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A Virtue Ethical Exploration of Multi-Attractedness

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Tässä artikkelissa tarkastelen moniviehättyneisyyden käsitettä hyve-etiikan kontekstissa. Moniviehättyneisyys on luonteenpiirteen tapainen ominaisuus, jonka kantaja tulee päätöksiä tehdessään ristiriitaisten näkökulmien puoleensa vetämäksi. Tavoitteeni on syventää moniviehättyneisyyttä koskevaa ymmärrystä selvittämällä, miten se voidaan Aristoteelisen hyve-etiikan piirissä määritellä. Tarkastelun lähtökohtana on Lehtosen näkemys siitä, että moniviehättyneisyys saattaa olla hyödyksi päätöksenteolle. Tutkimuksen aineiston muodostaa moniviehättyneisyyden teoria, joka muodostuu useista erillisistä teoreettisista kirjoituksista. Filosofisen tarkastelun viitekehys muodostuu Nikomakhoksen etiikan hyveen olemusta ja ilmenemistä teoretisoivista osioista sekä teoksen itsekuria käsittelevästä osiosta. Tutkimuksen tulokset syventävät moniviehättyneisyyden käsitettä ja tarkentavat kriittisen ja ei-kriittisen moniviehättyneisyyden välistä eroa.

Keywords: critical thinking, multi-attractedness, self-control, virtue ethics

1 Introduction[1]

This theoretical paper studies multi-attractedness in the context of virtue ethics. Virtue ethical concepts have been used increasingly in studies which have aimed to improve workplace communication and studying multi-attractedness in such an environment has initially been on the agenda in multi-attractedness research. The aim of this paper is to increase the under-standing of multi-attractedness by discovering how it can be defined in the context of Aristotelian virtue conception.

Originally developed by Tommi Lehtonen, multi-attractedness denotes a propensity to be drawn towards mutually contrasting opinions or likings (2015: 21). Hence, a multi-attracted agent perceives mutually conflicting options as equally tempting and practicable (Lehtonen 2017: 111). Such a situation is problematized in decision theory as irrational (Weirich 2015; Peterson 2009), not because of the plurality of options as such, but because of the seeming inability to choose between them. To be rational, the decision-maker should have coherent, consistent preferences (e.g. needs, wishes) as a basis for the criterion by which some options are excluded and others are not (Peterson 2009: 169). However, this is a requirement rarely met outside a theoretical context. Perfect coherency is regarded as unattainable in the com-plex decision-making situations of real life (Kruglanski 2012: 225), which seems to delimit the notion of the idealized rational decision-maker

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into a theoretical construction (March 1994). Addressing this fact, Lehtonen's theory approaches decision-making from a new point of view, focusing on the conflictual nature of preferences instead of rejecting them (2016: 74). This paper is the first attempt to outline an ethical understanding of the multi-attracted agent.

This paper explores multi-attractedness in the context of virtue ethics in order to find out how can multi-attractedness as a state of a person's character be related through the conception of a) virtue and b) self-control? The context of the discussion is Aristotelian virtue ethics, and more specifically, the parts from Nicomachean Ethics which concern his conception of virtue (I–III: 1–5) and the role of self-control (VII: 1–10). In support of my interpretations, I draw on David Bostock's reading of the Nichomachean Ethics in Aristotle's Ethics (2000). The results of the discussion increase especially the understanding of the difference between critical and uncritical multi-attractedness, and the theory of multi-attractedness in general.

Next, in section 2, I will summarize Lehtonen's theory of multi-attractedness, stressing the points relevant to the present discussion. In section 3, I will outline the virtue conception of Aristotelian ethics, focusing on the definition of virtue (in 3.1) and the role he gives to self-control (in 3.2). In section 4, I will address the research question and its follow-up question in the theoretical discussion. Finally, in the conclusion I will summarize the results of the enquiry and introduce further questions for future discussion.

