0 INTRODUCTION

We are inquirers. Not just qua philosophers but qua humans and even qua animals. We are subjects in pursuit of knowledge, from the mundane to the extraordinary and everything in between. We want to know where our keys are, who will win the next election, when life began, and more.

How should we conduct ourselves in inquiry? Which norms should we conform to as we inquire? Let’s call norms of inquiry ‘zetetic’ norms. What’s the relationship between zetetic norms and epistemic norms? Here’s a plausible thought: those sets of norms are identical. And even if you find that thought too strong (although I don’t) this weaker one might still seem right: epistemic norms are zetetic norms; the norms of epistemology are norms of inquiry. Aren’t they?

While I’m partial to the stronger identity claim, in this paper I’m going to make some trouble for both the stronger and weaker claims. In fact though, a lot of the focus in what’s to come will be on a claim much more specific than either of those general claims about epistemology and inquiry. That focal claim will be that our familiar contemporary epistemic norms, the ones epistemologists write and talk about these days, that those norms are norms of inquiry. I’m going to argue that some of those familiar epistemic norms are in tension with and even conflict with some central zetetic norms.

I’m going to say more about how we might think of the general relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic as we go. Whatever we ultimately settle on there, at least the following seems to be true: we want to be the best inquirers we can be. And we also want to be the best epistemic subjects we can be. These two desires strike me as very closely connected. But if there’s tension or even conflict
between the epistemic and the zetetic, how are we to proceed in attempting to satisfy these twin desires?

Before we get to those aspects of the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic that really worry me, I want to do a bit to warm the reader up to some other ways that the epistemic and the zetetic might collide. I think it's not hard, for example, to imagine cases in which resolving an inquiry demands one make a false or unjustified judgment. Say the detective wants to figure out who committed some murder, but knows they'll be too distracted to succeed if they believe that their partner was stealing money from the boss. All the evidence says the partner is crooked. Nonetheless, plausibly, believing that the partner is not stealing is the thing to do if the detective wants to figure out who committed the murder. Or say you want to know whether you can believe something completely unreasonable. One way to resolve your inquiry in this case then is to make (or at least try to make) a completely unreasonable judgment. Inquiry can also demand that we resist the demands of epistemology. For instance, all the evidence suggests you won't solve the mind-body problem, but if that's what you're working on then plausibly your inquiry demands you not believe that you're likely to fail.

I think these are all interesting cases; we'd obviously need to do more work to really make them stick. It's not surprising that these sorts of tensions emerge. For instance, it's no surprise that what we believe about our co-workers or our own chances of success can impact how well we perform our jobs. It turns out that this can make for friction between the epistemic and the zetetic at times. And it looks as though we can get some tension in some other strange sorts of cases as well.

But I don't think we need to look to strange cases like these to see the tension between the epistemic and the zetetic. And we don't need to think about what we should believe about how we're going to fare in inquiry. I think that we can find some much more straightforward and commonplace tensions between the epistemic and the zetetic. My plan in this paper is to look to completely typical sorts of inquirers in completely typical sorts of situations. My thought is that in these types of cases our familiar epistemic norms are going to regularly not just come apart from but be in tension with what I'll argue are some central zetetic norms. We don't need fanciful cases to get there, everyday cases of inquiry will do.

This paper is about the norms of inquiry. But it's also centrally about contemporary normative epistemology. My claim here is not at all that there is no way of thinking about “the epistemic” that keeps it in close harmony with the zetetic;
in fact I think there are many such ways. What I do want to say though is that epistemology as we know it, as it is currently done, doesn't seem to be leaving as much room as we might like for central norms of inquiry.

To draw this all out I want to start by picking out what seems to me a key zetetic norm. With that (and a close relative) in place, I'll be able to draw out the tension between some central norms of inquiry and some of our familiar epistemic norms.

1 A KEY ZETETIC NORM

Let's say that \( Z \) is the set of zetetic norms, all of them. And let's say that \( E \) is the set of our familiar contemporary epistemic norms. One of the goals of this paper is to say more about the relationship between these two sets. To do that I want to start by arguing for a couple of somewhat unfamiliar norms of inquiry. I think these will have to be central zetetic norms, but they are not the sorts of norms on which contemporary epistemologists have focused. Getting these norms out then already gives us some insight into the relationship between \( Z \) and \( E \): they are not identical.

The claim that some of the norms of inquiry are not central to contemporary epistemic theorizing should not be confused with the more general claim that some of the norms of inquiry are not epistemic. Let's say that \( E^* \) is the set of all epistemic norms – if some norm is epistemic, then it's in \( E^* \). On the quite plausible assumption that \( E \) is merely a proper subset of \( E^* \), the claim that at least some elements of \( Z \) are not elements of \( E \) does not imply that \( Z \) and \( E^* \) are not identical. The identity of \( Z \) and \( E^* \) would mean that all zetetic norms, all norms of inquiry, are epistemic, and all epistemic norms are also norms of inquiry. I'll say more about this possibility in the next section. For now though I want to focus on what I will argue are some central norms in \( Z \) so that we can think about how \( Z \) interacts with \( E \).

I want to start by drawing out what I think will have to be a key zetetic norm. We can give voice to this important zetetic norm via the following commonplace thoughts:

(i) Inquiry is a goal-directed activity: in inquiring we are in pursuit of an epistemic end like true belief or knowledge or understanding.

(ii) Goal-directed activities are bound by instrumental norms. Roughly, a subject
pursuing some end ought, other things equal, take the best means to that end.\(^2\)

From these two thoughts we get the further one that inquiries are bound by an instrumental norm. Let me make a couple of comments about (i) before articulating the specific instrumental norm of inquiry that will be a focus in the discussion to come. (i) says simply that in inquiring we are in pursuit of a goal or we aim to achieve something. Most every treatment of inquiry takes this sort of tack: inquiry has an aim where that aim is to get into some sort of doxastic or epistemic state appropriately related to the topic of inquiry. There is some debate about exactly what the aim or goal of inquiry is and I’ve listed a few options in (i). In what’s to come I’m going to take a stand on these issues. I think much of what I argue in this paper could be re-cast were I to think of the end differently, but fixing these things in one way now will help keep the discussion simpler.

In the discussion to come I’ll assume that the end of inquiry is knowledge: in inquiry we aim to come to know something. And I’ll also assume that what we aim to know is the answer to a question. In inquiry we ask and try to answer questions. So we can think of inquiry as focused on a question \( Q \) – where are my keys, who went to the party, where can I buy an Italian newspaper – and the aim of inquiry as knowing \( Q \). For our purposes one knows \( Q \) just in case one knows \( p \) where \( p \) is the complete true answer to \( Q \). In inquiry we aim to come to know the answers to questions. Or another way to say this: in inquiry we aim to resolve questions (where resolving is a matter of coming to know the answer).

(ii) just says that there is a type of norm that governs all goal-directed activities: an instrumental norm that says broadly that a subject in pursuit of an end ought to act in ways that will help them achieve that end. What should this instrumental norm of inquiry look like? Here is my suggestion:

**Zetetic Instrumental Principle (ZIP)** If one is inquiring into \( Q \) at \( t \) and actively focused on resolving \( Q \) at \( t \), then, other things equal, one ought to take the best means available to resolving \( Q \) at \( t \).

Let me make a few comments about ZIP. First, it demands that inquirers optimize with respect to the means they take in pursuit of the knowledge they’re after: they shouldn’t merely take some available means, but they should take the best of

\(^2\)Or a means as good as any other. I’m going to mostly talk about the “best” means here although I’m happy to allow for ties.
the available means. I think this is the right way to think about the normative demands that are central to goal pursuit generally. But I want to point out quickly — and I’ll comment on this again later — that the arguments to come don’t require this demand to optimize. The arguments I make are tidiest with the demand in place, but versions go through even with milder demands, e.g., a demand to satisfice with respect to the means one takes in inquiry or even a very weak demand to take some means (rather than a non-means).

Second, ZIP says that one ought to take the best (available) means to resolving rather than that one ought to take what one thinks is the best means or has reason to think is the best means. Some might prefer a more “subjectivist” ZIP I don’t, but I don’t think that the decision matters for what’s to come. Again, I’ll point this out later on.

