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In Defense of Ambivalence and Alienation

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1 Introduction

In this paper, I defend a radical thesis about ambivalence and alienation: to be true to oneself, one sometimes needs to be ambivalent and alienated from oneself. In Section 2, I define ambivalence and describe a case of it. Ambivalence is a certain condition of a person that allegedly presents a "problem." The question is how to react to this "problem." I describe five ways of reacting to it: transformation, rejection, residual ambivalence, division, and radical ambivalence. In Section 3, I argue that, of these reactions, radical ambivalence represents the only way to be true to oneself. In the second half of the paper, I turn to alienation. After defining self-alienation (Section 4), I argue that radical ambivalence is a form of self-alienation (Section 5). Given that faithfulness to oneself sometimes requires radical ambivalence, it follows that in some cases the only way to be true to oneself is to be alienated from oneself.

2 Five Ways of Reacting to Ambivalence

The kind of ambivalence I am interested in concerns all-things-considered evaluation, so I shall begin by explaining the concept of all-things-considered evaluation. In considering how to lead their lives, people continuously make all-things-considered judgments. In deciding whether to become a physicist or a dancer, a person takes into account everything that speaks in favor of and against each option and tries to reach a judgment that expresses which course of action is the best, all things considered. However, a person's *judgments* may conflict with her *emotions*. Thus, a person's all-things-considered *judgments* may not express what option the person values the most, all things considered. Because I am not interested here in the conflict between emotions and judgments, I work with the concept of all-things-considered evaluation: a person's all-things-considered *evaluation* with respect to two possible

courses of action expresses which course she favors in light of *all* of her attitudes, including attitudes of judgment *and* emotional attitudes.

In considering whether to become a physicist or a dancer, a person may fail to reach a definite all-things-considered evaluation. There are three possible definite results: an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of physics, an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of dancing, and the all-things-considered evaluation that the two options are equally worthy of pursuit. A person may fail to reach any of these three definite all-things-considered evaluations. We can now introduce three conditions that need to be fulfilled if a person is to be considered ambivalent: first, the person does not simply have a brute desire to pursue the two courses of action. Rather, *both* courses of action are of *fundamental importance* to her. Other things being equal—for example, in the absence of the conflict with the other course of action—the person would genuinely want to realize each of the two courses of action. Second, the person is unable to reach any of the three possible all-things-considered evaluations with respect to the relevant courses of action.

I am not interested here in enlisting the various possible meanings of "ambivalence" (cf. Greenspan 1980; Marino 2009; Kristjánsson 2010; Swindell 2010; Svolba 2011). I am concerned only with ambivalence about all-things-considered evaluations. With respect to such evaluations, one might say that a person fulfilling these two conditions is ambivalent. However, I am interested in cases that involve options that are *inherently* rather than contingently in conflict. This is the third and last condition of ambivalence in the sense discussed here: that the conflict between the two options is inherent rather than contingent. An inherent conflict means that the one course of action amounts to the promotion of certain values and the other course of action amounts to the undermining of the promotion of these very same values. I shall illustrate this point by means of an example drawn from the story of Donnie Brasco.

The film *Donnie Brasco* (Newell 1997) is based on the autobiography *Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia* (Pistone 1989).[1] The book purports to describe the real-life events of the

[1] I have chosen to use this example partly because I want to have a case already discussed in the literature: the film *Donnie Brasco* is discussed by Carol Rovane (2004, 193) (it is important to note that the autobiography differs in important ways from the film). Furthermore, I needed an example in which the conflict between the options is inherent. I could also have used other examples from the literature such as Bennett Helm's Betty (2001, 134–137) or Rahel Jaeggi's giggling feminist (2005, 126). In any case, as I discuss in Section 3, I think

FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone, who as an undercover agent infiltrates the Mafia under the name Donnie Brasco. As portrayed in the film, Brasco (played by Johnny Depp) starts out a committed FBI agent. However, during the many years he spends undercover, he begins to identify with his role as an associate of the Mafia. He becomes a close friend of Benjamin "Lefty" Ruggiero, played by Al Pacino, and finds himself valuing the relationships within the Mafia and developing a liking for the life of a criminal. We can now imagine, in this case going beyond the film and the autobiography, that Brasco attempts to reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to his life as an FBI agent and his life as a criminal. Additionally, we may assume that he would genuinely want to lead both lives—to be an FBI agent *and* a criminal—but that he fails to reach an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of either option or to judge them to be equally valuable. Now we have a case of a person who is ambivalent about an inherent conflict: in leading the life of an FBI agent he would be promoting certain values, and in leading the life of a criminal he would be working against these very same values.

I would now like to describe five ways in which a person could react to her own condition of ambivalence. I continue to use my extension of the Brasco case to illustrate the options. His "problem" is that he cannot reach a definite all-things-considered evaluation with respect to the question of whether to be an agent fighting for justice or a criminal acting against justice.

The first reaction may be called "rejection," and it is meant to be similar to the reaction that Harry Frankfurt (1988a; 1988b; 1988c; 1999a; 1999b; 2002) often seems to recommend in his writings. In this case, Brasco comes down in favor of one of the courses of action (call it "X") to the exclusion of the other (call it "Y")—for example, in favor of the criminal life.[2] In doing so, Brasco would have managed to overcome the initial ambivalence and to reach an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of X. In addition, Brasco—in Frankfurt's terminology—"wholeheartedly" identifies with his chosen way of life. It is not easy to pin down exactly what Frankfurt means by "wholeheartedness." He means, at least, that the person is "fully resolved." The person must be "resolutely on the one side of the forces struggling within him and not on the side of any other"

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that the Brasco example provides a good way to demonstrate the practical and psychological possibility of leading a radically ambivalent life.

[2] Of course, it may not be easy to realize any of these reactions; it may take a long time and it may not be a matter of "decision."

(1999a, 100). In the Brasco case, this means that by wholeheartedly embracing the one way of life and rejecting the other, Brasco manages to have the rejected considerations no longer counting for him at all. He has placed himself entirely on the side of the considerations speaking in favor of the one kind of life. I use this interpretation of "wholeheartedness" in this paper.

The reaction of rejection has been described in terms of two different dimensions. The first dimension concerns the courses of action pursued and the all-things-considered evaluations supporting the relevant courses of action. With respect to this dimension, the reaction of rejection means that Brasco comes down in favor of X to the exclusion of Y and manages to reach an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of X. The second dimension concerns the question of whether Brasco as a person is wholehearted with respect to this issue. The five possible reactions to ambivalence will be distinguished with reference to these two dimensions.