2 Multi-Attractedness and Decision-Making

Multi-attractedness is a theory of the role of multiple conflicting positive premises in a decision-making situation. As a concept, then, multi-attractedness falls into the field of the philosophy of decision-making, which takes a philosophical approach to the mathematically oriented decision theory. In decision theory, the aim is to generalize decision-making patterns into models through which the outcomes could be predicted by employing various tools and principles, such as counting probabilities and utility-maximization (Nau 1999: 217–236). Multi-attractedness is unfit for such models because in these terms, it is irrational. The rational decision-maker's choices are regulated by consistent preferences (March 1994), whereas the multi-attracted decision-maker is one whose preferences (needs, goals, hopes) are inconsistent (Lehtonen 2016a: 75–76). In short, inconsistency equals irrationality[2] (Weirich 2015: 63). This is because 'rational' is attributed only to options which serve the decision-maker's goal (Kruglanski & Boyatzi 2012; Kruglanski & Orehek 2009). Inconsistent preferences hint that the decision-maker does not in fact know what he wants, and for that reason his actions cannot be directly evaluated for how well they serve the goal. This suggests that multi-attractedness is an irrational state, and that as a decision-maker, the multi-attracted person is irrational. This is

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[2] The rational decision-maker is an idealization and as such over-optimistic, and not intended to resemble the realistic agent of decision-making (Kruglanski 2012: 225; Lehtonen 2016: 75).

not to say that multi-attractedness is 'without sense' in general, but that it is without consistency.

It must be stressed that rational decision is not necessary the best possible one or morally right one; it is only consistent with the preferences of the decision-maker. "A decision can be rational without being right and right without being rational" (Peterson 2009: 13). It has been established that in terms of decision-theoretical rationality, multi-attractedness is irrational; perhaps it is logical that the opposite of multi-attractedness is, in these terms, rational. Referring to the opposite of multi-attractedness, Lehtonen uses the term "mono-attractedness". Mono-attractedness is a state where a) one's preferences are consistent, b) one is indifferent to the matter at hand, or c) one is apathetic and therefore indifferent to any deliberation in general. (2017: 113) In a situation of decision making, then, the mono-attracted either knows what he wants and acts accordingly or does not want anything and therefore does nothing. In sum, multi-attractedness is irrational and mono-attractedness is rational, but this does not mean that rationality is always right, and its opposite is not.

Theoretically, multi-attracted person has, at least temporarily, two or more mutually competing considerations of the same thing, both or all of which he, at least at some level, believes to be true and possible. The competing considerations need not be strictly opposite (Lehtonen 2016a: 74), but different options which, as such, cannot be chosen simultaneously. They may represent virtually any field; for example, they may be political, economic, artistic, or religious (Lehtonen 2016a: 73; 2016b). These are dictated by the situational context. The situations in which multi-attractedness manifests in everyday-life are numerous (Lehtonen 2016a: 71; 2016b), but the sense in which it is used in the theory is different. Multi-attractedness is a theory about the nature of this inconsistency, but also one about how to harness this attitude and make the best possible use of it. Lehtonen suggests that identifying and intentionally involving multi-attracted people into decision-making situations in organizations could improve the quality of the decision-making processes (2014a: 41). To harness multi-attractedness in a real-life context requires methods for identifying and analyzing multi-attractedness in an empirical research setting. In fact, Lehtonen has developed methods for identifying and analyzing multi-attractedness in an empirical research setting. Due to the scope of this paper and the exclusively theoretical interest of the subject matter, a more detailed introduction of these methods is not included[3]. Nevertheless, also the development of the empirical methods is likely to benefit from the deepened theoretical understanding of how to define a decision-maker and decision-making situation dominated by competing considerations.

Multi-attractedness is a term describing this experience, embracing the decision-maker and the decision-making situation alike. Lehtonen employs a metaphor of "cross-draught

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[3] The report of the pilot study can be found in "Multi-attractedness (or multiple voices inside one person)" (Lehtonen 2017).

of likings" (Lehtonen 2016a: 74) to illustrate the competing considerations which construct the agent's preferences. As noted above, compared to the idealized rational decision maker's consistent preferences, these cannot be translated into axioms which govern the decision-making process (Nau 1999: 217–218). Moreover, Lehtonen asserts (2014: 41–44) that multi-attractedness can work as an advantage as well as a disadvantage for the agent depending on the type of multi-attractedness they represent.