Third, a “wide-scope” ZIP says roughly that one ought to either take the best means to resolving $Q^?$ at $t$ or not be actively investigating $Q^?$ at $t$, while a “narrow-scope” ZIP says that one ought to take the best means to resolving $Q^?$ (when one is actively investigating). In this latter case, but not the former, we can say flat-out that an inquirer ought to do something (if they’re inquiring). There is some debate about whether we should think of the ‘ought’ in instrumental norms like ZIP as taking wide or narrow scope.\textsuperscript{3} For now I’m going to assume ZIP is a narrow-scope norm and I’ll revisit the issue near the end of the paper.

Fourth, one might worry about ZIP in cases in which subjects have no reason at all to pursue some epistemic end — and this worry becomes acute, I think, with a narrow scope ZIP. For instance, if I have a various morbid, immoral or even just plain boring fascinations, is it really the case that I ought to take the best means to figuring out the relevant details? Considerations like this have led some to worry about whether we could have any reason at all (never mind a requirement) to take even the necessary means to ends we have no reason to pursue.\textsuperscript{4} I feel the force of the concerns here. In response, one might suggest a modification to ZIP: that one ought to take the best means to one’s ends in inquiry just in case one ought to be inquiring (or perhaps just in case one has good reason to be inquiring, etc.). For the purposes of this discussion I am going to leave ZIP unmodified. This is merely for

\textsuperscript{3}See Way (2010) for a good overview of the debate in the practical case.

\textsuperscript{4}See, for example, Raz (2005) for a defence of the thought that one has reason to take a necessary means to one’s end only if one has reason to pursue the end in the first place. I take it that the spirit of his argument could be run for the claim that we ought to take the means to these sorts of ends as well.
expository ease though. Nothing in the argument to come relies on cases in which we have no reason to inquire. So even if we modified ZIP in the relevant ways, the sorts of tensions I discuss in what follows will still emerge.\(^5\)

Finally, let me say something about ‘actively focused’. I take it that we can engage in long-term inquiries and during those long-term inquiries there will be periods of time during which we are engaged in other activities and without any irrationality. The detective might inquire into who committed the crime over months, but they surely will not be working to resolve their focal question during every minute of every day during those months. When they’re not actively working on the question it still seems right to say that their inquiry is ongoing and for them to report that they’re currently inquiring into who committed the crime. But it’s also perfectly permissible during this extended period of time for the detective to not take the best means to resolving the question of who committed the crime whenever they act. This is to say that it’s not quite right that one should take the best available means to resolving \(Q^2\) at any time during which one is inquiring into \(Q^2\). It is only when \(Q^2\) is an object of active investigation – when one is actively working on resolving \(Q^2\) – that one ought to (other things equal) take the best available means to resolving \(Q^2\).

To really get at the tension between the epistemic and the zetetic, I want to think about another, closely-related zetetic norm as well.

ZIP demands that we perform certain actions in certain circumstances. I take it that those can be bodily or mental actions. That is, the norms of inquiry might demand we pick something up and examine it, but they can also demand that once we examine it we make certain kinds of judgments and draw certain inferences from the beliefs that result from those judgments. Quick note: I’m assuming here and throughout that there is nothing more or less to judging than coming to believe. The word ‘judgment’ is sometimes used to pick out something more robust than a mere coming to believe, but I’m using it in just that thin sense here.

Let’s call a judgment that resolves a question a ‘resolving judgment’. In making a resolving judgment an inquirer comes to know the answer to their question. I think we should say that if someone actively inquiring into \(Q^2\) at \(t\) is in a position to make a resolving judgment with respect to \(Q^2\) at \(t\) then that’s the available action

\(^5\)This raises very interesting and important questions about the shape of reasons and requirements to inquire in the first place. I am not going to be able to get to these in this paper, but of course those sorts of norms will be in \(Z\) as well. My focus on ZIP in this paper is not intended to indicate that \(Z\) is limited to these sorts of instrumental norms.
that is the best means to their end of resolving $Q^t$ at $t$. Given ZIP this means that when an inquirer is in a position to resolve their inquiry, that’s the thing they ought to do. And so we have the following zetetic norm:

**Resolve! (RES)** If one is actively focused on resolving $Q^t$ at $t$, then if a judgment $j$ that resolves $Q^t$ at $t$ is an available judgment at $t$, then (other things equal) one ought to make $j$ at $t$.

RES says that if you’re actively investigating and are in a position to close your inquiry you ought to close. To get a grip on RES at work let’s imagine you’re inquiring into how many stripes the average zebra has ($Z^t$). Say you do a Google search about zebra stripes, and as a result the answer to $Z^t$ is on the screen with the other search results. RES says that you ought to come to know $Z^t$ at this point in your inquiry. Of course there are other things you could do at that time instead of coming to know $Z^t$: you could make some other judgments instead, e.g., about the colours of the results, or you could get up and walk away making no judgment. RES tells you that you should resolve, and so given RES you shouldn’t do these other things instead.\(^6\)\(^7\)

Or to take another example, say you want to know whether your neighbours’ kids are home ($H^t$), say you want to know if they want to play with your kids. You know that if your neighbours are home then their kids are home. You ring your neighbours’ bell and they answer. You come to know that your neighbours are home. Given what else you know, you’re now in a position to come to know (by inference) that their kids are home. RES says that at that time you ought to draw that inference and make that judgment – you ought to come to know $H^t$.

If we ought to take the best available means to our ends in inquiry (i.e., if ZIP is true), then if resolving judgments – when available – are the best available means to our ends in inquiry, then we ought to resolve when we’re in a position to. ZIP

\(^6\)The ‘instead’ here is important. Perhaps you can come to know $Z$ and something about the colour of the results at the same time. I take it that RES doesn’t mind if you do that. RES says that whatever else you do at the time you ought to come to know $Z^t$. It’s not coming to know $Z^t$ and so doing things instead of that that RES prohibits.

\(^7\)Here and throughout I assume that ‘ought’ and ‘permit’ are duals, i.e., one ought to $\varphi$ iff one is not permitted to not $\varphi$. This assumption is fairly widely made although not entirely uncontroversial. I don’t think too much hangs on the assumption though. Although I’m starting with zetetic requirement norms and inferring various prohibitions from them, I could have simply started with the zetetic prohibitions (e.g., don’t fail to resolve!) which, although slightly less straightforward, don’t seem less plausible to me. For ease of exposition I’ll sometimes say things like, ‘$Z$ ZIP RES prohibits $\varphi$-ing’. Strictly speaking it’s $Z$ ZIP RES plus this duality assumption getting us to the relevant prohibitions.
plus the claim that when available resolving judgments are the best available means to our ends in inquiry gets us to RES. I haven’t said much in defence of the thought that resolving judgments are the best means to our ends, but I take it that I don’t need to.

With ZIP and RES in Z, we are now a bit clearer on what some of the elements of Z are (and on why Z and E are not identical). In the next section I want to think more about how Z fits into contemporary epistemology given that ZIP and RES are elements of Z, and bring out some tensions between Z and contemporary epistemic norms.

I want to answer two questions before the close of this section though. First, are the norms in Z we’ve been thinking about, i.e., ZIP and RES, “practical” norms? In one sense they are obviously practical – they tell subjects what to do. Are they practical in some other sense though, one that’s in contrast to their being epistemic, for instance? As I said, I’ll say more later on the question of whether zetetic norms are epistemic, but it’s worth pointing out already that the mere fact that ZIP is an instrumental norm doesn’t settle whether it is practical or epistemic or something else. There is genuine debate in epistemology about whether our familiar epistemic norms are instrumental norms. This debate is about whether rational epistemic subjects are subjects in pursuit of ends like true belief or knowledge generally and then whether our norms are the norms subjects in pursuit of those ends should conform to. For instance, we think rational epistemic subjects should follow their evidence. But why should they? One answer is that it’s because rational epistemic subjects are trying to (say) know more, and following their evidence is a means to that end. On this sort of account all epistemic norms are instrumental. But it is not part of this account that those norms are no longer truly epistemic, or that they are practical instead. I don’t want to get too caught up in how to use terms like ‘epistemic’, but simply want to point out for now that the mere fact that some norms are instrumental should not be thought to entail that those norms are not epistemic, or that they are practical in some sense that is incompatible with their being epistemic.

