THE EPISTEMIC AND THE ZETETIC

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DRAFT. COMMENTS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

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. Here is a simple and plausible hypothesis: our familiar epistemic norms are zetetic norms. While the zetetic may extend beyond the epistemic as it’s standardly conceived of these days, our familiar and traditional epistemic norms are norms of inquiry. Aren’t they?

In this paper I want to make some trouble for this simple and plausible hypothesis. In general, I don’t think that the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic is at all straightforward. Like many close relationships it looks somewhat fraught, in fact. In particular I’ll argue that our familiar epistemic norms are often in tension with and even regularly conflict with some central zetetic norms.

I’m going to say much more about how we might think about the 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

1Please ask if you want to cite it though.
2Thanks to Harvey Lederman for suggesting the term.
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 you won’t succeed.

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 as I’ve indicated 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. I don’t want to say that there is no way of thinking about “the epistemic” that keeps it in close harmony with the zetetic. I do want to say 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 seem to me some key zetetic norms. And with those in place I’ll be able to draw out the tension between
those norms and some of our familiar epistemic norms.

1 THE NORMS OF INQUIRY

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 epistemic norms (I’m often going to call these ‘traditional’ epistemic norms). One of the goals of this paper is to say more about the relationship between these two sets. My opening speculative thought was that it seems plausible that $E$ is a subset of $Z$. In fact, one might speculate that something stronger than that is true: that $Z$ and $E$ are identical. Part of the upshot of this section though is that this stronger thought is not right. I want bring out some central norms of inquiry that are not the traditional norms contemporary epistemologists have been focused on. This means that we should think that there are some norms in $Z$ that are not in $E$. $E$ may well be a proper subset of $Z$ but the sets are not identical.

The claim that that some of the norms of inquiry are not our familiar, traditional epistemic norms should not be confused with the more general claim that some of the norms of inquiry are not epistemic. If $E$ is the set of our familiar epistemic norms we can think of $E^*$ as the set of all epistemic norms: if some norms is epistemic, then it’s in $E^*$. On the quite plausible assumption that $E$ is merely a proper subset of $E^*$, that at least some elements of $Z$ are not elements of $E$ does not mean 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 seem to me to be some central norms in $Z$ so that we can think about how $Z$ interacts with $E$.

I want to start by drawing out what seems to me 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.

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2 Or a means as good as any other. I’m going to mostly talk about the ‘best’ means although I’m happy to allow for ties.
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) and (ii) before getting to the specific instrumental norm of inquiry. (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 moreover 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).

My thought about (ii) is 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, other things equal, to take the means to their end. I’ll flesh this out a bit more once our central zetetic norm is on the table.

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 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 of them go through even with milder demands, e.g., a demand to satisfy 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 \( Q^7 \) at \( t \) or not be actively investigating \( Q^7 \) at \( t \), while a “narrow-scope” ZIP says that one ought to take the best means to resolving \( Q^7 \) (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. 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.

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 \( Q^7 \) at any time during which one is inquiring into \( Q^7 \). It is only when \( Q^7 \) is an object of active investigation – when one is actively working on resolving \( Q^7 \) – that one ought to (other things equal) take the best available means to resolving \( Q^7 \). I’ll say more about active inquiry as we go.

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

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\[ \text{See Way (2010) for a good overview of the debate in the practical case.} \]
ZIP demands that we perform certain actions in certain circumstances. I take it that those can be bodily or mental actions. 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 (I'm assuming here and throughout that there is nothing more or less to judging than coming to believe).

Let's call a judgment that resolves a question a 'resolving judgment'. Since making a resolving judgment means coming to know something, we need to be in the right sorts of epistemic circumstances to make a resolving judgment. I think we should say that if someone actively inquiring into \( Q \) at \( t \) is in a position to make a resolving judgment with respect to \( Q \) at \( t \) then that's the available action that is the best means to their end of resolving \( Q \) 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 \( Q \) at \( t \), then if a judgment \( j \) that resolves \( Q \) 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 (\( Z \)). Say you do a Google search about zebra stripes. The answer is on the screen with the other search results. RES says that you ought to come to know \( Z \) at this point in your inquiry. This strikes me as a very plausible result. Of course there are other things you could do at that time instead of coming to know \( Z \): 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.

