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SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT IS A QUESTION-DIRECTED ATTITUDE*

Jane Friedman, New York University†

1 INTRODUCTION

At the centre of much of our contemporary epistemic theorizing is a collection of attitudes which have come to be known as the 'doxastic attitudes' — belief, knowledge, credence, and more. Epistemic rationality is (at least in part) the rationality of our doxastic attitudes, and epistemic norms are (at least in part) norms on our doxastic attitudes. These days we often distinguish between two different, but closely related, kinds of doxastic attitudes: coarse-grained and fine-grained. Subjective probabilities/credences are the archetypal fine-grained doxastic attitude. Your credence in p can be any real number between 0 and 1, so that there are ever-so-many (indeed, infinitely many) different credences you can have towards p. Belief (sometimes called 'full belief') is the archetypal coarse-grained doxastic attitude. With respect to p, your belief options are far more limited than your credence options: you can believe p or you can disbelieve p (believe $\neg p$). On this picture, rather than infinitely many doxastic options, you seem to have only two — either accept or reject, a 'yes' or a 'no'.

In fact though, this coarse-grained picture has come to be associated with at least one more doxastic option — suspending judgment. This third option — also called 'withholding belief' or 'being agnostic' — is a bit more mysterious than belief and disbelief, the 'yes' and the 'no'. Intuitively, we can think of it as the 'maybe' option, or the 'I don't know' or 'I can't say' option. It is this doxastic option, the attitude of suspended judgment, that is the focus of the present paper (and the debate of which it's a part). How

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†jane.friedman@nyu.edu

should we be thinking about this attitude?[1] I want to argue that suspended judgment is, in effect, a questioning attitude. I will spell this suggestion out in much detail in what's to come, and try to respond to some objections as well.

2 PROPOSITIONS & QUESTIONS

The doxastic attitudes, suspension of judgment included, are attitudes that have contents, they are about something. So far, in discussing the doxastic attitudes, I've been assuming that the relevant attitudes have a particular kind of content: propositional content. This is standard. Belief, credence, knowledge (etc.) are thought to be (by and large) propositional attitudes — they are thought to have propositions as their contents or objects. When we say that S knows p, 'p' is standing in for some 'that'-clause ('that it's raining', 'that apples grow on trees', 'that the bank is closed today', and so on) and those 'that'-clauses are typically assumed to refer to or pick out propositions (the proposition that it's raining, the proposition that apples grow on trees, and so on).

What are propositions? Philosophers largely agree that they are the contents of some of our attitudes and the meanings of some of our sentences. But after that, when it comes to their metaphysics, there is less agreement. One common thought is that they are abstract objects like sets and numbers, rather than concrete ones like trees and lightbulbs. For instance, many take them to be kinds of sets — sets of possible worlds, or ordered sets of objects and properties. Recently, it's been argued that doxastic attitudes can have other sorts of contents or objects as well, contents or objects that are not propositions. For instance, some have argued that what's known can be a person or thing rather than a proposition (e.g. Benton (2017), Grzankowski (2016), Duncan (2020)). I think suspension of judgment also falls into this non-propositional category. Suspension of judgment is a doxastic attitude, but it doesn't have a proposition as its content or object, instead it has a question. Suspension of judgment is a *question-directed attitude*.

What are questions? And what are question-directed attitudes? Questions are familiar enough. A question is the thing you ask when you say to your friend, 'Who will be at the party later?' or 'What time is the party

[1] Both McGrath and I are taking it for granted that suspension of judgment is an attitude. This is a fairly commonplace assumption at this point. One alternative is to try to flesh out suspension of suspension of judgment just in terms of a lack of belief. For some arguments against a view like that see Friedman (2013b).

at?' or 'Do I have to go to this party?'. Questions are the sorts of things you have to answer on a test. Questions are the sorts of things the wondering about which can keep you up at night or keep you entertained when you're bored, and the settling of which can bring a kind of closure or a feeling of accomplishment. Just as propositions are the contents of particular kinds of sentences (declarative sentences like, 'The dog is barking' or 'Mushrooms are a type of fungus'), questions are the contents of particular kinds of sentences (interrogative sentences like, 'What's that noise?' and 'Do mushrooms grow on trees?'). And just as propositions are the contents of some of our attitudes, questions are the contents of some of our attitudes. Or so I will argue.

