

The Concept of Multi-Attractedness: From Text to Reality

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Tässä artikkelissa tarkastellaan, millaisten oletusten pohjalta ja millä menetelmillä voidaan tutkia moniviehäytyneisyydeksi kutsuttua asennetaipumusta. Moniviehäytyneisyydellä tarkoitetaan henkilön taipumusta tulla vastakkaisten ja keskenään ristiriitaisten vaihtoehtojen puoleensa vetämäksi päätöksentekotilanteessa. Tällaisen taipumuksen oletetaan johtavan vastapuolen näkökulman parempaan ymmärtämiseen ja kykyyn tehdä kompromisseja, joilla on tärkeä rooli tehokkaassa ja harkitsevassa päätöksenteossa. Jotta näitä oletuksia voitaisiin testata käytännössä, tarvitaan käsitetutkimuksen lisäksi empiirisiä havaintoja moniviehäytyneistä päätöksentekijöistä. Tällaisten henkilöiden tunnistaminen ja tutkiminen ovat tärkeää päätöksenteon teorian kehittämiseksi ja ymmärryksen lisäämiseksi asenteiden vaikutuksesta päätöksiin. Moniviehäytyneisyyden idean taustalla on John Irvingin *Minä olen monta -romaanin* päähenkilö. Kyseinen romaani on esimerkki siitä, miten kaunokirjallisuus voi valaista todellisuuden luonnetta ja synnyttää käsitteellisiä innovaatioita. Uutta käsitettä muodostettaessa on tärkeä tehdä selkoa siitä, missä määrin käsite viittaa mielestä ja kielestä riippumattomaan todellisuuteen ja missä määrin taas on kyseessä tarkoituksenmukaisuussysteistä luotu ajatusrakennelma. Suoritetun tarkastelun perusteella moniviehäytyneisyyden käsitteessä yhdistyvät empiirinen koeteltavuus ja romaanin innoittama luova hahmotus.

Keywords: attitudes, decision-making, multi-attractedness, rationality, text, tolerance

1 Introduction

It is common in both casual and formal contexts that conflicting views and different decisions seem to be equally good and attractive (Hedden 2015: 85–87). This can occur in various situations, for example, when deciding between electoral candidates, choosing a spare time activity, or making economic decisions. The equal attractiveness of different options can be based on various factors, including the objective features of the options, ignorance of differences and risks of the options, as well as the needs and values of the chooser. The reasons for the equal attractiveness can thus be objective or subjective, cognitive or value-based.

In my earlier study, I have baptized this attitude as *multi-attractedness*, denoting a person's propensity to be attracted equally by opposing and conflicting views in a decision-making situation (Lehtonen 2014: 40–44; 2015: 21–24). The idea behind multi-attractedness is inspired by the bisexual protagonist of John Irving's *In One Person* (2012).

The concept being born as a result of reading Irving's novel is a product of textual creativity and exposure. The term textual is taken here to refer to two things that we can do with and through texts: (1) create and declare new realities and (2) reveal existing

realities. As regards the creative/declarative task, texts are ‘runways of thought’: The writing and reading of texts can inspire us to challenge and transform established ways of thinking. Accordingly, texts help us to innovate and construct new concepts and frames of understanding. Texts such as novels and fiction in general can thus offer an access to conceptual resources from which we can borrow and carry findings that we did not possess before. As regards the revelatory task, texts are ‘exposures of reality’: They make us aware and able to explicate our unconscious preconception of facts that already existed independently of our perceptions and system of concepts.

The purpose of this paper is to explore what evidence and considerations are relevant when determining the extent to which multi-attractedness is a ‘declared reality’ and/or a ‘revealed reality’. The paper thus identifies the conditions under which *multi-attractedness* could be shown to refer to a reality that exists independently of our system of concepts, or could be shown to refer merely to a conceptual construction with no existence independent of human thought and ratification.

2 Introduction to Irving’s novel *In One Person*

Let us start by introducing the literary background of the concept of multi-attractedness. John Irving’s *In One Person* is about a young bisexual man who falls in love with an older transgender woman – Miss Frost, the librarian in a Vermont public library. The bisexual guy is the main character, but two transgender women – Miss Frost and a girl called Gee – are the heroes of this novel in the sense that these two characters are the ones the bisexual narrator, Billy Abbott, looks up to most.

