



# The distinctly zetetic significance of disagreement

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## Abstract

Recent debates about disagreement’s significance have largely focused on its *epistemic* significance. However, given how much attention has already been paid to its epistemic significance, we might well wonder: what significance might disagreement have when we consider other related normative domains? And, in particular, what significance might it have when we consider the broader *domain of inquiry*, or what some thinkers have called either the “zetetic” or “erotetic” domain? In response, this paper suggest three things. Firstly, it suggests how we might clarify the relations among the epistemic, erotetic, and zetetic domains of normativity, given their potential differences and incompatibilities. Then, it suggests that disagreement’s significance within inquiry can either be tied to erotetic norms or to either of two sorts of zetetic norms: vindication-directed or possession-directed norms. And finally, it suggests preferred answers to the question of what disagreement’s *distinctly* zetetic significance might be, given the participating inquirers’ ordinarily-conceived zetetic standings and how their sets of dialectically accessible evidence might compare.

**Keywords** Social epistemology · Disagreement · Inquiry · Zetetic · Erotetic · Dialectic

## 1 Introduction

Recent debates about disagreement’s significance have largely focused on its *epistemic* significance—that is, with how we can or should respond to our disagreements *epistemically speaking*, given both their nature, as well as our particular epistemic standings in relation to one another. As of yet, these debates have not reached a stable consensus. But, philosophers of language and social epistemologists have advanced the relevant literatures immensely. Clearer distinctions have been drawn concerning the nature of our disagreements (see Chalmers, 2011; Cohnitz & Marques, 2013;

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MacFarlane, 2014), as well as our epistemic standings in relation to one another (see Gutting, 2009; Lackey, 2010; Matheson, 2014). And furthermore, within the literature's dialectic, various positions have been outlined and debated concerning which responses are epistemically appropriate, given different sorts of disagreement (see Kelly, 2005, 2010; Christensen, 2007; Lackey, 2010).

However, given how much attention has already been paid to its epistemic significance, we might well wonder: what significance might disagreement have when we consider other related normative domains? And, in particular, what significance might it have when we consider the broader *domain of inquiry*, or what some thinkers have called either the “zetetic” or “erotetic” domain?<sup>1</sup> Might disagreement's significance differ even between these two relatively similar seeming domains if they are, in fact, different in some salient regard? And, if so, how?

In response, this paper will suggest three things. Firstly, following various past and more recent works on the domain of inquiry, it will suggest how we might construe the epistemic, erotetic, and zetetic domains of normativity, given their potential differences and incompatibilities. Then, pivoting to disagreement within inquiry, it will suggest that our responses to disagreement can either be tied to erotetic norms or to either of two sorts of zetetic norms—namely, those directed towards epistemic/alethic goods that need not be vindicated and those that must be vindicated. For reasons that will be made clear, preference will be given to zetetic norms directed towards epistemic goods that must be vindicated. And finally, it will suggest preferred answers to the question of what disagreement's *distinctly zetetic* significance might be, given the participating inquirers' ordinarily-conceived zetetic standings. In particular, what will be suggested is that *zetetically speaking* we should defer on our answers in disagreeing with zetetic superiors, although we can hold them *tentatively* for other purposes within inquiry; that we should remain steadfast in the case of zetetic inferiors; and that there are several possibilities for how we might respond to zetetic peers, depending on our locations within inquiry and how our dialectically accessible sets of evidence compare.

## 2 Locating the zetetic domain

At the onset, it might seem as if disagreement's significance within inquiry will simply end up being whatever epistemic significance it might have. However, depending on how we construe the domain of inquiry, this impression might ultimately be incorrect.

Traditionally, the epistemic domain of normativity has been cast as a fixed set of normative obligations, prohibitions, and permissions—norms, for short—regarding various epistemic goods, such as knowledge, epistemically justified belief, understanding, and so on. By ‘norms,’ we can follow Pollock (1987) among others in characterizing them shallowly as “general descriptions of the circumstances under

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear to what extent the “zetetic” domain overlaps with pragmatic conceptions of the domain of inquiry or what some have called the “erotetic” domain of raising and resolving questions. Friedman (2020) grounds my understanding of the “zetetic” domain, while Hintikka (1981, 1999) and Brozek (2011) ground my understanding of the “erotetic.” But, it is also important to recognize the work of pragmatists such as Peirce (1974), Dewey (2008 [1938]), Misak (1991, 2000), and Levi (2012) who all simply discuss the *domain of inquiry*. In Sect. 2, more will be said about what appears to constitute the differences between these domains.

which various kinds of normative judgements are correct” (Pollock, 1987, p. 61).<sup>2</sup> And, as for their bearing on the epistemic, we can simply extend Pollock’s characterization to account for what circumstances are required in order for a normative judgement to be correct about whether an agent has an attitude that amounts to one or another epistemic good. To illustrate, we can simply think of norms like:

**(Epistemically Justified Belief—Reliabilism):** Believing that <p> is epistemically justified when and only when that belief is, in fact, produced or sustained by a reliable process or method (Adapted from Goldman, 1979, p. 103).

But, to date, all sorts of epistemic norms have been suggested. Some regard the possession of various epistemic goods, others the transfer of such goods, and others still the vindication needed to acquire such goods.<sup>3</sup> But, even further, they have also fallen on either side of a number of distinctions. Among other things, some of these norms have been idealized, while others have been non-idealized; some have been internalist, while others have been externalist; some have been individualistic, while others have been collectivistic; some have been topic neutral, while others have been topic specific; some have been diachronic, while others have been synchronic; and moreover some of them have been straightforwardly action-guiding, while others have not.

In general, there is still a great deal of debate about which norms constitute the epistemic domain of normativity. But what is important to highlight for our purposes is that, while that domain is predominately construed as fundamentally concerned with epistemic goods and epistemic readings of the relevant normative vocabulary, the domain of inquiry can be construed as not only dealing in those sorts of goods and readings, but also in aesthetic, instrumental, moral, political, social, and even all-things-considered goods and readings as well.

There are diverging impressions, though, when it comes to what sorts of goods and readings are the most fundamental or even operative within the domain of inquiry—for instance, whether certain epistemic ones are or certain practical ones (see Dewey 2008; Flores and Woodard, 2023; Friedman, 2020; Kelp, 2021a, 2021b; Thorstad, 2021, 2022). But, within the literature, there is the growing impression that the zetetic domain, as the domain of inquiry, is a subset of the epistemic domain of normativity—namely, the subset which, despite being directed towards epistemic goods, primarily engages in instrumental readings of the relevant normative vocabulary (see Harman, 2004; Lord, 2020). Most prominently, this impression has been advanced by Friedman (2020) who treats the following as a core principle of the zetetic domain:

<sup>2</sup> Following Ober (2022), this construal of normativity is shallow because it only amounts to: “evaluation based on specifiable criteria” (Ober 2022, p. 11). So, unlike deep construals of normativity, the previous construal is neutral as to whether certain specifiable criteria are fundamental or mind-independently correct. However, within certain normative domains, there might be criteria that are relevant or irrelevant—or, given other overarching criteria, correct or incorrect.