The reaction that I call "transformation" differs from rejection along the first dimension. Rejection means favoring X to the exclusion of Y. But if X and Y both have appeal for a person, it may not be easy for her to give up one of them completely in favor of the other. Instead, the person might look for a third option, Z, which incorporates elements that made X and Y appealing to her. Brasco, for example, might seek a way of life that incorporates elements that made the criminal life exciting while still staying, at least mostly, on the side of justice. In other words, Brasco would seek to transform his original projects to form a third one, a compromise between the first two. When faced with the choice between X and Y, Brasco would then reach an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of Z. The reaction of transformation does not differ from rejection with respect to the issue of wholeheartedness: Brasco wholeheartedly endorses Z. The aspects of X and Y that are not incorporated into Z do not count for him at all. For example, if part of the appeal of the criminal life for Brasco originally consisted in the joy of maltreating others and this aspect is not part of the appeal of Z, then Brasco's wholehearted embracement of Z would mean that this appeal of the criminal life no longer counts for him at all.

The reaction that I call "residual ambivalence" does not differ from rejection or transformation along the first dimension. In other words, the reaction of residual ambivalence comes in two variations: it involves either the rejection of Y in favor of X or the endorsement of a third course of

action, Z, which is a compromise between X and Y. However, residual ambivalence differs from rejection and transformation along the second dimension. In this case, the person does not wholeheartedly embrace her chosen option. For example, Brasco may have managed to endorse a compromise, Z, that incorporates some elements that made X and Y attractive but that also excludes other elements that originally made X and Y attractive to Brasco. To say that Brasco does not wholeheartedly endorse Z is to say that he sees it as a loss that some of the elements making X and Y attractive are not incorporated in Z. Z is a compromise and cannot incorporate everything. Brasco's residual ambivalence consists in the fact that it is a loss to him that these elements are not incorporated into Z (see Table 1).

Table 1. Five reactions to ambivalence (X and Y are courses of action/ways of living)

	The course of action and the all-things-considered evaluation	**The person: wholehearted?**
Rejection	On the basis of the all-things-considered evaluation, Y is rejected in favor of X	The person wholeheartedly endorses X
Transformation	On the basis of the all-things-considered evaluation, X and Y are rejected in favor of a new course of action, Z, which is a "compromise" between X and Y	The person wholeheartedly endorses Z
Residual ambivalence	*Either* Y is rejected in favor of X (rejection) *or* X and Y are rejected in favor of Z (transformation)	The person is *not* wholehearted: she sees it as a loss that certain considerations speaking for the rejected course(s) of action are not reflected in the chosen course of action
Division	X and Y are pursued as entirely independent projects: no all-things-considered evaluation is attempted between X and Y	The person is (the persons are) wholehearted: there is wholehearted endorsement of X, and there is wholehearted endorsement of Y
Radical ambivalence	X and Y are both acted on; the person continues to attempt to reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to X and Y, but this attempt is consistently inconclusive	The person is *not* wholehearted: with respect to X and Y, she cannot reach any all-things-considered evaluation

The fourth reaction, "division," differs from the previous three reactions along the first dimension. In the first three cases, the person succeeded in reaching an all-things-considered

evaluation with respect to X and Y, either by rejecting one of these options in favor of the other or by forming a compromise between them. To react by "division" is to relinquish the project of reaching such an all-things-considered evaluation. Instead, the person decides to pursue the projects X and Y independently of each other. According to Carol Rovane (1998; 2004), under certain circumstances it is rational to take this option; she suggests that this option is what Brasco pursues in "a good portion" of the film: he (temporarily) ends life "as one unified agent, leaving in his stead two multiple agents who can, from their separate perspectives, coherently pursue lives in the two separate social worlds" (2004, 193).[3] It is not part of the reaction I call "division" that the person becomes two agents or persons, as Rovane suggests. The important point is that the human being in question—for example, Brasco—has decided to pursue the two projects entirely independently. He no longer thinks about the question of whether he favors X or Y (or a compromise between the two), all things considered. Instead, projects X and Y serve as the two respective *starting points* of his all-things-considered deliberations. When he deliberates from the point of view of project X, considerations relevant to project Y play no role, and vice versa (Rovane 1998, 160–179; 2004, 181–194).

In one sense, the person who opts for division is not wholehearted. With respect to X and Y, she has not decided in favor of one to the exclusion of the other or in favor of a compromise between the two. However, because the person has given up the attempt to reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to X and Y and decided to pursue the two projects independently, she is wholehearted. In the pursuit of each of these projects, she places herself entirely on the side of the relevant project. Moreover, there is no mode in which she does not place herself entirely on the side of the one project or on the side of the other. Thus, I describe the divided agent as wholehearted. To react to ambivalence by division is to decide to be separately wholehearted about two projects.

Ambivalence is a condition that is a threat to action. If a person fails to reach a definite all-things-considered evaluation, she fails to favor one particular course of action. The first three reactions to ambivalence respond to this threat by managing to reach an all-things-considered evaluation. With the reaction of division, the problem is solved by giving up the pursuit of an all-things-considered

[3] In the autobiography, agent Pistone portrays himself rather differently (see Pistone 1989, 14–15, 396–397).

evaluation between X and Y. Instead, all-things-considered evaluations are made separately for X and Y.

The fifth reaction, "radical ambivalence," is like the first three reactions in that the pursuit of an all-things-considered evaluation is not given up. However, the attempt to reach such an evaluation is unsuccessful. Because it is unsuccessful, the problem of the threat of inaction has not been solved. The reaction of radical ambivalence to this problem consists in the decision to pursue separately *both* courses of action, X and Y, while still attempting to reach an all-things-considered evaluation between them. Thus, this reaction is like division in that two courses of action are separately pursued. However, the similarity pertains only to the level of action. In contrast to division, with the reaction of radical ambivalence the person still attempts to reach an all-things-considered evaluation between X and Y.

As stated earlier, I am interested in cases of ambivalence that concern options of fundamental importance to the agent. Thus, we can think of X and Y as two fundamentally different ways of living life, both of which appeal to the person in question. To be radically ambivalent means that the person is still attempting to determine the right way to live for herself while she leads the two relevant lives separately. This does not mean that the radically ambivalent agent is ambivalent about everything. Her ambivalence "only" concerns the kind of life she should lead. Apart from this basic question, she may have quite firm opinions, concerning both factual matters and her preferences. For example, she may never have difficulties deciding what to wear or eat or what the weather will be like. Thus, she has no practical difficulties in carrying out her two lives.