John Irving strongly emphasizes that *In One Person* is not autobiographical. He says that “Billy is not me”. Instead, Billy comes from Irving’s imagining what he might have been like if he had acted on all his earliest impulses as a young teenager. The author explains: “Most of us don’t ever act on our earliest sexual imaginings. In fact, most of us would rather forget them – not me” (Irving 2012b). Irving claims that our sympathy for others comes, in part, from our ability to remember our feelings and to be honest about what we felt like doing. He adds: “Certainly, sexual tolerance comes from being honest with ourselves about what we have imagined sexually.” What is interesting here is that Irving associates tolerance with a sort of multi-attractedness: bisexuality.

Irving tells that when he was a boy, he imagined having sex with his friends’ mothers, with girls his own age, and even with certain older boys among his wrestling teammates. It turned out that he liked girls, but the memory of his attractions to the “wrong” people never left him. He says that the impulse to bisexuality was very strong in him. His earliest sexual experiences – more important, his earliest sexual imaginings – taught him that sexual desire is mutable.

Billy Abbott meets the transgender librarian, Miss Frost, because he goes to the library seeking novels about “crushes on the wrong people” (Irving 2012a: 59). Miss Frost starts him out with the Brontë sisters – specifically, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. She expresses less confidence in Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, which she also gives Billy. As she puts it, “If one can count sexual escapades as one result of crushes” (Irving 2012a: 61). Later, when Billy has become an avid reader and he returns to the library confessing his crush on an older boy in the wrestling team, Miss Frost – who has earlier given Billy novels by Dickens and Hardy – gives him Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*. This serves Irving as a pivotal transition from reading to acting: in the same night, when Miss Frost gives Billy *Giovanni’s Room*, she seduces him.

“We are formed by what we desire”, Billy tells us in the first paragraph of the first chapter, and continues: “I desired to become a writer and to have sex with Miss Frost – not necessarily in that order” (Irving 2012a: 15). Later in the novel, Billy realizes this about himself: “I knew that no one person could rescue me from wanting to have sex with men and women” (Irving 2012a: 533). This alludes to a kind of multi-attractedness.

Billy further describes himself saying: “I wanted to look like a gay boy – or enough like one to make other gay boys, and men, look twice at me. But I wanted the girls and women to wonder about me – to make them look twice at me, too. I wanted to retain something provocatively masculine in my appearance” (Irving 2012a: 176–177). Thus, multi-attractedness can also seek physical manifestations. Billy remembers when he is cast as Ariel in *The Tempest*, and Richard (the director) tells him that Ariel’s gender is “mutable.” Richard tells Billy that the sex of angels is mutable, too. Billy later says: “I suppose I was trying to look sexually mutable, to capture something of Ariel’s unresolved sexuality.” He concludes: “There is no one way to look bisexual, but that was the look I sought” (Irving 2012a: 177).

However, Billy does not start out so sure of himself. “You’re a man, aren’t you?” he asks Miss Frost, when he discovers that she used to be a man. “You’re a transsexual!” he tells her, accusingly. Miss Frost speaks sharply to him: “My dear boy, please don’t put a label on me – don’t make me a category before you get to know me!” (Irving 2012a: 295–296). As Billy learns – in part, from being bisexual – people’s genders and orientations do not define them. People are somehow more than their sexual identities, but their sexual identities matter (Irving 2012b).

3 Initial remarks on the concept of multi-attractedness

Multi-attractedness is not bisexuality. Yet, the difference between bisexuality and homo-/heterosexuality is useful for illuminating the difference between multi-attractedness and its neighbouring concept, tolerance. Bisexuals have a stronger personal

proattitude to both same-gender and different-gender sex than those homosexuals or heterosexuals who have a tolerant attitude toward heterosexuality or homosexuality respectively. One can easily see that there is a difference in being attracted and being tolerant also, for example, in politics and economics.

Virtually all people are interested in countless things, which is a trivial fact I am not going to focus on here. Instead, it must be highlighted that one can also be multi-attracted with a very limited scope of interests, such as sexual ones, provided that those interests are opposing or conflicting. Thus, a ‘cross-draught of likings’ (or conflict of interests) is the key feature of multi-attractedness. Therefore, we could replace the term *multi-attracted* by the term *conflictingly attracted*.