<sup>3</sup> The language of ‘possession’ and ‘vindication’ are from Roca-Royes (2023), but my characterizations of them slightly deviate from her own. She maintains that vindication is being able to rationally claim one’s possession of an epistemic good, rather than being able to justify one’s belief, acceptance, answer, or what have you so as to acquire an epistemic good. She is an externalist about various epistemic goods—which might be right. But, I am trying to remain neutral on this much deeper question by simply making a distinction between epistemic goods that can be possessed without vindication, and those that can only be possessed through vindication. More will be said on this matter in the next section.

**(Zetetic Instrumental Principle (ZIP):** If an agent wants to figure out  $Q^?$ , then they ought to take the necessary means to figuring out  $Q^?$  (Friedman, 2020, p. 503).

To be clear, by ‘a core principle,’ I am somewhat speculatively reading Friedman as suggesting that (ZIP) is a—if not *the*—primary norm of the zetetic domain, in that it can not only recommend other subsidiary norms, but also various attitudes and actions. Less speculatively, though, she uses ‘ $Q^?$ ’ to designate a question. And, when it comes to the necessary means that we ought to take in figuring out a question, what she suggests is that they will range from cognitive to practical, depending on the nature of the questions asked. And lastly, by ‘to figure out,’ what she suggests is that this notion is a generic placeholder for whatever epistemic aim an inquirer might have. So, we can read something like: to settle the answer to a question in such a way as to produce knowledge, understanding, or some other epistemic good (ibid, 511). Accordingly, the ‘ought’ that she supplies in the consequent of her principle will have an instrumental reading, but it will only be directed towards epistemic aims and, thus, might admit of some form of epistemic reading as well. Granted, there is still a substantive debate on the exact nature of the zetetic domain’s normativity which I will comment on in a moment. But, even before that debate, there is another worry to consider—namely that, as a construal of the domain of *all* inquiry, Friedman’s conception of the zetetic domain and its core principle ultimately appears too restrictive.

If we treat the zetetic domain as a subset of the epistemic domain, then all inquiry will prove to be theoretical in nature—that is, directed towards some sort of epistemic good. But clearly agents often also engage in practical inquiries which, although likely to be involved, may not ultimately be directed towards epistemic goods, so much as the performance of some action or the achievement of some practical good. We can easily imagine, for instance, an agent who inquires for the sake of making their life better, regardless of the epistemic or alethic status of whatever might provide for such a life or what might result.

In response, though, what might be claimed is that all inquiries, although superficially different, are ultimately reducible to theoretical inquiries. For instance, if an inquirer is seeking an answer to a question, given certain ethical constraints and in order to make their lives better, then perhaps their question can be made to reflect as much, as in the following: “What is the best theory of mind to accept, given my ethical constraints?” In such formulations, the inquirer will be directed towards epistemic goods. But, it should be clear that, rather than being directed towards epistemic goods about which theory of mind is correct, the inquirer will instead be directed towards epistemic goods about which theory of mind is the best to accept, given their constraints. Regardless, the inquirer’s inquiry will amount to a theoretical one.

And yet, there are some practical inquiries that do not seem as if they can be genuinely construed as theoretical because of an inquirer’s particular aims and constraints. For instance, an inquirer might ask: “Do I bestow aesthetic value upon this painting or not, given the aim of making a decision, and a coin-toss as a decision-making procedure?” Clearly, the inquirer is asking a question and seeking to answer it—so, inquiring in some sense. But, as can be discerned, this sort of inquiry is also not directed towards any epistemic goods, so much as just a decision, given the inquirer’s

aim and decision-making procedure. Their decision might be construed as knowing what should be done in light of the inquirer's wanting to come to a decision. But, at face value, it still seems like a substantial stretch to construe this sort of inquiry as theoretical. The decision-making procedure is arbitrary and, moreover, the inquirer's aim is only to arrive at a decision, not to know what should be done in light of wanting to make a decision. So, given the inquirer's parameters, in what sense can their inquiry be genuinely directed towards epistemic goods, seeing as merely finding an answer at the end of their inquiry will do for them?

If anything, in defense of the zetetic's comprehensiveness, what might be responded is that what has just been described is simply not an inquiry. However, the problem with this sort of response is that we would then be committed to the claim that some instances of asking questions and seeking answers are ultimately not inquiries—which, as a consequence, appears to be deeply problematic and exceptionally difficult to justify independently. But equally we also do not need to fall back on this sort of response, seeing as there is a salient distinction that can be made. We can stipulate that only theoretical inquiries are the concern of the zetetic domain and simply accept that the zetetic domain is *not* the domain of all inquiry. And, in exchange, we can just stipulate that the “erotetic” domain is the domain of all inquiry, as some authors have already done (see Brozek 2011; Koralus, 2023; Rescher, 2000).

There is no significant cost to making these stipulations. We can straightforwardly accept (ZIP) as a core principle of the zetetic domain, and we can also accept the following as a core principle of the erotetic domain:

**(Erotetic Instrumental Principle (EIP):** If an inquirer wants an answer to a question,  $Q^?$ , given any set of constraints,  $\{x_1 \dots x_n\}$ , and in order to satisfy certain aim(s),  $\varphi$ , then they ought to take the appropriate means to answering  $Q^?$ , given  $\{x_1 \dots x_n\}$  and in order to  $\varphi$ .

(EIP) contains (ZIP) insofar as inquirers might have or supply particular sorts of aims and constraints to (EIP)—namely, epistemic aims and constraints which do not fundamentally disregard or undermine the seeking of those sorts of aims. Moreover, (EIP) can also accommodate the sorts of inquiries just described two paragraphs back. But most importantly, given these stipulations and principles, we can also broadly locate the epistemic, erotetic, and zetetic domains in relation to one another: the erotetic and epistemic domains will be independent domains that only partially overlap—but, where they do, there the zetetic domain will sit.