3 ARGUMENTS FOR THE QUESTION DIRECTEDNESS OF SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT

I think suspension of judgment is a member of a family of attitudes that are question-directed. Other relatives include curiosity, wondering, and deliberating. For now, let's focus on suspension of judgment (although much of what I say in this section applies to those other attitudes as well). Here are a couple of reasons to think that suspension of judgment is a question-directed attitude.[2]

First, what I'll call the *Linguistic Argument*. If 'p' in 'Sam believes p' is replaced with a 'that'-clause, we end up with a well-formed English sentence, e.g. 'Sam believes that snow is white' or 'Sam believes that people are mostly good'. But if 'p' in 'Sam suspends judgment (in/about) p' is replaced with a 'that'-clause, we do not end up with a well-formed English sentence, e.g. 'Sam suspends judgment (in/about) that grass is green' or 'Sam suspends judgment (in/about) that there are more sunny days per year in New York than in Winnipeg'.

This sets suspension of judgment ascriptions apart from the typical sort of propositional attitude ascriptions which are straightforwardly made using declarative complements. Where p is some declarative complement, 'S believes p', 'S knows p', 'S hopes p', 'S thinks p', and so on, are all largely unproblematic ways of ascribing propositional attitudes to S. 'Suspend judgment' does not take declarative complements. So, suspension of judgment ascriptions are quite unlike our standard propositional attitude ascriptions.

We can, however, make suspended judgment ascriptions using interrog-

[2]These are largely drawn from Friedman (2013a).

ative complements — 'wh'-clauses like 'who invented the windshield wiper', 'whether grass is green', 'which of New York or Winnipeg is sunnier', and so on. Sam can suspend judgment about what colour snow is, suspend judgment about who is going to the party, suspend judgment about how many sunny days Winnipeg has in a typical year, suspend judgment about whether mushrooms grow on trees, and so on.[3] But interrogative complements typically pick out or refer to or express questions.[4]

So, suspension of judgment reports are not to be made using the sorts of complements we typically use to refer to propositions (declarative complements), and are to be made using the sorts of complements we typically use to refer to questions (interrogative complements). Linguistically then, suspended judgment reports don't look like our central propositional attitude reports. And the most natural suggestion, the one that can be read right off of our suspended judgment reports, is that they report that subjects have a particular kind of attitude towards a question. This argument is not decisive, but the fact that suspension of judgment ascriptions are naturally read as ascribing question-directed attitudes to subjects is certainly a reason to think that this is the kind of attitude being ascribed to those subjects. And thinking about alternative, plausible-seeming suggestions only bolsters the case that suspension of judgment is a question-directed attitude.

To see this, I want to explore at least one initially attractive route to understanding suspension of judgment reports as — despite appearances — propositional attitude reports. It starts by focusing on questions' close relative: answers. Questions have answers. And we can associate with each question a set of *possible* answers — these all count as answers, but they aren't all true. Take the question, 'Do mushrooms grow on trees?'. That question has two possible answers: mushrooms grow on trees, and mushrooms do not grow on trees. Those answers are propositions. Only one of those propositions is actually true. And for any possible world, at most one of those answers is true. This story generalizes. We can associate each ques-

[3]Another way we might ascribe suspension of judgment to a subject is by saying that they are agnostic. But again 'Sam is agnostic about whether it is sunnier in Winnipeg than in New York' is a fine attitude ascription, but 'Sam is agnostic (about) that it is sunnier in Winnipeg than in New York' is not. Agnosticism ascriptions, like suspension of judgment ascriptions, should be made using interrogative rather than declarative complements.

[4]Notice, some of these interrogative complements are 'indirect' — they do not have the standard interrogative 'subject-verb inversion'. In direct interrogative sentences the predicate verb comes before the subject, e.g. 'Is Sam home?' or 'What colour is snow?'. Indirect interrogative sentences, by contrast, do not involve this sort of inversion, maintaining the traditional declarative word order, e.g. 'whether grass is green', 'what colour snow is'.

tion with its *possible answer set* — the set of all possible answers to that question. If each of these possible answers is a proposition, this opens up a way of trying to insist that suspension of judgment is a propositional attitude after all, despite initial appearances. Here is the strategy. Even if the interrogative complement in a suspended judgment report picks out a question, that question has a possible answer set, and so perhaps it is the propositions in those sets that are the contents of our suspendings, rather than the questions themselves. For instance, perhaps Sam's suspending judgment about whether mushrooms grow on trees is a matter of his having an attitude towards a pair of propositions: mushrooms grow on trees, and mushrooms do not grow on trees.