It should be kept in mind that an ambiguity or complexity of interests does not necessarily mean a contradiction. An example of the former is the desire to drink water and the simultaneous desire to drink beer. An example of the latter is the desire to drink and the simultaneous desire not to drink. Yet, there can be completely coherent reasons even for conflicting interests (cf. Plato’s *Republic IV*, 439a–e, where he presents the idea that coherent reason is reason’s calculations overcoming impulse, which is closer to right than rational decision-making as these are discussed below in this paper). In the case of drinking and abstaining from drinking, the reasons can be, for example, alcoholism and social pressure. Thus, the term *multi-attracted* could also be replaced by the terms *complexly attracted* and *ambiguously attracted*.

Related to this is the fact that two or more preferences (i.e., actions, objectives, interests) can exclude each other outright (e.g. to drink and not to drink) or can be contradictory in their long-term impacts (e.g. to eat fast food and to try to avoid obesity). In the latter case, different preferences themselves may be compatible, at least in the short run and under certain conditions, but their expected long-term impacts exclude each other. What are especially interesting in terms of decision theory are those cases in which two or more conflicting options considered to be equally attractive can be transcended to form a synthesis. Such cases indicate that the disagreements of decision makers can, at least in some cases, be constructively overcome, which is good news, for example, for political and business leaders.

Multi-attractedness comes thus within different scopes and ranges. If the scope of interests of a multi-attracted person is limited, he or she represents what can be called ‘local multi-attractedness’. If the person instead has an unlimited scope of interests, he or she represents ‘global multi-attractedness’. There is every reason to believe that various types of local multi-attractedness are much more common than global or unlimited multi-attractedness. For example, Billy Abbott embodies sexual multi-attractedness. Moreover, one can be multi-attracted without there being real opportunities for that person to choose between different interests, let alone to realize the choice. Thus, the

propensity of multi-attractedness does not require the actual ability or opportunity to realize opposing ends.

As has already been hinted, multi-attractedness is apt to be criticized for implying incoherence and irrationalism. This is the more so because normative decision-making theories commonly assume that decision makers are rational and consistent in their preferences. Things are made more complicated, however, by the fact that rationality can be defined in various ways, including from the perspective of an individual or a group of individuals. Moreover, individual and social rationality can come into conflict. Let us assume for argument's sake that rationality is defined in terms of the goals and means, which is in fact quite a conservative assumption. As regards goals of human action, rationality can be defined as the ability of individuals or groups to adopt appropriate goals. What is appropriate then depends not only on the case and circumstances, but also on our general idea of humans and our 'philosophy of life'. Thus, the criteria of rationality are world-view dependent. From the point of view of means, rationality can be defined as behaving in a manner that optimizes one's ability to achieve one's goals. Based on these definitions, one can conclude that a decision is rational if and only if the decision maker chooses to do what he or she has most reason to do – both in terms of goals and means – at the point in time at which the decision is made. This is something that the concept of multi-attractedness problematizes through expanding the palette of equally attractive options.

It is also noteworthy that a decision can be rational without being right and right without being rational. One way to define the rightness of a decision is to say that a decision is right if and only if its actual outcome is at least as good as that of every other possible decision (Peterson 2009: 4–5). This definition does not exclude multi-attractedness from being an acceptable attitude. However, normative decision theories emphasize rationality, not rightness, as the key criterion of the quality of decisions. The reason is simple. The practical rightness of decisions can be ultimately evaluated on the basis of their outcomes that may become evident only in the future, whereas the rationality of decisions is evaluated based upon the best information available at the time of the decision.

As we have seen, traditional decision-making theories assume that an ideal agent would have only coherent preferences (Weirich 2015: 63). Traditional theories also assume that an ideally rational decision maker must either prefer one object to another or be indifferent between them (Peterson 2009: 169). These assumptions may make multi-attractedness seem irrational or, like in Billy Abbott's case, morally controversial. Moreover, it has been assumed that decision makers need to take into account what others are doing. In such cases, rational decision makers have to make trade-offs between conflicting aims such as mutual benefit and risk minimisation (Peterson 2009: 8, 10). This must for various reasons, ethical included, be assumed to apply to the multi-

attracted as well. Thus, although a multi-attracted person could strive for realizing all his or her personal interests if his or her decisions were to affect only themselves, in social contexts such as group and joint actions he or she must be ready to take other people's interests into account and must be ready to compromise and make trade-offs.