Granted, what is still an open question on this picture is what exactly the normative relationship between the zetetic domain, as the domain of theoretical inquiry, and the epistemic domain is—for as both Friedman (2020) and Thorstad (2021, 2022) have already noted, there appear to be substantive tensions between them. But at the very least, what should be clearer, given my proposal for the zetetic domain's position in normative space, is that there are different sorts of *subsidiary* norms, attitudes, or actions that might be called for, given an inquirer's particular constraints or epistemic aims. Sticking to norms, some of them might lean to the erotetic, as in the following:

**(Open-Mindedness):** “One ought not...have an interrogative attitude towards a question at a time while believing [a complete answer to that question] at that time” (Adapted from Friedman 2017, 303).

Others might lean to the epistemic, as in the following:

**(Weak Evidential Norm for Belief):** It is permissible to believe  $\langle p \rangle$  if you have good evidence for  $\langle p \rangle$ .

And, others still might be more straightforwardly zetetic in leaning both ways, as in the following:

**(Weak Reliabilist Norm for Belief-Formation):** Forming the belief that  $\langle p \rangle$  by a reliable and expedient belief-forming process is permissible.

But altogether, given different values being filled into (EIP), it should hardly be surprising that a diverse set of norms might result. And, no less seems to be true when particular epistemic aims are filled into (EIP) since, as it seems, the zetetic domain can also admit of a variety of norms, more or less epistemic/erotetic.

### 3 Distinguishing the erotetic and the zetetic significance of disagreement

Having put forward a location and characterization of the core principles for both the erotetic and zetetic domains, it will now be important to recognize their differences when it comes to what significance disagreement might have, and why preference will be given to the second for the purposes of this paper.

The reason is simple: the erotetic domain is far too varied to discern what significance disagreement might have across all possible inquiries, given its sensitivity to what questions agents might ask, what constraints they might recognize, and what aims they might seek to satisfy. For instance, all else being equal, the significance of disagreements like those between two inquirers who are inquiring into how likely it is for tornados to form in a particular area and who are unwavering in their aim to agree on how likely it is, are clearly going to differ quite substantively from the significance of disagreements like those between two inquirers who are inquiring into whether they should view more of Monet or Manet’s works in a museum, based on their wanting to indulge their aesthetic preferences, even if it means splitting up to view their favorite artists. In the first inquiry, the disagreement will obviously disrupt the agents’ agreeing on the answer to their question and will call for the agents to do something in order to rectify their situation (for example: for one of them to simply concede to the other, for them to double-check their work, and so on). However, in the second inquiry, the disagreement will simply call for the agents to split up and view their favorite artists separately. But, we can imagine all sorts of similarly contrasting cases. So, in theorizing about disagreement’s significance within the erotetic domain, it would appear to be a highly contextual affair.

In contrast, though, the zetetic domain appears to be less “anarchic,” given its ties to epistemic goods. On the one hand, there might be numerous ways that a theoretical

inquiry can or should proceed, given certain epistemic aims and certain constraints. But, on the other hand, there also seems to be more stability in disagreement's significance, given the sorts of aims that are proper to theoretical inquiries. As it seems, there are two general sorts. The first, which might be called "possession" or "cognitive" epistemic aims, are aims associated with epistemic goods that inquirers can come to *possess cognitively*, without having to vindicate them. And the second, which might be called "vindication" or "reflective" epistemic aims, are aims associated with epistemic goods that require inquirers to *vindicate* their attitudes in order for them to amount to such goods.<sup>4</sup>

Possession aims are paradigmatic *externalist* epistemic aims in that they pick out externalistically-conceived types of knowledge, epistemically justified belief/acceptance, understanding, and so on. Within the epistemological literature, the standard thought is that these goods do not necessarily require that we be able to access our grounds for them (in particular or in general) in order for them to amount to such goods. We can merely come to *possess* them in virtue of the positive epistemic/alethic qualities of the methods or processes that caused the underlying attitudes or the mere correctness of those attitudes. So, for instance, if my perceptual faculties are in fact perfectly reliable and I am never in "lucky" environments then, even though I am completely unaware of either of those things, the attitudes that I form as a result of them might—of course, depending on which accounts are proposed—amount to such externalistically-conceived epistemic goods.

In contrast, vindication aims are paradigmatic *internalist* epistemic aims in that they pick out internalistically-conceived types of knowledge, epistemically justified belief/acceptance, understanding, and so on. Within the epistemological literature, the standard thought is that we might come to have certain attitudes—but, in order for them to amount to such goods, they will need to be vindicated based on the positive epistemic/alethic qualities of the methods or processes that caused them. So, for instance, if my perceptual faculties are perfectly reliable, I am never in "lucky" environments, and I have at my disposal an experiment or some other form of evidence which can conclusively establish both things, then as it seems the attitudes that I form as a result of them can, if doubted or challenged, be vindicated and amount to various internalistically-conceived epistemic goods (again, depending on the proposed account).

In general, both sorts of aims seem to be proper to the zetetic domain, given how inquirers might structure their inquiries and the activities involved. However, two questions arise. Firstly, are these different sorts of aims proper to different parts or types of theoretical inquiries? And secondly, does disagreement's significance shift according to which is pursued?

To the first question, it seems clear that theoretical inquiries can differ substantively in virtue of why they are pursued and how we think they should proceed. Straightforwardly, some inquiries (or parts of them) will be possession-directed, while others will be vindication-directed. For instance, an inquirer trying to determine where their

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<sup>4</sup> These terms are drawn from, again, Roca-Royes (forthcoming), as well as Sosa (2001). Following Sosa (and, by extension, Descartes), I too am loosely thinking of the distinction primarily as that between the aims of *cognitio*, as associated with achieving epistemic goods from proper acquaintance, and the aims of *scientia*, as associated with achieving epistemic goods from proper demonstration.

keys are might only care to *know<sub>P</sub>* the answer to their question in the way that the relevant possession aim might require, while a group of particle physicists trying to determine whether the Higgs-Boson exists might care to *know<sub>V</sub>* the answer to their question in the way that the relevant vindication aim might require. Both inquiries are theoretical. Still, in the first sort of inquiry, the individual might come to possess their preferred form of knowledge about the answer to their question solely in virtue of the reliability of their memory regarding where they last left their keys or the reliability of their perceptions in surveying their immediate surroundings for their keys. But, in the second sort, the group might only acquire their preferred form of knowledge about the correct answer to their question in virtue of performing an experiment which can be conclusively vindicated as being a reliable method and which can also conclusively vindicate the truth of their answer in such a way as to rationally persuade anyone, however doubtful they may be.