Looking more carefully at this suggestion though helps to confirm that suspension of judgment is a question-directed attitude. Call this the *Argument from Conceptual Limitations*. 'Whether' questions (also known as 'yes/no' or 'polar' questions) can be straightforwardly associated with their possible answer sets. Those sets have just two possible answers — the 'yes' and the 'no' — both of which can be easily gleaned from the question itself. The question of whether φ has two possible answers: the proposition that φ and the proposition that $\neg\varphi$. But when it comes to the other sorts of questions, getting from a question to its answer set is trickier: all we can glean from the question is an answer schema or a function that could yield answers with the right sorts of inputs. This sort of thing isn't an answer set nor a member of an answer set but is something more like a partial recipe for getting to an answer set.

Here's what I mean. Take the question, 'What is the earth's core made of?'. We know that the possible answers to this question are all of the form 'The earth's core is made of x'. But this is just an answer schema and not an answer to the question (and it doesn't pick out or refer to a proposition). Every possible answer in the question's answer set will be a proposition that starts with that answer schema but replaces x with some type of substance or material, e.g. the earth's core is made of nickel, the earth's core is made of lead, the earth's core is made of bubble gum, the earth's core is made of corduroy, and so on.

This set of answers is obviously vast. No person could explicitly enumerate all of them. Moreover, many average subjects won't even have the concepts to think about or contemplate many of the answers in this set since they won't have all the relevant substance concepts. For instance, if I don't have the concept 'sulfur' then I cannot grasp or understand the proposition

that the earth's core is made of sulfur. But we can assume that one cannot have a doxastic attitude towards a proposition that one cannot grasp and does not understand. If suspending judgment about what the earth's core is made of were a matter of having a propositional attitude towards all the propositions in that question's possible answer set, then I (without the concept 'sulfur') could not suspend judgment about that question. Does anyone have all the concepts required to grasp all of the propositions in this question's possible answer set? Certainly most of us do not. But anyone who understands the question 'What is the earth's core made of?' can or is in a position to suspend judgment about that question. This includes subjects who can grasp or understand very few of that question's possible answers. This makes it hard to see how suspending judgment about a question could be a matter of having an attitude towards the possible answers to that question. Being able to understand a question is all it takes to be able to suspend judgment about that question. But being able to understand a question does not entail being able to understand all (or perhaps even any) of the possible answers to that question. Grasping answers can take significantly more conceptual sophistication than grasping the question itself.

Of course there are other ways of trying to defend the idea that suspension of judgment is a propositional attitude, or that it has some altogether different sort of content. I won't go through any further suggestions though.[5] At the end of the day, I think we should take suspended judgment ascriptions at face value. If we do that we should conclude that suspended judgment is a question-directed attitude.

4 IS SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT AN INTERROGATIVE ATTITUDE?

So far I am not sure that I've said anything about which McGrath disagrees. But now I want to distinguish question-directed attitudes from *interrogative attitudes*. To say that an attitude α is question directed is to say that α has a question as its content or object. To say that α is an interrogative attitude is to say that having α involves being in a state that is 'asking-like'. Given that interrogative attitudes are aligned with question asking in this way, for the purposes of this discussion we can assume that all interrogative attitudes are question-directed attitudes. But are all question-directed attitudes interrogative attitudes?

[5] See Friedman (2013a) for more.

To answer this I'll need to say more about the sense in which these interrogative attitudes are asking-like. When we ask someone a question we perform a particular kind of speech act. In the typical case we ask someone $\mathbb{q}$ (I will use these double-struck letters to denote questions) by uttering an interrogative sentence (usually with a particular kind of intonation) that expresses $\mathbb{q}$. Here are some properties we often or typically find in this sort of speech act. In performing a question asking we are trying to get an answer to $\mathbb{q}$ (from the person to whom we're directing our asking); we ask $\mathbb{q}$ because we want an answer to $\mathbb{q}$ or because we want to know the answer to $\mathbb{q}$; in asking $\mathbb{q}$ we have some aim or goal, e.g. getting the answer to $\mathbb{q}$; asking $\mathbb{q}$ is a way of expressing our ignorance about $\mathbb{q}$; and finally, while there are some situations in which it is appropriate to ask $\mathbb{q}$ while knowing full well what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is (e.g. I'm helping you practice for a test), these cases seem to be the exception, not the rule — we typically expect askers to be missing the information they are asking for, and so special circumstances aside, it is strange to ask someone $\mathbb{q}$ when you know what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is.[6]

