self-consistency check. In fact, I will indicate how a nonreflective self-consistency mechanism may send an affective signal to the reflective processing system in section 3.2 where I discuss the work of Sascha Topolinski and Fritz Strack. The second claim is found in Christman, The Politics of Persons, 152.


138 Northoff et al., “Self-referential Processing”.


140 Ibidem, 100. It remains unclear what distinguishes a force within from one outside of the self however.

141 Ibidem, 104.

142 Ibidem, 105.


144 Berofsky, *Liberation From Self*, 94 ff. As Beate Rössler has recently pointed out, Frankfurt treats the externalization of wishes and normative imperatives as if they were convictions, but they are not, because wishes and normative imperatives do not lose their validity after a conflict in the way convictions do after they are either falsified or validated; see “Autonomie und Ambivalenz”, 372 ff.

145 An alternative mechanism is proposed by the psychologists Tim Kasser and Kennon Sheldon in “Nonbecoming, Alienated Becoming, and Authentic Becoming. A Goal-Based Approach”, in: Jeff Greenberg et al ed., *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology*, 480-493. They speculate that there is an Organismic Valuing Process (OVP) that gives the organism internal information to aid it in decision-making. Its output would be what we typically experience as intuition. Most importantly, the leading goal of the OVP is said to be the health of the organism (487). There are subsequent problematic assumptions about its hostility towards extrinsic goals (such as status and looks) that we need not go into that here. At this point I want to point out only that the postulation of the OVP is not only entirely speculative, but also unlikely to operate under the goal of health, because this is too general a goal to have evolved. It is possible that an innate fear of snakes is selected for, but unlikely that an abstract goal such as survival evolved.


149 Baumann and Kuhl in this regard found that state oriented individuals who reported a negative mood were less proficient in identifying coherent against incoherent word triplets (e.g. salt, deep and foam is coherent because all words are related to ‘sea’) than action oriented individuals with the same level of negative mood. Nicola Baumann and Julius Kuhl, “Intuition, Affect and Personality: Unconscious Coherence Judgments and Self-Regulation of Negative Affect”, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol 83 no 5 (2002), 1213-1223.

150 Ideally one would want to see this research extended to the measurement of latencies on actual action choices instead of memory tasks. That is, one would like to see experiments in which it is shown that state oriented individuals in simulated choice situations are more likely to make choices for options that they previously rated as unattractive (especially when they are subjected with negative affect) and also show longer response latencies. Although there is no such research to date, that does not seem such a giant leap.


152 Specifying the level of negative affect is a task that I do not take up in this thesis.


155 Christman responds to this concern by noting that on his account of sustained critical reflection over a variety of circumstances (which I discussed in section 3.1) the assessment of the background values would be more realistic because there is no need to assess fleeting affective and cognitive reactions, while the assessment would moreover have to be applied only to basic organizing values which are presumably more easily detected. See, The Politics of Persons, 158. This may make the task of gauging a person’s mental states of (non-)alienation somewhat less improbable, but that is not the same as this task being realistically achievable.


157 What about cases in which we reflectively come to endorse a mental state (or the way in which we appropriated that mental state), but the mental state in question slipped past initiatory mechanisms? This question was posed to me by Joel Anderson. I think that both cases would indeed properly authenticate the mental state in question (because of the involvement of either coherence or the reflective point of view of the agent) and that retrospective reflective authentication would hence have to be added as a subsequent condition. This case is irrelevant to the present discussion though, because the stimuli that slip past the initiatory mechanisms (which I will discuss later) are brought about by evaluative conditioning of the misattribution type and
stored mainly as implicit attitudes. As such they are unlikely to ever become the object of reflection, and when they do, they are unlikely to be corrected since – as was discussed in section 2.2 – negating implicit attitudes at the explicit level often has the opposite effect.


159 Walther et al., “Changing Likes and Dislikes Through the Back Door”.

160 I should note at this point that a rival to the APE model is less categorical on this issue. On the Meta Cognitive Model (MCM) attitudes are not established on line but read from memory. Moreover, in contrast to dual systems model of implicit influence, there is on the MCM but a single type of memory in which attitudes are stored. However, in this memory store, attitude objects are not just associated with an evaluation, but the evaluation itself may in turn be the object of a so called meta-cognitive tag. If the MCM is correct, then associative processing is simply less effortful processing and not a qualitatively different kind of processing (i.e. where one ascribes truth values and the other does not). However, the MCM should predict that conflict detection should be seriously impaired in associative processing, since fewer representations are taken into account so that less meta-cognitive tags – including ones with truth value – are considered. R. Petty, P. Briñol, and K. DeMarree, “The meta-cognitive model (MCM) of attitudes: Implications for attitude measurement, change, and strength”, in: Social Cognition, vol 25 (2007), 657-686.