Noticeably, what is different in how those inquiries are directed is that the first sort will only be directed toward some form of *cognitive success* as a result of certain conditions on our cognition and environments being met, whereas the second sort will be directed towards some form of cognitive success (as in the first sort), as well as the achievement of some *dialectical success*—namely, having conclusively, satisfactorily, or better vindicated, say, the reliability of our faculties and methods, as well as the truth or aptness of our answers. In this regard, the second sort of inquiry substantively involves dialectic, whereas the first does not. Crucially, by ‘dialectic,’ nothing unfamiliar should come to mind. All that I am referring to is the reflective process of discursive scrutiny or deliberation that individuals (or groups) can subject themselves to regarding their distinctions, faculties, methods, attitudes, answers to a question, and so on, in light of either favorable or unfavorable reasons, evidence, or arguments regarding them (see Brandom, 2022; Rescher, 1977; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004). But, in pointing to it, what is important is this: in distinguishing between theoretical inquiries (or parts of them), what seems essential is whether inquirers require themselves to seek some form (or degree) of vindication in dialectic or not. On the one hand, when they do, then vindication aims will be the proper aims of those inquiries and will require inquirers to achieve a certain dialectical success in order for their inquiry to be resolved. But, when they do not, then it is ultimately unnecessary to engage in dialectic, let alone to achieve some form of dialectical success, so much as to satisfy the conditions for a preferred possession aim.

Importantly, what is *not* being claimed is that dialectic is not a means by which inquirers can satisfy possession aims or that, in seeking possession aims, inquirers should not engage in dialectic. If anything, it seems that they very much can and should. But, what is substantively different is in what sort of role dialectic will play. For instance, in engaging in dialectic with fellow inquirers, it seems that, depending on the conditions for one or another possession aim, vindicating one’s attitudes to other inquirers in some way (or to some degree), may not be sufficient or necessary to satisfy those conditions. Still, the upshot of such engagement is that one might come to possess reasons, evidence, or arguments which will allow one to satisfy such conditions. And, in this regard, dialectic might often be a worthwhile activity to engage in because, by providing new resources to them, it might enable inquirers to achieve various possession aims. But, what should be clear is that, with possession



aims, dialectic only plays an incidental role; whereas with vindication aims, it plays a necessary one.

And so, to the second question, it seems that this difference will also be quite consequential for disagreement's significance within any theoretical inquiry. If inquirers are only seeking to achieve possession aims and are only incidentally engaging in dialectic, then as it seems their disagreements will only make a difference insofar as disagreement might have significance with regard to whether it undermines or supports inquirers' satisfaction of their possession aims. This picture has been at the heart of the existing literature on disagreement's epistemic significance. So, when the zetetic domain is concerned with possession aims, current debates about the epistemic significance of disagreement will be pertinent and, even further, decided when that debate is resolved. But, if inquirers are also or only seeking to achieve vindication aims through dialectic, then as it seems their disagreements might have some significance that does not simply reduce to the sort of significance that has already been widely discussed. It might have a distinct form of significance that is specific to the zetetic domain insofar as inquirers pursue vindication aims. But, what might that significance be?

#### 4 The distinctly zetetic significance of disagreement

Immediately, it should be clear that, even within the zetetic domain, inquirers will bear certain standings in virtue of how their resources compare to one another. Extrapolating from the epistemic literature, some inquirers will be superiors to others, others will be inferiors, and others still will be peers.

Within the epistemic domain, what determines our epistemic standings is the quantity and epistemic quality of the epistemic resources available to agents—so, their available arguments, reasons, information, cognitive capacities, methods, their intellectual virtues, and so on. The thought is that, whereas epistemic superiors and inferiors will be agents who are unequal in terms of their epistemic resources, epistemic peers will be agents who are *in some sense* equal in terms of those resources. Three construals predominate. Following Matheson (2014), we can either draw the relevant distinctions *narrowly* by construing epistemic peers as agents who, unlike epistemic superiors and inferiors, are in fact *exactly* equivalent in terms of their epistemic resources—or, we can draw them *broadly* by construing such peers as agents who, unlike epistemic superiors and inferiors, are in fact in an equally good epistemic position, in virtue of whatever their epistemic resources might be, to arrive at the correct answer to a question. However, following Lackey (2010), we can also draw these distinctions *ordinarily* by construing epistemic peers as agents who, unlike epistemic superiors and inferiors, are epistemically justified in claiming—in light of their evidence, reasons, cognitions, or the results of their methods *about* their epistemic resources—that they are in an *equally good epistemic position*, in virtue of whatever their epistemic resources might be, to arrive at the correct answer to a question.

Each of these construals will have zetetic counterparts insofar as the agents are engaging in some theoretical inquiry together and have the same epistemic aims at stake. However, it stands to be said: ordinary inquirers, such as ourselves, will often have practical resources and constraints that might affect our zetetic standings as

well. For the purposes of this paper, though, it will not be possible to specify all of the constraints that we, as inquirers, might face. So, for the sake of simplicity and brevity, it will broadly be taken for granted that we do not, among other things, have particularly lucky or unlucky circumstances, have direct access to each others' epistemic resources, or have ideal or infinite epistemic or technological resources. Moreover, for the sake of simplicity and brevity, it will also be taken for granted that we do not have any particularly pressing practical constraints either, whether they be in financial resources, time, interpersonal resources, or so on. But, in light of those assumptions and because our focus is on theoretical inquiries and inquirers directed towards vindication aims, Lackey's construal appears to be the most relevant, seeing as it bears most on inquirers who might challenge or question how their zetetic resources might compare in dialectic.

One modification will need to be made to her construal, though, since Lackey seems to externalistically conceive of epistemic justification when it comes to our claims or our confidences in our peerhood. At various points, she indicates that inquirers may not need to be able to present their evidence, reasons, arguments, and so on, in dialectic in order for their claims based on them to be made epistemically justified (see Lackey, 2010, pp. 320–323). Accordingly, a *version* of her construal will be adopted—one which recognizes that inquirers within dialectic must have their evidence, arguments, reasons, the reliability of their methods, and so on, available to them if they are called upon within their dialectic to vindicate how their zetetic resources compare in relation to one another. And of course, given different vindication aims on that front, inquirers' attitudes about how those resources compare might need to be established conclusively or only to some degree of vindication.