Even if one does want to think of zetetic norms as practical in some sense, I want to say the following about the argument to come. There are familiar cases in which the practical and the epistemic collide. I want to believe that everyone in the

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8For some of this debate over instrumentalism in epistemology see Foley (1987), Stich (1990), Kornblith (1993), Kelly (2003), Leite (2007), Grimm (2008), Street (2009), Steglich-Petersen (2011), Cowie (2014) and Sharadin (forthcoming).
world is kind, but my evidence tells me otherwise. Here my practical goals pull me in one doxastic direction and epistemology in another. If I believe I won’t win the match chances are I won’t. But if all the evidence points to my losing, then again the practical and the epistemic can seem to be at odds. These sorts of cases have zetetic analogues (we got a quick glance at some of them in the introduction). The cases to come are not like these though. So even if one insists that the norms in Z are practical, the tension to come is not the familiar tension between the practical and the epistemic.

Second question. As we can see, the norms in Z sometimes demand we make certain judgments and (given some other plausible principles) sometimes demand that we not make certain judgments. One might worry about how norms like that sit with thoughts about the extent to which judging and believing are voluntary. If judging (which, again, is simply coming to believe) isn’t voluntary, can there really be norms that demand we make or resist making judgments at all?

I’m not sure I have an especially illuminating answer here, but I don’t see any special problem for norms like ZIP and RES that isn’t already there for standard epistemic norms, which also seem to demand and prohibit certain kinds of judgments. Epistemologists have been discussing these sorts of issues about ‘doxastic voluntarism’ and norms for belief for a long time. This discussion is still thriving. Although I don’t want to commit to any particular way forward here, like many people engaged in these discussions, I think there is a great deal to say about the extent to which what I judge or believe is “up to me”, much of which seems to make room for norms for forming and having beliefs. And I don’t see why the sorts of zetetic norms for belief I’ve been thinking about in this section aren’t on the table via these sorts of strategies in just the same way that our familiar epistemic norms are.

2 Z AND JUDGMENT-FOCUSED EPISTEMIC NORMS

There’s an important choice point now. Notice that ZIP and RES aren’t, in the first instance, aimed at states of belief but instead speak to inquirers’ actions including their judgments or acts of belief formation. Do contemporary epistemic norms – the norms in $E$ – speak to our judgments? While I think they often address our belief states, they seem to me to range over our judgments as well. I take it that most will want to say that epistemology says that coming to believe $p$ based on strong evidence for $p$ is perfectly permissible, and maybe even required, and that judging $p$ without evidence for $p$ is impermissible. For now then let’s say that $E$ contains these sorts of judgment-focused norms. In the next section I’ll think about the interaction between $Z$ and more state-focused epistemic norms.

On the assumption that $E$ speaks to our judgments what sorts of judgment-focused norms are in $E$? Here are some central candidates:

$\textbf{EP}_j$ If one’s evidence $e$ clearly and decisively supports $p$ at $t$ then one is permitted to judge $p$ at $t$.\textsuperscript{11}

$\textbf{EO}_j$ If one’s evidence $e$ clearly and decisively supports $p$ at $t$ then one ought to judge $p$ at $t$.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10}Some have thought that all doxastic norms should be judgment norms (in my sense). For instance, at least some of the American pragmatists thought we should be focused on justifying changes in view rather than states of mind. See, Levi (1998) for a good overview. More recently, Kolodny (2005) argues that all norms of rationality, epistemic or otherwise, should be thought of as “process requirements” rather than “state requirements”.

\textsuperscript{11}On ‘clearly and decisively’. The thought here is that $e$ itself should be secure, perhaps known or something on analogously epistemically stable footing, and this should be clear to the subject. $e$ should also decisively support $p$, and this too should be clear to the subject. Of course believing may be permissible given much worse evidential circumstances as well, but the idea here is to get a largely uncontroversial version of this sort of central evidentialist norm.

\textsuperscript{12}On $\textbf{EO}_j$ and $\textbf{EP}_j$. There is an important complication that I am putting aside in this discussion that is relevant to these first two norms. Say you have clear and decisive evidence for $p$ and you judge $p$, but you do so not based on your clear and decisive evidence but based on the tea leaves. Was that judgment permissible? I don’t think so. That judging $p$ at $t$ is permissible then should not be taken to mean that any way of judging $p$ is permissible at $t$. And similar sort of considerations seem to apply to evidential requirements as well. If you judge $p$ based on the tea leaves rather than your clear and decisive evidence I don’t think we should say that you’ve discharged your epistemic duty. Officially then I think these norms need some kind of “basing” condition. What you’re permitted or required to do in these cases is make judgments based on the relevant clear and decisive evidence. Exactly how this should be formulated and fleshed out gets us into a series of thorny issues. Since they aren’t essential in what’s to come, I am going to try to avoid them. The reader should take there to be implicit basing conditions in all the evidentialist permission and requirement claims discussed in this paper though.
KP$_j$ If one is in a position to come to know $p$ at $t$, then one is permitted to come to know $p$ at $t$.

KO$_j$ If one is in a position to come to know $p$ at $t$, then one ought to come to know $p$ at $t$.

The requirements and permissions in all of these norms are epistemic. There’s a sense in which it’s difficult to evaluate what role exactly these norms play in contemporary normative epistemology because it’s not always clear whether parties in these discussions mean to be expressing judgment-focused norms or state-focused norms and there is limited explicit discussion of the differences between these. For instance, talk of what it’s permissible “to believe” seems to me ambiguous between talk of what beliefs it’s permissible to have and what beliefs it’s permissible to form. My own sense is that often this ambiguity is the result of indifference rather than carelessness. That is, my sense is that most are happy to think of epistemic norms as telling us both about what judgments to make and about what beliefs to have. For now then let’s assume that’s right. Let’s assume that when epistemologists are discussing epistemic requirements and permissions they are mostly happy to think of those as ranging over the making of certain kinds of judgments as well as the having of certain kinds of beliefs. Let’s call this the ‘neutrality assumption’. Given the neutrality assumption we can assume that claims made by epistemologists about epistemic normativity apply to states of belief and acts of judgments.

With the neutrality assumption in place I think it’s difficult to overestimate the centrality of a norm like EP$_j$ in epistemology. Not only do I not know of anyone who explicitly denies it in the literature, but it’s hard to think of anyone who might want to given their other commitments. I’ll bring out one way in which a norm like EP$_j$ shows itself in the contemporary literature, but I hope the norm strikes the reader as fairly uncontentious. If you have no opinion about $p$ but come to have excellent evidence for $p$, then you’re epistemically permitted to come to believe $p$.

Here is a way to get at the centrality of a norm like EP$_j$ in the literature. I take it that the most discussed normative notion in contemporary epistemology is epistemic justification (although if you think that knowledge is normative then that might be a competitor). In thinking about the normativity of justification, Alston (1985) talked about a central conception that tied justification closely to notions like duty, obligation, and permission: the ‘deontological’ conception of epistemic
justification. Although Alston was worried about this conception, it was and is entirely commonplace to think of epistemic justification as tightly connected to these sorts of deontic notions.

One way that connection comes out is via the following thought: if one is epistemically justified in judging \( p \) then it is (at least) epistemically permissible to judge \( p \). This sort of principle seems to be an instance of a generally plausible one connecting justification and permissibility. If I was justified in keeping some secret from you, that seems to imply that I had a right to do it or had good reason to. But I take it that if those are true then I was at least allowed to keep the secret in this case. And plausibly many other popular normative notions we apply to forming and having beliefs imply permissibility as well, e.g., warrant, rationality, reasonability, and more.

The thought then is that wherever we have epistemic justification we have epistemic permissibility. So where do we have epistemic justification? One popular account here is an ‘evidentialist’ one. The evidentialist says (roughly) that the extent to which we’re epistemically justified in making some judgment supervenes entirely on the strength of our evidence for the content of that judgment. Not everyone agrees with the evidentialist’s claim that all epistemic justification comes via one’s evidence, e.g., certain kinds of reliabilists about justification, but the claim that the right kind of evidence for \( p \) makes it that one can justifiably judge \( p \) is as widely accepted as nearly any claim I can think of in epistemology. And I take it that “clear and decisive” evidence is exactly the right kind.

We can think of all of this as getting us to two claims about the epistemic permissibility of making certain kinds of judgments. First, if one has clear and decisive evidence for \( p \) at \( t \) then one can justifiably judge \( p \) at \( t \). And second, if one justifiably judges \( p \) at \( t \) then one permissibly judges \( p \) at \( t \). But these two claims get us (more or less) to EPj.

