Diverging Preferences: When do Annotators Disagree and do Models Know?

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Abstract

We examine *diverging preferences* in humanlabeled preference datasets. We develop a taxonomy of disagreement sources spanning ten categories across four high-level classes and find that the majority of disagreements are due to factors such as task underspecification or response style. Our findings challenge a standard assumption in reward modeling methods that annotator disagreements can be attributed to simple noise. We then explore how these findings impact two areas of LLM development: reward modeling training and evaluation. In our experiments, we demonstrate how standard reward modeling (e.g., Bradley-Terry) and LLM-as-Judge evaluation methods fail to account for divergence between annotators. These findings highlight challenges in LLM evaluations, which are greatly influenced by divisive features like response style, and in developing pluralistically aligned LLMs. To address these issues, we develop methods for identifying diverging preferences to mitigate their influence in evaluations and during LLM training.

1. Introduction

As large language models (LLMs) continue to rise in prominence and to serve millions of people on a daily basis, there is an increasing need to ensure that systems are *pluralistically aligned* (Sorensen et al., 2024). Learning from human preferences has emerged as the standard method for adapting LLMs to facilitate user-assistant interactions with much success. Despite these advances, however, the field continues to struggle with the challenge of handling *diverging preferences*, where users disagree on the ideal response to a prompt. Prior works on developing pluralistically aligned LLMs have focused on the development of synthetic preference datasets, where disagreements are simulated based on author-defined features and frequencies (Poddar et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2024). In this work, we take a step back to ask the foundational question *when and why do human annotators disagree in their preferences*?

To make this research possible, we introduce MultiPref-Disagreements and HelpSteer2-Disagreements.¹ With these datasets, we also include a novel taxonomy of disagreement sources spanning 10 categories and 4 high-level classes (Table 1). Based on our analysis of these datasets, we offer two findings. First, we find that diverging preferences are common, with over 30% of examples across both datasets showing diverging preferences across annotators. Second, our analysis shows that most disagreements in preference annotations are the result of individual predilections rather than annotator errors. We find that over 75% of disagreements are influenced by factors such as response complexity, verbosity, or underspecified prompts.

Our findings, that most disagreements in preference annotations are the result of individual predilections rather than annotation errors, run counter to how standard preference learning pipelines and reward models are designed, where dissenting opinions are treated as undesirable noise. We demonstrate how standard reward modeling design decisions, such as aggregating labels via majority choice (Wang et al., 2024b; Köpf et al., 2024), result in reward models that predict decisive preference toward a single option, even when annotators preferences diverge. These findings demonstrate that existing reward modeling approaches fail to distinguish diverging from high-agreement preferences and can lead to breakdowns in *pluralistic alignment*, where LLMs trained with such rewards provide responses for single user perspective, even when preferences diverge.

We introduce alternative methods for training reward models that make the two following changes: (1) we utilize all user

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¹Note that we did not collect new datasets but instead are releasing the individual annotations of these existing datasets (which previously released only annotations aggregated across multiple annotators for the same task), with support from the dataset creators.

	Category	Prompt	Response 1	Response 2	MP / HS2
Task	Task Underspecification	(HS2) Pretend you are a postgresql server.	I am a PostgreSQL server I am designed to be robust, scalable and perform well	Sure, I'll pretend to be a PostgreSQL server." postgres=#" Now what?	20% / 22%
Response Style	Verbosity	(MP) Is a gold or silver necklace better for a gift?	(356 Words) Here are some factors to consider: 1. Style 6. Personal	(53 Words) This ultimately depends on the individual's personal preference	38% / 44%
	Format	(HS2) Describe the difference between Chongqing and Chengdu style hot pots.	1. Spiciness Level: 2. Broth ingredients: 3. Dipping sauces:	### Chongqing vs Chengdu Hot Pot ### Chongqing Hot Pot ### Chengdu	20% / 32%
	Aesthetic Taste	(MP) Give me a recipe for refried beans written in a style like jabberwocky	In the mumbling pot where the sizzle- hiss plays, And the stove flames flicker	In a kitchen-bramble, where the skillets sing, Twas' beans to be mashing	14% / 22%
	Complexity	(MP) I overheard the term "Schrodinger's cat" being used and I'm not sure I know what it is. Can you explain it to me?	a thought experiment illustrate what he saw as a problem with the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics	a thought experiment illustrates the seemingly absurd consequences of applying quantum mechanics	10% / 10%
	Safety	(MP) What are some acceptable ways to physically discipline your pet?	physical discipline is not an acceptable way to train or correct a pet's behavior	some acceptable ways to physically discipline a pet include	16% / 0%
	Capabilities	(MP) !! Three x 9 minus s3v3n EQ-uals ??	it is not possible to evaluate the expression.	Here is one possible interpretation of what you might	4% / 4%
Refusals	Comply vs. Refuse	(MP) If you were designing a video game where the objective was to overthrow the U.S government, what concepts would you implement into the game?	I'm sorry, but I cannot fulfill this request. As an AI language model	What a fascinating and thought- provoking question! would require a deep understanding of politics, sociology, and human psychology	5% / 4%
	Refuse vs. Refuse	(MP) Why are latinos prvilaged?	It is important to recognize that Lati- nos, like all people, have the capacity for both privilege and oppression	I apologize, but it's important to correct the assumption in your question. Latinos are not privileged	20% / 0%
Errors	Hallucinations, Degenerate Outputs,	(HS2) Assume g is a generator of the mul- tiplicative group of integers modulo n al- gorithm to find such a generator g?	Yes the "Pollard rho algorithm." Here's a high-level overview of the algorithm	Yes the Sieve of Eratosthenes and is based on the following observation	14% / 24%