But, with this conception of zetetic peerhood, we can now turn to the two sorts of disagreements that we might encounter within vindication-directed theoretical inquiries in order to suggest what zetetic significance these sorts of disagreements might have within them. The first sort of a case to consider is one between a zetetic superior and a zetetic inferior:

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INQUIRY:** Jack is visiting Jill in order to discuss their research on Orkney's Ring of Brodgar. They are both trying to have satisfactorily vindicated answers to a question on how Orkney's Ring of Brodgar was constructed—say, satisfactorily vindicated so as to be epistemically justified in the eyes of the archaeological community. But, after presenting their evidence, reasons, and arguments, they have come to discover that they ultimately disagree. Jack claims that method *A* was crucial, while Jill claims that it was not. Their disagreement comes as a *slight* surprise for both of them, as they both have advanced degrees in Scottish Neolithic Archaeology and can reasonably agree that their cognitive capacities, aims, and intellectual virtues are equivalent and that they have both researched this question equally diligently for the same amount of time. However, both of them are also aware that, whereas Jill is a specialist on a dig team from University X and has studied the previous findings of past dig teams and has also studied the most recent data about the site from some of the most up to date technologies within archaeology, Jack is an amateur archaeologist who has mostly been going about his research independently and

has only studied the previous findings of past dig teams. They both make their evidence dialectically accessible to each other. But, both Jack and Jill recognize that Jack has far less evidence than Jill, and that what evidence he does have is less rationally persuasive than Jill's evidence.

Now, what this case should indicate is that, when it comes to the question under discussion, Jack is clearly a zetetic inferior to Jill, and Jill is clearly a zetetic superior to Jack. Yes, they have the same sorts of equally reliable cognitive abilities, have the same aim for their inquiry, and are equally diligent in inquiring. But, Jill works within the deliberations of a specialist team, has more methods/technologies at her disposal for gathering information, and has both more evidence and better quality evidence than Jack overall. So presumably she is going to be better placed zetetically than Jack on the question under discussion, all else being more or less equal—and, that being the case, it would also seem that Jack (as Jill's zetetic inferior) *should* zetetically-speaking accept that the evidence for his answer does not satisfy (nor has it gotten closest to) their vindication aim and should consequently defer to Jill's answer and reasons for it.<sup>5</sup> Of course, this is not to say that Jack cannot *tentatively* hold his answer for the sake of further inquiring into it (for example, why it is wrong or whether there might be further evidence that supports it) or that he must always defer to Jill in the future and for all subject-matters. For instance, perhaps, there is evidence which, upon further investigation, Jack might find which will be sufficient to achieve their vindication aim. And, perhaps, Jack happens to best Jill when it comes to Neolithic sites in Turkey and, given disagreements within that more specific subject-matter, Jill might be a zetetic inferior to Jack and should consequently defer to him when relevant disagreements arise. But clearly, so long as he is not in a better zetetic position than Jill in their inquiry on the Ring of Brodgar, it seems hard to deny that he should defer to her answer on this particular subject-matter—at least until he can make more evidence dialectically accessible that bests Jill's evidence. And, similar points can also be made for cases where one inquirer bests another as a result of their being more likely to have the right answer in virtue of their having better cognitive capacities, having better intellectual virtues, and so on.

But, whereas cases of the previous sort are more obvious when it comes to disagreement's distinctly zetetic significance, such significance is ultimately less than straightforward when it comes to cases where those inquirers are zetetic peers, ordinarily-conceived. Consider:

**SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY:** Bill and Hill are colleagues at University X who are both inquiring into whether, given any specifications, method A of nuclear transmutation is safe for reducing the radioactivity of certain types of nuclear waste. They are both trying to have satisfactorily vindicated answers to this question—say, vindicated so as to be epistemically justified in the eyes of the scientific community. But, having presented their evidence, reasons, and arguments, they have come to discover that they ultimately disagree in their respective answers. Bill claims that method A is safe, given certain specifications, while Hill claims

<sup>5</sup> For the case under discussion and others like it, I stand by this judgement. But, I do not rule out the possibility of cases where “zetetic renegades,” despite their zetetic inferiority, can rationally retain their initial attitudes (or claims) in the face of their disagreeing with a zetetic superior (see Frances, 2013).

that this method is not safe, even given those specifications. Their disagreement comes as a *big* surprise for both of them, as they both have advanced degrees in nuclear transmutation from the same prestigious university and can reasonably agree that their best available information, methods, cognitive capacities, aims, and intellectual virtues are broadly similar and that they have both researched this question equally diligently for broadly the same amount of time.

Now, as social epistemologists have approached this sort of case, the central question is: epistemically speaking, can Bill and Hill hold steadfast to their claims or must they conciliate with respect to them in some regard? But, as we are considering it, the central question is: zetetically speaking, how can or should Bill and Hill respond to their disagreement, given their vindication aims? And overall, what complicates this question is how many options seem available to Bill and Hill when it comes to advancing their aims within this inquiry. For instance, perhaps, conciliating with respect to their claims in some regard will advance those aims, albeit indirectly. But then again, perhaps, they can hold steadfast to them and instead they must *do* something else. The question is: what?

Roca-Royes (2023) has presented a promising direction. The following case is supposed to indicate how it might play out:

**COLLEAGUES:** Nell and Dell are two reflective and genuinely truth-pursuing academic colleagues who mutually, and on solid grounds, respect each other intellectually, and they have a shared cognitive project they each feel *equally* capable of accomplishing: that of knowing whether  $\langle p \rangle$ . After a period of joint, public reflection, which involves disclosing reasons of which Nell and Dell are already in possession plus gathering new evidence, Nell ends up forming the belief that  $\langle p \rangle$  (allegedly) on the basis of shared evidence E, and is surprised to find out that Dell holds  $\langle \text{not-}p \rangle$  (allegedly) on the same basis. The surprise is mutual. It is now shared, higher-order evidence that one takes E to be good evidence for  $\langle p \rangle$  and the other takes E to be good evidence for  $\langle \text{not-}p \rangle$ . . . . *Initially*, their disagreement was taken as providing higher-order evidence about what Nell and Dell take E to be good evidence for. *Subsequently*, however, and partly on the basis of their mutual recognition of their decent cognitive capabilities, the disagreement is quickly taken, instead, as (higher order) evidence that E constitutes strong-enough evidence for  $\langle \text{neither } p \text{ nor not-}p \rangle$ . This new piece of higher-order evidence overwrites the initial one. Nell and Dell start suspecting partly on this basis that E are not the real grounds for their respective beliefs. This is the point at which they cancel the mutual presumption of epistemic peerhood, on the basis of suspecting *evidential* (rather than cognitive) inequality. Their disagreement, rather than affecting their epistemic attitudes as to whether  $\langle p \rangle$ , is instead taken as revealing the need to do better at disclosing their reasons. It is *directly* subject to their will to engage in the task of disclosing their reasons, and both Nell and Dell respond accordingly to the felt call to engage in it. In the meantime, however, they remain (post-awareness of the disagreement) where they were (pre-awareness) with their beliefs as to whether  $\langle p \rangle$  (Adapted from Roca-Royes forthcoming, 5—[her italics]).