When Feldman and Conee originally proposed their influential evidentialist view they tied justification not only to permissibility but to obligation, claiming that we have obligations to believe what the evidence supports. While this sort

\[13\] Also see, Alston (1988).
\[14\] See Silva (2017) for some discussion of an even stronger thesis: “(J = P): For S to have epistemic justification to believe that P is for S to be epistemically permitted to believe that P” (28). Silva gives an extensive list of epistemologists who subscribe to this stronger principle and then more who subscribe to the weaker claim that justification entails permissibility.
\[15\] The term is due to Feldman and Conee (1985) who originally argued for the position.
of claim is somewhat more controversial than the claim that it’s permissible to believe what the evidence supports, I think many still feel the force of the claim that rational epistemic subjects don’t simply turn their backs on the evidence. If one has overwhelming evidence for it seems right that judging \( p \) is permitted. But is it also permissible to fail to judge \( p \)? Is it never the case that the evidence demands we form a belief (rather than simply allow it but also allow us to simply ignore the evidence)? The thought that, yes, sometimes evidence demands certain judgments rather than merely leaving them optional seems fairly intuitive.

So while EO\(_j\) is a bit more controversial than EP\(_j\), it still strikes me as central to our theorizing about epistemic normativity. What about KP\(_j\) and KO\(_j\)? Although these might be less familiar than the evidentialist norms, I think that they are at least as plausible. Here is one way to get to them: if any subject who comes to know \( p \) has justifiably judged \( p \) (which anyone who thinks that knowledge entails justification should think), then if justification entails permissibility in the sense at issue now, we should say that any subject who comes to know \( p \) has permissibly judged \( p \). And we don’t need to go by way of justification to get to these norms. In general, if you judge \( p \) and succeed in knowing \( p \) then you’ve done something epistemically right or good or reasonable, and again those seem to entail that you’ve done something permissible as well. Moreover, whatever thought motivates an evidentialist requirement to believe, I take it is going to motivate the thought that we should come to know when we’re in a position to.

Let’s assume then that E, our set of contemporary epistemic norms, contains all of the norms just stated. I don’t mean to be saying it doesn’t contain any others, I think it surely does, but I think we’ll find the relationship between E and Z fairly strained even if we just focus on these few core elements of E. After bringing that out I’ll think about what happens to the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic if we think a bit differently about contemporary normative epistemology. And after that I’ll think about Z and more state-focused epistemic norms.

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\(^{17}\)For some pushback against the claim that we are epistemically required to believe what the evidence supports (or epistemically required to believe anything at all) see Nelson (2010).

\(^{18}\)This thought can be found in all sorts of spots in the literature, e.g., BonJour (1980), Feldman and Conee (1985), Feldman (2000), Kelly (2007), and more. We find a slightly different thought in a slightly different context as well: for Bayesians if you learn some proposition \( p \) you don’t then have the option of conditionalizing on \( p \) or not, rather you are required to conditionalize on that new evidence.
2.1 Z AND E: ZETETIC DILEMMAS

To start to see some of the tension let’s go back to our zebra inquiry. Say you’re inquiring into Z\(^2\) – how many stripes the average zebra has – you open your trusty animal encyclopedia, start reading the entries under ‘A’, and learn about aardvarks. I take it that coming to know those things about aardvarks is not the best means to coming to know Z\(^2\) at that time. Arguably, it’s not a means to that end at all. Either way though there are many (better) means you could take to resolving your inquiry, e.g., turning to ‘zebra’ in the book. So we can say at least the following in this case: learning about aardvarks is not the best means to your end at the relevant time. But this means that from the perspective of Z it’s not permissible to make those judgments about aardvarks at the relevant time. But those aardvark judgments can be epistemically impeccable – they can be based in clear and decisive evidence and result in knowledge. This means that from the perspective of E they are judgments you’re epistemically required to make at the relevant time. So from the perspective of E making those judgments is required but from the perspective of Z it is prohibited. So it looks as though E and Z conflict.\(^{19}\)

My thought here is that at the relevant time you face a choice between making judgments about aardvarks and doing other things like turning the book to ‘zebra’. Even once you’ve looked at the section on aardvarks, learning what’s on the page is an additional step. Making those judgments counts as a move you can make or fail to make at the relevant time in the course of your inquiry and so whether that move is the thing to do depends now on what else you could be doing at the time. In this case since you could turn to ‘zebra’ instead of learning about aardvarks Z says (or at least implies) that you shouldn’t come to know those things about aardvarks.

There are ways of thinking about the case I’ve just given according to which you’re not doing anything wrong in making those aardvark judgments, even from a thoroughly inquiry-theoretic perspective. For instance, say that as you open the book you remember how fascinating aardvarks are. You decide you want to learn more about them before figuring out what’s going on with zebra stripes. So you switch which questions you’re actively inquiring into: now it’s some question(s) about aardvarks. The version of the case that brings out the tension between the epistemic and the zetetic shouldn’t be filled in this way though. Rather it should be

\(^{19}\)It’s worth making clear that something much weaker than ZIP would get us to the very same result. It seems to me that learning about aardvarks in this case is not a means to settling Z\(^2\) at all. If that’s right then coming to know about aardvarks at the relevant time looks impermissible given even a very weak instrumental principle, e.g., take any means to your end in inquiry.
a case in which you don’t stop being actively focused on resolving $Z$. It's from that perspective that the norms of inquiry bar you from making epistemically obligatory moves.\textsuperscript{20}

These sorts of cases are very easily multiplied. Imagine you want to know how much your part of the dinner bill is. The best means to your end is to do some calculations. But over the stretch of time during which you’re doing your mental math there is other knowledge available as well via (say) visual and auditory perception – there is plenty to see and hear in the restaurant during that time. Maybe you could come to know some of that while doing the math, but at some point the only way to get an answer to the question of how much you owe, is going to be to ignore some of what’s going on around you, which means leaving some available knowledge – knowledge you’re in a position to get by simply following evidence you have – on the table. Or say your inquiry demands you talk to a witness and take down what they say. Again, this will require you to attend to some of your available evidence but also ignore some of it. And we can easily come up with more cases.

Here’s a general recipe. Take any case in which a subject is inquiring into some question $Q$ but is also in a position to come to know all sorts of things irrelevant to settling $Q$. I take it this is an absolutely typical case of inquiry. If I’m trying to figure out where I left my keys or who robbed the bank or where the nearest gas station is I’m doing these things over some interval of time $T$. But there will typically be plenty I can come to know throughout these $T$s that has nothing to do with the inquiries I’m engaged in: facts about the colours of all the cars driving by or popular shoe styles of the people on that street or any other details of the scenes before my eyes that really have nothing to do with the matters I’m investigating. Sometimes the norms of inquiry will be indifferent as to whether I take up that irrelevant information, but sometimes they won’t. When taking up that information gets in the way of my doing as I zetetically ought, the norms of inquiry are going to demand I ignore that information and do some other things instead, e.g., talk to witnesses, drive away, do some calculations, learn some other zetetically relevant information, and so on. After all, ZIP demands we take the best means to our ends in inquiry. But surely there will be many times over the course of most any inquiry at which making some irrelevant judgments is not at all the best means to

\textsuperscript{20}A complete picture of zetetic normativity would have to give us norms for switching between objects of active inquiry. We haven’t looked at any norms in this paper that speak to these sorts of switches. But they will be in $Z$ as well.
our zetetic ends (and plausibly not a means at all). So from the perspective of \( Z \) at many times over the course of these typical inquiries there will be judgments we are not permitted to make, many of which may be epistemically impeccable and would result in our knowing more. We might think of these situations as ‘zetetic dilemmas’: epistemology demands we make all sorts of judgments that the norms of inquiry demand we don’t make.\(^{21}\)

\( E \) demands we come to know all we can at every time. But the norms of inquiry will demand that we focus on particular tasks and that can easily force us to violate some norms in \( E \) since it will force us to ignore some of the information available to us in many cases. In other words, for subjects like us, the norms in \( Z \) can demand we violate norms like EO\(_j\) and KO\(_j\). And they plausibly tell us to badly violate those norms. Given our cognitive limitations doesn’t the best chance we have of succeeding in resolving our inquiries involve ignoring any information not relevant to those tasks? For subjects like us doesn’t expertise in one area often come at the cost of knowledge in others?