Based on these assumptions, two rational decision-making strategies are available for the multi-attracted (see Table 1). First, the multi-attracted can try to form a synthesis or a new option based on or inspired by the original options. This strategy is especially multi-attracted by its nature because it tries to preserve at least something of the original options. For example, bisexuality is an example of such a synthesis. Second, the multi-attracted can also try to find additional evidence or new arguments to support the discrimination between competing alternatives. If successful, this strategy can lead to the decision in which one of the options is found to be the better, or at least more recommended, than the others.

Table 1: Two major decision-making strategies for the multi-attracted

1.	<i>A synthesis or a new option based on or inspired by the original options</i>
2.	<i>Additional evidence or new arguments to help find the best option among the existing ones</i>

By now it should be clear that the major problem of idealized decision theories is that we humans are not ideal agents who would always strive for a clear-cut (or exclusionary) decision or would always succeed in making such a decision. Rather, in many cases we would like to keep the doors open for different options and their combinations as long as possible. In saying this I am not denying the value of idealizations of decision-making, quite the opposite. The assumption of an ideal agent is widely made because it helps to limit the number and quality of available options in a decision-making situation, thereby simplifying and rationalizing decision-making scenarios and different decision-making styles. In general, idealizations help us to conceptualize and condense the key aspects of complex realities and to make those conceptualizations testable in the 'laboratory of the mind'. In particular, normative decision theories contain idealizations (don't all theories?), because idealizations are expected to contribute to identifying and controlling key elements and conditions for decision-making. However, there is nothing so good that no bad may come of it. Problems with idealization include the risk of loss of information on the one hand and the risk of too much irrelevant information on the other (Lehtonen 2012: 7, 13). This is an additional reason why focusing on multi-attractedness, as a descriptive feature of decision makers, can be fruitful. An example of such a decision maker is Billy Abbott.

4 Multi-attractedness value

In order to empirically identify the multi-attracted, it is useful to introduce, for lack of a better term, the ‘multi-attractedness value’. It obtains numerical values that can be determined, for example, by asking respondents to evaluate in a scale from 1 to 4 whether they (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) moderately agree, or (4) strongly agree with conflicting claims such as “More refugees should be welcomed in Europe” and “More refugees should be deported” or “Income distribution should be equal” and “Income distribution should reflect individual contribution to what is produced”. The sum of the values given to such opposing claims, divided by the number of the claims, gives the ‘multi-attractedness value’. This quotient can be interpreted as follows: The higher (i.e., the closer to 4) the quotient is, the stronger multi-attractedness is. Moreover, it can be agreed that the respondents should get, for example, the value greater than 3 in order that they could be reasonably identified as multi-attracted in terms of the claims made. Of course, the limiting value must be decided from case to case. The existence of multi-attractedness can thus be empirically investigated in terms of the ‘multi-attractedness value’, provided that we can study people’s attitudes to a given set of claims.

I carried out a preliminary study on multi-attractedness at the University of Vaasa in January and February 2016. The results of the study are promising. The students of the Ethics and Social Philosophy course at the University of Vaasa formulated pairs of attitudinal claims as group work. I chose and edited 52 claims (or 26 pairs) for the survey. I mixed the pairs so the opposing claims were not one after the other. The course participants answered the survey anonymously.

I assumed that the multi-attractedness value received by the informant would be close to 2.5. This value would be the result if one of the opposing claims always received the value 1 (“strongly disagree”) and the other the value 4 (“strongly agree”) $[(x + 4x) \div 2x = 2.5]$. I also supposed that the advance information regarding the aim of the survey might have influenced the results. Therefore, I only told the participants that the idea was to figure out the existence and nature of multi-attractedness after completion of the survey.

The average and median of all the informants was 2.79 in the pilot study. Based on this, the attitudes of the Ethics and Social Philosophy course participants are not completely straightforward. There were 53 informants, of which 35 were women (66%) and 18 were men (34%). The highest multi-attractedness value was 3.31, and the lowest was 2.52.

Interviews

I conducted individual interviews with the six informants who had received the highest value. One of them was male. The highest values in the above-mentioned four-step scale were between 2.96 and 3.31, thus close to 3.