The radically ambivalent agent is not wholehearted. Just like the residually ambivalent individual, she does not resolutely favor one kind of life. However, these two persons lack wholeheartedness for very different reasons. The *residually* ambivalent agent has successfully reached an all-things-considered evaluation. This all-things-considered evaluation is made on the basis of considerations that the person takes to speak in favor of X and Y. When all of these considerations are taken into account, it is best to do X (rejection) or Z (transformation). With residual ambivalence, the person in question experiences it as a loss that the considerations speaking in favor of X and Y cannot be realized in her choice in the way that they could have been if she had chosen Y instead of X (in the case of rejection) or X or Y instead of Z (in the case of transformation). For example, let us assume

that Brasco rejects the criminal life in favor of the life of an FBI agent. With his reaction of residual ambivalence, Brasco still values aspects of the criminal life—perhaps he values the ruthless treatment of other people—and he experiences it as a loss that these aspects cannot be realized in the life of justice. Nevertheless, he has reached an all-things-considered evaluation: all things considered, these aspects of the criminal life should not be realized. It is in this respect that the radically ambivalent agent differs from the residually ambivalent one. The *radically* ambivalent agent has not decided in favor of one option. She has decided to act on both options while continuing to deliberate on the relative merits of the options. Strictly speaking, given my definition of ambivalence, only the radically ambivalent agent and not the "residually ambivalent" person is really ambivalent. The latter has come to an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to her options and is thus, in my sense, no longer ambivalent. However, in recent criticisms of Frankfurt mentioned in the next paragraph, the condition I have called "residual ambivalence" is often considered to be a defensible form of ambivalence. For this reason, I think it is nevertheless useful to speak of residual ambivalence.[4]

In many places in Frankfurt's work (1988c; 1999a; 2002), he seems to argue that rejection is the only legitimate response to ambivalence.[5] It is possible that this impression is due only to Frankfurt's rhetoric and that he does not mean to exclude transformation as a permissible response. In any case, many authors have defended transformation (Helm 2001; Korsgaard 2009; Ekstrom 2010). These authors, however, seem to want to exclude the remaining reactions as legitimate responses. Recently, many philosophers have defended ambivalence against its critics, in particular against Frankfurt and Christine Korsgaard (Calhoun 1995; Velleman 2002; Benson 2005; Jaeggi 2005; Rössler 2009; Poltera 2010; Marino 2011). As far as I can tell, these writers defend only residual ambivalence and seem to want to exclude radical ambivalence as a legitimate reaction. Rovane (1998; 2004) defends division by arguing that it is a way of achieving rational unity (twice). Because the

[4] I do not discuss separately those cases in which the person fails to reach an all-things-considered evaluation that X or Z is a better option than the other options and instead *arbitrarily* decides in favor of X or Z. I believe that my arguments in Section 3 show that radical ambivalence is sometimes a better choice than the choice described in these cases.

[5] If the agent cannot overcome her ambivalence, another reaction is permissible, but only as a second-best choice (1999, 102,106).

radically ambivalent agent sacrifices rational unity for ambivalence, Rovane would presumably consider radical ambivalence to be inferior to division.[6]

The radically ambivalent agent is my hero. In the next section, I will sing her praise.

3 In Defense of Radical Ambivalence

My aim in this section is to argue that, in certain cases, radical ambivalence is the only response which enables the ambivalent person to be true to herself. This does not show that, all things considered, radical ambivalence is a legitimate reaction. The radically ambivalent individual would also have to be evaluated with respect to such issues as *autonomy*, the pursuit of *truth*, the *good life* and the *moral life*, *rationality*, and the possible defectiveness of the person's *actions*. These topics cannot be discussed here.[7]

Before presenting my argument, I must make a few remarks about the life of the radically ambivalent person and the notion of being true to oneself. I will start with the first issue. Is it really practically and psychologically possible to be a radically ambivalent person? In my view, it certainly is. As far as the *practical* possibility is concerned, it should be noted that the actions of the radically ambivalent individual are not necessarily self-defeating. Of course, if Brasco continues to work for the same criminal organization "at night" that he attempts to destroy "during the day," then his activities might indeed be self-defeating. But it does not have to be that way. As a radically ambivalent agent, he pursues his two projects separately. He is, we can imagine, a criminal on weekends in New York and a policeman in Berlin on workdays. Following these two courses of action is not self-defeating. It is true that the one course of action promotes certain values and the other course of action undermines the promotion of these same values (this is how I defined ambivalence).[8] However, what I have shown is that, by working in two different cities, the concrete actions he performs in the different cities are not mutually defeating.

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[6] It would of course require more work to show that these authors fit into my categories in this way.

[7] These other topics are of course not any less interesting. However, the notion of being true to oneself is an elusive concept that nevertheless plays a central role in the literature on ambivalence—for example, in Frankfurt's criticism of ambivalence as a form of self-betrayal that I discuss later in this section. To do justice to this complex issue, I have thus chosen to leave these other topics aside.

[8] I have defined the inherent conflict involved in ambivalence in this way so as to make it as difficult as possible to defend radical ambivalence. If my defense of radical ambivalence is successful, then radical ambivalence will also be defensible in cases of less severe forms of conflict. There are other ways of defining inherent conflict (see Marino 2011).

Leading a life in two cities in this way makes it practically possible to be a radically ambivalent person. Turning to the *psychological* possibility, let us recall that Brasco decides to become radically ambivalent to solve a problem. He has been trying unsuccessfully for a long time to reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to these two ways of living. This means that he is not able to react with either rejection or transformation. Because he wants to resolve the issue, he does not want to opt for division. Of course, he might have decided to suspend action as much as possible in order to spend the whole time deliberating about these two options. For example, he might have decided to collect unemployment benefits and spend his time in his apartment pondering the options. However, he decides to do both: to act on the two options *and* continue to deliberate about them. He may even think that this will help him in his deliberations. Instead of deliberating in his apartment, he decides to try both ways of living. He may hope that the experience of acting on the relevant values will help him decide. He knows that later—if he succeeds in reaching an all-things-considered evaluation in favor of the one way of life—he will come to condemn some of his earlier actions. However, he is willing to pay that price. He may fear that otherwise he will never come to an all-things-considered evaluation and will thus never come to lead a life he values.