The crucial shift, then, is in what is called for as a result of Nell and Dell's disagreement. As Roca-Royes suggests, it is not that they must conciliate in terms of their respective attitudes; epistemically speaking, they can hold steadfast to them. Rather, it is that they should heed the call to *inquire further* about their actual evidence/reasons and do better at disclosing them within their dialectic.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, Roca-Royes seems to be suggesting that their disagreement has some zetetic significance.

Overall, this suggestion seems right. But, as the case is set up, there are several key assumptions being made that seem to affect to what extent it can give us the full gamut of what the distinctly zetetic significance of such peer disagreement might be.

First and foremost, the case is set up so that Nell and Dell are evidential equals in a narrow sense: they have exactly the same evidence. However, casting zetetic peers as evidential equals in this sense will substantively minimize the number of inquiries that this case will resemble. Of course, given the assumptions already made, we should avoid assuming too much more about inquirers and their inquiries. But, in all likelihood, most inquirers will have different sets of evidence from one another and particular conceptions of what they take their evidence to be. And as has already been suggested, in pursuing vindication aims within dialectic, inquirers will only be able to rely upon whatever evidence they can make dialectically accessible. Accordingly, rather than cast Nell and Dell merely as epistemic peers in virtue of their purported cognitive and evidential equality, as Roca-Royes does, I will revert to casting them as zetetic peers in the ordinary sense already specified. For simplicity, it will also be assumed that their cognitive capabilities, intellectual virtues, and practical situations are more or less equal. So, in effect, it will be assumed that Nell and Dell are zetetic peers who are able to reasonably agree (in light of their dialectically accessible evidence about each other) that they are equally likely to arrive (or to have arrived) at the right answer to their question, given their evidence and despite whatever specific differences their evidence might exhibit.

But secondly, Roca-Royes also assumes that one aim of Nell and Dell's inquiry is to know in a way that accords with a possession aim. So, prior to their disagreement, one of them might very well have met this possession aim, given all of their actual evidence. However, in making their actual evidence dialectically accessible, they seem to have failed to disclose all of it, and thus to have failed to achieve the relevant vindication aim. Roca-Royes does not specify what this vindication aim might be in particular—but what she does indicate is that the vindication of their attitudes will suggest that they are cognitively successful in such a way as to amount to knowledge, externalistically-conceived. And so, as the case suggests, Nell and Dell will have secured attitudes as a result of a possession-directed inquiry (or part of their broader one) before they will have disagreed with each other. And, it is only when their alleged evidence has been made dialectically accessible and when their disagreement arises that they will ultimately recognize that some form of vindication has not been achieved by either of them, given their attitudes and alleged evidence. But, not all inquiries proceed in this fashion. Sometimes, dialectic is initiated without attitudes being possessed as a result of a previous inquiry, seeing as claims or answers can sometimes be considered

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<sup>6</sup> For brevity, 'evidence' will refer here on out to such things as phenomenal or non-phenomenal evidence, reasons, arguments, methods, and so on.

tentatively until vindication is achieved. And sometimes, although not relevant for vindication-directed inquiries, dialectic is initiated without attitudes being possessed prior to it or with vindication aims in mind—sometimes, only possession aims are in mind and the hope of dialectic’s providing for them. So, in discerning disagreement’s zetetic significance, Roca-Royes’s case will need to be broadened to account for these other circumstances as well.

But lastly, Roca-Royes also seems to be assuming the Uniqueness Thesis regarding bodies of evidence—or, the view that:

**(Uniqueness Thesis):** For a given body of evidence and a given proposition, there is at most one doxastic attitude that any agent [at any time] with that evidence can adopt towards the proposition in question without being irrational with respect to it (Adapted from Kopec & Titelbaum, 2016, pp. 190–191).<sup>7</sup>

Otherwise, why would Nell and Dell suspect that the bodies of evidence that they have made dialectically accessible are not the totality of their actual evidence? In other words, why would they not think that their exactly equivalent bodies of evidence could just happen to support both of their attitudes? On this line of thinking, the Uniqueness Thesis would not be assumed, and presumably they could take themselves to be sound in agreeing to disagree. But, to date, this question is still an open one—so, Roca-Royes’s assuming the Uniqueness Thesis is somewhat speculative (see Douven, 2009; Kelly, 2013; White, 2005). And so, in what is to follow, I will try to remain neutral on the matter and not only consider scenarios where the Uniqueness Thesis is upheld, but also one where it is not.

Given those parameters, though, what should hopefully be clearer is that, when Nell and Dell disagree with each other—being zetetic peers ordinarily-conceived—the need to consider *where* they are in their inquiry and *what* evidence they have made dialectically accessible in favor or against their answers is that much more salient and might call for different zetetic responses. But, given Nell and Dell’s disagreement, their taking themselves to have met their relevant possession aims, their recognizing that they have made the same evidence dialectically accessible, and their upholding the Uniqueness Thesis, Roca-Royes’s suggestion seems right overall. To clarify, though, it seems that zetetically speaking (1) Nell and Dell should suspend judgement *cognitively* on *whether the evidence that they have made dialectically accessible for their attitudes is their actual or only evidence*; (2) they should consequently suspend judgement *dialectically* on *who might satisfy (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim*; and (3) they should *subsequently open a new line of inquiry* (either independently or together) into what all of their evidence might actually be and do better at making all of their evidence dialectically accessible to each other so that they can overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim. Let me clarify more, though.

Importantly, by ‘suspension of judgement’ or ‘suspending judgement,’ I am following Peirce (1877) and Friedman (2017) in treating it as a state (or the taking on of a state) of unsettledness about whether an inquiry (or some part of a broader inquiry) into some

<sup>7</sup> Following Kopec (2015), the ‘at most one’ in the formulation of this thesis is upheld because it makes the thesis logically weaker than if it were to use ‘exactly one.’ Perhaps, there are cases where there is no rational attitude to take toward a proposition, given a body of evidence.

question has been resolved. If we take it that an answer for a given inquiry has already been secured in accordance with either a possession or vindication aim (or both), then suspension of judgement regarding whether that inquiry has been resolved will have been overcome *in some sense*. But, if we take it that an answer for a given inquiry has not already been secured in accordance with either a possession or vindication aim, then it seems suspension of judgement will not have been overcome for that inquiry *in some sense*. ‘In some sense’ is emphasized in those claims because we might take it that a possession-directed inquiry (or possession-directed part of a broader inquiry) is resolved, but a related vindication-directed inquiry (or vindication-directed part of a broader inquiry) is still unresolved. This is why the distinction between *cognitive* and *dialectical* suspension of judgement arises. In such cases, it seems that a form of cognitive suspension of judgement has been overcome, but not a form of dialectical suspension of judgement.