Are any question-directed attitudes like this? Some are, but not all. For instance, compare two question-directed attitudes: grasping/understanding $\mathbb{q}$ on the one hand and wondering $\mathbb{q}$ on the other. Even if both are attitudes towards $\mathbb{q}$ (and I think they are), only one of them shares the sorts of properties of question asking just discussed. We can use a concrete example to help bring this out. Any will do since what I say here is fully general. But to fix ideas, let's say $\mathbb{q}$ = 'What time does the lecture start?'. Wondering what time the lecture starts typically involves things like wanting to know what time the lecture starts and trying to figure out what time it starts. Grasping the question, 'What time does the lecture start?' need involve none of that; it's just a matter of understanding the parts of that question and what it's asking for. When you're wondering what time the lecture starts, you typically have some aim or goal (e.g. figuring out what time it starts), and you typically have an interest in getting an answer to the question — you want to know what time it starts. None of this need be the case when you merely grasp the question of what time the lecture starts. You can fully understand the question, 'What time does the lecture start?' even if you do not care at all what time it starts and have no interest whatsoever in knowing what time it starts or figuring out what time it starts.

[6]Say I ask you $\mathbb{q}$, and when you answer I say, 'Yeah, I already knew that'. You could then reasonably be confused about why I asked you in the first place (you might respond: 'Why are you asking me, then?'). Or if I keep asking you $\mathbb{q}$ you could reasonably be annoyed, and retort, 'You already know this, I already told you'.

Further, there is something strange and even irrational about wondering what time the lecture starts while knowing that it starts at noon. If you know that the lecture starts at noon then why are you wondering what time it starts? This hardly makes sense and seems like a form of incoherence. But this is not at all the case when it comes to merely grasping the question. It seems perfectly reasonable to both fully understand the question of what time the lecture starts and know that it starts at noon. There is no incompatibility in being in both of those states of mind (and we might even think that anyone who knows the answer to what time the lecture starts also needs to understand the question of what time it starts). Finally, wondering about what time the lecture starts is typically an expression of (felt) ignorance about what time it starts. Central to why you are wondering in the first place is that you take yourself to not know what time the lecture starts (and also you want to know). But grasping or understanding the question of what time the lecture starts need involve no ignorance about what time it starts, felt or otherwise.

In general then, wondering $\mathbb{q}$ and asking $\mathbb{q}$ share a number of key properties. These properties make wondering $\mathbb{q}$ seem like question asking in some important ways. Understanding $\mathbb{q}$ is not like question asking in these ways. And so if a mark of an interrogative attitude is that it is both question-directed and asking-like, then it does seem as though only some question-directed attitudes are going to also be interrogative attitudes. Some, but not all, question-directed attitudes themselves involve a sort of questioning stance, they involve something like being in a questioning or asking state of mind. Where does suspension of judgment fit? Is suspension of judgment asking-like in the relevant ways? Is it an interrogative attitude? Well, it is not appropriate to suspend judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ while knowing what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is. In fact, that seems like a fairly profound form of incoherence. In addition, suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ is a way of expressing one's ignorance about $\mathbb{q}$ (or better: being ignorant about $\mathbb{q}$).

In these ways, suspending judgment looks more like wondering than like grasping or understanding; it looks like an interrogative attitude. But does suspension of judgment, like asking and wondering, involve something like a desire to get an answer to one's focal question? In suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ do we have the aim of or an interest in resolving $\mathbb{q}$? If suspension of judgment is inquisitive in ways similar to wondering, then it is intricately bound up with not just a kind of neutrality about a question, but with a pull to answering the question. Is that the right way to think about suspension

of judgment?

In my experience it is this aspect of the interrogative account of suspension of judgement that elicits the strongest objections. And so I want to argue for the view by tackling some of those head-on.[7] I will focus on McGrath's central concerns, but speak to some others as well. I do think suspension of judgment is inquisitive in this way and that most of the main objections to the view can be dismissed.