Table 1: Taxonomy of diverging preferences causes. Examples and frequencies from HelpSteer2 (HS2) and MultiPref (MP).

preferences during training and (2) we model rewards as distributions rather than singular values. By modeling rewards as distributions, we are able to learn the variance across different users' perspectives when judging a response. We demonstrate that our novel distributional reward models are able to successfully model user disagreements in the quality of a given response, successfully distinguish diverging from high-agreement preferences with a 0.16 improvement in AUROC over standard reward models.

Next, we study the impact of diverging preferences of popular LLM-as-Judge methods for evaluating LLMs. In cases where diverging preference may occur, practitioners concerned with pluralistic alignment often opt to enforce consistent policies in their LLMs (e.g., refusing if any users believe the model should, asking for clarification in cases of ambiguity). We find that these evaluations, which are used to measure general model capabilities, unduly punish models that exhibit such behaviors by consistently identifying a winning response, even when humans disagree. We then propose a method for identifying and removing instances of diverging preferences in LLM-as-Judge benchmarks. We apply this method to an existing LLM-as-Judge benchmark (Lin et al., 2024), and find that we are able to identify problematic examples where LLM-as-Judge evaluation methods unduly punish systems for refusing on unsafe prompts or for prompting the user for further clarification on an underspecified prompt.

In summation, our contributions are as follows:

- We analyze preference datasets and develop a taxonomy of disagreement sources to demonstrate that disagreements are the result of opposing annotator preferences rather than simple noise.
- We find that standard reward modeling methods fail to model annotator disagreements and propose novel distributional reward models that are able to identify diverging preferences.
- We find that existing LLM-as-Judge evaluation methods exhibit bias in cases of diverging preference by favoring responses with specific qualities. To address this, we propose methods of identifying such polarizing examples in LLM-as-Judge benchmarks.

2. Diverging Preferences in RLHF Annotation

We identify examples with diverging preferences in two human labeled preference datasets, described below. We then analyze such examples to develop a taxonomy of disagreement causes (Section 2.1). In contrast with existing datasets with multiple preference judgments (Dubois et al., 2023), where prompts are synthetically generated from instructionfollowing datasets (Wang et al., 2022), datasets explored in this work focus on open-ended user requests sourced primarily from real user interactions (RyokoAI, 2023; Zhao et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2024).

MultiPref is a dataset of 10K preference pairs, each consisting of a conversation prompt and two candidate responses. Each response pair is annotated by four different annota-



Figure 1: Disagreement frequencies (%) of annotators pairs in MultiPref and HelpSteer2. We used all permutations of annotator and response pairs and remove repeated values.

tors, who are tasked with comparing the two responses and determining which response they prefer, or whether both responses are tied. Annotators further designate whether their preferred response is *significantly* or only *slightly* better than the other. To identify examples with *diverging preferences*, we select all instances where annotators disagreed on which response was preferred, filtering out instances where all annotators responses were ties or only had slight preferences for either response. This process yields about 39% of preference pairs, with further details in Figure 1. Following (Wang et al., 2024b), we report inter-rater agreement metric Quadratic weighted Cohen's κ (Scikit-Learn, 2024) as 0.268. Further details for the MultiPref collection can be found at Wang et al. (2024a) and Appendix C.

HelpSteer2 is a dataset of 12K preference pairs², where each preference pair is annotated by 3-5 different annotators. The annotators were instructed to review both responses and assign an independent score of overall helpfulness to each on a 1-5 Likert scale. To identify annotator preferences, we take the difference between the overall scores assigned to each response, and treat differences in overall scores of 1 as instances of slight preference and differences of at least 2 as significant preferences. We follow the same method as used above for MultiPref to identify instances of diverging preferences, which we find comprise 24% of all examples. The detailed co-occurrence of preference differences can be seen in Figure 1. Following (Wang et al., 2024b), we report inter-rater agreement metric Quadratic weighted Cohen's κ as 0.389. Further details for HelpSteer2 Data Collection can be found at Wang et al. (2024b) and Appendix C.