There are two aspects to this variation. Firstly, Lehtonen distinguishes between local and global multi-attractedness to tell apart whether one is multi-attracted in, say, one area of life (e.g. politics; being supportive of some leftist but also some rightist ideals), or whether one is multi-attracted in an all-encompassing way (2016a: 74; 2015: 21; 2014a: 41–42; 2014b). For that reason, multi-attractedness can exist in a limited context or outside of any context. Secondly, the theory of multi-attractedness distinguishes between critical or disciplined and uncritical or undisciplined multi-attractedness (Lehtonen 2015: 21–27; 2014a: 41–44). Lehtonen describes critical multi-attractedness as an attitude promoting considerate, disciplined, cautious and morally as well as logically consistent decision-making, whereas those who embody uncritical multi-attractedness are described as inconsiderate, undisciplined, and faltering in their opinions (2017: 120–121; 2016b). Of this Lehtonen says that critical multi-attractedness "is preferable, if for no other reason, then for the ability to make considered decisions among alternatives" (2014a: 41; 2014b). It seems to be implied that the distinction local/global does not result into an advantage nor a disadvantage, but the distinction critical/uncritical does. This classification is of special interest to the present paper due to its evident ethical undertone.

3 Aristotelian Conception of Excellence

3.1 On Virtue

The Aristotelian conception of virtue differs in many ways from modern virtue ethics. Differences lie mostly in how moral values are understood and applied; while today's ethics is concerned with doing right, Aristotle's ethics is concerned with doing well. Hence it could be said that Nicomachean Ethics encompasses Aristotelian virtue theory not as how to live an upright life but how to live an excellent life. David Bostock asserts that this difference is one of the main reasons why Aristotle's seminal work, the Nicomachean Ethics (hereafter NE in references) bears meaning in the modern world (2000: 2, 20). These differences be-come apparent in the chapters which discuss topics not perhaps intuitively associated with virtue, like humor; the virtuous person employs wit instead of boorishness or buffoonery (1127b: 34–1128b: 8). Wit is more virtuous than boorishness or buffoonery, because it employs humor in the right proportion and with good taste. This qualitative difference between right and wrong is called 'doctrine of the mean' (1106a: 26–9), referring to the understanding of virtue as the mean between two extremes. Although a central element of Aristotelian virtue conception, the doctrine of the mean is

only touched upon in the present paper. The reason for this is that the doctrine is a criterion for a trait indisputably qualified as a virtue, whereas the present paper is a speculative discussion on whether multi-attractedness can be qualified as one.

The approach to human life in Aristotle's ethics is holistic. In Aristotle's view, everything seems "to aim at some good" (1094a: 2). The ultimate good for the human being is eudaimonia (1095a: 14–20), traditionally translated as 'happiness'. This is perhaps the closest translation possible, but still regarded as an understatement (Bostock 2000: 11). Happiness can be fleeting, whereas eudaimonia denotes long-term happiness; moreover, it entails doing well, living well (1095a:14–20) and fulfilling one's potential and function as an individual and a member of society (1097b: 22–8). In Aristotle's view, some traits or dispositions assist in reaching this goal whereas others do not. These dispositions are divided into virtues and vices accordingly. Furthermore, the traits reside in either the intellect or the character, meaning that there are virtues (and vices) of the intellect and of the character (1103a: 14–19). Modern virtue theory uses the labels of epistemological and moral virtues to address the same typology. Both, however, are evaluated in the same way, that is, according to whether they serve the goal of eudaimonia – a life well lived.

