

having concluded that Ralf murdered Smith. Holmes could remain curious because he is open-minded, which could stem from his attitude about truth overriding the operations of his certainty. Holmes, being open minded, could likely contribute to more good than harm in expending additional detective capital such as taking an extra phone call, conducting an extra interview, or contemplating any additional (previously unimagined) possibilities contrary to his original findings. Additionally, open-mindedness may be an implicit norm of his profession. Detectives may have a duty to be practical about closure and concluding a murder case by relying on evidence against Ralf that is beyond a shadow of doubt. Yet, their employer may grant them the discretion to leave the door open for the remote possibility of any new or contradictory evidence and suspects – albeit improbable. Note that even before Holmes becomes certain about Ralf, his open-mindedness can facilitate his curiosity by enabling Holmes to suspend his judgment and certainty by considering (have interest in) all evidence for or against any suspect, including Ralf. Thus, open-mindedness facilitates, and neither hinders the operation of uncertainty nor works to diminish Holmes interest in the course of his curious enquiry.

As noted in an earlier example, a Marine Biologist remains curious about life in ultra-deep ocean, despite being certain about all that was once the thinkable aspects of life in ultra-deep oceans because he is open-minded. A Marine Biologist remains curious because his curious attitude about pursuing truth could keep his imagination open to unimagined possibilities, which dominates and overrides his certainty about a particular life in ultra-deep oceans. Similar to the detective case, open-mindedness for the Marine Biologist keeps him interested, with his curiosity persisting.

To make the role of open-mindedness in curious inquiries more clear, some background and framing of this trait may be helpful. The quality of open-mindedness that makes it an intellectual virtue is widely covered in the current literature¹⁶. Some distinctive features of open-mindedness are generally relevant to situations involving intellectual conflict such as a person's belief on one hand and opposing argument and body of evidence on the other (Roberts, 2007). Nonetheless, open-mindedness can be manifested in situations void of intellectual dispute and can be present in intellectual activities other than rational evaluations (Baehr, 2011, p196).

Open-mindedness is closely related to virtues such as intellectual fairness, honesty, impartiality, empathy, patience, adaptability, creativity, and autonomy¹⁷. A curious agent understands the risk and disadvantages of being closed-minded, which could fuel his inclinations towards open-mindedness. An agent may have learned that being closed-minded would generally prevent a person to “conceive of or imagine certain otherwise inscrutable or unidentifiable possibilities or explanations in his enquiries” (p198)¹⁸. In this light, a truth-seeking agent who is generally biased against

closed-mindedness remains willing to expend some extra amount of epistemic and cognitive capital, despite the certainty about the object of his curiosity. An open-minded person does not ignore or distort new or opposing positions. “In the context of intellectual conflict or opposition, open-mindedness is an antidote to vices such as narrow mindedness, closed-mindedness, dogmatism, prejudice, and bias”(p195). While he may have many firm convictions, “his hold on them does not prevent him from giving serious consideration to the other side” (Roberts, 2007). In order for an agent to remain curious, “taking seriously an alternative cognitive standpoint” requires first the freedom or departure from chains of his own beliefs and cognitive conclusions. In each case that a person departs or detaches from a certain default or privileged cognitive standpoint, he or she moves beyond or transcends it (Baehr, 2011, p198).

An open-minded person is one who is able to, even if need be temporarily, loosen his grip on his belief or certainty that P in order to consider or take seriously the case for not-P, not due to some subjective or unconscious uncertainty about P, but due in part to desire for truth that transcends particular truths. Intuitively, it is this cognitive ‘moving beyond’ or transcending of the person's doxastic commitments, and a willingness to consider things from the other side, that makes the activity in question an instance of open-mindedness (pp. 198-199).

Open-mindedness is often a “facilitating virtue” that equips the curious agent to think outside the box not just about this P, but about all the P's that he has not yet imagined or met. It allows the curious dialog to keep going. By freeing the mind beyond the particulars of belief, or keeping it free from the binds of certainty, it creates psychological space, as it were, for other virtues and faculties to perform their respective functions. Also, note that the kinds of open-mindedness, in the context of curiosity, is about things that are genuine objects of interest or entail having something at stake that demands taking such a standpoint “seriously”: the real intention of being open-minded is “not just for show” but it requires giving that object of interest a fair, honest, and objective hearing (pp. 205-207).

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