Evidence for thinking that associative processing is at least subject to consistency constraints comes from a study by Bertram Gawronski and Fritz Strack that uses induced compliance. In such studies subjects are typically asked to write an essay that runs counter to one of their attitudes (e.g. blacks should pay more tuition). As a consequence, the subject is expected to experience a conflict between the position she actually holds (e.g. blacks are equal) and her behavior (i.e. writing that they are not). In the classical set up, one group is then exposed to high pressure to comply with writing the essay and another group to low pressure. The high pressure is reasoned to induce the belief that the behavior is only performed to please the experimenter. Combined with a belief such as ‘in order to please others you may temporarily engage in behavior that runs counter to your convictions’, this proposition resolves the conflict. Hence, under high pressure the initial proposition should not change. However, in the low pressure condition there is no such justification. The subject is therefore forced to either give up her behavior or to change her attitude, depending on what causes least resistance. Cognitive dissonance theory predicts that it is typically easier to change the initial belief, and this is what is generally found and what Gawronski and Strack found when they measured explicit attitudes. However, there was no change on implicit attitudes after dissonance reduction in the low pressure condition (while implicit and explicit attitudes were highly correlated in the high pressure condition). Betram Gawronski and Fritz Strack, “On the Propositional Nature of Cognitive Consistency: Dissonance Changes Explicit, But Not Implicit Attitudes”, in: Journal of Experimental Psychology, vol 40 (2004), 535-542. These and other experiments strongly suggest that automatic corrections for consistency do not carry over to implicit attitudes. For a discussion of these subsequent experiments see Bertram Gawronski, Fritz Strack and Galen Bodenhausen, “Attitudes and Cognitive Consistency. The Role of Associative and Propositional Processes”, in: Richard Petty, R.H. Fazio and Pablo Briñol ed., Attitudes: Insights From the New Implicit Measures (New York 2009), 85-117, there 94 ff.

161 Nicola Baumann, Julius Kuhl and Miguel Kazén, “Left-Hemispheric Activation and Self-Infiltration: Testing a Neurophysiological Model of Internalization”, in: Motivation and Emotion, vol 29 no 3 (2005), 152-165, there 147. An alternative explanation would be that subjects who were all right handed were made uncertain because of the left-hand ball squeezing and for this reason were more attentive at encoding. This explanation can be ruled out however, because retrieval was significantly better only for ascribed tasks.

162 Ibidem, 155.


166 On this inadvertent effect of discrepancy reduction, see Ibidem, 152. According to Petty and colleagues this effect explains why implicit-explicit discrepancy is so persistent.


See Beate Rössler, Der Wert des Privaten (Frankfurt am Main 2001) for an argument for thinking that we value privacy because of a concern with autonomy. See Robert Noggle, “Manipulative Actions: A Conceptual and Moral Analysis”, in: American Philosophical Quarterly, vol 33 no 1 (1996), 43-55, there 51 for another – practical – argument in support of the intuition that trivial cases of autonomy violation should not be remedied with state action. If the commitment to protect autonomy on the part of the state is part of the terms of a (hypothetical) contract, then at least one appropriate standard for determining what this commitment should amount to is to say that it must be enforceable (because that is a universal requirement of contracts). This can in turn be taken to mean that the state should be able to realistically intervene in cases of autonomy violation and that it is simply practically impossible for a state to monitor all interactions for the presence of manipulations.

Whether consent to autonomy violation is possible in principle is contested, most notably by Marina Oshana. She argues not only against the possibility of autonomously giving up what I call freedom (as in voluntary slavery) but also against the possibility of autonomously giving up (psychological) autonomy. Let me stress that these arguments are not equivalent. (This is not even true if Oshana’s conception of (social) autonomy is correct, since her argument is not that autonomy is only to be found in objective social relations, but that such social relations must be added to psychological states.) Thus, if it is legitimate to autonomously sell yourself to a slave holder, then this need not imply that you may autonomously hand your life to a hypnotist. Furthermore, it is at least pace Oshana – not obvious that a person cannot voluntarily sell herself into slavery. If this is correct, then any attempt to argue against ceding autonomy with reference to a continuum between voluntary slavery cases and cases in which autonomy is given up must fail. As an independent argument against the possibility of autonomously giving up autonomy, Oshana claims that in doing so an agent would always be underestimating her moral status. Oshana, Personal Autonomy in Society, 57. (This idea, she notes, is also found in Jean Jacques Rousseau and Thomas Hill Jr.) If appreciating your moral status is a condition for autonomy and if that moral status is contingent on not ceding autonomy, then it follows that it is impossible to ever autonomously give up autonomy. This argument is also not convincing. Not only is it not clear why every autonomous act must be based on the (implicit) premise that one is a moral agent, since nothing in the concept of autonomy seems to call for such a requirement. It is also not clear why on a minimal conception of moral status it would be irreconcilable with giving up autonomy. There is no unambiguous intuition to this effect. Looking forward for a moment, I note that much hangs on this argument. If I am mistaken, and it is not possible to autonomously give up autonomy, then my argument against branding would have greater ramifications.