Virtue and vice are defined according to how they act in the soul of a human being. A soul has two parts: One which 'has reason'; the rational soul, and one which 'partakes in reason' by being able to listen to it, the soul of passions (1102a: 26–b14). These parts are inhabited by actions or movements which are categorized as a) passions, b) capacities, and c) states (1105b: 19–20). Passions include 'appetites', which refer to simple needs such as hunger and to more complex needs such as confidence or longing. Faculties, again, refer to the capacity to react to the passions (1105b: 21–28). Finally, states represent the movements, which include virtues (1106a: 11–3). Aristotle argues that feelings cannot be chosen any more than the reactions they arouse (1105b: 29–1106a: 10), and that, as a result, virtue is a state of the soul (1106a: 12–13). To prioritize choices over feelings and reactions does not detach virtues from feelings. In fact, the appropriate feelings are a key factor in defining a virtuous act from a good one (Bostock 2000: 37). Virtue, as a state of a soul, means that one's feelings, reasoning, and actions are in harmony. In Aristotle's words (1105a: 30–1105b: 1):

> The agent also must be in a certain condition when he does [virtuous acts]; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character.

So, the virtuous act must be done 1) knowingly: an apprentice can perform correctly with the guidance of his master but is unable to repeat the act based on his own knowledge (1105a: 22–23); a virtue cannot be done by accident. 2) The act must be chosen, meaning that it must be voluntary, not done by accident in this respect either, and chosen for its own sake; meaning that it must be voluntary and chosen for its own sake and not as a

means of accomplishing something else (1097a: 30–34). Hence, Aristotle combines voluntariness and motivation for the choice. Finally, 3) the act must be done from a firm and unchangeable character, meaning that the agent must have love for virtue (1104b: 3–11), making the agent genuinely be the kind of person who wants to do this act from these premises.

As seen from the above criteria for virtue, the agent's choice and act must be done with the soul's passions and rationalizations in harmony. Thus, sense and passion are not in juxtaposition in the Aristotelian virtue conception (Bostock 2000: 116), but the virtuous agent is guided to the right by his feelings. This is the most important difference between the virtuous person and the self-controlled person.

3.2 On Self-Control

In the Nicomachean Ethics, self-control is a topic of discussion independent of virtue. It is situated after the introduction of Aristotle's conception of virtue and all the examples of individual virtues he gives. Self-control is one of the three good states of character Aristotle discusses: state of virtue, state of self-control, and state of heroic virtue; opposed to them are, respectively, vice, lack of self-control, and brutishness (1145a15–27). Virtue and vice have been already discussed above. Heroic virtue and its opposite, brutishness, refer to a kind of nobility of character and the lack of it, for which reason it is not relevant to the topic of the paper. Therefore, the focus here will be on the role of self-control, and respectively, the lack of self-control.

Self-control is in a way a practice to balance between passion and reason when they are not coordinated. Self-control can fail for either impetuosity or weakness: "For some men after deliberating fail, owing to their passion, to stand by the conclusions of their deliberations, others because they have not deliberated are led by their passion" (1150b19–21). In other words, the weak fail to follow the result of their deliberation and the impetuous fail to de-liberate at all. Common to both is that the agent in one way or another knows that he is doing wrong (Bostock 2000: 124), but they are distinguished by the choice of whether to pause to deliberate on the matter. By contrast, self-controlled agent deliberates on his passions (impulses, emotions) and can overcome them by using knowledge.

Aristotle's definition of self-control is also continuous with his understanding of the soul as divided into the parts of reason and passion (1102a26–b14). While the virtuous person's actions are always performed so that these parts are in harmony, the self-controlled agent's soul is dissonant. Even though the self-controlled agent would reason correctly and choose the same act as the virtuous agent, his feelings would not have been in harmony with his actions and reasoning. The motivation for choosing well relies in his knowledge of what is virtuous instead of love towards it; the self-controlled agent chooses to refrain from bad because he knows it is unvirtuous, not because he would feel the desire

to do it regardless. David Bostock gives an astute reading of the relationship between virtue and emotion (2000: 45–46, emphasis in the original):

> [T]he virtuous disposition is one which involves a harmony between emotion and reason: both pull in the same direction. (This is what distinguishes the virtuous person from one who is merely self-controlled (enkratês) the self-controlled man acts in the right way, but this is because his reason overcomes his feeling; he is subject to an internal struggle which the virtuous man is not.)