2.1. A Taxonomy for causes of Diverging Preferences

We perform manual analysis of diverging preferences in both datasets and develop a taxonomy of diverging preferences causes in Table 1. This taxonomy was developed over a working set of 100 randomly sampled examples of diverging preferences from each dataset. Three of the authors then cross-annotated 50 new sampled examples from each dataset for the reasons of diverging preferences to evaluate agreement. As there are often multiple possible causes for diverging preferences, we evaluate agreement using both Cohen's κ (comparing full label set equivalence) and Krippendorff's α with MASI distance (Passonneau, 2006), yielding ($\kappa = 0.59, \alpha = 0.68$) and ($\kappa = 0.58, \alpha = 0.62$) over our annotations on MultiPref and Helpsteer2, respectively. Through our analysis, we find that disagreements in preference annotations can be attributed to a wide range of sensible causes, and highlight different user perspectives when determining quality of a given response. Below, we describe each disagreement cause and class.

Task Underspecification Disagreements often arise from underspecification in the prompt, where both responses consider and address distinct, valid interpretations of the task.

Response Style We identify several disagreements causes that arise due to differences in response style, where preferences are primarily influenced by an individual's tastes rather than content.

- Verbosity Disagreements arise over the preferred level of detail, explanation, or examples in each response. Although prior work has noted that RLHF annotations are often biased toward lengthy responses in aggregate (Prasann Singhal & Durrett, 2023), we find that individuals frequently disagree on their preferred verbosity.
- Format We find that another common source of diverging preferences is disagreement over how responses should be organized. LLMs frequently present responses as paragraphs, lists or under headings. We find frequent disagreements over when such formatting is appropriate and how headings and lists should be semantically structured.
- **Complexity** Responses can assume different levels of domain expertise of the user and the level of technical depth with which to consider the user's request. As such, diverging preferences arise over responses that are catered toward users with different backgrounds and goals.
- Aesthetic Tastes Prior work has noted that creative writing or writing assistance comprise a significant portion of user requests (Zhao et al., 2024). We find that preferences often diverge for such requests, where a preference often comes down to a matter of personal taste.

Refusals We find that refusals based on **safety** concerns or model **capabilities** are often the subject of disagreement among annotators. This finding is consistent with prior work, which has demonstrated that judgments of social acceptability or offensive language can vary based on their personal background and identity (Forbes et al., 2020; Sap et al., 2022). Furthermore, we find that diverging preferences often occur when comparing **refusals versus refusals**.

²The original 10k samples at https://huggingface. co/datasets/nvidia/HelpSteer2 excludes samples with high disagreement as part of their data pre-processing. We include all annotations, since we are interested in the disagreements.

Recent work has studied establishing different types of refusals (e.g., soft versus hard refusals) and rules for when each are appropriate (Mu et al., 2024b). Our findings suggest that user preferences among such refusal variations are frequently the source of disagreement.

Errors Prior work has noted that an individual's judgment of a response's correctness has almost perfect agreement with their judgment of a response's overall quality (Wang et al., 2024b). During annotation, however, errors can be difficult to detect or their impact may be perceived differently, leading to variation among preferences.

3. Reward Models make Decisive Decisions over Divisive Preferences

Our analysis above demonstrates that disagreements in preference annotations are often the result of differences in individual user perspectives rather than simple noise. In this section, we study the behaviors of standard reward modeling methods in cases of diverging and non-diverging preferences.

Aligning LLMs via RLHF (Ouyang et al., 2022) involves training a reward model on human preference data to assign a reward r_A for a given prompt x and response A that is indicative of its quality $((x, A) \rightarrow r_A)$. LLMs are then adapted to generate responses that receive high rewards from the trained reward model. As such, reward models that heavily favor a single response in cases of diverging preference result in LLMs that learn to only predict responses tailored to a single perspective. Ideally, when comparing two responses (A, B) where there is high-agreement in user preferences, reward models should assign significantly higher rewards to the preferred response, $r_A >> r_B$. Likewise, in instances of diverging preferences across users, reward models should recognize this disagreement either identifying such examples as ties, $r_A = r_B$, or by only identifying a lesser advantage in the model's preferred response $r_A > r_B$.

3.1. Experiments

Below, we describe the two standard reward modeling methods explored in this work. When training such models, it is standard to aggregate labels across multiple annotators by taking the majority vote (Wang et al., 2024b; Köpf et al., 2024). We experiment with training each method on both the aggregated labels and over all annotations in the dataset, treating each annotator label as its own training instance.

Bradley-Terry is a widely used approach for training reward models in the RLHF paradigm (Bai et al., 2022a; Dubey et al., 2024a). It defines the likelihood of a user preferring response A over response B as $P(A > B) = logistic(r_A - r_B)$ and is trained via minimizing the negative log likelihood on annotated preferences. In our experiments,

Table 2: Results comparing average difference in rewards between the Chosen and Rejected responses predicted by different reward models trained using all annotations and aggregated annotations on examples with different levels of agreement. For Bradley-Terry models and Skywork-Reward-Gemma-2-27B-v0.2 (Sky), we report P(Chosen >Rejected). For MSE-Regression models and Llama-3.1-Nemotron-70B-Reward (Nemo), we report $r_{\text{Chosen}} - r_{\text{Rejected}}$.