The proposal of his that I am about to discuss is actually intended as an analysis of manipulation, but it carries over smoothly to the present discussion of authenticity.


In order to explain these effects, Noggle refers to evidence from learning theory for the existence of two networks, one operating on the basis of stimulus-response linkages and one operating on the basis of an interconnected semantic network. Ibidem, 63.

Ibidem, 64. The advantage of this criterion, Noggle suggests, is that the argument for qualifying a case of conditioned motivation as alien does not rely on it occurring against the victim’s will (this latter criterion does not work, he argues correctly, because we need a principle that accounts for the formation of an authentic will in the first place, and the will – as the outcome of that process – cannot be invoked to account for its own authentic formation).

Noggle might propose to specify a level of concordance in response to this particular objection, but I have no idea on the basis of which criteria he could plausibly do so.

Noggle ends his article by stating that “alien desires are repugnant because they involve information that does not go through the person’s rational faculties”, 67. This is confusing because he earlier defined alien desires on the basis of their concordance with beliefs (see quote above), as well as implausible as a theory of autonomy, because so much of our mental processing bypasses the person’s rational faculties.


For accounts of why autonomy does not trump all other values see Oshana, *Personal Autonomy in Society*, chapter 6; Berofsky, *Liberation From Self*, chapter 10.


CHAPTER 3

I am grateful to Agnes Nairn, whose comments forced me to clarify this passage.

See Dan Sperber, *Explaining Culture. A Naturalistic Approach* (Oxford 1996). I take it that there is no controversy about which theories of culture count as more naturalistic in the sense of being closer to biology. Picking Sperber’s theory from among more naturalistic approaches may be less obvious. However, once it is accepted that memetics is seriously flawed because of its assumption that ideas would replicate – which it generally is – then there is no rival theory in terms of scope to Sperber’s account. And because my argument requires a theory of that scope, Sperber’s theory is the only viable account. Let me note also that social theories towards the humanities side of the spectrum tend to exclude insights from psychology which makes them unhelpful for my purpose in any case.

Ibidem, 60.

Ibidem, 119 ff.

Ibidem, 134. See chapter 2.3 for an account of these principles.

In his discussion of the spread of myths Sperber notes that the incentive to retell a story can be either institutional or an intrinsic incentive. As an example of the latter kind he mentions ‘attractiveness’ which is related to the structure and themes of the story, but he does not explain what these themes are or how they relate to motivations. Nowhere in *Explaining Culture*, in fact, do we learn how motivations work in the first place. Ibidem, 95.

For Sperber’s discussion on feedback loops see Ibidem, 84.


Srinivasan et al., “An Approach to the Measurement”, 1444 and 1447


18 Ibidem, 150.


20 Buller, Adapting Minds, 131 ff.


22 Carruthers, The Architecture, 161-163.

23 Buller, Adapting Minds, 158-160.


26 Ibidem, 29.

27 Carruthers, 24. There are limitations to such sharing though. It will not occur if two modules need the same information at the same time or if they are too far removed from one another in the brain, because processing would slow down in these cases.


29 Larry Bernard, Michael Mills, Leland Swenson and Patricia Walsh, “An Evolutionary Theory of Human Motivation”, in: Genetic, Social and General Psychology Monographs, vol 131 no 2 (2005), 129-184, 161. The rubric of memetic challenges involves the motivations to explain things and to leave a legacy. The argument appears to be that memes lead to social contexts beyond real groups to future groups to which people can be motivated to leave a legacy. It is not clear in what the challenge exists however (even less so for the supposed motivation to explain things – it may be that the existence of memes is a necessary condition for question as to the meaning of things arise, but that does not explain why this poses a challenge).


33 Kipling Williams in “Ostracism”, in: Annual Review of Psychology, vol 58 (2007), 425-452 distinguishes, next to the need to affiliate, another response to ostracism that consists of desires to acquire existential needs by engaging in antisocial behavior. The precise ostracism cues that activate the affiliation motivation module against for example the aggression module will depend on many situational factors and these have not yet been investigated in sufficient detail.