One might think: so much the worse for norms like EO\(_j\) and KO\(_j\). Are we really epistemically required to come to know everything we can at a time or believe everything our evidence supports at a time? Part of what’s come out in this section is that we are typically in a position to know quite a lot. We are presented with a great deal of information in visual perception and it is rare that a subject’s beliefs are deductively or inductively/evidentially closed. That is, subjects can typically extend their knowledge by drawing inferences (deductive or inductive) from things they already know, or by coming to believe the various details of the perceptual scenes before them. But if this is right then \( E \) might strike one as simply too demanding. I am sympathetic to this thought, so I think it’s worth thinking about the interaction

\(^{21}\)It’s interesting to think about the interaction between the sort of argument here and some of the “clutter avoidance” arguments in Harman (1986). One of the things Harman begins to show there is how a norm that tells us to avoid cluttering our minds with “trivialities” might have an impact on normative epistemology (see Friedman (forthcoming) for an account of how dramatic the impact stands to be). A clutter avoidance norm demands we not come to believe/know all sorts of trivialities. Even if we thought of anything that was zetetically irrelevant at a time as a triviality at that time (which does not strike me as very plausible), the norms of inquiry we’ve been thinking about don’t care if you form or have all of those trivial beliefs. They simply demand you have certain kinds of zetetically relevant beliefs. Part of what they prohibit might be thought of as coming to believe a bunch of “trivialities” (at least in relation to your focal inquiry) without also coming to believe the zetetically relevant things. Our zetetic norms have nothing against zetetically irrelevant beliefs, per se. Moreover, the arguments here don’t hang on the idea that we don’t have enough storage space to keep all the knowledge available to us, rather they largely hinge on the idea that as rational inquirers we should take the best means to our epistemic ends. Just that will bar making all sorts of judgments at some times, even if there are no limits at all on how much we can store in memory.
between Z and a less demanding set of epistemic norms. Before that though I want to say a just a tiny bit more about the demanding epistemic norms.

Even if E strikes one as too demanding, one might still want to say that norms like EO\textsubscript{j} and KO\textsubscript{j} state ideals. While we may not fault subjects like us for failing to live up to them, perhaps we do think of them as setting some sort of epistemic standard that, all things considered, it would be better to live up to. Doesn't the ideal epistemic subject come to know all they can?

If norms like EO\textsubscript{j} and KO\textsubscript{j} somehow set or express ideals then we should be able to think about how close or far epistemic subjects are from those ideals. And we might plausibly want to say that the more one approximates the ideal the better. While we don't want to have to count propositions, this means that roughly, when it comes to ideals like EO\textsubscript{j} and KO\textsubscript{j}, the more of what you're in a position to come to know at a time you in fact come to know at that time, the closer you get to the ideal at that time and the better you're doing epistemically. But if this is the epistemic ideal then I think it's fairly different from the zetetic ideal.

Here is one way to see this. Say you are inquiring into \( H \) – whether your neighbours' kids are home. You go over and knock at their door and they open it and you come to know that your neighbours are home. Given that you know that if they are home then their kids are home, you're now in a position to come to know the answer to your question. RES says that you ought to make that inference and come to know \( H \). But at the time at which you're poised to make that inference you are in a position to know quite a lot, much more than just that your neighbours' kids are home (\( h \)). For instance, since your neighbours have opened their door you're being visually presented with all sorts of information about the inside of their home, so there's quite a lot you can come to know about that, e.g., that they have a Barcelona chair. Moreover, there are plenty of other inferences you could draw at that time from other things that you know, e.g., how many apples you ate or hours of sleep you got last week. These are all things you're in a position to know at the time at which you're poised to infer \( h \) and resolve \( H \).

Say you come to know everything you're in a position to know at that time except for one thing: \( h \). You will have come to know a tremendous amount at the relevant time – nearly all you can – and so you will have been nearly ideal from the perspective of E. But from the perspective of Z you seem to have failed fairly dramatically: you failed to come to know the one thing your inquiry demanded you come to know. And what about the case in which you just came to know \( h \)
and ignored all of the other available information? Well, you would have been a complete zetetic success (at least from the perspective of $H$), but very far from epistemically ideal. This is all to say that if we think of $E_{O_j}$ and $K_{O_j}$ as setting epistemic ideals then an almost completely successful epistemic subject can be an utter failure zetetically and a completely successful inquirer can be mostly a failure epistemically.\(^{22}\) So even when we think of the demanding norms in $E$ as telling us something about an epistemic ideal, there’s a tension or at least a strange mismatch between the epistemic and the zetetic.

2.2 $Z$ AND $E'$: INCONSISTENCY

The zetetic dilemmas and other tensions I brought out in the last section were in part due to the demandingness of $E$. One strategy for avoiding the tension then is to reject the demanding norms in $E$. What does this amount to though? The thought that those sorts of norms are too demanding seems to imply that they should not be in $E^*$ (and then that $E$ is not a subset of $E^*$) – that those norms are not genuine epistemic norms at all.\(^{22}\) As I’ve said I do think that they appear all over the contemporary epistemology literature, so it’s worth being clear that rejecting $E_{O_j}$ and $K_{O_j}$ as genuine epistemic norms is a somewhat revisionary move. But given that norms like $E_{O_j}$ and $K_{O_j}$ are surely more controversial than their permissive counterparts, I think it’s important to think about interactions between the zetetic and a less demanding version of contemporary epistemology.

With that let’s say that $E'$ contains $E_{P_j}$ and $K_{P_j}$ but doesn’t contain norms like $E_{O_j}$ and $K_{O_j}$. $E'$ is less demanding than $E$. Nonetheless, I think that there is still tension between contemporary epistemic norms and norms like ZIP even if one insists that $E'$ better represents contemporary normative epistemology than $E$ does.

Here’s one way to bring out the tension. Again, focus on the case in which you’re trying to find out whether your neighbours’ kids are home. Again, take the case in which you know that if the parents are home, then the kids are home. You knock at the door and the parents answer – you come to know that the parents are home. You’re now $(t)$ in a position to know that the kids are home $(h)$. But again

\(^{22}\)Kitcher (1990) might be thought of as making a case for the claim that a good scientific inquirer, qua member of the scientific community, should sometimes violate the norms of epistemology. His case isn’t quite like mine, but nonetheless might give us even more reason for thinking that the epistemic and the zetetic are going to come apart in key ways.

\(^{22}\)I think that getting rid of $E_{O_j}$ and $K_{O_j}$ means getting rid of epistemic requirements to believe altogether. If we’re not epistemically required to believe when the evidence is clear and decisive then it’s hard to see when we could be epistemically required to believe.
we can think about the case in which you’re also in a position to know much more than \( h \) at \( t \), e.g., all the other things that can be inferred from things you know and all sorts of things about your neighbours’ house, and more.

RES says you must come to know at least \( h \) at \( t \). As it stands RES is neutral on your coming to know more than \( h \) – it doesn’t demand it but doesn’t prohibit it either. You violate RES at the relevant time if you fail to come to know \( h \). One way you can do this is if you make a set of judgments at \( t \) but none is an \( h \)-judgment. For instance, if you come to know all sorts of things about your neighbours’ furniture at \( t \), without also judging and coming to know \( h \) at \( t \), you’ve violated RES. But just coming to know those things about your neighbours’ furniture looks perfectly permissible from the perspective of \( E' \), so it looks as though there’s still some tension here. Let me draw this thought out a bit more.

Let’s say that \( K \) is the set of all of the propositions you’re in a position to know at the time at which you’re in a position to close \( H' \). For any \( p \) in \( K \), \( EP_j \) and \( KP_j \) permit you to judge \( p \). But given how permissive \( E' \) is, while making those judgments is permissible from the perspective of \( E' \), it’s not required. Given this I take it that \( E' \) permits one to make the relevant judgments but also permits one not to. That’s to say, for any \( p \) in \( K \), judging \( p \) is permitted from the perspective of \( E' \), but so is failing to judge \( p \): judging \( p \) is thoroughly optional from the perspective of \( E' \). But this also means that for any \( p \) in \( K \), just judging \( p \) (judging \( p \) and nothing else) is permissible from the perspective of \( E' \). If all of this is right though then we can see the conflict between \( E' \) and \( Z \). From the perspective of \( E' \) it’s perfectly permissible to just make judgments about the furniture in your neighbours’ house at the relevant time, but from the perspective of our new zetetic norms, this is not permissible – RES says that whatever else you do you must judge \( h \). For instance, you violate RES at \( t \) (the time at which you’re in a position to settle your inquiry) if you just make the judgment that your neighbours have a Barcelona chair (\( b \)) at \( t \), but from the perspective of \( E' \) just judging \( b \) at \( t \) is perfectly permissible. From the perspective of \( Z \) just judging \( b \) at \( t \) is not permissible but from the perspective of \( E' \) just judging \( b \) at \( t \) is permissible. So we have \( Z \) and \( E' \) rendering conflicting verdicts in these cases.\(^{24}\)

We can draw out the same sort of tension in cases like the zebra inquiry from the last section. In that case, it’s perfectly permissible from the perspective of \( E' \) to make all of those judgments about aardvarks at the relevant time, but impermissible...