We can imagine that, while walking the streets on police duty, he continues deliberating which way of life is the best, all things considered. However, if he sees a crime taking place, he will not hesitate to take decisive police action to prevent it. His action does not have to be any less decisive because of his ongoing deliberations. Coordinating his actions with his colleagues and arresting the criminal will require his full attention and he will thus suspend his deliberations about the two options and give this police action all his attention. Later, during a more peaceful period—though perhaps while he is still on duty—he will take up his deliberations again. This is precisely what he has decided to do: to act decisively on both courses of action while continuing to seriously deliberate about the relative merits of the two. Given that he is still trying to reach an all-things-considered evaluation of the two ways of living, he is not wholehearted. This does not necessarily make his actions any less decisive.

Perhaps this way of life would be too difficult "psychologically" for most people. Perhaps most people would not be able to be decisive in their actions without having reached an all-things-

considered evaluation in favor of the relevant course of action (or without having opted for division). However, this is merely a psychological or pragmatic difficulty. My goal is to argue that, even if perhaps psychologically difficult for most people, radical ambivalence is the only response to ambivalence that enables the ambivalent person to be true to herself.[9]

Before turning to the issue of being true to oneself, I need to say a few words about the topic of personal identity in general. The classic issue of personal identity can be understood as revolving around three questions. The first question is "What am I fundamentally?" Some standard answers to this question are "a human being," "a person," "a thinking thing," etc. These answers give rise to the further questions of diachronic identity and individuation or synchronic identity. The answers to the question of my diachronic identity will differ depending on how one answers the first question.[10] For example, if I am fundamentally a human being, then my existence will begin at the time when a human being begins to exist (probably before birth). I may possibly continue to exist in a purely vegetative state, but I will not be able to survive my bodily death. If I am fundamentally a person, then my existence will presumably begin when a certain human being acquires the capacities of a person (probably later than the birth of the human being), but I could possibly survive my bodily death. Similarly, the answers to the question of my individuation will depend on the answers to the first question. For example, if I am fundamentally a person, then I could possibly be one of two persons existing in one human being. This possibility is excluded if I am fundamentally a human being.

In this paper, I am not concerned with any of these three questions. I do not think that my argumentation with respect to ambivalence is affected by the answers to these questions. To make my argumentation more concrete, in the following it will be assumed that the answer to "*What* am I fundamentally?" is "a person" and that we are dealing with a case of exactly one person and that this person is the only person materially realized by (or identical to) exactly one human being. In addition to these three questions, there is a fourth question to be considered.[11] This is a question that the person

[9] I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for helpful critical questions about the psychological possibility of leading a radically ambivalent life.

[10] The following possible answers to the questions of diachronic identity and individuation are merely meant to illustrate how the answers to "What am I fundamentally?" set the stage for addressing these questions. I do not mean to suggest that these possible answers must necessarily be given.

[11] In fact, I think that, with respect to the issue of personal identity, even more questions need to be distinguished, see AUTHOR (YEAR 1). In this work, I offer detailed answers to the first three questions. In

asks herself, namely "*Who* am I?" In answering this question, the person draws a distinction between those parts of herself that represent who she really is and other parts of herself. All these parts are within the boundaries of the person, these boundaries having been drawn by the answer to the question of individuation. The question "Who am I?" is the question with which I am concerned here. When a person is true to herself, she is true to who she really is.

Despite the fact that I am dealing with the issue of ambivalence only with respect to the question "Who am I?" it might be argued that a radically ambivalent person is so radically divided that she cannot count as one person in the sense of the question of individuation. Of course, if one favors certain answers to the question of individuation, then radical ambivalence would indeed mean that the radically ambivalent human being could not count as one person. However, though I cannot argue this here, I do not think that such answers are plausible. I have said that the ambivalent person is only ambivalent with respect to the two inherently conflicting ways of life under discussion. In many other ways the radically ambivalent person is unified: for example, when Brasco leads his criminal life according to certain values, he nevertheless draws on experiences, beliefs and capacities he acquired when leading the life of a policeman, and vice versa. Although I cannot argue and explain this here, this unity means that Brasco is one person in the sense of the question of individuation.[12]

There are two fundamentally different approaches to the issue of what determines who I am. According to the constitution view, my evaluative activity is somehow constitutive of who I am. The non-constitution theorist, in contrast, holds that there are facts about who I am prior to my evaluative activity. In my defense of radical ambivalence, I will not decide between these views. Rather, my argument has two parts. In the first part, I argue in favor of radical ambivalence by assuming that the constitution view is true. The second part defends radical ambivalence under the assumption of the non-constitution view.

There are, of course, different versions of the constitution theory, depending on what is meant by the relevant evaluative activity. For example, in the approach defended at least in Frankfurt's early writings (1988a; 1988b), this evaluative activity is understood as *identification* with a psychic element.

AUTHOR (YEAR 2), I extensively discuss the meaning of the fourth question and different ways of answering it.

[12] For my account of individuation, see AUTHOR (YEAR 1).

Other theorists understand this evaluative activity differently. For the purpose of my argument, I do not have to say more about this activity except that two versions of the constitution approach understand it differently. To explain this difference, let us consider the ambivalent person. I have defined the ambivalent person as somebody to whom two inherently conflicting ways of living are fundamentally important. To say that they are of fundamental importance to the person means that they are not something the person simply desires. Furthermore, to say that these ways of living are fundamentally important to the person opens up the possibility of saying that they may both possibly represent who the person really is. After all, by attaching fundamental importance to them, the person has drawn a distinction between her desires to lead these lives and those desires of hers not fundamentally important to her (assuming that "desire" is the right word in both cases). However, according to the standard version of the constitution view defended by Frankfurt and Korsgaard, the ambivalent person has not yet succeeded in constituting herself. She has not yet wholeheartedly decided in favor of one of the ways of living as opposed to the other (or a compromise between them). In this sense, there is not yet any answer to the question of who the ambivalent person is. To answer that question, the constitution activity needs to be completed. According to an alternative version of the constitution view, the ambivalent person may already have drawn a distinction between those parts of herself representing who she is and other parts of herself. According to this version of the theory, to constitute herself a person does not need to be wholehearted or reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to two internally conflicting ways of life. She only needs to embrace the relevant ways of life by a certain kind of evaluative activity. If the ambivalent person embraces both ways of life in this way, then both ways of life represent who she is.