34 Mark Leary and Ellen Tambor, “Self-Esteem As An Interpersonal Monitor”, 524.

35 Williams, “Ostracism”, 338-441.


41 Bad genes would of course quickly be rooted out of any one population if it were not for processes such as mutation (of which the negative effect is too weak for it to be selected against immediately) and host-pathogen co-evolution.

42 Randy Thornhill and Steven Gangestad, The Evolutionary Biology of Human Female Sexuality (Oxford 2008), 168.

43 Ibidem, 169-171. Female preferences for men are also related to their muscle mass and masculine features of the face (strong jaw, strong brows) which result from testosterone levels in adolescence. At this point males face a trade-off between allocating energy to mating effort (for example by muscle mass growth) and somatic functioning (such as that of the immune system). Ibidem, 176. Because there is thus a real cost to testosterone induced male features, they honestly signal the health of the organism to women.

44 Ibidem, 137.

45 Ibidem, 113 and 125-127. Interestingly, if android fat is deposited in for example breasts, it is not rated as attractive by men. Ibidem, 125.

46 Ibidem, 137-141.
The authors also note that formal modeling demonstrates that male assistance is a stable strategy.

50 Good hunters with high prestige have more surviving offspring. Ibidem, 66. Women also pay more attention to pictures of men with high status features. That is, when pictures of men, of which some display features of high status, are displayed briefly, women overestimate the number of high status men if they have to estimate their frequency under high time pressure. Because there was no such effect with regard to pictures of high status women, and because women displayed the same bias in a follow-up eye tracking study, this study suggests that women have a subtle bias for paying attention to high status men. Nathan DeWall and Jon Maner, “High Status Men (But Not Women) Capture the Eye of the Beholder”, in: Evolutionary Psychology, vol 6 no 2 (2008), 325-341. David Buller has contested the existence of a female preference for high status men in *Adapting Minds*, chapter 5. However, his alternative explanation of studies which show that women prefer high status men – that status homogamy predicts mate preference – does not stand up. That is, female university students indicate a preference for high income men, but this preference does not take the shape of an inverted u, as Buller’s homogamy hypothesis would predict. Andrew Delton, Theresa Robertson and Douglas Kenrick, “The Mating Game Isn’t Over. A Reply to Buller’s Critique of the Evolutionary Psychology of Mating”, in: Evolutionary Psychology, vol 4 (2006), 262-273, there 269. The authors also discuss studies which show that female preference for dominant men is moderated by the danger of the higher aggression being turned on women themselves, so that more dominance is not unconditionally preferred by women.


52 Thornhill and Gangestad, *The Evolutionary Biology*, 209, 211, 218, 220. Fertile female preferences for symmetrical male faces (when rating for short-term mating) are – as opposed to consistent preferences for men with more symmetrical bodily features, such as wrists – mixed. This may be because facial symmetry is a poor proxy for overall symmetry. Ibidem, 217.

53 Moreover, women may shift their preferences for a long-term mate in relation to their perceived mate value. It is found that women who are rated as more physically attractive have higher standards with regard to good genes, parenting, and partner indicators. David Buss and Todd Shackelford, “Attractive Women Want it All: Good Genes, Economic Investment, Parenting Proclivities, and Emotional Commitment”, in: *Evolutionary Psychology*, vol 6 no 1 (2008), 134-146.


56 Ibidem, 254.

57 Ibidem, 255.


61 What is more, with regard to behavior that is triggered by the mating motivation Geoffrey Miller has proposed that art, sports, creativity, morality, personality traits, intelligence and language evolved because of sexual selection pressures. Miller, *The Mating Mind. How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature* (New York 2000). Evidence for his sweeping hypotheses is still in short supply however.


64 Mazur, *The Biosociology of Dominance*, 66.

65 Ibidem, 67. There is also evidence that dominance is wired up similarly with innate human emotional systems for pride, shame, embarrassment, contempt and awe, which is another reason for thinking that the dominance motivation is innate. D. Keltner, J. Haidt and M. Shiota, “Social functionalism and the evolution of emotions”, in: M. Schaller, J. A. Simpson, and D. T. Kenrick ed., *Evolution and Social Psychology* (New York 2006), 115-142.


67 Ibidem, 118 ff.

This is a point that the authors do acknowledge. But if it is true, then one would need stronger arguments for allocating positions in a ‘pyramid of needs’ than saying that a certain motivation is really important.

Dan Ariely and Michael Norton, “Conceptual Consumption”, in: Annual Review of Psychology, vol 60 (2009), 475-490. What I call ‘unmediated consumption’ is called ‘physical consumption’ by the authors, but this is bound to lead to confusion.