The interviews confirmed the results of the survey, and multi-attractedness appeared to be a recognizable feature. Five of the six interviewees considered themselves multi-attracted. An interviewee (mav 2.96) said that she can “put herself in the boots of another” and can understand different points of view, but she does not consider herself multi-attracted. She said that she is empathetic and tough as well as strong in her opinions. Hence, a high multi-attractedness value is not enough to confirm multi-attractedness; other reasons are also needed.

The interviewees considered multi-attractedness as positive and useful because it supports a versatile evaluation of different options and helps them understand different points of view. Multi-attractedness also helps to make things proportionate and able to be perceived in a new light. On the other hand, the interviewees mentioned that multi-attractedness also hinders decision-making. Some said that their friends or spouse wonder why decision-making takes so much time. Thus, the interviewees represented a deliberate form of multi-attractedness rather than the indecisive type. A related subject for further study would be to examine how strongly the ability to make rapid decisions correlates with weak multi-attractedness. Furthermore, how does the rightness of decisions correlate with the decision maker’s multi-attractedness?

The multi-attracted declared that they often stop to think whether they should have made another choice. Still, all but one considered that they have been able to make consistent decisions bearing critical consideration. Unsurprisingly, the interviewees named knowledge, reason, and emotions as the basis of decisions. The interviewee who said he had made many wrong choices stated that he mainly acts based on emotions.

One interviewee (mav 3.31) said that multi-attractedness had appeared in her only after puberty; she was more straightforward in her childhood. Another interviewee (mav 2.96) spoke of the gradual development of her multi-attractedness and linked this to the widening of her worldview. Other multi-attracted said they have been attracted to different mutually opposing options related to hair dyes, as well as political opinions, for as long as they could remember. It turns out that such multi-attractedness that is non-specific and does not concentrate on any particular field of life or action also exists.

Group discussion

These results were widened and elaborated by the group discussion that was executed before the survey. The group discussion considered whether or not a refugee center should be founded in a municipality. The eight-person groups discussed this question from the basis of the following assumptions: The representatives of a municipality with a population of circa 20,000 have come together to consider the draft resolution according to which a refugee centre will be founded in the municipality. The neighbouring municipalities have rejected the refugee centre, and the nearest equivalent countries – Germany, Denmark, and Sweden – are tightening the conditions for refugee acceptance. The discussants were urged to simply be themselves and represent the values and attitudes they have in reality.

The discussion was conducted and the draft resolution was put to vote in nine groups in which the chairs recorded the course, content, and tone of the discussion. The reports shed light on the basis of consensus and reasons for disagreement. I used this data to provide background for the interviews and to get an initial idea of the group discussion role of participants who received a high multi-attractedness value.

Interestingly, three groups voted for the refugee centre, four groups voted against, one cast an empty vote and one group decided to vote. One of the interviewees (mav 2.96) was from a group that voted against the refugee centre, yet his own vote was placed in favour of the refugee centre.

This pilot study gives reason to accept multi-attractedness as an empirical concept and real characteristic. The air is thick with further questions.

5 Reality created vs. reality revealed

Multi-attractedness is thus not doomed to remain a theoretical concept, but can be studied empirically. To this is related the above-introduced ‘multi-attractedness value’ that can be studied, for example, through surveys. The nature and effects of multi-attractedness can be further studied by addressing various conceptual and empirical questions, for example, through interviews and observations.

Another distinction is also useful in distinguishing conceptual questions from empirical ones, namely that between ‘declared reality’ and ‘revealed reality’. This distinction is related to the concept of scientific progress introduced by William Whewell (1794–1866) who maintained that the progress of science is based on the explication of concepts and the colligation (or ‘binding together’) of the facts under those concepts. The explication of concepts represents the ‘creation of reality’ aspect and the colligation of the facts represents the ‘revelation of reality’ aspect of scientific research.

Paradoxically, the revelation aspect requires the creation aspect, as we have already seen in the case of the concept of multi-attractedness: The existence of the multi-attracted would remain undiscovered forever without the existence of the concept of multi-attractedness that sets the criteria for identifying multi-attracted people.