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4What counts as a resolving judgment? Since I'm assuming here that we resolve our inquiries when we come to know the answers to the questions we're inquiring into, I'm thinking of a resolving judgment as nothing more (or less) than a judgment that results in knowledge. If one thought it took more (or less) to resolve an inquiry though, this norm should still apply.

5The '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 \( Z \). It's not coming to know \( Z \) and so doing things instead of that that RES prohibits.

6Here and throughout I assume that 'ought' and 'permit' are duals, i.e., one ought to \( \varphi \) iff one is not
Or to take another example, say you want to know whether your neighbours’ kids are home \( (H^?) \), 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 \( H^? \). Again, there are other things you could do at that time, but plausibly if you’re actively aiming to resolve then you ought to draw the relevant inference when you’re in a position to.

If one ought to take the best available means to one’s end in inquiry (i.e., if ZIP is true), then if resolving judgments – when available – are the best available means to one’s ends in inquiry, then we ought to resolve when we’re in a position to. ZIP plus the claim that when available a resolving judgment is the best available means to one’s end in inquiry gets us to RES.

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 traditional epistemology given that ZIP and RES are elements of \( Z \), and bring out some tension between \( Z \) and traditional 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 about 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. 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 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.
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 this certainly isn’t meant to show that they are not epistemic nor, I think, that they are practical. 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 does not 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 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 (some of these went by briefly in the introduction). The cases to come are not like these though. So even if we think 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 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 the zetetic norms 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

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7For 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).

8Alston (1988) is a canonical articulation of the (putative) problem that the (putative) involuntariness of believing raises for normative epistemology. There is an incredibly rich literature that responds to this (putative) problem and makes space for genuine epistemic norms. For just a small
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 traditional 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 traditional 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:

\[ \text{EP}_j \quad \text{If one's evidence } e \text{ clearly and decisively supports } p \text{ at } t \text{ then one is permitted to judge } p \text{ based on } e \text{ at } t. \]

\[ \text{EO}_j \quad \text{If one's evidence } e \text{ clearly and decisively supports } p \text{ at } t \text{ then one ought to judge } p \text{ based on } e \text{ at } t. \]

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

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It's worth noting that Kolodny (2005) argues that all norms of rationality, epistemic or otherwise, should be thought of as “process requirements” rather than “state requirements”.

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.
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 almost no explicit discussion of the differences between these, e.g., 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 requirement and permission norms 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. With that assumption I think we should say that the norms just listed are absolutely central to traditional normative epistemology. Let me say a bit more about this. Just to flag for now: in this section when I talk about what subjects are permitted/required/have justification “to believe” I mean to be talking about the normative statuses of various acts of judgment rather than (just) the normative statuses of various states of belief.

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 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 $p$ based on that evidence.

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 has been 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\[11\] Before and since it has been 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 has epistemic justification to believe \( p \) then it is (at least) epistemically permissible to believe \( p \).[12] This sort of principle seems to be an instance of a generally plausible connection between justification and permissibility. If I was justified in unlocking the door, that seems to imply that unlocking it was permissible (at least). And plausibly many other popular normative notions we apply to forming and having beliefs seem to imply permissibility as well, e.g., warranted, rational, reasonable, and more.

So wherever we have epistemic justification we have epistemic permissibility. So where do we have epistemic justification? Again, one fairly popular account here is an ‘evidentialist’ one.[13] The evidentialist says (roughly) that one is justified in believing \( p \) so long as that belief is based in sufficiently good evidence. Not everyone agrees with the evidentialist’s claim that all epistemic justification comes by way of following one’s evidence, e.g., certain kinds of reliabilists about justification, but the claim that basing a belief \( p \) in adequate evidence is a way of ending up with a justified belief is as widely accepted as nearly any claim I can think of in epistemology. All we need for our purposes is the claim that if one comes to believe based on sufficiently good evidence, then the resulting belief is justified (and one was justified in making the judgment that led to that belief).

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 comes to believe \( p \) based on sufficiently good evidence for \( p \) then one has justification to believe \( p \); and, second, if one has justification to believe \( p \) then one is permitted to believe \( p \). This gets us to the thought that forming a belief based on sufficiently good evidence is epistemically permissible which is just what EP\( _J \) says (although I’ve replaced ‘sufficiently good’ with ‘clear and decisive’).