Ibidem, 479.

77 See Mercier and Sperber, “Why do Humans Reason?”. Furthermore, a special category of public consumption consists of acts that are caused by the norm module. For the motives that are produced by this module are about adhering to abstract principles, not about impressing specific individuals. I exclude this special category of public consumption because of a lack of evidence about their influence (they re-enter only in section 5 and are discussed only insofar as they interact with the three social modules).

78 Angelo Chao and Juliet Schor, “Empirical Test of Status Consumption: Evidence From Women’s Cosmetics”, in: Journal of Economic Psychology, vol 19 (1998), 107-131, there 117. Results for mascara were more ambiguous, but the authors note that the quality test for this product differed from the rest.

79 See Gad Saad, The Evolutionary Bases of Consumption (Mahwah and London 2007) for an overview of evolutionary approaches to explaining consumer behavior. Let me note at this point also that several authors speak casually – especially in the context of consumption – of a presumed need for people to express themselves. See for example Jonah Berger and Chip Heath, “Where Consumers Diverge From Others: Identity Signaling and Product Domains”, in: Journal of Consumer Research, vol 34 (2007), 121-134. What is meant by this is not that decisions are made on the basis of sufficient access to memory (as in PSI) but that individuals would have a need to stand out from the rest and show who they really are. I am skeptical about the sophistication of such a need to be different. It is uncontested that people often want to stand out from the rest, but such behavior seems to reduce either to simple heuristics or to the mating or status motivation. As to the heuristics, it turns out that people who order beer publicly seek greater variety (compared to table friends) than a control group in which subjects communicate their choice privately. Dan Ariely and Jonathan Levav, “Sequential Choice in Group Settings: Taking the Road Less Traveled and Less Enjoyed”, in: Journal of Consumer Research, vol 27 (2000), 279-290. There is also evidence that consumers in narrow store aisles display more varied and unique product choices. Jonathan Levav and Rui Zhu, “Seeking Freedom Through Variety”, in: Journal of Consumer Research, vol 36 (2009), 600-610. The underlying motivation of such behavior seems in the beer case best explained by evidence that people who make more varied choices gain more status, while the variety seeking in confined spaces may be best explained by reactance (see chapter 2.2) with which it was correlated in that experimental setting. R. Ratner and B. Kahn, “The impact of private versus public consumption on variety-seeking behavior”, in: Journal of Consumer Research, vol 29 (2002), 246-57, and Levav and Zhu, “Seeking Freedom”, 605. Hence, the desire to be distinct may not be the result of a deep urge to show one’s true nature, but rather a mechanism for gaining status and making one’s behavior less predictable when one feels pressured.

80 Aric Rindflieisch, James Burroughs and Nancy Wong, “The Safety of Objects: Materialism, Existential Insecurity, and Brand Connection”, in: Journal of Consumer Research, vol 36 (2009), 1-16. The researchers in fact make distinction between communal brand connections and self-brand connections, but it is not clear whether these types of connections are distinct. Communal brand connections consists of responses to the following items:

I really identify with people who use this brand.
I feel like I almost belong to a club with other users of this brand.
This brand is used by people like me.
I feel a deep connection with others who use this brand.
A closer look at the items of the self-brand connection measure reveals that there is nothing about these questions that a person could not report as an element of her feeling part of a brand community:

This brand reflects who I am.
I can identify with this brand.
I feel a personal connection to this brand.
I (can) use this brand to communicate who I am to other people.
I consider this brand to be “me.”

81 Ibidem, 7.
85 Interestingly, in a final study it was established that the act of eating a nostalgic cookie satiated the need to belong but not the choice of a nostalgic product. For this studies participants engaged in another game of cyberball which was interrupted three times by an implicit recognition test that measured their need to belong. First to ensure that there was an effect due to the social exclusion of the cyberball game, then after a (nostalgic) cookie choice test and finally after a (nostalgic) cookie eating test. Only the cookie eating test eliminated the implicitly measured need to belong.
87 But in a follow-up task they, interestingly, were more likely to choose voluntary work over leisure time when primed with images of sexually attractive men than a control group, and they preferred conspicuous volunteering options over non-conspicuous ones. On this task men showed no such effect.
89 Yet another study found that men switch to a much higher discount rate when they have seen pictures of beautiful women against a control group. That is, when primed with attractive women, men are less likely to defer consumption for the benefit of a higher pay out in the future. Looking at cars has no such effect. Women showed no change in discount rate after looking at pictures of beautiful men. Miller, Spent, 106-111.
93 Moreover, this effect could not be explained by the expected happiness that subjects ascribed to the future use of the product in an accompanying survey.
99 This is what Emily Stone, Todd Shackelford and David Buss find in “Sex Ratio and Mate Preferences: A Cross-Cultural Investigation”, in: European Journal of Social Psychology, vol 37 (2007), 288-296. The set of countries involved is small however, and the significance of the effect (i.e. the female adjustment of mate preferences) is marginal. Note that more demanding female long-term mating preferences in low sex-ratio contexts could also be an evolved strategy of up-trading in ancestral contexts of polygyny.
145