5 NON-INQUISITIVE SUSPENDING?

Is suspension of judgment about ?q asking-like or inquisitive in the sense at issue now, involving (roughly) an interest in answering ?q. McGrath worries that it is not. He says,

> You might suspend judgment while also suspending inquiry and so lack the inquiring attitude. For instance, you might think that in your current epistemic situation further inquiry will only lead you around in circles on the issue at hand – perhaps your current evidence is just too complicated and messy. Consistent with this, you might think there's a chance that better evidence will come out next year and so plan to take up the issue again then. You'd be suspending judgment without inquiring. (cite)

The claim that suspension of judgment is an interrogative attitude, that it, like curiosity and wondering, involves an inquisitive orientation, does not entail and should not be confused with the claim that in suspending judgment about ?q you are actively inquiring into ?q. Having an interrogative attitude towards ?q need not involve taking any sort of action or engaging in any sort of activity — mental or physical — aimed at resolving ?q.

Although I've been using wondering as my representative interrogative attitude, it isn't the best interrogative attitude with which to compare suspension of judgment. This is because wondering is more of an activity than a state. Suspension of judgment is a state. But some interrogative attitudes are also states, and curiosity in particular makes for a helpful comparison to suspension of judgment. Curiosity is a state. It's an interrogative one though: linguistically, curiosity ascriptions share the properties of other ascriptions of question-directed attitudes discussed in section 3, and curiosity itself shares the central interrogative properties of wondering discussed in

[7] For some other ways of arguing for the view, see Friedman (2017).

section 4, e.g. subjects curious about ?q are often described as wanting to know ?q, it's strange to be curious about ?q if you already know ?q, and so on.

In thinking about suspension of judgment as an interrogative attitude, curiosity is an excellent model. Curiosity about ?q is a state of mind with ?q as its content or object. That state can certainly prompt a subject to actively investigate ?q at some point, given their other beliefs, desires, preferences, and more. But it need not. A subject who maintains a life-long curiosity about ?q but never does anything to resolve or answer that question is a perfectly possible subject (and may even be a perfectly rational one). In general: that one is curious about ?q at a time does not mean that one is actively investigating ?q at that time.

That curiosity is a good model for suspension of judgment is not to say that one of those attitudes entails the other, but just that we do well to look to the functional profile of someone curious about ?q to get a sense of how I'm thinking of what a subject who is suspending judgment will do (inquiry-wise and in general). Given this, I think McGrath slightly misses the mark in the passage above. Suspending inquiry into ?q is perfectly compatible with maintaining interrogative attitudes towards ?q. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of questions we are (say) curious about at a given time are ones we are not actively investigating at that time. McGrath though, pushes this objection further. He says,

> Suppose it matters that you get things right. Perhaps the judgment is about whether someone is to be fired from a job. You might suspend judgment till the new evidence comes in while also resolving not to take up the question at all in the meantime – not even wondering about it. Here you might of course still be curious. But one wonders if even curiosity isn't required for suspending. Suppose I'm suspending my judgment till I get better evidence next week. Suppose I'm concerned that I'll give in to temptation to judge based on my current rather meager evidence. I don't want to do that. Lastly, suppose I could make myself incurious about the matter. If I do so – knowing that when the evidence does come in I'll be curious once again does this mean I'm not suspending judgment? I don't think so. Perhaps becoming incurious can be, in certain cases, an effective way to hold off from making a judgment until the right time. Is there an inquisitive attitude a suspender must have? I'm skeptical. (cite)

Again, some of what McGrath says here isn't quite on point. The claim

that suspension of judgment is an interrogative attitude does not mean that in order to count as suspending judgment about ?q one must have some other interrogative attitude towards ?q, over and above suspension of judgment. The claim is that suspension of judgment is itself interrogative. So of course it says that whenever one suspends judgment about ?q one has at least one interrogative attitude towards ?q — the interrogative attitude of suspending judgment about ?q.[8] Putting this aside though I think there is a more general sort of concern at the heart of McGrath's discussion here.

Even if suspending judgment doesn't require having some other interrogative attitude, the claim that it is itself an interrogative attitude does mean that there is no case in which a subject suspends judgment about ?q without having an interrogative attitude towards ?q. And this means that suspending judgment about ?q comes along with the sort of inquisitive pull I described. Suspending judgment about ?q always involves something like an interest in resolving ?q. So a general objection now is: Aren't there cases in which subjects suspend judgment about ?q but have absolutely no interest in resolving ?q?