In fact many find the claim that forming a belief based in the evidence is always permissible to be true but too weak. 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 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 $p$ it seems right that believing $p$ is permitted. But is it also permissible to fail to believe $p$? Is it never the case that the evidence demands belief of us (rather than simply allowing belief but also allowing us to simply ignore the evidence and form no belief)? The thought that, yes, sometimes evidence demands belief 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 I don’t know of any discussions of exactly these norms in the literature, I think that these norms are at least as plausible as their evidentialist counterparts. Here is one way to get to them: if any subject who comes to know $p$ also has justification for believing $p$ (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; sometimes our epistemic circumstances demand that.

Let’s assume then that $E$, our set of familiar and traditional epistemic norms contains all of the norms just stated. I think we’ll find the relationship between $E$ and $Z$ fairly strained. After bringing that out I’ll think about what happens to the relationship between the epistemic and the zetetic if we have a more minimal notion of the traditionally epistemic. And after that I’ll think about $Z$ and more state-focused epistemic norms.


$^{15}$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).

$^{16}$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 – and you start reading your animal encyclopedia from ‘A’ and learning 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\(^{17}\).

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 such that you may not be doing anything wrong even from the perspective of inquiry. For instance, say that you also care a great deal about aardvarks. You also want to know more about them. And we can then imagine that once confronted with available information on aardvarks, you switch to actively inquiring into some questions you have about them. 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 a case in which you don’t stop being actively focused on resolving \( Z^2 \). It’s from that perspective that

\(^{17}\)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 principle that says: take any means to your end in inquiry.
the norms of inquiry bar you from making epistemically obligatory moves. 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 during the time at which you're doing your mental math there is other knowledge available as well via (say) visual and auditory perception. 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 then. 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 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

18A 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.
impeccable and result in our knowing more. We might think of these situations as 'zetetic dilemmas': epistemology says I must come to know as much as I can at every time, but the norms of inquiry will sometimes demand I not come to know some of that over the course of my inquiries, but do some other things instead.

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 and KO. 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 and KO. 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 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 between Z and a less demanding set of epistemic norms. Before that though I want to say a little bit more about the demanding epistemic norms.

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19 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 how 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 (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.
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} 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 you in fact come to know, the closer you get to the ideal 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\textsubscript{2} – 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 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\textsubscript{2}. 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\textsubscript{2}.

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 be 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 if we instead think of the case in which you just came to know h and ignored all of the other available information? Well, you would be a complete zetetic success (at least from the perspective of H\textsubscript{2}), but could be very far away from the
epistemic ideal. This is all to say that an almost completely successful epistemic subject can be an utter failure zetetically and a completely successful inquirer can be mostly a failure epistemically. 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. As I’ve said I do think that they appear all over the contemporary epistemology literature, so it’s worth being clear that rejecting EOj and KOj as genuine epistemic norms is a somewhat revisionary move. But given that norms like EOj and KOj are surely more controversial than their permissive counterparts, I think it’s important to think about interactions between the epistemic and the zetetic if we make the revision to the epistemic.

With that in mind let’s say that E' contains EPj and KPj but doesn’t contain norms like EOj and KOj. E' is less demanding than E. I claimed at the outset that E should be thought of as the set of our traditional epistemic norms. E' is what’s left of our traditional epistemic norms if you think they never demand belief of us. I think that there is still tension between the epistemic and the zetetic when we revise E in the suggested way now; that is, there is tension between Z and E'.

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 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 neighbour’s house, and more.

Kitcher (1990) might be thought of as making a case for the claim that a good scientific inquirer 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.
RES says you must come to know at least $h$ at $t$. As it stands it’s neutral on whether you may come 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 coming to know just those things about your neighbours’ furniture looks perfectly permissible from the perspective of $E'$, so it looks as though there’s still a tension here (although different than before). 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 $p$. 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 the relevant time if you just make the judgment that your neighbours have a Barcelona chair ($b$) at that time, but from the perspective of $E'$ just judging $b$ at that time is perfectly permissible. From the perspective of $Z$ just judging $b$ is not permissible but from the perspective of $E'$ that’s just fine. So we have $Z$ and $E'$ rendering conflicting verdicts in these cases.  