Let us assume that the ambivalent person has embraced both of these ways of life in this way. If she has, who is the ambivalent person? According to the alternative constitution view, *who she really is* is defined by her commitment to the two inherently conflicting projects.[13] By embracing both of these projects in this way, she draws a boundary between the desires to pursue these projects and other desires that she simply has. Furthermore, the desires to pursue these two projects are within the boundary that is definitive of who she is. Of course, this is only who this person currently is. In saying

[13] Of course, other parts of the person having nothing to do with the two inherently conflicting ways of life may also be part of who she is.

that this is who the person "currently" is, I mean that the person's evaluative attitudes toward these two projects have been sufficiently stable and have existed long enough to say that this is who she really is.[14] Of course, a person may change and cease to be ambivalent. However, in my argument I am concerned with the ambivalent person as she currently is.

As I already mentioned, the defenders of the standard version of the constitution view would not accept this interpretation of the ambivalent person. They would say that, with respect to the two inherently conflicting ways of life, the person has not yet succeeded in constituting herself. I find this a very implausible description of the ambivalent person. In making this claim, I am not drawing on intuitions opposed to the constitution theory. Rather, the fundamental intuition of the constitution theory is that we make ourselves into who we are by our evaluative attitudes. By adopting an evaluative attitude toward the desires and passions we encounter in ourselves—by appropriating some of these desires and by rejecting others—we constitute ourselves. This the ambivalent person has already done. She has given some desires a privileged status and rejected others. It seems to me too extreme to demand that a person must do more before we can say who she is. In my argument in defense of radical ambivalence, I will be assuming the alternative constitution theory. The defenders of the standard version of the constitution view can avoid my argument by insisting on their theory. However, as I have just mentioned, I do not find this theory plausible. I will discuss the standard version again briefly after I have stated my argument.

The five reactions of the ambivalent person discussed in Section 2 are possible responses to her "problem" of ambivalence. Which of these reactions enables the ambivalent person to be true to herself? If the alternative version of the constitution theory is correct, we may assume that the ambivalence of the ambivalent person represents who she really is. The answer to the question of who the ambivalent person really is is that she is somebody who embraces two inherently conflicting ways of living, is committed to reaching an all-things-considered evaluation of these ways of living, but has so far persistently failed to reach such an evaluation. If this is who the ambivalent person is, then

[14] I cannot discuss what is "sufficiently" stable and long "enough" for these purposes. For the purpose of my argument, I suppose it suffices if different theorists use their own favorite definitions. I myself find it plausible that the period is longer than just a few seconds, minutes or days.

radical ambivalence is the only way for the person to be true to herself. Or so I shall now argue by considering the five possible reactions.

To demand that the person reject Y in favor of X is to demand that the person cut away a part of who she currently is. The person currently values X *and* Y, though she is unable to reach an all-things-considered evaluation. Thus, by employing rejection the ambivalent person would be betraying herself as she currently is. Of course, the person may simply cease to be ambivalent and come to reject one of the options, but I am not concerned with this possibility. I am arguing that to demand of a person, who is in fact ambivalent, that she give up her ambivalence in favor of the option of rejection is to demand of her that she betray herself. This claim, I argue, is true not only for rejection but also for the other three alternatives to radical ambivalence, to which I now turn.

Demanding that the person opt for Z, a compromise between X and Y, is problematic for the same reason. As a compromise, Z must necessarily reject certain elements that make X and Y appealing to the agent. Thus, this proposal is also a demand to the effect that the ambivalent agent cut away a part of herself and in this way betray herself as she currently is.

Because residual ambivalence entails a demand either for rejection or for transformation, it is problematic in the same way. With residual ambivalence, the person experiences it as a loss that not everything speaking in favor of X and Y is expressed in her new life. However, this experience simply means that the residually ambivalent person is sensitive to the fact that rejection and transformation (and thus the reaction of residual ambivalence) require that the ambivalent person betray herself as she currently is.

Division is problematic for a different reason. By "dividing herself," the person can pursue both X and Y. However, the person has given up her ambivalence. In this way, the demand for division is a demand that the ambivalent person betray herself. Radical ambivalence is the only way for the person to be true to herself: she pursues both of her projects *and* she remains ambivalent.

As I have already said, defenders of the standard version of the constitution view can resist my argument by insisting on their theory. In addition to my previous doubts about the standard version, I think that my description of the radically ambivalent person provides a further reason to reject the standard version and thus to accept the conclusion that being radically ambivalent is the only way for

the ambivalent person to be true to herself. In effect, my argument in favor of radical ambivalence as opposed to the other four reactions has two important elements. The first part of the argument consists in the claim that, among the five reactions, radical ambivalence is the only way to continue to be like the ambivalent person. The second element consists in the assumption that the ambivalence of the ambivalent person represents who she really is. The first part of my argument is not disputed by the standard version of the constitution view. This version only disputes the fact that the ambivalent person has succeeded in constituting something that represents who she really is. I think that my detailed description of the *radically* ambivalent person throws doubt on this claim of the standard version. The radically ambivalent person has very clear ideas about who she is. She understands herself as somebody who embraces two internally conflicted sets of values. She also understands herself as somebody who is determined to find out which set of values is the right one to live by. To do so, she is willing to go to extremes: to live a double life that enables her to engage in ongoing deliberations about the two sorts of lives and to examine both sets of value by actually acting on them. It seems to me that this is a person with a clear identity, albeit an identity defined by the ambivalence at its heart.

Frankfurt writes that "ambivalence as such entails a mode of self-betrayal. It consists in a vacillation or opposition within the self which guarantees that one volitional element will be opposed by another, so that the person cannot avoid acting against himself" (1999b, 139n). If "ambivalence" is defined so that it implies self-betrayal, then this claim is trivially true but uninteresting. There are two other ways of understanding the claim. First, it might mean that ambivalence is necessarily self-defeating or necessarily leads to indecisive action. This claim was refuted earlier in my discussion of the practical and psychological possibility of Brasco leading two lives in two cities. Second, the claim might mean that, by being ambivalent, one is not true to who one is. But, as I have just argued, ambivalence may be a central part of who one is. In that case, not being ambivalent would be self-betrayal.

As I said earlier, there are two accounts of how something gets to count as representing who a person really is. Thus far my argument has been based on the constitution theory. According to the non-constitution theory, who a person really is does not depend on her evaluative activity. A simple

version of a non-constitution theory would be that *all* the characteristics of a person falling within the boundaries determined by the answer to the individuation question represent who a person really is. According to other versions of this theory, only *some* of these characteristics represent who a person really is. For example, one might want to say that a person's sexual preferences or moral dispositions are part of who she really is, whereas her preference for vanilla ice cream as opposed to strawberry flavors is not. If so, the non-constitution theorist will need to explain by what *principle* sexual desires and moral characteristics get to count as part of who a person really is, while other characteristics do not. I will not enter into a discussion of any such possible principles in this paper.