McGrath gives us an interesting version of this objection in the passage above. Take a case in which the matter of ?q is very important to you and you really want to resolve it, but right now you're not in a position to. But while you don't have sufficient evidence to justify settling the question one way or another right now, you know more evidence is coming later. Let's also say that you know this about yourself: if you remain in this state of interest about ?q then you are more likely to pre-judge the issue and settle on an answer before the new evidence comes in; you're more likely to make a mistake. So if you really care about getting things right on the matter of ?q, you should lose all interest in resolving ?q. If there's some way you can manage to do that, McGrath says (or we can read him as saying) that we will end up with a case in which you're suspending judgment about ?q but lack any interest in ?q or in resolving ?q. Let's call this a (putative) case of *non-inquisitive suspension of judgment.*

If suspension of judgment is an interrogative attitude then there are no cases of non-inquisitive suspension of judgment. If McGrath's case and others like it are going to be counterexamples to my interrogative account

[8]Carruthers (2018) argues that questioning attitudes are foundational components of human (and animal) minds. He wonders, though, whether there is in fact a plurality of question-directed attitudes or just one basic sort that can take different forms. Although I am taking our folk-psychological attitude kinds at face value, I don't think my view is ultimately incompatible with either approach.

in this way then they will need to have two properties. First, they will need to be cases in which subjects are suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$, and second, they will need to be cases in which subjects have no interest in what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is. I don't believe McGrath's case has both properties, and I think we have good reason to expect it to be difficult to find a clear case with both properties.

Why? First, as McGrath and I agree, suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ is not a matter of not believing any answer to $\mathbb{q}$, rather it's a matter of taking up an attitude towards $\mathbb{q}$. There are ever so many questions whose answers we neither believe nor disbelieve, but we're not suspending judgment about all of those questions. This means there are at least two importantly different ways of being neutral about what the answer to a question is: we can suspend judgment about the question, but we can also just not believe any answer to that question. Let's call this latter neutral state, the *null state* with respect to a question. A subject in the null state with respect to $\mathbb{q}$ does not believe any of $\mathbb{q}$'s answers, but is also not suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$.

If we take this distinction back to McGrath's case, should we say that after wiping away all interest in $\mathbb{q}$ you're still suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$? Or are you back in the null state with respect to $\mathbb{q}$? I don't think that simply consulting our intuitions can get us a verdict here. In general, suspension of judgment is not a sufficiently familiar part of our pre-theoretic folk-psychology to make it intuitively clear that you are suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ in this case (or that you're in the null state with respect to $\mathbb{q}$).

Moreover, I think there is a case to be made that subjects like McGrath's — subjects who really do not care one way or another (either intrinsically or instrumentally) about what the answer to some question is — are not suspending judgment. Suspending about $\mathbb{q}$ requires us to keep $\mathbb{q}$ in mind in a particular way, whereas the null state requires nothing of us. But why would a subject want to maintain an attitude towards a question — a non-trivial cognitive burden — if they had absolutely no interest in that question, and did not care at all about what the answer to that question was? Sometimes we want or need to keep track of gaps in our knowledge or other kinds of epistemic lack. But if we want to keep track of things we don't know, we can do that directly, e.g. with beliefs about what we don't know. And sometimes we are faced with questions we do not want to think about or care at all to answer, and so we turn away from those questions. In these cases we may decide not to deliberate and to make no judgment about what the answers to those questions are. But those decisions do not

on their own make it that we've adopted some attitude towards the relevant questions going forward; they are perfectly compatible with dropping those questions entirely. In taking on an attitude towards $\mathbb{q}$ we are opting to keep $\mathbb{q}$ in mind. But it is difficult to see why a subject would keep $\mathbb{q}$ in mind if they had no interest in $\mathbb{q}$/the answer to $\mathbb{q}$.

So we have reason — stemming just from the implications of suspension of judgment being an attitude — to think that subjects who really don't care at all about the matter of $\mathbb{q}$ (or how to answer $\mathbb{q}$ or what the truth about $\mathbb{q}$ is) are not suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$. And subjects who can be described as caring about $\mathbb{q}$ in these ways, even minimally? The interrogative account of suspension of judgment is entirely compatible with these sorts of subjects suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$. So long as the relevant subject can be described as caring about what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is or having even a mild interest in $\mathbb{q}$ or in what $\mathbb{q}$'s answer is, that subject can also count as suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$ on my view. In this way, the interrogative account of suspension of judgment is quite flexible and, I think, can accommodate the range of intuitive cases of suspension of judgment.