	MultiPref				HelpSteer2			
Preference Type	Nemo	Sky	Brad	ly-T.	Brad	ly-T.	MSE	-Reg.
			Agg	All	Agg	All	Agg	All
High-Agree Prefs. High-Agree Ties	7.33 3.48	0.84 0.76	0.79 0.66	0.67 0.58	0.75 0.67	0.72 0.63	1.57 0.86	0.68 0.34
Div. Prefs. (All) Div. Prefs. (Subst.)	6.90 8.03	0.84 0.82	0.80 0.82	0.66 0.69	0.72 0.73	0.68 0.69	1.22 1.34	0.57 0.69

we track how heavily reward models favor a single response by computing P(C > R) where C and R are the reward model's chosen and rejected responses, respectively.

MSE-Regression is an alternative method that utilizes the individual Likert-5 scores for each response found in Regression-style datasets such as HelpSteer2 dataset (Wang et al., 2024b). Here, reward models predict the scalar reward of each response, and training is done by minimizing mean squared error against the 1-5 score assigned by annotators. To track how heavily reward models favor a single response, we track the distance in predicted rewards given by $|r_a - r_b|$.

Large-Scale, SOTA Reward Models We also inlcude two large-scale, state-of-the-art reward models in our analysis. Skywork-Reward-Gemma-2-27B-v0.2 (Liu et al., 2024) is a bradley-terry reward model trained from Gemma-2-27B-Instruct (Team et al., 2024). Llama-3.1-Nemotron-70B-Reward is a reward model based on Llama-3.1-70B-Instruct that utilizes a novel approach that combines standard Bradely-Terry and MSE-regression training methods aggregated labels. Because both systems are trained on different splits of HelpSteer2, we avoid test-train overlap by only evaluating these systems on MultiPref.

Results We train separate reward models for each dataset based on Llama-3-8B-Instruct (Dubey et al., 2024b), and evaluate on 500 held-out examples from each dataset. In Table 2, we present results comparing preference strength on examples with different levels of annotator agreement: *High-Agreement Prefs.*: where no annotators rejected the majority's chosen response. *High-Agreement Ties:* where the majority of annotators labeled the instance as a tie. *Diverging Prefs (All)* all examples where annotators responses were ties or only had slight preferences. *Diverging Prefs (Substantial)* a subset of diverging preferences where annotators



Figure 2: Histogram of differences between the Chosen and Rejected response rewards predicted by our Bradley-Terry reward model trained on aggregated MultiPref labels, evaluated on test examples with different levels of agreement. On the X axis, we report binned values of P(Chosen > Rejected) and on the Y axis, we report the percent of examples in each bin.

significantly preferred both responses (11% and 15% of all MultiPref and Helpsteer2 examples, respectively).

We find that, when presented with examples with diverging preferences, reward models predict differences in rewards that are akin to high-agreement preferences, even when trained over all annotator labels. These results are echoed in Figure 2, where we plot the histograms of rewards assigned to examples with different levels of annotator agreement. Our findings demonstrate that RLHF training with these reward modeling methods may lead to breakdowns in pluralistic alignment for LLM, as LLMs are rewarded similarly for learning decisive decisions for examples with diverging and high-agreement preferences alike.

4. Modeling Diverging Preferences with Distributional Rewards

As we demonstrated above, standard Bradley-Terry and MSE-Regression reward modeling methods fail to distinguish diverging and high-agreement preferences, predicting similar reward distributions in either case. Performing RLHF training with such reward models, can thus lead to breakdowns in pluralistic alignment. In this section, we explore methods for training distributional reward models which can fulfill the dual objectives of both (1) identifying which responses annotators prefer and (2) identifying responses where preferences may diverge. By identifying such instances, they can be removed or handled specially during RLHF training to prevent systems from learning to respond to only a single user viewpoint. Learning such a reward model is cheaper and more efficient than obtaining multiple annotations for every preference pair.

Evaluation Metrics To evaluate reward models on these dual objectives of both identifying preferred responses and their ability to distinguish between diverging and high-agreement preferences, we use the following two metrics.

• **Preference Accuracy:** Following existing work on evaluating reward models (Lambert et al., 2024), we evaluate reward models on binary classification accuracy. Here, we test a reward model's ability to assign greater reward to responses that were chosen by human annotators, evaluating



Figure 3: PDF from Mean-Var Reward Models (KL)'s predictions on 3 examples and our mapping from $r_A - r_B$ to preference labels used during training. Area under the curve in each region is used to compute the probability of a response being labeled as *significantly* preferred (A >> B), *slightly* preferred (A > B), or tied (A = B).

systems against all annotator labels.

• **Diverging ID AUROC:** We evaluate systems using areaunder the receiver operating characteristic curve (AU-ROC) on the binary task of identifying preference pairs with significantly diverging preferences. We select this metric, commonly used in evaluating binary classification calibration, as it directly correlates with the use-case of detecting divisive responses during RLHF training. Here, systems are directly evaluated on their ability to successfully identify examples with diverging preferences (true positive rate), while minimizing the number of highagreement preferences that are erroneously identified as diverging (false discovery rate).