104 See Miller, Spent, 85-86 for a similar argument.


106 Miller, Spent, 85 and 105.

107 Ibidem, 86.

108 Miller does by the way mention conditioning as a means of making effective sex appeals in ads on page 98 of Ibidem.


CHAPTER 4

1There is an interesting but small literature on the effect of cognitive load on persuasion attempts. Anick Bosmans and Luk Walrop in How Vulnerable are Consumers to Blatant Persuasion Attempts? Research Report (University of Leuven 2005) demonstrate that playing background music seriously impairs consumer skepticism toward persuasion attempts by salespersons. This impairment occurs even if sales intentions are explicit because of the salesperson wearing a promotional t-shirt and cap and talking about a “promotional drink” (20). These results are explained with reference to the impairment of working memory by the background music, which inhibits the application of persuasion knowledge to the source of the persuasion attempt.


4 See Dennett, Elbow Room, 10-11, for a more detailed description.


7 Ibidem, 764.

8 Ibidem, 764.


14 Ibidem, 192.

15 Ibidem, 195.

16 As Chartrand and colleagues note, in-store displays are a growing trend. Ibidem, 198.

17 Ibidem, 197.


Ibidem, 407.
21 Ibidem, 409.
22 Ibidem, 411.


24 Furthermore, on implicit attitude measures there was no correction effect in either condition. But this suggests only that implicit brand attitudes are more resistant to propositional negations.


27 Ibidem, 183.
28 See chapter 2.3.


30 Ibidem, 347.


34 Strick et al., “Humor in Advertisements”, 40 and 42.
36 Strack, Werth and Deutsch, “Reflective and Impulsive Determinants of Consumer Behavior”, 206.

37 Friese, Hofmann and Wänke, “The Impulsive Consumer”, 355. Note that Agnes Nairn and Cordelia Fine suggest that autonomy in the realm of consumption requires that people be able to “overcome implicit consumer attitudes in choice situations” in “Who’s Messing With My Mind? The Implications of Dual-Process Models for the Ethics of Advertising to Children”, in: *International Journal of Advertising*, vol 27 no 3 (2008), 447-470, there 459. If Friese and colleagues are correct in thinking that shopping environments chronically facilitate impulsive decision-making, then this requirement may be too demanding.

38 Similarly, if advertisements for unattractive products are correlated with more sales if they induce negative affect, then – all other things being equal – we have suggestive evidence for thinking that introjections occurred.

39 Note that testing whether autonomy violating instances of negative affect occurred in advertisements is relatively straightforward. In company archives one can find historical records of advertisements, sales figures and even investigations into how much consumers like a brand compared to rival brands in its market. Given that introjection is observed for the 50% of subjects who score below the median on the action orientation test, introjection effects should show up in the sales record.


43 Ibidem, 16.
45 Ibidem, 518. This may have been because of metacognitions or because of subsequent explicit attitudes that suppressed such an evaluation.


48 Ibidem, 598.

49 That is, if we assume that learning processes are at work in advertising so that advertisements become more effective over time. A third explanation of the data would be that the increase in the use of tropes is due to motivations of the advertising professionals. It could be that the use of metaphors serves as a signal of clever-
ness and creativity in the advertising industry and so functioned as a devise to enhance prestige. This is not a very convincing argument however, because schemes seem to be no less reliable as a signal of creativity. Phillips and McQuarrie, “The Development”, 11.


53 Note the difference between autonomy violation in purchasing actions, discussed in section 3.1, and autonomy violation of attitudes that in turn cause purchasing actions.


55 On the first point see Ibidem, 94.


57 Ibidem, 970.

58 Ibidem, 86.


60 Ibidem, 90.


62 If my assumptions are correct, future studies should also find evidence of learning processes that show that awareness of the workings of advertisements increases at both levels over time.