In short, the self-controlled agent and the virtuous agent can act exactly alike when judging their actions 'from the outside'. The difference is their motivations and the fact that the virtuous person acts according to his feelings, whereas the self-controlled person may act against his feelings because he needs to control his passions.

4 The Virtue Ethical Exploration

The aim of this discussion is to form a virtue ethical understanding of multi-attractedness by adapting it to the Aristotelian conception of virtue (I–III: 1–5) and self-control (VII: 1–10). The discussion follows loosely the organization of section three which introduced the relevant ideas and concepts from Aristotelian virtue ethics.

The criteria according to which virtue must be performed 1) knowingly, 2) voluntarily and chosen for its own sake, 3) from an unchangeable character dictates that a virtuous disposition of character is necessarily inhabited the rational part of the soul and not the passionate one (see section 3.1). To begin the exploration of the potential of multi-attractedness as a virtue, it is necessary to start from this basic issue of which part of soul seems to be in control of it. As said before, Lehtonen asserts the key feature of multi-attractedness to be that of "cross-draught of likings", or in other words, being pulled by competing considerations (2017: 111; 2016: 74). Is the cross-draught dictated by passions or reason? The name of the concept, multi-attractedness indeed implies that it is at least initially associated with feelings. Still, all virtues are associated with a distinguished feeling decisive in telling them apart from each other. But 'attractedness' is a feeling to be pulled in by an object of the attraction; it is a relationship between two entities, where one does the pulling and the other one is being pulled (OED: attraction 6b). It has been established by Lehtonen that the agent is the one being pulled whereas the other object does the pulling. It seems that it is not at least fully voluntary. Does this mean that multi-attractedness should be understood like anger which arises as a reaction to someone or something? Admitting this would mean that multi-attractedness would be 'without sense' and inhabiting the soul of passions. It would seem to be an over-simplification to admit this, at least from such meagre basis as has been covered so far. It has also been shown that multi-attractedness is not simply an emotion. However, this is true of attraction – it is a reaction caused by an object, hence a feeling, and it seems justified to deduce that 'attraction' would be the feeling 'multi-attractedness' is based on.

The next step in discussing which part of the soul multi-attractedness inhabits is to focus on the prefix of the concept and consider its role, because it seems to be something that distinguishes multi-attractedness from attraction as such. The prefix 'multi' implies that the feeling of attraction is either divided into two[4] mutually contrasting versions of itself or doubled so that there are two different mutually contrasting yet separate attractions. It should be re-membered that the context for multi-attractedness is a decision-making situation. The situation connects the likings, accordingly explaining why the likings are necessarily in contrast instead of only different. It is reasonable to assume that in a single decision-making situation one single decision is to be made. When multi-attractedness is the decision-making agent's disposition, it is connected to this one single decision. For this reason, I assert that there must be only one attraction which is governed by two objects; if there were multiple decisions to be made, then a choice between the likings would be unnecessary because both likings could be entertained and chosen separately from each other. The present account also makes sense regarding the metaphor of 'cross-draught of likings'; the cross-draught is created by the single attraction being pulled to two directions. Still, the question of is the cross-draught is dictated by passion or reason has not been answered.

To answer this, the cross-draught should be explored further. In addition to being constituted on one attraction governed by two objects, the attraction evoked by the two objects must be equal. This is at the core of why the multi-attracted agent is inconsistent; if the attraction evoked by the objects was not equal, there would be no inconsistency and the choice would be made based on the superior attraction. Accordingly, it must be deduced that the equality of the attractions must be reasoned rather than felt without participation of reason. To become aware of the inconsistency of the attractions requires intellectual effort. Accordingly, it seems that multi-attractedness cannot be realized through passion alone but requires reason to manifest. Therefore, it must inhabit the part of the soul which 'has reason', the rational soul. Based on everything said so far, the discussion has established multi-attractedness is commensurate with Aristotelian conception of virtue.