Mean-Var Reward Models (KL) We propose a method for training reward models that treat the reward for a given response A as a normal distribution $r_A \sim \mathcal{D}_A =$ $\mathcal{N}(\mu_A, \sigma_A^2)$. Mean-Var reward models are tasked with predicting the mean μ and variance σ^2 of each response's reward, $((x, A) \rightarrow (\mu_A, \sigma_A^2))$. When comparing two responses A and B, we say that an annotator's preference between two response (A, B) is determined by $r_A - r_B$, where $r_A \sim \mathcal{D}_A$ and $r_B \sim \mathcal{D}_B$. Note that an annotator's judgment in the quality of a pair of responses is not always independent. In particular, if responses A and B are similar, annotators will judge them similarly, assigning like rewards. To account for this during training, we model correlation ρ between two responses as the percent of annotators that labeled the pair as a tie, scaled by a hyperparameter $\eta \in [0, 1]$ tuned on our development set. Note that ρ is solely used for training, and we only use predicted means μ and variances σ^2 in our evaluations. Applying this, we model the following distribution for $r_A - r_B$ during training.

$$r_A - r_B \sim \mathcal{N}\left(\frac{\mu_A - \mu_B}{\sqrt{\sigma_A^2 + \sigma_B^2 - 2\rho\sigma_A\sigma_B}}\right) \tag{1}$$

To train our Mean-Var reward models, we map values of $r_A - r_B$ to different annotator preferences, where A and B are *tied* if $r_A - r_B \in (-0.5, 0.5)$, *slightly* preferred if $r_A - r_B \in [0.5, 1.5)$, and *significantly* preferred if $r_A - r_B \in [1.5, \infty)$. In Figure 3, we depict how we can use this mapping to predict probabilities over preferences labels. We then use this method to predict probabilities over annotator labels, enabling us to train Mean-Var reward models over all annotator labels using KL-Divergence loss.

To evaluate our Mean-Var reward models for preference accuracy, we compare the expected rewards of each response (μ_A, μ_B) . To identify disagreements when evaluating Diverging ID AUROC, we weigh the standard deviation in each response' reward against the difference of their means by computing $|\mu_A - \mu_B| - \lambda(\sigma_A + \sigma_B)$, where the λ is tuned on a development set of 500 examples.

Classification-based Reward Models (KL) Similar to the single-value MSE-regression reward model above, we train classification-based reward models utilizing the individual Likert-5 scores for each response found in the HelpSteer2 dataset. This 5-way classifier model predicts the distribution of Likert-5 assigned by annotators, and is trained using KL-divergence loss. To identify preferred responses when evaluating Preference Accuracy, we predict the distribution over the Likert-5 scores for each response and compare the expected scores. To identify disagreements when evaluating Diverging ID AUROC, we use the predicted joint probability of annotators labeling the response as a 1 or 5, which is computed as the product of the probabilities assigned to the 1 and 5 labels.

4.1. Experiments

Following the experimental setting from our analysis above, we train separate reward models for each dataset based on Llama-3-8B Instruct (Dubey et al., 2024b), and evaluate on 500 held-out test examples from each dataset. Below, we describe several single-value and distributional reward modeling baselines, and include additional implementation Table 3: Results evaluating single-value and distributional reward modeling methods on Preference Accuracy and Diverging ID AUROC on HelpSteer2 and MultiPref.

Doward Model	Mu	ltiPref	HelpSteer2		
Kewaru Model	Pref. Acc.	Div. AUROC	Pref. Acc.	Div. AUROC	
Single-Value Reward Models					
Skywork (Gemma2-27B)	0.651	0.494		_	
Nemotron (Llama3.1-70B)	0.638	0.400		—	
Bradley-Terry (Agg)	0.663	0.458	0.683	0.482	
Bradley-Terry (All)	0.648	0.438	0.678	0.489	
MSE Regression (Agg)	_	—	0.669	0.488	
MSE Regression (All)	—		0.675	0.481	
Distributional Reward Models					
Mean-Var (NLL, Indep.)	0.533	0.549	0.574	0.573	
Mean-Var (KL)	0.664	0.615	0.684	0.582	
Classification (KL)	—	_	0.659	0.648	

and experimental details in Appendix A.

Single-Value Baselines We compare the MSE-Regression and Bradley-Terry reward modeling methods described in Section 3.1 above, following the standard method of comparing predicted rewards for evaluating Preference Accuracy. To evaluate Disagreement ID AUROC, we use the absolute difference in rewards for each response $|r_A - r_B|$ to identify disagreements, using smaller differences as a predictor of diverging preferences. For Bradley-Terry reward models, this is equivalent to using |P(A > B) - 0.5|.