\(^{24}\) Again, the relevant deontic duality assumption is doing work here.
from the perspective of Z. In general, most any inquiry is going to have this feature: there will typically be some epistemically impeccable judgments that it won’t be permissible to make from the perspective of one’s inquiry. Again, this grows, at least in part, out of the fact that at a typical time a great deal of knowledge is available to us. E’ permits us to take as much of it as we’d like and ignore as much of it as we’d like, but Z can make coming to know some of it non-optional.

One might wonder just how significant this tension is though. What we’re left with now is the conclusion that in a typical inquiry, our standard epistemic norms permit us to make all sorts of judgments that the norms of inquiry declare impermissible. This isn’t the sort of dilemma that we had in the last section. Crucially, a rational inquirer can avoid violating epistemic norms now. If the you stop making judgments about aardvarks and turn the page, there’s no epistemic demand that you are violating. You’re permitted to make those aardvark judgments, but also permitted not to. So you can be the best zebra inquirer you can be without violating any epistemic norms.

Is this really a tension then? I may be morally permitted to cross the street on a red light, but legally I am not. If I just wait at the corner until the light changes I won’t have done anything immoral or illegal. Is there a conflict between moral norms and legal norms given cases like this though? On the one hand, yes, since one set of norms is declaring some action impermissible that the other declares permissible. On the other though, I don’t know that we should see this as worrying in any way given that there’s a path forward that avoids violation.

But it’s not clear to me that we should be thinking of the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic on the model of that of the moral and the legal. There’s a question that’s been looming since the beginning of this paper about the extent to which we can think of the epistemic and the zetetic as properly distinct sources of normativity. And this question seems important right now. Let’s say these aren’t distinct at all – that all epistemic norms are norms of inquiry and all the norms of inquiry are epistemic. Then the tension being pointed to in this section is not to be thought of as a tension between two separate sources of normativity, but something more like an inconsistency in a single source, i.e., the norms of inquiry/epistemology declare some judgments both permissible and impermissible. This strikes me as a very bad result.\(^\text{25}\)

So something now hangs on the relationship

\(^{25}\)Perhaps it’s not a given that we must avoid this sort of normative inconsistency. I can imagine that some will be fine with the thought that normative theories or sets of norms can be incoherent in these sorts of ways. I am not fine with this though and I assume many are also going to think of
between the epistemic and the zetetic. Should we think of these as distinct sources of normativity or not?

2.2.1 THE EPISTEMIC AND THE ZETETIC

I am taking it that the claim that the epistemic and the zetetic are just a single source of normativity is just the claim that $Z$ and $E^*$ are identical; it’s the claim that in general all epistemic norms are zetetic norms and all zetetic norms are epistemic norms. Given that norms like ZIP and RES are in $Z$, it looks like $Z \neq E$ and $Z \neq E'$. Neither of these tell us whether $Z = E^*$ though. And in fact, I think there’s a lot to be said in favour of the identity of those two sets of norms.

One way to show this might be to precisely delineate the borders of $Z$ and $E^*$ and show them to be the same. I don’t know how to do that. Figuring out exactly where the epistemic starts and ends has proved notoriously tricky. And what counts as a “zetetic” norm is not a matter of discussion at all (given that it’s a neologism in this context). My plan then is to aim for something more modest. I want to argue that there is reason to think (a) that epistemic norms are norms of inquiry and (b) that norms of inquiry can be thought of as epistemic. This will make something of a case for the thought that $Z = E^*$, or at least for the thought that there is significant overlap between these two sets of norms. That will make it harder to think of the epistemic and zetetic as radically different in kind and, as a result, will make the conflict between $Z$ and $E'$ more problematic.

First, on (a). As I’ve already said, it seems to me that we should be thinking of (all) epistemic norms as norms of inquiry or zetetic norms. The alternative is to say that epistemic norms aren’t norms that bind us qua inquirers. But isn’t that exactly the point of epistemology? Or if not exactly the point, at least part of the point? Isn’t it at least part of the business of normative epistemology to tell us about how we should conduct ourselves in inquiry, how we ought to go about properly acquiring and managing information? Part of what I’ve pointed out so far is that as we think more about a normative theory of inquiry we’ll find that at least some of the norms we focus on in epistemology these days don’t fit as comfortably as we might have liked into a more complete account of the zetetic. This doesn’t

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26For some recent debate about the matter, see Cohen (2016) and responses.
mean that our contemporary epistemic norms aren’t norms of inquiry though, it just means that zooming out on the norms of inquiry reveals that perhaps we don’t have a completely coherent account of how the practice ought to proceed.

Second, on (b). I think there is also a case to be made for thinking of the zetetic norms we’ve looked at as epistemic, although perhaps it’s somewhat more controversial. We can start by thinking about ZIP. Should we think of ZIP an epistemic norm? ZIP does not seem to play a role in helping to determine whether some beliefs amount to knowledge. If only those sorts of considerations are in the domain of the epistemic, then ZIP may well be extra-epistemic. I don’t know that the epistemic is or should be constrained in that way though.27

The sorts of considerations our zetetic norms circle around – considerations about how we should inquire – are highly relevant to whether a subject will come to know the answer to their focal question though, and not merely in some superficial sense. Norms like ZIP are norms that assess a subject’s judgments, beliefs and knowledge (among other things) according to how well they serve their ends in inquiry. These ends are epistemic and the zetetic norms tell inquirers what to do given that they are in pursuit of these epistemic ends. As we’ve seen they are norms that tell inquirers what to do if they want to get closer to knowing than they are. There is obviously good reason to think of norms like this as epistemic, even if they aren’t our familiar sorts of epistemic norms. They are the sorts of norms that a rational subject trying to move themselves from ignorance to knowledge on some matter will conform to.

Moreover, I think there’s something to be said for thinking of the epistemic in the more expansive sense described in the last paragraph. First, if we conceive of the epistemic too narrowly, then we risk leaving key parts of a theory of inquiry outside of the purview of epistemology. While nothing needs to be wrong with splitting the work here, prima facie it seems as though epistemology is the place to look for a theory of inquiry: as I just said, inquirers are subjects in pursuit of epistemic ends. Second, and more substantively, contemporary normative epistemology can look somewhat myopic. Those epistemic norms tell subjects how to be doxastically at a time – how various aspects of their doxastic lives ought to be arranged; they also tell subjects what they should do with new information when it happens to come

27Cohen (2016) argues against a series of proposals for when a belief’s justification counts as “epistemic”. He argues that the sorts of proposals that define ‘epistemic’ in terms of its relation to truth or knowledge fail. Cohen ultimately thinks that the epistemic is ill-defined, but I think his arguments make room for some more expansive accounts of the epistemic as well.
in – how their existing doxastic state should accommodate that new information. At their most demanding these norms press subjects to expand on the knowledge they already have – they demand subjects make new judgments given the new evidence they get or that their beliefs be closed under various logical operations. While the sorts of epistemic norms just described tell subjects what to do with information when it happens to come in, they are silent on what new information should come in, whether that’s the sort of information subjects should be seeking out, how subjects should get the sort of information they need, and more. These questions don’t feel obviously different in kind from the more traditional sorts of epistemic questions.

I take it that the feeling that epistemology might want to tell us how to proceed when we want certain kinds of information and not just how to deal with what happens to come our way is not misplaced. The zetetic norms I’ve been thinking about in this paper are part of that sort of project and so thinking of them as epistemic seems to me not misplaced either. This is all to say that I think there’s a good case for thinking of our zetetic norms as epistemic: they are norms regulating our pursuit of knowledge.28

Altogether I think these considerations mean that we cannot think of the epistemic and the zetetic as too deeply distinct. Epistemic norms seem to be norms of inquiry and zetetic norms are norms that bind us in our knowledge acquisition efforts. Whatever names we give these different norms it looks as though they are closely connected. This makes a case for the claim that \( Z = E^* \) or at least the claim that there is significant overlap between these two sets of norms. But with that, the sorts of conflicts brought out in this last bit of the paper seem more troubling. First, if \( Z = E^* \) and \( E' \) is a subset of \( E^* \), then \( E' \) is a subset of \( Z/E^* \). But this means that \( Z/E^* \) is inconsistent given the arguments in the last section: it regularly declares judgments both permissible and impermissible.29

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28In fact, my sense is that this more expansive way of thinking of the epistemic or of epistemology is consonant with a lot of the history of philosophy. I take that a number of philosophers through the ages – from Aristotle to Francis Bacon to Charles Peirce – were thinking about epistemology as (also) concerned with more obviously inquiry-theoretic questions.