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 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

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21 Again, the duality assumption is doing some work here.
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, but \( Z \) often bars us from coming to know a great deal of what's available to be known.

One might wonder just how significant this tension is. 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 though. 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, it's not clear 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 permissible and also declare those judgments impermissible. This strikes me as a bad result. So something now very much hangs on the relationship 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

In this subsection we’ve been thinking about a fairly small set of epistemic norms, $E'$. $E'$ says that one is always permitted to come to know and always permitted to come to believe based on the evidence. Given the sorts of norms in $Z$, $Z \neq E'$ (also, $Z \neq E$). But again, we cannot conclude from those inequalities that $Z \neq E^*$. The claim that $Z$ and $E^*$ are identical is the claim that in general all epistemic norms are zetetic norms and all zetetic norms are epistemic norms. Nothing I’ve said so far tells against this identity either. In fact, I think there's a lot to be said in its favour.

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 this though. There is no consensus on exactly where the epistemic starts and ends.$^{22}$ Rather than try to decide the case, I’ll 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 (as we’ve seen).

First, on (a). As I’ve already said, it seems to me that we should be thinking of our traditional epistemic norms as norms of inquiry or zetetic norms. The alternative is to say that our traditional 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 the project of properly collecting 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 the norms we have so far focused on in epistemology don’t fit as comfortably as we might have liked into a more complete account of the zetetic. This doesn’t mean that these traditional 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

$^{22}$For some recent debate about the matter, see Cohen (2016) and responses.
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.

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 strangely myopic. Traditional 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 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.

Cohen (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.
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 questions we traditionally deal with.

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.

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\(^{24,25}\).

\(^{24}\) And if we think that \( E^* \) contains norms like EO\(_j\) and KO\(_j\) then we are regularly faced with epistemic/zetetic dilemmas, which seems to make the first sort of tension I brought out seem worse as well. In general, the more closely related we think the epistemic and the zetetic are, the worse the results here seem to be: they are tensions internal to a single source of normativity rather than between two independent sources.

\(^{25}\) I 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 will turn out 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:

**EP** If one's evidence $e$ clearly and decisively supports $p$ at $t$ then one is permitted to have a $p$-belief at $t$ (based on $e$).

**EO** If one's evidence $e$ clearly and decisively supports $p$ at $t$ then one ought to have a $p$-belief at $t$ (based on $e$).

**KP** If one is in a position to know $p$ at $t$, then one is permitted to know $p$ at $t$.

**KO** If one is in a position to know $p$ at $t$, then one ought to know $p$ 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 $E$. Say that in the course of your zebra inquiry you recognize your clear and decisive evidence that aardvarks eat ants ($p$) and come to know $p$. Once you do that your belief $p$ is based in clear and decisive evidence and you know $p$. Given this, from the perspective of $EP$ and $KP$, believing $p$ is permissible and from the perspective of $EO$ and $KO$ you ought to have that $p$-belief. According to our zetetic norms though, judging $p$ in the course of your inquiry was not permissible. But there are no judgments that are both permissible and not or required and prohibited now. $E_s$ and $Z$ have different “objects” with one set evaluating judgments and another beliefs, so we don’t have the same kind of tension that we have between $Z$ and the judgment-focused norms in $E$.

Avoiding friction between these sorts of state-focused epistemic norms and norms like ZIP and RES is not cost-free though. 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 \( t \).\(^{26}\)

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 could 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. With that inference we get back to the the same sorts of problems we had in the last section, only now focused on 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 its antecedent is true and consequent false. Most interesting for our purposes are cases in which judging \( p \) is zetetically impermissible, but in which the resulting \( p \)-belief is zetetically permissible; and cases in which some \( p \)-belief is epistemically permissible, but the judgment that delivered the belief was epistemically impermissible. These are fairly uncomfortable cases.

In these cases it’s not merely that being in some state is permissible_\( x \) but some route to the state is an impermissible_\( x \) route to take to that state – that seems fairly commonplace. Instead what we have now is the following: being in some state is permissible_\( x \) but any route to the state is impermissible_\( x \). 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_\( x \), but getting into the state – by any route at all – is forbidden_\( x \). This is a strange combination of normative properties. One might think that the

\(^{26}\)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.
best explanation as to why there is no permissible\textsubscript{x} route into some state is that being in the state is itself forbidden\textsubscript{x}. This speaks in favour of (1).