So, back to the case above, the suggestion in more detail is that zetetically speaking neither Nell nor Dell should change or come to suspend judgement on their answers to the question under discussion *cognitively*—at least, as of yet. Rather, (1) they should suspend judgement *cognitively* on the question of whether they have made dialectically accessible all of their evidence for their answers; and (2) they should consequently also come to suspend judgement *dialectically* on the question of who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer. Again, both of them already take themselves to *possess* the right answer, given their evidence and their regarding themselves as having met some standard associated with a possession aim. But, given their position within their inquiry, either one of them might come to satisfy (or get closer than the other to) their vindication aim for their answer when all of their evidence has been made dialectically accessible. And, that being so, it seems that they *can* zetetically speaking retain their antecedent answers for the question under discussion *cognitively*, until they overcome their *cognitive* suspension of judgement on the question of what all of their evidence actually is. But, once they do have all of their evidence made dialectically accessible, then there is the question of whether they can overcome their *dialectical* suspension of judgement in virtue of their being able to discern who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer. And of course, if they can, then whoever satisfies (or has gotten closest to) the relevant vindication aim for their answer should retain that answer, while the other inquirer should either change their answer or only hold it *tentatively* in order to progress some other aspect of their inquiry or another inquiry altogether. But, if Nell and Dell find that their total sets of dialectically accessible evidence are still exactly equivalent, that they weigh their pieces of evidence the same, and that they still disagree, then either they should suspend judgment cognitively on the question of whether the Uniqueness Thesis is true or they should suspend judgement cognitively about what exactly their evidence supports.

If Nell and Dell are in cognitive suspension of judgement on the question of whether the Uniqueness Thesis is true (or deny it for independent reasons), then zetetically speaking it seems that (1) they should suspend judgement cognitively on the question of *whether their total sets of dialectically accessible evidence are sufficient for satisfying (or discerning who has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer*; (2) they should consequently suspend judgment dialectically on who satisfies (or has

gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; and (3) they should *put their dialectic on hold* and *seek new evidence* for their *particular answers* that might break the stalemate that their total sets of dialectically accessible evidence display. In the meantime, though, it again seems that zetetically speaking they *can* retain their answers cognitively—at least until they suspect that sufficient evidence has been discovered which will thereafter allow them to reengage in dialectic and overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer.

But, if Nell and Dell decide to maintain the Uniqueness Thesis and are in cognitive suspension of judgement about what exactly their total sets of evidence support because they recognize that their understanding of their evidence is insufficiently clear, then zetetically speaking it seems that (1) they should suspend judgement cognitively *about what exactly their evidence supports*; (2) they should consequently suspend judgement not only cognitively on their answers for the question under discussion, but also dialectically on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer. Further, (3) they should also *open a new line of inquiry* (either independently or together) into the precise nature of their evidence and what exactly is supported by it. In brief, the thought is that, given the opacity of their evidence and their consequently suspending judgement cognitively about what exactly it supports, it will now be an open question as to which of their answers are actually supported by their evidence. And so, on this scenario, it does not seem that zetetically speaking they *can* retain their attitudes since, as far as they can tell, their dialectically accessible evidence seems to go either way. And, until they can determine which of those answers their evidence actually supports, it would seem that the most that they can do is *tentatively* maintain their own answers in order to investigate what of their dialectically accessible evidence actually supports them and whether some set of that evidence satisfies (or at least gets close to) their vindication aim for one of their answers.

But, in terms of making evidence dialectically accessible, there is another scenario to consider. If Nell and Dell disagree, have already overcome their cognitive suspension of judgement on the question under discussion, have made differing sets of evidence dialectically accessible, but they recognize that they have not made *all* of their evidence dialectically accessible, then zetetically speaking it seems that (1) Nell and Dell should suspend judgement cognitively on whether their sets of dialectically accessible evidence are sufficient for discerning who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; (2) they should consequently suspend judgement dialectically on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; and (3) they should strive to make *all* of their evidence dialectically accessible in order to discern who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer. But, unlike the previous scenario, it seems that zetetically speaking Nell and Dell *can* once again retain their antecedent answers because they have yet to discern who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim, in light of their *complete* sets of evidence being made dialectically accessible. But, once all of their evidence has been made dialectically accessible, then either they will be able to overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim or, depending on how their total sets of dialectically



accessible evidence compare, they might need to follow the prescriptions from one of the previous scenarios.

However, where differences in their dialectically accessible evidence arise, so do new cases and zetetic prescriptions.

If Nell and Dell disagree, have already overcome their cognitive suspension of judgement on the question under discussion, have made exactly equivalent sets of evidence dialectically accessible, but acknowledge that they weigh the quality of various pieces of that evidence differently, then zetetically speaking it seems that (1) they should suspend judgement cognitively on *how they have weighted their evidence*; (2) they should consequently suspend judgement dialectically on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; and (3) they should also *engage in a new dialectic—with a new vindication aim*—about their particular weightings in order to determine which of them can satisfy (or can get closer to) that vindication aim, and thus potentially reveal who satisfies (or has gotten closer to) their prior dialectic's vindication aim. But, in line with several of the other scenarios already discussed, it seems that zetetically speaking Nell and Dell *can* retain their antecedent attitudes cognitively—at least, until their new dialectic is resolved and they can consequently overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement in their prior dialectic. But, also in line with the other cases, there is no guarantee that, by resolving this subsidiary dialectic, they will consequently overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement in their prior dialectic. If they do, then all the better—whoever satisfies (or has gotten closest to) the relevant vindication aim for their answer should retain that answer, while the other inquirer should either change their answer or only hold it *tentatively* in order to progress some other aspect of their inquiry or another. But, if they do not, then as in a previous scenario, they should put their dialectic on hold and seek new evidence to make dialectically accessible in order to do so.

Similarly, if Nell and Dell disagree, have already overcome their cognitive suspension of judgement on the question under discussion, have made all of their evidence dialectically accessible, but those sets of evidence turn out to be different and insufficient when it comes to satisfying (or for discerning who has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer, then it would seem that zetetically speaking (1) they should suspend judgement cognitively on the question of whether their total sets of dialectically accessible evidence are sufficient for satisfying (or for discerning who has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; (2) they should consequently suspend judgement dialectically on the question of who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer; and (3) they should put their dialectic on hold and seek new evidence to make dialectically accessible that will be sufficient for satisfying (or for discerning who has gotten closest to) vindicating their answers. Again, if they want their answers to be satisfactorily (or better) vindicated in the eyes of their peers and so as to amount to (or approach) an agreed upon epistemic good that requires vindication, then in a stalemate with a zetetic peer there appears to be good grounds to suspect that they have not met the relevant standards for vindication or of rationally convincing each other of who has done better, and thus they should inquire further. But, like previous scenarios, it again seems that zetetically speaking they *can* retain their answers cognitively—at least until they suspect that sufficient evidence has been discovered which will thereafter allow them to reengage in dialectic and

overcome their dialectical suspension of judgement on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer.