Next, Aristotle's tripartite criteria for virtue is addressed one item of criterion at a time. The first of these concerns the requirement which states that a virtuous act must be done knowingly. It means that when performing an act, it must be purposeful. For instance, an action that can be regarded as 'just' must have been *intended* as just and not being that by accident. Moreover, to act knowingly in pursuit of virtue means that the agent must learn to be governed by the pursuit of virtue in all relevant situations (1105a22–23); to be virtuous requires something close to the effect of a skill. Multi-attractedness is tied to its decision-making context, so from this basis it seems that obtaining a multi-attracted attitude to the decision-making process must be done knowingly and not be that by accident. It has been stated that to realize the equality of the attractions, the agent must become

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[4] 'Multi' could of course mean a larger number than two. To keep the discussion as simple as possible, I will delimit its meaning to two in the discussion.

aware of them through reason. This implies that to be multi-attracted initially entails being in the know of being multi-attracted, and thus, multi-attractedness is always done knowingly. However, this does not make multi-attractedness a virtue. Being knowingly multi-attracted equals becoming aware – this is not yet a skill that can be learned nor does it lead to any specific good (compared to, e.g. justice or courage).

So, in its raw form multi-attractedness (henceforth multi-attractedness proper), does not require skill. The skill lies in the knowingly done choice of how to treat the cross-draught. The theory of multi-attractedness recognizes two opposite ways to do this. The ways of how to treat the cross-draught are embodied in the categorical dichotomy of critical and uncritical multi-attractedness (see section 2). Critical multi-attractedness is a disposition in which critical thinking is employed whereas in uncritical multi-attractedness it is not. For the established morally positive status of critical thinking, it can be deduced that critical multi-attractedness is the virtuous way and uncritical multi-attractedness the unvirtuous way. Critical multi-attractedness is also the variant "recommended" by Lehtonen (2014a: 41). Hence, it can be deduced that while multi-attractedness proper requires reason and can be said to be done knowingly, that choice does not involve a choice between the virtuous and the unvirtuous. To choose critical multi-attractedness over uncritical multi-attractedness, then again, meets the Aristotelian criterion of being done 'knowingly' because it involves a choice between virtue and vice and can be paralleled to a skill.

The fact that multi-attractedness proper cannot be performed knowingly vitiates the rest of the criteria. Firstly, as a result of the lack of control there is in multi-attractedness proper it can be inducted that the same chain of reasoning will also apply with the requirement of voluntariness. So, while the agent cannot have control or choice to feel or not feel an equally strong attraction to multiple options, once having reasoned the equal strength and thus becoming aware of the inconsistency, they can choose to act in the right way. The right way is to employ critical thinking knowingly and choose to do it voluntarily. Secondly, to choose multi-attractedness for its own sake is also a choice of whether to employ critical thinking or not rather than whether to employ multi-attractedness or not. There is no choice to multi-attractedness proper, so it cannot be voluntary or chosen for its own sake. Thirdly, the final requirement of virtue in Aristotelian conception is that a virtuous act must be done from a firm and unchangeable character, in other words, that it must be done genuinely and with a commitment to virtue. Along the lines of the previous argumentation, the agent must choose voluntarily and in full understanding to apply critical thinking to the disposition of multi-attractedness; to choose critical thinking because it is right to employ it and be the kind of person who genuinely wants to do that at the present context, and who would choose in the same way in any other situation where such a decision situation would manifest itself. All of these are statements for critical thinking, not multi-attractedness – the knowingly done, voluntary choice the discussion focuses on has shifted from a multi-attracted vs. a non-multi-attracted choice to denote a

choice between critical and uncritical multi-attractedness as in a critical or uncritical procedure of reasoning.