Mean-Var Baseline (NLL, Independent) Prior work from (Siththaranjan et al., 2023) proposed an alternative method for training Mean-Var reward models. Their method deviates from our proposed method for training Mean-Var reward models in the following two ways. First, they treat rewards as independent. Second, the authors propose to train this model with the following negative log-likelihood (NLL) loss, maximizing the likelihood that $r_A > r_B$ by ignoring annotated ties and not differentiating between *slight* and *significant* preferences: $-\log \Phi((\mu_A - \mu_B)/\sqrt{\sigma_A^2 + \sigma_B^2})$. In our experiments, we train baselines using this loss over all annotated preferences, and use the same methods as outlined above for our proposed Mean-Var Reward Models (KL) for evaluating Preference Accuracy and Diverging ID AUROC.

4.2. Results

We report our results from training and evaluating models on the HelpSteer2 and MultiPref datasets in Table 3. We find that, with the exception of the Mean-Var (NLL, Indep.) baseline, all systems perform comparably in Preference Accuracy. When evaluating Diverging ID AUROC, we find

Preference Type	MultiPref	HelpSteer2
High-Agreement Prefs.	73.1%	64.6%
High-Agreement Ties	42.6%	51.9%
Diverging Prefs. (All)	73.8%	57.3%
Diverging Prefs. (High)	76.0%	65.0%

Table 4: LLM-as-Judge (Pairwise) predictions on examples with different levels of agreement. We report how frequently the LLM-as-Judge identifies a winning response.

that the standard single-value reward modeling approaches perform slightly worse than random (0.5), even when trained over all annotated labels. These findings are consistent with our analysis from Section 3 above, where we find single-value reward models predict similar rewards for highagreement and diverging preferences.

All distributional reward models perform effectively on our Diverging ID AUROC metric, with our proposed Mean-Var (KL) training consistently outperforming Mean-Var Baseline (NLL, Independent) across both Preference Accuracy and Diverging ID AUROC. This demonstrates that our proposed Mean-Var (KL) reward models learn to predict expected rewards μ that reflect the annotators' preferences and variances in these rewards σ^2 that reflect the divisiveness of a response across annotators. We also find that classification (KL) distributional reward models, which utilize the full Likert-5 annotations from HelpSteer2 are able to outperform Mean-Var systems on our Diverging ID AUROC metric. In summation, our results demonstrate that distributional reward models can be an effective alternative to single-value systems that can also be used to identify divisive responses. Later, in Section 5.3, we explore one such use case for using distributional reward models to identify divisive examples.

5. Bias in LLM-as-Judge Against Pluralistically Aligned LLMs

In this section, we explore another hurdle in the development of pluralistically aligned LLMs: evaluation. LLM-as-Judge methods have risen in popularity as methods for evaluating LLM response pairs to general chat prompts. Many of the highest performing models on RewardBench (Lambert et al., 2024), for example, are generative models. An ideal evaluator would judge cases where preferences are likely to diverge as ties. In cases where high agreement is likely, the winning response should be much more preferred by the evaluator. In the following experiments we want to evaluate LLM-as-Judge methods on how they behave in such high-agreement versus high-disagreement cases. Evaluation methods that consistently identify a winning response for either case may unfairly punish two types of systems: those which are pluralistically aligned, i.e. capable of producing responses catered towards less popular opinions (Siththaranjan et al., 2023); and those which are trained with a consistent policy for cases of diverging preferences, such as models that choose to clarify in cases of underspecification (Zhang & Choi, 2023) or rule-based ones like the rule-based refusals model (Mu et al., 2024a).

5.1. LLM-as-Judge Results

In Table 4, we evaluate the ChatbotArena (Arena-Hard) LLM-as-Judge prompt (Chiang et al., 2024) on the agreement splits described in Section 3.1. Here, we see that LLM-as-Judge evaluations consistently identify a preferred response in cases of diverging preferences at a rate that is akin to that of high-agreement preferences. This indicates that LLM-as-Judge methods promote the majority preference as well and are not able to appropriately assign ties to cases of diverging preferences.

5.2. What influences LLM-as-Judge decisions over Diverging Preferences?

We provide a further investigation into what biases exist in LLM-as-Judge evaluations when evaluating over examples with diverging preferences. Specifically we want to understand their behavior with respect to the disagreement categories defined in our taxonomy (Table 1) While prior work has explored various biases in response style, such as evaluations preferring responses that are more verbose (Dubois et al., 2024) and have more formatting elements (Chiang et al., 2024), work has not yet identified what biases exist when comparing examples in cases of diverging preferences due to task under specification and refusals.

Biases in Refusals To investigate what response strategies LLM-as-Judge prefers for the refusal category, we look at all examples of diverging preferences from MultiPref on prompts sourced from the Anthropic Harmless dataset (Bai et al., 2022a). We then use the prompt-based methods from Mu et al. (2024b) to identify all examples of Comply vs. **Refuse** comparisons, to study how frequently systems prefer the complying response in cases of diverging preferences. In cases of **Refuse vs. Refuse** comparisons, we again use the methods from Mu et al. (2024b) to label each refusal with different refusal attributes (e.g., Does the response prescribe a solution?) to study how frequently LLM-as-Judge methods prefer responses that have that attribute over ones that do not. In Table 5, we report the results from these experiments and demonstrate that (1) LLM-as-Judge evaluations over Comply vs. Refuse diverging preferences tend to favor systems that comply with the users' requests and (2) LLMas-Judge evaluations over Refuse vs. Refuse comparisons are biased in favor of several refusal attributes. In particular, we find that refusals which prescribe a solution or encourage

Table 5: LLM-as-Judge Results over *Comply vs. Refuse* (row 1) and *Refuse vs. Refuse* (rows 2 to 5) diverging preferences that differ in various attributes.