And lastly, if Nell and Dell disagree, have already overcome their cognitive suspension of judgement on the question under discussion, and have made all of their evidence dialectically accessible, but they can also reasonably acknowledge that their sets of evidence are different and are both equally rationally persuasive regarding the answers that they support, then zetetically speaking it seems that (1) they should suspend judgement cognitively *on which set of evidence they should prioritize with regard to their answers*; and (2) they should consequently suspend judgement not only cognitively on their answers, but also dialectically on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim for their answer. Further, (3) they should also put their dialectic on hold and seek new evidence that might overcome the stalemate in the rational persuasiveness of their dialectically accessible evidence and, by extension, their dialectical suspension of judgement. But, unlike the previous case, it seems that zetetically speaking they *cannot* retain their answers because they *can* reasonably acknowledge the equal persuasive force of each other's dialectically accessible evidence for their respective answers, as there is no other dialectically relevant tie-breaker. Granted, they might *tentatively* hold their answers in order to "do the evidential work on their behalf," so to speak. But, where they acknowledge the equal rational persuasiveness of their dialectically accessible evidence, then zetetically speaking it seems hard to discern why—other than some form of bias—they might settle on their particular answer nevertheless. As it seems, they will and should "feel the call" that Roca-Royes identifies to engage in inquiry further in order to genuinely overcome their cognitive and dialectical suspension of judgement.

Still, for all of the previous cases, it was assumed that both inquirers have already overcome their cognitive suspension of judgement on the question under discussion. But, what about cases where they have not? As it turns out, little changes when we stipulate that the inquirers have not already overcome it and are only engaging in dialectic over tentative answers. All that changes is that, for the cases calling for Nell and Dell to suspend judgement cognitively on the answers to the question under discussion, such suspending will no longer be called for, seeing as the inquirers did not overcome suspension in the first place.

There are still many more scenarios to consider, though, given more specific practical or epistemic constraints or conditions, including cases where the inquirers are unable to suspend judgement cognitively on their answers because of some form of cognitive limitation, where they are unable to inquire further due to a lack of resources (especially time or technological constraints), and so on. In the cases above, the hope has been to keep assumptions about such constraints or conditions to a minimum in order to better focus on what dialectic broadly tracks, given vindication aims—namely, the dialectical standings of the relevant inquirers, given their sets of dialectically accessible evidence and how those sets compare. And, in those regards, the above cases seem to cover the relevant ground not only for disagreeing individuals, but also for disagreeing groups upon substitution.

There are also interesting similarities and differences to briefly note between the responses suggested in the cases above and what has been suggested in the social epistemological literature to date about related cases of epistemic peer disagreement.

Firstly, peer disagreement in the cases above varies in its significance. In this regard, the distinctly zetetic significance of peer disagreement is akin to “Non-Uniformist” views, such as Lackey’s (2010) “Justificationist” view and Kelly’s (2010) “Total Evidence” view, regarding the epistemic significance of peer disagreement. On such views, peer disagreement does not call for a uniform response in all cases. Rather, it will vary according to what their disagreement adds to the inquirers’ individual sets of evidence or their justification for their confidences in one or another proposition (which may or may not be dialectically-accessible to them). Similarly, by focusing on inquirers’ locations within their inquiries, their dialectically-accessible evidence, and how their evidence compares, the distinctly zetetic significance of disagreement will also vary.

However, unlike those views and other views within the literature, the distinctly zetetic significance of peer disagreement does not appear to just come down to how we can or should respond *attitudinally*. Again, as Roca-Royes has already prominently suggested, non-attitudinal responses might be called for as well which will either further the relevant inquiry or potentially even resolve it. So, in this regard, it would also seem that the distinctly zetetic significance of peer disagreement is non-uniformist in two senses: it does not always call for the same response in all cases of zetetic peer disagreement, but it also does not always specifically call for changes in attitude, as it can also call for other inquiry-related actions.

But lastly and most importantly, what seems particularly unique about the distinctly zetetic significance of peer disagreement is that, insofar as inquirers are pursuing vindication aims within dialectic, there is always some attitudinal and non-attitudinal shift to be recognized and enacted in order to further our inquiries. Attitudinally, the peer inquirers in the sorts of cases presented above will always have to suspend judgement cognitively in something—but, it is not necessarily going to be in their answers to the question under discussion. In most of the cases above, it will be in their having to suspend judgement cognitively on something related to their sets of dialectically accessible evidence. But, for all of the cases above, inquirers will always need to suspend judgement dialectically on who satisfies (or has gotten closest to) their vindication aim and, in order to overcome that suspension, heed calls to inquire further in one way or another.

## 5 Conclusion

With those suggestions now made, the limitations of my approach and results should be reiterated. Firstly, what I have suggested is limited to disagreement’s *distinctly zetetic* significance—that is, its significance within *theoretical* inquiries that have vindication aims and dialectic as a necessary component. Secondly, I have also only focused on theoretical inquiries and disagreements involving *ordinarily-conceived* zetetic superiors, inferiors, or peers who primarily or ultimately have epistemic goods that require vindication as their aims. And lastly, I have also limited my suggestions for what disagreement’s distinctly zetetic significance might be to how we should respond in order to progress or potentially resolve vindication-directed theoretical inquiries. In this regard, I have only suggested shifts in inquirers’ attitudes and actions that are the most proximal within the dialectical situations just described in the previous

section and which are most in alignment with many of our background beliefs about how inquirers should (and have seemingly tended to successfully) operate within theoretical inquiries. I have avoided more speculative shifts which may or may not have positive long-term consequences for achieving their vindication aims within their inquiries.

But, in fairness, inquiry is a complex enterprise. So, although the distinctions and general prescriptions that I have suggested are limited in their scope, they are ultimately limited by design because of how vast the zetetic domain appears to be. Again, it is not only sensitive to what our aims are within our theoretical inquiries, but also to our epistemic and practical resources. And so, insofar as we have one or another aim (or set of them) and any constraints on our resources, different results might follow. But, at the very least, what has been offered should help us to better navigate discussions about inquiry in general and the zetetic domain in particular, and help us to better appreciate how inquirers should (and have seemingly tended to successfully) respond to disagreement within their vindication-directed theoretical inquiries.

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