64 Ibidem, 3.

65 VN, item 1556. Letter by Hesselmans to Oppenheim, September 16, 1970.


68 Ibidem, 19.

69 AM, item 582. Memorandum by Kranenburg, August 30, 1963.

70 AM, item 13. Meeting of the board of directors, October 2, 1963.


72 Ibidem, 6.


CHAPTER 5

1 See Taylor, Brainwashing, for a preliminary analysis of organizational practices that might also structurally violate autonomy. She notes that education is not inherently hostile to autonomy because it aims to provide us with critical capacities for exercising autonomy, such as knowledge and the ability to ‘stop and think’. Ibidem, 64 and 66; similarly, mental health professionals aim primarily to help people to understand themselves, Ibidem, 77-78; and the military requires discipline, but soldiers are nowadays often given considerable responsibility, Ibidem, 82-83. Possible autonomy violations in such orchestrated emotional group formation are moreover legitimate if the army can be said to defend the national and international order that is necessary for liberal freedom to persist. Much more is to be said about these cases of course.


3 In fact, the researchers correlated these two measures of religiosity to three types of brand reliance, all which negative correlated with it: the number of Apple stores per million, the number of other brand stores per million and the brand-discount store ratio.

4 Shachar and colleagues went on to manipulate the type of religious prime and found that the negative correlation with national brand reliance (for signaling products) only occurred when participants were asked to think about religion in terms of self-worth and not when they were to think about religion in terms of security or about the religiosity of others. They take this to be evidence that the shared motivational source of religion and brands is the need to express self-worth. This is highly debatable though. First of all, it is not clear what expressing self-worth refers to. The term self-worth is open to all kinds of interpretations and may thus hide
a wide variety of motivations that may have been activated in subjects. Secondly, insofar as Shachar and colleagues invoke a need to express the self, I am skeptical for the reasons given in chapter 3, where I criticized that notion.

5 The development of so called mega churches is more similar to branding in this regard. It will be discussed in section 1.2.


8 A far-fetched argument can be developed for thinking that the structure of religious beliefs exerts pressure in the direction of autonomy violation though. That is, one could argue that concepts that conflate properties from multiple modules (e.g. the folk psychology and folk biology modules) and so achieve a memory optimum (e.g. a speaking snake) cannot be validated either by induction or by deduction. As a result, thinking hard about such concepts is not going to strengthen faith. Hence, the existence of supernatural agents must be validated at an emotional level, and this is done most effectively during synchronized and more or less ritualized activity. In other words, on this argument the nature of religious beliefs drives ritual practice in the direction of autonomy violation by means of synchronic states induced by music, chant and dance. My judgment is that there are too many speculative assumptions involved in this argument for it to be plausible. But nothing in my overall argument in this chapter hangs on this objection being correct.


10 Ibidem, 717.


15 It has shown for example that involuntary movements in the face are harder to control in response to music, Sosis and Alcorta, “Ritual, Emotion, and Sacred Symbols”, 337.

16 Ibidem, 333.


19 Ibidem, 540.

20 Ibidem, 539. See also Atran, In Gods We Trust, 13.

21 See Raymond Paloutzian, James Richardson and Lewis Rambo, “Religious Conversion and Personality Change”, in: Journal of Personality, vol 67 no 6 (1999), 1047-1079. On the basis of the very imperfect available evidence the authors conclude that conversion has a minimal impact on Big Five personality traits, which are very stable over the life course, but that it has a profound effect on goals, feelings, attitudes and behaviors, while it also profoundly affects midlevel narrative personality structures that guide orderings of life goals.

22 See Bulbulia, “Meme Infection or Religious Niche Construction? An Adaptationist Alternative to The Cultural Maladaptationist Hypothesis”, in: Method and Theory in the Study of Religion, vol 20 (2008), 1-42, there 36, where it is argued that because of costly testing of commitment “the risks of manipulation are significantly reduced”.

23 Moreover, this structural drive for intention validation by emotional signaling offers a structural antidote to religious Machiavellians only insofar as these are regularly involved in rituals. And the larger the organizations of a religion, the more need for specialization and the less ‘ritual contact hours’. James Hunter, "Religious Elites in Advanced Industrial Society", in: Comparative Studies in Society and History, vol 29, no 2 (1987), 360-374, there 371. For this reason, large scale doctrinal religions leave more room for manipulative intentions than smaller scale emotionally arousing types of religion.

24 Recently, Pascal Boyer and Pierre Liénard have argued that there may be a Hazard Precaution System in the brain that is receptive to the repetitive, scripted and goal demoted behavior often (but not always) seen in rituals. In a nutshell, this mechanism makes the organism carry out precaution procedures that may prevent future harm (e.g. washing hands prevents infection and counting stones makes one attentive to possible visits by predators that passed by). Repetitive behavior may thus appeal to humans by activating this fear-relieving system, so that over the course of cultural evolution rituals with rigid repetitive procedures had better survival chances. Boyer and Liénard, "Why Ritualized Behavior? Precaution Systems and Action Parsing in Devel-


31 Stark and Finke, Acts of Faith, 114. Stark and Lofland noticed that all new members of the cult they observed joined after establishing personal contacts. See also Chana Ullman, The Transformed Self. The Psychology of Religious Conversion (New York 1986) for evidence from interviews on the importance of personal contacts for religious conversion.