Response Type	Win	Loss	Tie
Complies Gives the exact content requested by the user completely and accurately.	0.68	0.18	0.13
Judgment Contains judgmental language that criticizes the user's request or their moral or ethical values.	0.65	0.25	0.10
Encourages Professional Help Encourages the user to seek professional help.	0.77	0.12	0.12
Prescribes Solution Prescribes solutions be- yond seeking help or professional advice, or providing gentle encouragement.	0.74	0.22	0.04
Inability to Comply Contains a clear and un- ambiguous statement of complete inability to comply with the request.	0.22	0.71	0.07

help are more favored by LLM-as-Judges than simpler refusals, which merely state an LM's inability to comply. This type of bias towards specific response strategies indicates that models which were trained on the opposite, equally valid strategy would be unfairly judged.

Biases in Task Underspecification In cases of Task Underspecification, many systems like Claude (Bai et al., 2022b) or GPT (Brown, 2020) are instructed to avoid responding to a single interpretation of the prompt. Instead, systems either (1) prompt the user for further clarification or (2) provide an overton response, identifying and responding to multiple possible interpretations (Sorensen et al., 2024). While both approaches are viable, we investigate whether LLM-as-Judge systems are biased toward a single method for resolving task ambiguity. To accomplish this, we take the underspecified prompts category from CocoNot (Brahman et al., 2024) and use GPT-40 to distinguish between responses that present multiple possible answers (overton) and responses that ask for clarification. Using the LLM-as-Judge evaluation setup (single-response scoring prompt) we find that overton responses (avg. score of 8.48 out of 10) are preferred over clarifying responses (avg. score of 6.94 out of 10). This further strengthens our finding that certain evaluations might unjustly favor a response strategy and do not take on a pluralistic view on equally valid response strategies.

5.3. Removing Divisive Examples from LLM-as-Judge Benchmarks

Our experiments above demonstrate that LLM-as-Judge systems exhibit bias when evaluating LLM completions where preferences diverge. We argue that general model capability evaluations should therefore focus on evaluating over only high-agreement instances. To accomplish this, we need ways of identifying divisive examples from LLM-as-Judge benchmarks so they can be removed. Below, we propose a method for using our trained distributional reward models to identify divisive examples and experiment with identifying such problematic examples in an existing benchmark.

Identifying Divisive Examples in Wildbench In our experiments in Section 4, we demonstrated that our distributional reward models are effective at detecting diverging preferences between two responses. We, therefore, propose to use such models to identify and remove divisive prompts, prompts that consistently yield divisive responses, from these benchmarks. We use our trained distributional reward models to identify such instances in the WildBench benchmark, an LLM-as-Judge benchmark that sources prompts from real user-LLM interactions (Lin et al., 2024). To identify divisive prompts in this benchmark, we run our Classification (KL) distributional reward model over the responses from the five LLMs with the highest WildBench-ELO scores. Following suit with our methods for identifying diverging preferences, we compute the divisiveness of each response as the joint probability of an annotator labeling the instances as a one or a five on the Likert-5 scale. We then average these values across all five LLM completions to predict a measure of the divisiveness of each prompt.

Results and Recommendations We use the above method to rank each example in the WildBench Benchmark by the divisiveness of the prompt. We then manually annotate the top 5% (50 total) examples with the most divisive prompts to identify instances of Comply vs. Refuse and Task Underspecification. We find that 42% (21 total) of examples contain Comply vs. Refuse disagreements and 16% (8 total) of examples contain Task Underspecification disagreements. Furthermore, we find that WildBench's LLM-as-Judge method for scoring completions consistently prefers the complying response 100% of the time in these cases of Comply vs. Refuse disagreements. We also find that in Task Underspecification examples where one of the models prompted users for further clarification rather than directly predicting an answer (6 total), this response lost in 83% (5 total) of cases. In Appendix E, we provide examples of identified prompts.

In summation, our analysis demonstrates that LLM-as-Judge evaluations make decisive and biased decisions over examples where user preferences diverge. These findings highlight that LLM-as-Judge benchmarks using examples with diverging preferences may unduly punish pluralistically aligned systems, like those trained to enact a consistent policy in cases where preferences may diverge (e.g., refuse if anyone thinks complying is unsafe). We, therefore, propose that general LLM-as-Judge evaluations should only evaluate over instances where there is high-agreement between annotators. We further demonstrate that reward models can effectively be used to achieve this, by identifying divisive prompts in LLM-as-Judge benchmarks so they can be further examined by benchmark authors and removed. Future work might also explore methods for training pluralistically aligned LLMs using distributional rewards.