Whatever the principle is, it must be something other than the person's evaluative activity. According to the non-constitution approach, who a person really is is settled by something other than her evaluative activity. This means that a person's evaluative attitudes can be more or less true to who she really is. For example, let us assume that a strong preference for X over Y is part of who a person really is independent of her evaluative attitudes. If the person also evaluatively favors X over Y, then her evaluative attitudes are *true to* who she is independent of her evaluative attitudes. However, if the person evaluatively favors Y over X or if she is unable to reach an all-things-considered evaluation of X and Y, then her evaluative attitudes are *not* true to who she is independent of her evaluative attitudes. These explanations do not yield a precise explanation of "true to who one really is," but they are sufficient for my argument about ambivalence.[15]

If we assume that the non-constitution theory is correct, which of the five reactions to ambivalence enables the person to be true to who she is? As I have defined "ambivalence," ambivalence concerns a person's evaluative attitudes. The ambivalent person is unable to reach an all-things-considered evaluation of X and Y. To answer the question, we must consider two different cases: the case in which being ambivalent (in the sense I have defined it) amounts to being true to who one is independent of evaluation and the case in which it does not amount to being true to oneself. I will consider the two cases in turn.

If the ambivalent person is true to who she really is independent of her evaluations, who is she independent of her evaluations? She must be a person who, independent of her evaluations, is strongly

[15] I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their useful queries about self and constitution.

drawn to follow the courses of action X and Y, while not being drawn unambiguously more to one of them than the other. One might say that this person is, as it were, doubly ambivalent: on the one hand, she is ambivalent in the way I have defined "ambivalence," namely, on the level of her evaluations. On the other hand, in the sense of who she is independent of her evaluative activity, she is drawn in two directions without being drawn unambiguously more in the one direction than the other. One might also call this circumstance "ambivalence," though this is not how I have defined the term. In this case, I could repeat my previous argument and state that, among the five reactions, being *radically* ambivalent is the best way for an ambivalent person to be true to who she is independent of the her evaluations. All the other four ways of reacting would amount to not being true to herself as she really is independent of her evaluations.

Let us consider the case in which the ambivalent person is not true to who she is independent of her evaluations. Such a case may be, for example, somebody who, independent of her evaluations, is strongly disposed to perform X to the exclusion of Y. In that case, being radically ambivalent would not be the best way of being true to herself.

I conclude that being radically ambivalent is in *some* but *not all* cases the only way for the ambivalent person to be true to herself. To be precise, this holds in *two* kinds of cases: first, insofar as both of the conflicting evaluative attitudes of the ambivalent person are constitutive of who she is, radical ambivalence is the only way for an ambivalent person to be true to herself. Second, insofar as there are facts about who a person is independent of her evaluative activity *and* these facts consist in the person being drawn to X and Y without being drawn unambiguously to the one to the exclusion of the other, radical ambivalence is the only way for an ambivalent person to be true to herself.

Is it valuable to be true to oneself? I think it is.[16] However, it is not desirable at any price. Thus, to defend radical ambivalence, I would need to defend it with respect to the other considerations mentioned at the beginning of this section (autonomy, rationality, etc.). This task must be left for another occasion.

4 Alienation Defined

[16] This view remains an assumption in this paper.

I contend that being radically ambivalent is a way of being alienated from oneself. If the argument presented in the previous section is correct, then truthfulness to oneself may require that one be radically ambivalent. Thus, if being radically ambivalent is a way of being alienated from oneself, truthfulness to oneself sometimes requires alienation from oneself. However, before I can make this argument (in Section 5), "self-alienation" must first be defined in this section.

I maintain that being true to oneself is in many cases desirable, including those cases in which being true to oneself requires radical ambivalence. If that is so, then it would also sometimes be desirable to be alienated from oneself, assuming that radical ambivalence involves self-alienation. It is often assumed that self-alienation is, by definition, something that is not desirable. If that is correct, then my argument could not possibly be correct: if it follows from my argument that it is sometimes desirable to be alienated from oneself and if self-alienation is by definition not desirable, then there must be something wrong with my argument. Thus, if my argument is to go through, it is important to show that self-alienation is not by definition something undesirable. For this reason, I place particular emphasis on showing that the concept of self-alienation can be understood purely descriptively.[17] I will now give an account of self-alienation by specifying three purely descriptive conditions that something needs to fulfill to count as self-alienation.[18]

1. Alienation is *not* mere *strangeness* or *foreignness* (Jaeggi 2005, 43). If something is strange or foreign to me, I stand—formally speaking—in a relation to it: the relation of strangeness. Alienation, however, is not the relation of strangeness. Rather, I am alienated from something when I stand in a relation to X other than the relation of strangeness and something is true of this relation (in

[17] Of course, one could contend that my argument shows at most that radical ambivalence and self-alienation are instrumentally desirable or valuable: if we assume that being true to oneself is valuable *in itself* and being true to oneself requires radical ambivalence and self-alienation, then radical ambivalence and self-alienation are *instrumentally* valuable. If instrumental value is all that my argument can establish for self-alienation, then I would not need to show that self-alienation can be defined purely descriptively. After all, something that is undesirable in itself may sometimes be of instrumental value. Although I cannot elaborate on this point here, I believe that my argument establishes more than the instrumental value of radical ambivalence and self-alienation with respect to the aim of being true to oneself. Rather, I contend that radical ambivalence and self-alienation are sometimes constitutive of being true to oneself, and that radical ambivalence and self-alienation are in these cases valuable in themselves. Thus, I believe that I need to show that the concept of self-alienation can be understood purely descriptively.

[18] In my account of self-alienation, I draw on Jaeggi (2005). Jaeggi's work is one of the most thorough treatments of alienation in recent years and it shares my aim of presenting an account of alienation free of the essentialist assumptions made by authors such as Hegel and Marx. However, there are important differences between my account and hers. In particular, she thinks that *alienation* is an evaluative concept which means that describing a person's relationship to something as alienated is to find a deficiency in this relationship (2005, 23, 43–45).

addition to its being my relation to X) which means that I am alienated—estranged—from X. This condition tells us only what alienation is *not*. It does not tell us what must be true of my relation to X so as to make me alienated from X. Thus, we may call this the "negative-condition." The next two conditions specify what must be true of my relation to X to turn it into alienation from X.