In this vein, it seems that it no longer makes sense to explore multi-attractedness proper as a potential virtue. It is evident that the virtuous elements are defined by the critical component, which makes critical multi-attractedness the one on which the discussion will focus on. The intermediate conclusion is that multi-attractedness proper cannot be defined as a virtue according to the criteria set forth in the Nicomachean Ethics. It seems that the virtuous sense of multi-attractedness is fully dependent on critical thinking, which is, certainly, a trait of a virtuous man although not a virtue in itself (1145a15–b1). Critical thinking becomes a device for controlling and making sense of the competing objects of attraction. It seems that by controlling multi-attractedness proper and rejecting uncritical multi-attractedness through critical thinking, a good result should be achieved. As a final step in the discussion, it seems appropriate to take one which explores critical multi-attractedness in the framework of Aristotelian self-control (see section 3.2), because this seems to resonate with the way critical multi-attractedness functions.

Self-control is defined as a mechanism to control a feeling when it seems to lead into vice rather than virtue, hence corresponding to the role critical thinking has in multi-attractedness. In addition, self-control is a good state of character, not a virtue but something in kind of it. Therefore, critical multi-attractedness should be understood as a positive disposition. It was established that the feeling multi-attractedness is constructed upon is 'attraction'. The role of self-control is, thus, to control the attraction. As stated in 3.2, with self-control, the agent can avoid falling prey to weakness or impetuosity and be able to deliberate on what is the right choice to make. Accordingly, by developing the critical component, the multi-attracted agent can develop the skill of being multi-attracted in the way which benefits him.

Lack of self-control makes the agent weak or impetuous in their actions and decisions; lack of critical thinking in multi-attractedness works similarly. It seems to lead to that which Lehtonen's uncritical multi-attractedness (see section 2) is an embodiment of; to uncontrolled infatuation to inconsistent objects of attraction which lead nowhere because the pleasure that is gained from this attraction is not controlled by critical thinking. Indeed, Lehtonen has asserted that uncontrolled multi-attractedness bears a resemblance to a sugar-addict in a candy-shop, shoveling everything down his throat without pausing to consider the consequences (Lehtonen 2016c).

So, the conclusion is that multi-attractedness cannot be defined as virtue in the Aristotelian sense because it needs to be perfected by critical thinking in order to act in consensus to a virtue. Even when perfected, the act of multi-attractedness is not done from an unchangeable character, but one which needs to be controlled by critical thinking as a ver-

sion of Aristotelian self-control. As a result, critical multi-attractedness does not constitute a virtue of its own, but can be seen as a trait found in a virtuous agent rather than the unvirtuous one.

5 Conclusion

The present paper explored the concept and theory of multi-attractedness in the context of virtue ethics from the perspectives of a) virtue and b) self-control. The outcome of the discussion is that multi-attractedness cannot be qualified as a virtue because it needs to be perfected by critical thinking. Therefore, all the choices that are required to make an act commensurable with Aristotle's criteria for virtue, are choices between critical and uncritical thinking. As a result, multi-attractedness is best viewed through Aristotle's notion of self-control. Critical thinking becomes a device of self-control, a way to manage the 'cross-draught of likings' so that the outcome is alike to the choice a virtuous agent would have made. The difference is consistent with Aristotle's view of the difference between a self-controlled agent and a virtuous agent; the virtuous agent acts with a harmony between his actions, reasoning, and feelings, whereas the self-controlled agent controls his feelings by his reasoning and guides his actions from his knowledge of the good. In consensus with the self-controlled agent, the multi-attracted agent is not virtuous, but better than the unvirtuous agent.

This discussion was a first step towards an ethical understanding of multi-attractedness. Hence, a plenty of important questions remain unaddressed. The connection to Aristotelian self-control which emerged as a result of the discussion, is in itself an open end, and further enquiries in this context have a potential to greatly enlighten how multi-attractedness works in a decision-making situation. In addition, one of the most important aspects of further studies is to clarify the relative role of mono-attractedness in defining the virtuousness of multi-attractedness. This aspect has the potential to significantly enhance the adaptation of multi-attractedness in an empirical research setting, one of the future goals for the theory. As virtue ethical concepts have progressively been used in research for the purpose of improving communication in the workplace (e.g. Mitchell et al. 2012), Lehtonen suggests (2016: 81) that involving those who are identified as multi-attracted could benefit decision-making in diverse organizations. The results of the present paper constitute one of the initial steps in the direction of understanding the implications of multi-attractedness.

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