What of McGrath's case then? One thing I want to point out is that it begins as a story about someone who cares very much about what the answer to some question is. So much, in fact, that we're to imagine that they'll jump the gun if they keep wondering about the question. We're to imagine that for their own epistemic safety they should put the question aside. Then comes the putting aside. We're assuming that this subject is suspending judgment before the putting aside. But what about after? Well, it depends what happens during this 'putting aside' of the question.

McGrath describes this putting aside as follows: 'suppose I could make myself incurious about the matter' (cite). Whatever is happening here it is not a regular psychological process, but some other sort of undertaking. The subject has to somehow 'make themselves' incurious (and it's not clear how). This is worth bringing out because genuine interest in a question is not something we can just switch off at will, and the fact that this subject is genuinely interested in the question at hand is (I submit) part of what makes it plausible that they are initially suspending judgment. But imagine a genie came and granted this subject their wish of wiping away any interest in resolving the relevant question. In that case I am happy to say that this subject has been returned to the null state with respect to their question and is not suspending judgment.

Moreover, it seems to me that when this subject asks the genie to make

it that they are no longer concerned with answering the relevant question, they should be hoping to be returned to the null state. If this subject is trying to guarantee that they won't think about the question at all until the new evidence comes in, then why would they want to make sure they retain an attitude towards the question? That does not seem like a way of opting not to think about the question any further. Quite the reverse, in fact. But I want to also make clear that if this subject's disengagement with the question is less dramatic than the disengagement I just described, if we are meant to imagine them maintaining some interest in the relevant question post-turning away, then there is nothing in the interrogative account that says that this subject could not be suspending judgment. In general, I think if we genuinely flesh out a hypothetical subject with no interest at all in some question, then it will also be plausible that this subject is not suspending judgment about that question.

6 SUSPENSION OF JUDGMENT & INQUIRY

In Friedman (2017) I argued not only that suspension of judgment is an interrogative attitude, but that it occupies a special place amongst the interrogative attitudes. There I argued that suspension of judgment is the (or at least an) interrogative attitude that we have when we have any other interrogative attitude. If you are wondering about $\mathbb{q}$ or curious about $\mathbb{q}$ or deliberating about $\mathbb{q}$ (etc.), then you are also suspending judgment about $\mathbb{q}$.[9] This claim about the relationship between suspension of judgment and the interrogative attitudes is independent of the one I focused on in the previous section. From the fact that suspension of judgment is an interrogative attitude, it does not follow that it is entailed by every interrogative attitude. And from the fact that suspension of judgment is entailed by every interrogative attitude, it does not follow that it is itself an interrogative attitude.

[9] Quick (proto)-argument for this claim. We want some explanation of the incoherence in having an interrogative attitude towards $\mathbb{q}$ while knowing what the answer to $\mathbb{q}$ is. What's wrong with that combination of attitudes? Here's a tidy explanation. The interrogative attitudes all entail suspension of judgment. If that's right then the incoherence that's involved in having an interrogative attitude towards a question while knowing the answer to that question is just that of familiar doxastic inconsistency. If you're curious about whether it's raining out right now but you know that it's not (say you're staring out the window seeing a beautiful sunny day), you seem to be in an incoherent state. And now we can understand what is so bad about it: it's a state in which you believe (and know) that it is not raining out, while suspending judgment about whether it's raining out. This is much like a case in which you have a set of inconsistent beliefs (e.g. you believe that it's raining out and you believe that it's not raining out).

That said, I do want to endorse both claims.

Given the close relationship between the interrogative attitudes and inquiry, the picture that then emerges is one according to which suspension of judgment is intimately bound up with inquiry. It is an attitude we have as we inquire. This picks up on a central thread in discussions of suspension of judgment in the history of philosophy. Sextus Empiricus described the Pyrrhonian skeptic — the archetypal suspender — as the true (and perhaps perpetual) inquirer, and Descartes' first step in his famous inquiry into the foundations of all of our knowledge was to suspend judgment.[10] On my account, inquiry is baked right into suspension of judgment and suspension of judgment is baked right into inquiry. We've already seen some of McGrath's worries about the first sort of baking. But he worries about the second as well. He says,

> Suppose I start thinking about a question for the first time. Suddenly I faint, which terminates my considering the proposition, precluding the possibility that I arrive at a judgment on the matter. Intuitively, I didn't suspend judgment; I didn't get far enough to suspend. Compare this with a case in which I consider it, conclude I just don't have good evidence, and decide to return to the matter after gathering some more evidence, waiting to make up my mind on the matter. I do suspend in that case. (cite)