32 Note that proper consent is absent in the case of children who convert to a religion. However, parents by no means influence their offspring by religious thoughts exclusively, as atheist parents likewise pass on a wide variety of beliefs about the good life to their offspring. For this reason the question we are dealing with is one of parental autonomy in general. In this regard, only a radical liberal version of parental autonomy would clash with allowing for the conversion of children, since parents on this conception may not bias their children towards any idea of the good life, see Colin MacLeod, “Conceptions of Parental Autonomy”, in: Politics and Society, vol 25, no 1 (1997), 117-140, there 128. This position is highly problematic, since, as MacLeod points out, it undermines the social conditions for children’s autonomy that are secured by parenthood in the first place. That is, parents have the right to decide on most matters for their children (as long as some minimal basic rights are respected) because they can best provide the intimacy required for a healthy mental development of a child, have a privileged epistemological access for establishing the needs of the child and are most motivated to care for the child. Ibidem, 129. All three conditions are undermined when parents are no longer able to guide their parenting behavior by the goals in life they deem of the greatest importance: it hampers their motivation, it hampers the emotional basis for intimacy and, as result of the weakening of the bond with the child, the ability to access the child’s needs. Hence, the unreconstructed version of liberal parental autonomy is inconsistent (it erodes the psychological basis for the autonomy it wants to preserve) and as such not undermine the case for allowing infant conversion. For a more extensive discussion of these issues, see Bader, Secularists or Democracy?, 211 and 268.

33 See R. Laurence Moore, Selling God. American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture (Oxford 1994) for an account of this development.

34 The exact number is regularly updated by the Hartford Institute for Religious Research at their website, it was accessed by me at February 13, 2010 13:54 http://hirr.hartsem.edu/cgi-bin/mega/db.pl?db=default&uid=default&view_records=1&ID=&sb=3&so=descend

35 http://hirr.hartsem.edu/mega church/megastoday2008_summaryreport.html


37 Ibidem, 61.


39 http://hirr.hartsem.edu/mega church/megastoday2008_summaryreport.html

40 http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_21/b3934001_mz001.htm

41 What is more, religious practice is moving out of churches and into the household, where religion is experienced in interaction with music records, movies, tv preachers, and merchandise. Ibidem, 60. As a result, brands of faith become part of everyday life, just as commercial brands, and are thus not subject to the gradual conversion process that characterizes traditional religions.

42 The marker of the year award is a price that is awarded every year at the annual gathering of the Association of National Advertisers. See Matthew Creamer, “Obama Wins! … Ad Age’s Marketer of the Year”, in: Ad Age, October 17 2008, http://adage.com/moy2008/article/article_id=131810

CONCLUSION

1 Robert Levine, The Power of Persuasion. How We’re Bought and Sold (Hoboken 2003), 3. It can alternatively be argued that the reason for the lack of concern for autonomy violation is the fact that the mass media in which such debates would have to occur earn most of their money from advertising, and that this exerts structural pressure against criticizing advertising. There may be something to this argument, but at least in Western Europe there are public broadcasting venues some of which do not figure any advertising at all – such as the BBC – but still do not extensively discuss the nature of the influence of advertising. It is possible that different institutional or cultural biases are responsible for the lack of attention for the subject on advertising-free public broadcasting channels, but I know of no evidence which indicates that this is the case.

2 Ibidem, 21 ff.

3 It may be objected that work in psychology has long since demonstrated illusions of control and that these have not changed public opinion about agency. But this objection is unconvincing because earlier psychological experiments have not been part of major research programs such as those pursued in neuroscience. Moreover, there is experimental evidence to suggest that non-neuroscientists are easier to persuade when neuroscientific insights are used even if these are not relevant. See Deena Weisberg, Frank Keil, Joshua Goodstein, Elizabeth Rawson, and Jeremy Gray, “The Seductive Allure of Neuroscience Explanations”, in: Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, vol 20 no 3 (2008), 470-477.

4 Emily Falk, Elliot Berkman, Traci Mann, Brittany Harrison and Matthew Lieberman, “Predicting Persuasion-Induced Behavior Change from the Brain”, in: The Journal of Neuroscience, vol 30 no 25 (2010), 8421-8424.