The concept of multi-attractedness is born as a result of reading Irving's novel and to that effect the concept is a product of textual creativity and exposure. The term *textual* refers here to two things that we can do with and through texts: (1) create and declare new realities and (2) reveal existing realities. As regards the creative/declarative task, texts are 'runways of thought', as was already stated. Accordingly, the writing and reading of texts can inspire us to challenge and transform established ways of thinking. For one thing, this challenge and transformation concern the concepts we use for classifying, organizing and constructing reality. However, even more fundamentally, the challenge is about the practices upon which our ways to categorize reality are based. An example of this is the fact that legal concepts of family relations depend on a cultural practice called marriage. Changes in practices demand changes in concepts, as has been seen in many countries where legislation that permits same-sex marriages is under consideration.

Thus, texts such as novels and plays can help us innovate and construct new concepts and frames of understanding as well as they can help create new practices. Texts can thus offer an access to conceptual resources from which we can extrapolate findings that we did not possess before. As regards this revelatory task, texts are 'exposures of reality': They make us aware and able to explicate our unconscious preconception of facts that already existed independently of our perceptions and system of concepts. The Socratic idea of philosophy as the midwifery of thought nicely matches this use of texts. Through the initial definition and characterization of multi-attractedness, we can clarify and explicate the 'declared reality' aspect of that concept, while empirical questions concern its 'revealed reality' aspect.

The conceptual questions can basically be answered through philosophical and literary inquiry. However, empirical study and evidence are also relevant for the specification of the concept. As a basis for the empirical study, a pair of propositions is useful to be introduced (see Table 2). These propositions can be used as hypotheses when multi-attractedness is explored in various decision-making situations. According to the first proposition (P1), it is of benefit to decision-making in different organizations that some (or even many) of their members are attracted (but not necessarily committed) to ways of thinking that are opposed to each other. Such opposites concern liberalism and conservatism, environmentalism and economic expansionism, or religiousness and secularism, to mention just a few examples. Such sharing of interests can be assumed to reinforce political and economic deliberation without losing multi-voicedness, and to improve the possibilities for unconditional decision-making which is not suppressed by the

particular interests of given groups. According to the first proposition, decision-making that is affected by multi-attractedness can thus help avoid false generalizations and one-sidedness. Miss Frost and the mature Billy Abbott epitomize this view.

The second proposition (P2) states that if participants in the decision-making process share the same interests even though conflictingly attracted or ambiguously attracted by other interest, their emotional involvement with the issues at stake plays a lesser role. In that case reasoning remains communicative even when the participants disagree on the decision to be made. Assuming that your opponents see your point of view and that you know this, you do not need to fervently defend your opinion nor to act against your best interest. That presumably helps in addressing even difficult issues rationally and dispassionately. Therefore, recognizing and involving those who are multi-attracted can support decision-making in diverse organizations and in society as a whole.

Table 2: Research propositions for empirical study of multi-attractedness

P1	It is of benefit to decision-making in different organizations that some (or even many) of their members are attracted to ways of thinking that are opposed to each other.
P2	If participants in the decision-making process share the same interests even though conflictingly attracted or ambiguously attracted by other interest, their emotional involvement with the issues at stake plays a lesser role.

In empirical studies these propositions can be adopted as testable hypotheses, not fixed opinions, meaning that the hypotheses can be confirmed or falsified by empirical evidence, including informants' opinions and participatory observations.

6 Conclusions

The concept of multi-attractedness is a new contribution to decision-making theory and to developing a better understanding of the role of attitudes in choice. This is socially important because multi-attractedness can reinforce the respect for and understanding of opponents' views. Therefore, identifying and involving those who are multi-attracted can support decision-making in diverse organizations and in society as a whole. Thus, by applying the concept of multi-attractedness into decision-making analysis, the seemingly counter-productive feature can be redefined as a positive feature of decision-making, displaying thoroughness rather than indecisiveness.

Moreover, the concept of multi-attractedness helps to address the role of the contradictory and incoherent preferences in decision-making situations more explicitly and effectively than earlier models. As was noted above, multi-attractedness is not, however, a completely unprecedented attitude, but supposedly familiar to many people's experience of themselves as choosers and decision-makers in various situations.

The concept of multi-attractedness has been introduced to offer a new understanding of how sympathy to opposing views affects decision-making. Such sympathy is beneficial and important for the realisation of justice and democracy in multicultural societies and thus important in order to take different people's interests and preferences equally into account. As we have seen, fictional literature can contribute in different ways to creating and revealing new features of reality. Multi-attractedness is a social construction inspired by a novel, and multi-attractedness can be studied empirically.

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