Unfortunately for me, as McGrath correctly points out, this sort of argument appears in a paper of mine (Friedman (2013b)) and seems to be at odds with the claim that all interrogative attitudes entail suspension of judgment. In the sorts of cases at issue, a subject starts wondering about $?q$ but then they are interrupted. They stop wondering, but not because they have reached any natural stopping point — an answer, frustration over the question, etc. — but because something pulls their attention away from their wondering. McGrath's thought (and my earlier self's thought) is that this sort of subject hasn't had the chance to suspend judgment. This conclusion does not sit well with the claim that all interrogative attitudes entail suspension of judgment since that claim entails that once a subject starts wondering about $?q$ they are also suspending judgment about $?q$. So something has to give.

[10] See Sextus Empiricus (2000), Descartes (1996).

On this front, I think my past self should defer to my current self. Any subject wondering about ⁇ at t is suspending judgment about ⁇ at t. I still think the sorts of 'interruption' cases just described have some intuitive appeal, but I now think the conclusions I drew from them, and that McGrath is drawing from them, can't be right. In concluding that this interrupted subject is not suspending judgment we seem to be endorsing (or at least moving towards) a view according to which suspension of judgment about ⁇ does or should come at the end of inquiry into ⁇ — it is or ought to be the product of such an inquiry. But this is not right. There is nothing at all unusual or normatively inappropriate about inquiring into ⁇ while in a state of suspended judgment about ⁇. These two are natural bedfellows. This sort of harmony between inquiring and suspending judgment means that we should not be thinking of suspension of judgment as the output of inquiry or an attitude we come to have only once our inquiry has ended.

Where I agree with McGrath (and where I now think the intuitive force of interruption cases lies) is that we typically suspend judgment only after some period of reflection on a question. Unlike McGrath though I think this is a 'pre-inquiry' stage of question reflection, and so comes before we start wondering.[11] In this (typically brief) stage of reflection, we try to understand a question and scan memory for the answer. After this, if no answer to the question is found in memory, we may 'decide' to try to figure out what the answer is. This is a key investigative inflection point. It's the point at which we decide to open a question in thought and make it an object of curiosity and (at least potential) investigation. I also think it's the point at which we suspend judgment about a question. Part of what it is to open a question in thought in this way is to suspend judgment about it.

So suspension of judgment typically comes on the heels of a pre-inquiry stage of question reflection. And there is good reason for this. Part of what happens during this stage of question reflection is the recognition that we do not have the answer to the question in memory, that we don't (already) know the answer.[12] But these are exactly the sorts of epistemic circumstances in which suspension of judgment is appropriate. Suspending judgment about ⁇ is a way of registering this sort of epistemic lack with respect to ⁇ and

[11] I am assuming that wondering about questions and considering questions (which is roughly the language McGrath uses) are ways of inquiring into questions. I take it that McGrath is assuming this as well.

[12] Loewenstein (1994) argues that curiosity emerges from the perception of an information or knowledge gap. This view has been influential in the literature on curiosity in psychology and cognitive science.

putting ℚ onto an epistemic to-do list (or better: to-answer list). Part of what makes this key investigative inflection point a plausible candidate for the point at which a subject suspends judgment is that this inflection is in part a response to the recognition of a critical epistemic gap.

McGrath locates suspension of judgment at a recognizable moment in inquiry — a moment at which we feel our investigation is at a sort of epistemic dead end. We just cannot figure out what the answer to some question is and so we throw up our hands, giving up, at least for now. I locate it at a different moment — the moment at which a question becomes a genuine object of curiosity and investigation, the moment at which we open a question in thought and take up an inquisitive stance towards the question. There are several reasons I prefer my account to McGrath's.[13] Beyond what I've already said in its defence here, to my mind one of its main virtues is theoretical: the account makes clear why suspension of judgment should be playing the central role in epistemology that it is. To say that suspension of judgment is baked right into inquiry and the interrogative attitudes is not (just) to say that those attitudes always come along with suspension of judgment, as a companion or little brother, but to say that all interrogative attitudes are, in a way, modes of suspending judgment. Part of what it is to take up an inquisitive stance towards a question is to suspend judgment about that question. Suspension of judgment is not born in epistemic frustration, rather it's at the very core of one of our most basic epistemic desires — our desire to know more.

[13] For my views on this matter in more detail see Friedman (2017).

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