If one wanted to deny (1) without having to say that some impermissible\textsubscript{x} judgments lead to permissible\textsubscript{x} beliefs one might try to insist that (1) is false because there is a more strict divide between the epistemic and the zetetic and in particular that the former only speaks to beliefs and issues no normative verdicts about judgments at all, and the latter speaks only to judgments issuing no normative verdicts about beliefs at all. Going this sort of route involves saying that it is never the case that some judgment is epistemically permissible or impermissible and that it is never the case that a belief is zetetically permissible or impermissible. The epistemic is simply silent when it comes to our judgments and the zetetic silent when it comes to our beliefs. As I’ve already said, this seems quite wrong to me.

That said, even if one wanted to deny (1) and so avoid the sort of tension I brought out in the last section, I don’t think this means that \(E\) 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 \(E\) 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 \(E\), but making the judgment that led to that belief will have been impermissible from the perspective of \(Z\). For instance, according to \(E\), 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. This leaves us with a strange normative gulf between even our familiar state-focused epistemic norms and the zetetic norms we’ve looked at. We can’t just read the norms of inquiry off of our traditional epistemic norms. In particular, we simply cannot tell whether some judgment is permissible in inquiry by looking only to the epistemic permissibility of the resulting states. That it is epistemically permissible to have some belief tells us very little about whether it’s zetetically permissible to make the judgment that we will need to make to get us to that belief.

Moreover given that \(E\) 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 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 $E$: 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.\footnote{And as before, it seems to me that the closer the epistemic and the zetetic get the worse these tensions are as well. If all the norms under discussion now are of the same kind then we’ll regularly have zetetic/epistemic norms telling us (say) that we must be in some state but that we must not get into that state; or that it’s perfectly permissible to be in some state, but impermissible to get into that state. This does not make for a coherent source of normativity.}

So, while the relationship between $E$ 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.

As I said at the outset, I don’t think that the arguments in this paper show that there’s an insoluble problem, rather they present a challenge for normative epistemology as it is currently done. If the sorts of tensions I tried to bring out here are real, then I take it that we’ll want to do something to resolve them. I’m not entirely sure what to do at this point, but I want to say a little bit about what the
some of the natural paths forward look like to me and what we stand to lose and gain on each.

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 results 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 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.}

What can we do if we want to say that $Z = E$ (or at least that the epistemic and the zetetic are closely connected)? In that case I take it that we should want to avoid the result that this set of norms is inconsistent. Doing that means revising either $Z$ or $E$. In particular, at this point, it means rejecting norms like ZIP or rejecting 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 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, is there anything left of the traditionally epistemic if we say that even $E'$ is not a subset of $E^*$? There may be. For instance, there still seems to be room for some familiar sorts of epistemic constraints: ones that prohibit believing in certain kinds of (defective) epistemic circumstances. In order to avoid inconsistency though, the absence of an epistemic constraint against believing $p$ cannot entail that it’s epistemically permissible to believe $p$. One difficulty here comes in reflecting on what we should say about the epistemic permissibility of justifiably believing or knowing. It looks as though this “constraints only” picture leaves 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 to ZIP from two 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 dis-junctive demand: to either take the best means to resolving one’s inquiry or to not

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29This is not an entirely comfortable set of normative commitments. It means committing to the idea that normative epistemology is “gappy”, i.e., that there are some judgments or beliefs that are not epistemically prohibited, but not epistemically permitted either. See Von Wright [1991] for some discussion of these sorts of normative gaps.
be inquiring. When we think of ZIP this way it's not quite in tension in the same sorts of ways with traditional 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 traditional 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 didn't have the same conflict as we do when we take ZIP to be a narrow-scope norm, we would 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.

The thought that the project we're engaged in when thinking about normative epistemology is the project of coming up with 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. Again, I don't at all think this is the end of the story here. I

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\(^{30}\)The idea is that the norm should say that it ought to be the case that if one is inquiring into some question that one take the best means to resolving it. But then we can think of that conditional norm as a disjunctive demand to either take the best means or not inquire.
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?  

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