29I want to quickly point out that the arguments in this section could have been made were ZIP and RES “subjectivized”. If ZIP said (e.g.) that inquirers should take what they think is the best means to their zetetic ends, and RES said that they should (try to) resolve when they think they’re in a position to, we could generate the very same sorts of cases to bring out the various tensions between the epistemic and the zetetic. In that case, ZIP and RES would still make demands on subjects and with a duality assumption that would mean that various zetetic prohibitions would also be in place. But just as before some of the judgments that are zetetically prohibited will be epistemically impeccable and so will be epistemically required or at least permitted.
3 Z AND STATE-FOCUSED EPISTEMIC NORMS

My claim in the last section was that $E$ contains some judgment norms – that traditional epistemic norms speak to our judgments. But if $E$ is meant to be the set of our familiar, traditional epistemic norms, then it should also contain some “state-focused” epistemic norms – norms that speak to which states we should or may be in. That’s to say, $E$ should also contain norms like these:

\[ \text{EP}_i \text{ If one's evidence } e \text{ clearly and decisively supports } p \text{ at } t \text{ then one is permitted to have a } p-\text{belief at } t. \]

\[ \text{EO}_i \text{ If one's evidence } e \text{ clearly and decisively supports } p \text{ at } t \text{ then one ought to have a } p-\text{belief at } t. \]

\[ \text{KP}_i \text{ If one is in a position to know } p \text{ at } t, \text{ then one is permitted to know } p \text{ at } t. \]

\[ \text{KO}_i \text{ If one is in a position to know } p \text{ at } t, \text{ then one ought to know } p \text{ at } t. \]

I want to think about how $Z$ interacts with just these norms, so let’s say that $E_s$ is the subset of $E$ that contains these sorts of state-focused epistemic norms (and no judgment norms). The norms in $E_s$, at least in the first instance, make no claims about the permissibility or obligatoriness of judging or coming to know, but only about the permissibility and obligatoriness of having certain beliefs and of having knowledge. Given this it looks as though $E_s$ and $Z$ are not in tension in the way that $Z$ was with the other, judgment-focused norms in $E$. $E_s$ and $Z$ have different “objects” now (at least in the first instance) with one set evaluating judgments and another beliefs, so these two sets of norms don’t seem to render competing normative verdicts about the judgments we make over the course of our inquiries.

I don’t think that we should be all that sanguine yet though. First, avoiding friction between these sorts of state-focused epistemic norms and norms like ZIP and RES is not cost-free. In particular, we’ll have to reject the following principle bridging the normative evaluation of judgments with that of the beliefs that result from those judgments if we want to avoid the trouble from the last section:

(1) Necessarily, if judging $p$ at $t$ is impermissible$_x$ then the $p$-belief that results from that judgment is impermissible$_x$ at $t$.\[30\]

\[30\]There is a slightly tricky temporal issue here. Judgments take place over time, and their upshots are beliefs. Here is one way to think of this: if some judgment takes place throughout $[t_1, t_2]$ then the subject has the relevant belief at $t_2$. Rather than having to keep bringing up these temporal subtleties, we can think of $t$ here and throughout as the endpoint of the relevant judgment interval.
The subscript on ‘impermissible’ here is meant to indicate that both of these impermissibilities are of the same type or kind, e.g., epistemic, practical, zetetic. (1) ties the normative statuses of judgments and the states that are their outputs together in a general way. It says that whenever making some judgment is impermissible\(x\), having the belief that results from that judgment is also impermissible\(x\). If we want to avoid the conflicts from the last section we’ll have to reject (1).

If we accepted (1) then we would be able to move from the claim that some judgment is zetetically impermissible at a time to the claim that the belief formed by way of that judgment is; or from the claim that some belief is epistemically permissible to the claim that the judgment that resulted in that belief is. With either inference we get back to the same sorts of problems we had in the last section (although the inference from zetetic judgment prohibition to zetetic belief prohibition will leave us with a conflict at the level of belief states rather than acts of judgment).

I think there’s a lot going for (1). If (1) is false, then there are cases in which subjects are prohibited\(x\) from making some judgment at a time, but are also such that it’s perfectly permissible\(x\) to have the belief that results from that judgment. In these cases it’s not merely that being in some state is permissible\(x\) at a time but some route to the state is an impermissible\(x\) route to take to that state at that time – that seems fairly commonplace. Instead what we have now is the following: being in some state is permissible\(x\) at a time but there is no permissible\(x\) route into the state at that time. On the way we’re thinking about judging now it’s just the act or process of coming to believe. There is no way to enter the state of believing without coming to believe. And so this way of denying (1) means saying that there are cases in which being in some state is perfectly permissible\(x\) at a time, but getting into the state – by any route at all – is forbidden\(x\) at that time. This is a strange combination of normative properties. One might think that the best explanation as to why there is no permissible\(x\) route into some state at a time is that being in the state is itself forbidden\(x\) at that time. This speaks in favour of (1).\(^{31}\)

That said, even if one wanted to deny (1) and so avoid the sort of tension I

\(^{31}\)There is a way of denying (1) that doesn’t require saying quite the thing I’ve said in this paragraph. One could try to insist that there were normative gaps of the following sort: beliefs that were neither permissible\(x\), nor impermissible\(x\). For instance, one might insist that (1) is false because the norms of epistemology don’t range over judgments at all or that the norms of inquiry don’t range over beliefs at all. These don’t seem at all plausible accounts of the reach of either epistemic or zetetic normativity though.
brought out in the last section, I don’t think this means that E_s and Z are operating harmoniously. Part of what’s meant to be worrying about the tensions and conflicts I brought out in the last section, is that I think we should have been hoping that epistemic and zetetic normative verdicts would largely align. But the normative verdicts issued by E_s and Z are fairly incongruous.

For instance, with an eye to the cases from the last section, it looks as though it will regularly be the case that having some belief is perfectly permissible from the perspective of E_s, but making the judgment that led to that belief will have been impermissible from the perspective of Z. For instance, according to E_s it’s epistemically permissible for you to have the belief that aardvarks eat ants in the course of your zebra inquiry, but according to Z you’re not permitted to form that belief at the relevant time. And part of what I’ve tried to point out is that these sorts of conflicts are going to be entirely commonplace. But this means that we cannot read the norms of inquiry off of our familiar epistemic norms: that some belief is permissible (or justified or warranted or required) according to our familiar epistemic norms tells us almost nothing about whether making the judgment that will get you to that belief is permissible from the perspective of your inquiry. There’s a fairly dramatic normative gulf here.

Moreover given that E_s may well contain some demanding state-focused norms, there may well be all sorts of cases in which judging p at a time will be zetetically prohibited, but having the belief that results from that judgment is epistemically required.

These last two features of the relationship between even state-focused epistemology and the norms of inquiry strike me as fairly problematic and aren’t radically different from the sorts of tensions we saw between judgment-focused epistemic norms and zetetic norms. Here is one way to see this. How should we act in inquiry? As inquirers we are bound by our norms like ZIP and RES, but as epistemic subjects (inquirers?) we are bound by our familiar epistemic norms. When you’re trying to figure out how many stripes the average zebra has and are suddenly in a position to come to know all sorts of things about aardvarks, what should you do? Zetetic norms tell you not to make those aardvark judgments, but then how can you have the beliefs epistemology demands?

This last thought means that conforming to the norms in Z can make it that we won’t be able to conform to the norms in E_s: we won’t be able to have the beliefs that are epistemically permitted or even required. In general, this means
that conforming to the norms of inquiry can effectively force us, and quite regularly, to violate the norms of epistemology – even the state-focused ones. I think we should have been hoping that this would never (or at least almost never) happen.

So, while the relationship between $E_s$ and $Z$ might not be quite as fraught as the relationship between $Z$ and the judgment-focused norms in $E$, these sets of norms are not operating as harmoniously as we (or at least I) would have liked.