2. In this paper, I am concerned only with *self*-alienation: alienation from oneself. As such, the second condition is not meant to characterize other forms of alienation. In self-alienation, I am alienated from X, and X is a part or side or aspect of myself. I stand in a relation to X that makes X a part of myself: a relation of "mineness." I also stand in this same relation of mineness to those parts of myself from which I am not estranged. In other words, I stand in the relation of mineness to *all* parts of myself. This means that the task of explicating this relation belongs, broadly speaking, to the task of answering the question of individuation mentioned in the last section. Having explicated this relation, one could then explain, for example, why my evaluative attitudes and my desires are part of myself, whereas the furniture in my office is not. In this paper, I merely assume that there is such a relation of mineness.[19] The mineness relation represents the first part of the second condition: self-alienation from X requires that I stand in the relation of mineness to X.

What is required over and above the mineness relation for a person to be alienated from a part of herself? In my view, the difference between an alienated relationship to a part of oneself and a non-alienated relationship consists in the way in which the person *views* this part of herself. Accordingly, the latter part of the second condition says that a person's alienation from X requires that the person understand or experience X as not fully her own. The full statement of the second condition (the "mineness-condition") is thus: I stand in a relation of mineness to X *and* I view X as not fully my own.

The mineness-condition provides the key to a purely descriptive understanding of alienation. According to the entry on alienation in the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, written by Allen Wood, alienation involves a "separation" which "sunders things that belong together" (Wood 2005, 21; cf. Jaeggi 2005, 43). It is tempting to read "belong together" evaluatively or normatively. The mineness-condition invites another reading. X "belongs to me" in the sense that it is part of me. I stand in a relation of "mineness" to it just as I do to those parts of myself from which I am not alienated. In

[19] I have undertaken the task of explicating the mineness relation elsewhere, see AUTHOR (YEAR 1).

alienation, I am "separated" from X in the sense that I understand or experience X as not fully mine. This circumstance does not imply that something has gone *wrong* here. To say that I am alienated from X is simply to characterize *my perspective* on X: I view it as not fully mine. This does not make my relation to X or anything else about me deficient.

I have deliberately used the vague phrase "understand or experience X as not fully mine" so as to accommodate many different ways of being alienated from X, for example the psychiatric phenomenon of alien voices and thoughts (cf. Stephens and Graham 2000). But given that I have been concerned with all-things-considered evaluation, let us consider what this approach might mean for the case of a person's evaluative relationship to herself. In this case, some philosophers might understand the fact that the person views X as not fully hers to mean that she does not identify with X. For my purposes, it does not matter how we interpret this evaluative relationship exactly. The important point is that alienation is characterized by describing the person's own evaluative relationship to X.[20] Understood in this way, to say that a person is alienated from a part of herself is not as such to make any evaluative judgment about the person's relationship to herself. In particular, it is not to say that the person's relationship to herself is somehow faulty or deficient. In other words, it is not part of the *concept* of alienation that one must make such a judgment in using it. Of course, one may defend the *thesis* that alienation should always be negatively evaluated. Given that I contend that radical ambivalence is a form of self-alienation and that radical ambivalence is sometimes desirable, I reject this thesis. Because the concept of alienation does not require any evaluative judgment about alienation, this thesis and my rejection of it are both compatible with the concept of alienation.

3. The mineness-condition provides a positive characterization of what must be true of my relation to X for me to be alienated from X (for the case of self-alienation): I must stand in a relation of mineness to X, and I must view X as not fully my own. The third condition (the "activity-condition") adds a further positive description. According to this condition, alienation is somehow the result of my activity (cf. Jaeggi 2005, 20, 42). This can happen in different ways: my already existing relation to a given X may change through my activity and thus bring about my alienation from X. Or

[20] I want to allow that a person may be in error as to the character of her evaluative relationship to X. She may think that she views X as fully hers even if, in fact, she does not. In other words, she may be in error as to how she views some parts of herself.

X may be the result of my activity, or X may itself be my activity.[21] This condition brings out Hegelian and Marxist aspects of the concept of self-alienation: a person's alienation from herself is, in part, brought about by the person herself.

I am not sure whether the activity-condition should be treated as a necessary condition of alienation. A person may experience desires or passions that overcome her as parts of herself from which she is alienated. But it is not clear that either passive passions or a person's alienated relationship to them is a product of her activity. I will not pursue this issue and will treat the activity-condition as a necessary condition of alienation. In the next section, I argue that radical ambivalence fulfills all three conditions of alienation.

5 Radical Ambivalence as Alienation

I maintain that it is obvious that radical ambivalence involves alienation from oneself. It fulfills all three conditions of self-alienation. The radically ambivalent Brasco leads two inherently conflicting lives. In leading each of these lives, he continues to try to reach an all-things-considered evaluation with respect to these ways of life. However, so far he has failed to reach such an evaluation. In leading the criminal life, he is acting on values that inherently conflict with other values that he also holds—values speaking in favor of the life of justice. In other words, in acting on the values of the criminal life, he is conscious of accepting other values inherently in conflict with these values. Thus, in leading the criminal life, he stands in a relation of mineness to the motives he is acting on, while at the same time viewing these motives as not fully his own. He views them as not fully his own in the sense of being conscious of endorsing values according to which these motives are reprehensible. Thus, while leading the criminal life, Brasco fulfills the mineness-condition (and trivially also the negative-condition). The same holds when he pursues the just life. Thus, in leading each kind of life, he acts on motives that he views as not fully his. The activity-condition is also fulfilled: in each of his lives, he is alienated from something that is the product or expression of his own activity. In each life, he acts against values that he actively embraces, though his commitment to these values is not unambiguous enough to enable him to reach an all-things-considered evaluation to resolve the conflict.

[21] In encyclopedic entries on alienation, something close to the activity-condition is sometimes understood be the basic meaning of the term (cf. Petrović 1967; Ritz 1971).

One may distinguish between weak and strong alienation. In weak forms of alienation, the part of a person from which she is alienated, X, is only part of her in the sense that it falls within the boundary of the person drawn by an answer to the question of individuation. In this case, X is not expressive of who the person really is. In strong forms of alienation, the part of a person from which she is alienated, X, *is* expressive of who the person really is. In those cases in which radical ambivalence amounts to being true to who one really is (specified at the end of Section 3), radical ambivalence amounts to a strong form of alienation. For example, in leading a criminal life, Brasco is conscious of acting against a part of himself expressive of who he is, and the same holds when he leads the life of justice. Radical ambivalence always involves alienation; in those cases in which radical ambivalence amounts to being true to oneself, it involves a strong form of alienation.