4 GOING FORWARD

We want to be the best epistemic subjects we can be. And we want to be the best inquirers we can be. These desires seem very closely connected. Unfortunately, it is not obvious now what the best strategy for satisfying both should be. I don't have a solution here, but I do want to say a little bit about what the some of the natural paths forward look like to me.

A fairly common reaction to the sort of tension I've tried to bring out here is to reject demanding epistemic norms and so to think of something like $E'$ as giving us the core deontological commitments in epistemology: we should stop talking about what epistemic subjects ought to believe, and focus only on what they are permitted to believe (and perhaps on other normative modalities like justification, reasonableness, etc. as well). With this sort of move we avoid zetetic dilemmas leaving it, at least given just the considerations adduced here, that rational inquirers need not violate the norms of epistemology. Of course, one cost here is that we must say that there are no purely epistemic requirements to believe. As I've said, it's not clear to me exactly how costly epistemologists will find this concession given that there is some independent support for rejecting these sorts of norms.

But as I said earlier, I'm not convinced that we should be satisfied with the picture of either epistemic or zetetic normativity that result from this sort of move. Unless we insist on a strict divide between these two kinds of normativity we'll be left with troubling inconsistencies. If we said, for instance, that epistemic norms are norms of inquiry, then we'd be left having to say that the norms of inquiry are inconsistent. But it's hard for me to give up the idea that, in general, epistemic norms are (or at least should be) norms of inquiry (or the idea that norms of inquiry are epistemic in some sense). Others may be more satisfied with a certain kind of division of labour here, but I am not.\footnote{We might find one example of a division of labour like this in Kelly (2003). There Kelly argues that reasons to believe what the evidence supports are purely epistemic, while reasons to (say) act...}
What can we do if we want to say that \( Z = E \) (or at least that the epistemic and the zetetic are closely connected)? On the assumption that we want to avoid the result that this set of norms is inconsistent we’ll have to revise either \( Z \) or \( E \). More specifically we’ll have to reject norms like ZIP or reject the permissibility norms in \( E' \). Let me say a little bit about why neither path is especially easy.

On rejecting the permissibility norms in \( E' \). As I said earlier in the paper, these norms are so central to normative epistemology as we know it that rejecting them means a radical revision to contemporary epistemology. I have no problem with radical revision per se, but let me say a little bit about where this one seems to me to run into trouble.

To start, what’s left of contemporary normative epistemology if we reject even the sorts of permissibility norms discussed in this paper? None of the zetetic norms I’ve been focused on have so far come into conflict with a standard sort of epistemic constraint, e.g., one that prohibits believing in certain kinds of (defective) epistemic circumstances. So perhaps these sorts of familiar epistemic constraints are still on the table. We need to be careful though: in order to avoid inconsistency the absence of an epistemic constraint against believing \( p \) cannot entail that it’s epistemically permissible to believe \( p \). This is not an entirely comfortable set of normative commitments. Here is one way to bring this out. This “constraints only” picture seems to leave us having to say that there is no case in which \( S \) is justified in believing \( p \) but so believing was epistemically permissible; and that there is no case in which \( S \) knows \( p \), but that knowing or their coming to know is or was epistemically permissible. Of course this isn’t because knowing or justifiably believing is always epistemically impermissible, but because these things are neither epistemically permissible nor impermissible. Still, this doesn’t feel like a great landing place.

Could we just deny ZIP? Perhaps, but not easily. Recall, we got ZIP from two

to get more evidence on questions we want to resolve are not. It’s worth pointing out that if RES is a genuine norm of inquiry, then we have zetetic reason to believe what the evidence supports in many cases. Would that make RES epistemic for Kelly? I suspect he’d want to say ‘no’, but I think this question makes vivid how difficult it is to keep these different sources of normativity apart.

This should not be taken to mean that such conflicts will not arise. In fact the sorts of cases I discussed quickly in the introduction of the paper might be a start at some cases of tension even with these sorts of epistemic prohibitions.

If we say that there are epistemic constraints against believing but no epistemic permissions to believe then we have to endorse a position according to which normative epistemology is “gappy”, i.e., according to which there are some judgments or beliefs that are not epistemically prohibited, but not epistemically permitted either. See ? for some discussion of these sorts of normative gaps.
simple and compelling thoughts: that inquiry is a goal-directed activity and that goal-directed activities are bound by instrumental norms. I don’t see a ton of wiggle room here.

This is all to say that I don’t think that there is an obvious and non-revisionary path forward here. Perhaps there are some less obvious ones left, and certainly some of the revisionary paths are less revisionary than others. I do think that we should want to have the epistemic and the zetetic cohere, although it’s not clear in which direction we should move to make that happen.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Early in the paper I assumed that ZIP was a narrow-scope norm (and the others, too). Some prefer to think of instrumental principles or norms as wide-scope. If we were to think of ZIP as a wide-scope norm, we should think of it as issuing in a disjunctive demand: to either take the best means to resolving one’s inquiry or to not be inquiring. When we think of ZIP this way it’s not quite in tension in the same sorts of ways with our familiar epistemic norms since it doesn’t say straightforwardly that one ought to take the best means to resolving one’s inquiries.

What should we say about the cases at issue if we were to think of ZIP as a wide-scope norm? If ZIP were a wide-scope norm then there would be cases in which, according to our epistemic norms, making some judgment $j$ was permissible or even required, but according to ZIP it was impermissible to both be inquiring into some question and to make $j$. I take it that this is still a bad or strange result for the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic even if it’s not quite the same conflict. When one is inquiring into some question one can do what’s epistemically (say) required and not violate any zetetic norms now by giving up on one’s inquiry. This hardly seems like a like a reason to be sanguine: we can avoid friction between the epistemic and the zetetic now so long as we don’t inquire. Moreover, even if we don’t have quite the same conflict as we do when we take ZIP to be a narrow-scope norm, we have something of a conflict still. Given the sorts of cases we’ve been reflecting on all along and assuming a wide-scope ZIP, there would be all sorts of cases in which it would not be permissible to both be inquiring into some question and make some judgments, but from the perspective of our epistemic norms wouldn’t this combination be perfectly permissible? So while there’s more to say here, I don’t think that insisting that ZIP or other zetetic
norms are wide-scope offers very much relief.

One final thought on this set of issues. Let’s say one wanted to insist that ZIP was a wide-scope norm. What should we then say about the cases in which subjects have excellent reason to inquire or in which subjects ought to be inquiring into some questions? Plausibly in these sorts of cases the relevant requirements “detach” – these subjects ought (full-stop) take the best means to their zetetic ends. So even if one thought of ZIP as wide-scope, we could still generate the same sorts of tensions in cases in which subjects have good reason (etc.) to be inquiring. Again, it’s hard to find much relief here.

The thought that the project we’re engaged in when thinking about normative epistemology is the project of formulating or articulating a picture of rational inquiry is prima facie plausible. Isn’t theoretical rationality (at least in part) the rationality one displays in inquiring well? Part of the upshot of this paper is that the interaction between the epistemic as we currently think about it and the zetetic is far from harmonious. While I think that we have good reason for thinking of the epistemic and the zetetic as intimately connected, thinking more about the norms of inquiry makes clear that our familiar epistemic norms are also in tension with some central zetetic norms. That some judgment or belief is in impeccable epistemic standing is not a reliable guide to whether it’s an acceptable judgment to make in inquiry.

As I’ve tried to bring out, I think many of the obvious paths forward are somewhat bumpy. I don’t think this is at all the end of the story here. I think the epistemic and the zetetic must be very closely connected. That plus the thought that inquiry is a goal-directed activity plausibly calls for a revision to our standard epistemic norms, and perhaps even a radical one. The only alternative seems to me to involve denying that the epistemic and the zetetic are as closely connected as we might have hoped they would be. But if epistemic norms are not norms of inquiry then what are they, why should we conform to them?\(^{35}\)

\(^{35}\)Thanks very much to: Dave Chalmers, Daniela Dover, Katie Elliott, Josh Habgood-Coote, Harvey Lederman, Eric Mandelbaum, Jessie Munton, Susanna Siegel, Amia Srinivasan, Sam Scheffler, Stephen Schiffer, Michael Strevens, and Crispin Wright. Thanks also to audiences at: the Sedona workshop on pragmatic encroachment, the NYU Mind & Language Seminar, Princeton University, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, and the CUNY Grad Center.
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