That would seem to be the end of the matter. Radical ambivalence obviously involves alienation. However, it is sometimes maintained that ambivalence does not involve alienation (Jaeggi 2005, 128–129). Thus, I must consider two objections to understanding radical ambivalence as alienation. First, it might be argued that alienation requires an asymmetrical relation to two sides of oneself. On the one hand, there is the side of a person that is truly expressive of who she is. On the other hand, there are the parts of herself that she does not consider to be fully her own. This asymmetrical relation is required for alienation: for there to be a part of herself from which a person is alienated, there must be another part of herself that is truly expressive of who she is (cf. Jaeggi 2005, 129). This case does not apply in radical ambivalence. It is definitive of radical ambivalence that the person cannot consider either part as exclusively expressive of who she is. Thus, being radically ambivalent cannot involve alienation from oneself.

Of course, one can define "alienation," stipulatively, in such a way that radical ambivalence is excluded. However, it seems to me that understanding radical ambivalence as alienation does more justice to the subjective experience of ambivalence. Because in this paper the main emphasis lies on those cases in which radical ambivalence amounts to being true to oneself, I am focusing here on strong alienation. Let me thus assume that the two sides of Brasco and his ambivalence about them express who he is. The radically ambivalent Brasco takes up two standpoints, and each of them partly expresses who he is. In leading his criminal life, he may experience this life as alienating; this

experience derives from the fact that he, while leading the criminal life, can also take up another standpoint partly expressive of who he is—the standpoint of justice; when doing so, he experiences the life he currently leads as alienating. The fact that he does not understand the standpoint of justice to exclusively express who he is does not change the character of this experience. It is an experience of alienation. Given that this is the phenomenological character of such an experience, I think that "alienation" should be defined in such a way that it enables us to count this experience as an experience of alienation. Thus, "alienation" should not be defined so as to require an asymmetrical relation to the different sides of oneself.

The asymmetrical reading of self-alienation can be understood as an attempt to explain what is meant by saying that one is alienated from *oneself.* According to this interpretation, "oneself" refers to those parts of me that represent who I really am. If there is no one core exclusively representing who I am—and this is the case in radical ambivalence—then there is no "oneself" to be alienated from. I think that alienation from oneself must be understood differently. It is the *person* who is alienated from herself. By this I mean the person whose boundaries are drawn by an answer to the question of individuation. In those cases in which radical ambivalence amounts to being true to oneself, there are two inherently conflicting sides to this person expressive of who she really is. Both of these sides are "fully" her own in the sense that both are expressive of who she really is. However, in taking up the standpoint representative of one of her sides, the person cannot view her other side as "fully" her own in another sense: in taking up her one standpoint, she must condemn her other side. In that sense, she is alienated from herself. This is a radical form of alienation: there is no standpoint that the radically ambivalent agent can occupy without being alienated from herself.[22]

A second objection to understanding radical ambivalence as alienation is based on the assumption that my account of alienation has allegedly left out one necessary condition for being alienated. According to this condition (the "domination-condition"), to be alienated from X, I must somehow be dominated by X in such a way that I am not fully in control of my decisions and actions. For self-alienation this means that the part of myself from which I am alienated somehow exercises power over me in such a way that I am not fully in control of my actions and decisions. Thus, self-

[22] I wish to thank two anonymous reviewers for their valuable critical questions about my notion of alienation.

alienation implies that one is not fully autonomous (cf. Jaeggi 2005, 41–42). The radically ambivalent agent, however, is fully autonomous, though it was not possible to present the arguments for this claim in this paper. If this claim is true and alienation implies a loss of autonomy, then radical ambivalence cannot involve self-alienation.

I could of course answer this objection by dropping the claim that the radically ambivalent agent is fully autonomous. However, given that I think that radical ambivalence is compatible with autonomy, I shall offer a different response. I do not wish to question that the term "alienation" is sometimes used in accordance with the domination-condition. For example, Marx sometimes seems to be saying that alienation involves such a relation of domination (Marx 2009, 84–86). However, the term "alienation" is used in different ways. I do not believe that there is one correct meaning to be arrived at through an analysis of the term. Rather, I think that it is necessary to discuss what is the most useful way of employing the term. I have offered a purely descriptive account of it, which I find a useful way of employing the term. It captures at least partly what is often meant by "alienation," and it is a clear way of employing the term. With the help of this account, certain theses with a clear meaning can be stated and discussed: radical ambivalence involves self-alienation; self-alienation is sometimes desirable; and so forth. Similarly, I suggest that my way of understanding alienation gives us a clear and useful way to discuss the relationship between alienation and domination. From this perspective, we could understand the domination-condition as expressing a *thesis* about alienation rather than expressing something that is part of the *concept* itself: the thesis is that domination is an inevitable consequence of alienation. In other words, I would argue that it is not part of the concept of alienation that alienation from X requires that one be somehow dominated by X. In addition, I would suggest that this thesis is false and that radical ambivalence as self-alienation offers a counter-example to this thesis. The radically ambivalent agent is alienated from parts of herself, but she is in no way dominated by these parts. In pursuing her two lives, the radically ambivalent agent is subject to alienation but not to any loss of autonomy.

Having answered these two objections, I conclude that being radically ambivalent is a way of being alienated from oneself. On the basis of the argument presented in Section 3 (faithfulness to

oneself sometimes requires radical ambivalence), I also conclude that, to be true to oneself, one must sometimes be alienated from oneself.

6 Conclusion

In recent years, some authors have criticized Frankfurt and Korsgaard for demanding too much unity of the person. Yet these same critics demand that a person possess more unity than the radically ambivalent agent does. My defense of the radically ambivalent individual challenges all of these views. Self-alienation is usually considered to be undesirable. I have also challenged this dogma. In my view, it is desirable to be true to oneself. I have argued that, to be true to oneself, one must sometimes be radically ambivalent and that radical ambivalence involves self-alienation. To be true to oneself, one must thus sometimes be alienated from oneself. Therefore, contrary to dogma, self-alienation is sometimes desirable.[23]

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[23] As mentioned in footnote 17, more work needs to be done in order to show that self-alienation is valuable *in itself*.

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