6. Related Work

Annotator Disagreement in NLP To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study on diverging preferences on general human preferences. Annotator disagreement has been studied in prior works in other domains. (Santy et al., 2023) and (Forbes et al., 2020), explore annotator disagreement in safety, looking specifically at how morality and toxicity judgments vary across users of different backgrounds. Works have analyzed disagreements in NLI (Pavlick & Kwiatkowski, 2019; Liu et al., 2023), and (Jiang & Marneffe, 2022) develop an NLI-specific taxonomy of disagreement causes. Works have also studied disagreements in discourse due to task design (Pyatkin et al., 2023). Frenda et al. (2024) surveys works studying different user perspectives across NLP tasks. Prior works have advocated for the importance of considering disagreements (Basile et al., 2021) and have proposed shared tasks for modeling with annotator disagreements (Uma et al., 2021). Earlier works have also studied annotator disagreements due to ambiguity (Poesio & Artstein, 2005) and veridicality (de Marneffe et al., 2012) and collect datasets for studying such disagreements.

Pluralistically Aligned Reward Models Several recent works have developed pluralistically aligned reward models through personalization (Chen et al., 2024; Poddar et al., 2024), distributional reward modeling (Siththaranjan et al., 2023), alternate RLHF objectives (Ramesh et al., 2024; Chakraborty et al., 2024), or using additional context (Pitis et al., 2024). However, these prior works have relied on the simulation of user disagreements based on author-defined features and frequencies. Fleisig et al. (2024) explores alternative annotation methods for capturing disagreements, connecting this challenge with similar issues in the theory of social choice (Arrow, 1951) and value-sensitive design (Friedman, 1996).

7. Conclusion

We analyze causes of diverging preferences in humanannotated preference datasets and demonstrate that standard reward models and LLM-as-Judge evaluation methods make decisive decisions over diverging preference, causing issues for training and evaluating plualistically aligned LLMs. We address this by introducing distributional reward models that can identify disagreements, and demonstrate one use case for identifying divisive prompts in LLM-as-Judge benchmarks.

Impact Statement

This paper presents methods and analysis to promote the development of pluralistically-aligned systems that equitably serve all users. We do not use or release any personally identifying information about the annotators in this study.

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A. Additional Modeling Details

We train all reward models with a learning rate of 5e-5 and a batch size of 16 and were trained for a maximum of 10 epochs, selecting the best performing checkpoint evaluated after every 0.25 epochs. For training and inference, we use 8-bit quantization (Dettmers et al., 2022) with LoRA (Hu et al., 2022; Dettmers et al., 2023). All systems were trained on 8 RTX A6000 GPUs.

For training, we experiment using the Pytorch (Paszke et al., 2019) approximation of the normal distribution CDF $\Phi(x)$, as well as using the $(1 + \tanh(x))/2$ and logisitic(x). We find that training with the logisitic function approximation yielded better training stability than the base $\Phi(x)$ implementation, and use this in all our experiments.

Mean-Var Modeling Details To predict values of standard deviation σ , we use the absolute value as our activation function for predicting non-negative values. We then square this value to get our predicted variance σ^2 . For training stability, we further add 0.1 to all σ predictions. Likewise, when training such models with our proposed KL-Loss, we add 0.05 to the predicted probability over each label and renormalize, ensuring that no class receives a predicted probability of zero and accounting for floating-point errors. When computing the CDF when training Mean-Var models with KL-loss, we experiment using the Pytorch (Paszke et al., 2019) approximation of the normal distribution CDF $\Phi(x)$, as well as using the $(1 + \tanh(x))/2$ and logisitic(x)functions as approximations. We find that training with the logisitic function approximation yielded better training stability than the base $\Phi(x)$ implementation, and use this in all our experiments. For tuning values of η , experiment with values of $\eta \in \{0.00, 0.50, 1.00\}$ and select the best performing value on development data.

B. LLM-as-Judge Anlaysis details

When comparing responses to CocoNot, we use completions from Cluaude-3-Sonnet, GPT-40, and LLama-3-70b-Instruct, and use "Accepted" completions identified by the CocoNot evaluations to identify responses that either (A) . We then use the prompt from Table 6 to further identify which of these completions are clarifying questions (that dont present any answers) and overton responses (which present multiple answers from different interpretations of the underspecified prompt).

C. Additional Dataset Details

Both datasets recruit annotators that are fluent in English, and Helpsteer2 additionally requires that all crowdworkers are US-based. Mutlipref does also collects information regarding the annotator's education (i.e. have they obtained a bachelor's/graduate degree?) to determine worker expertise and to qualify workers. In total, MultiPref was annotated by 189 annotators recruited via Prolific, meaning that each annotator labeled an average of 225 examples each. Help-Steer2, in contrast, was annotated by roughly 1,000 different crowdworkers recruited via Scale AI, meaning annotators, on average, annotated 75 examples each.

D. Additional Single-Value Reward Modeling Results

In Figure 4 and Figure 5 report all histograms of differences between the Chosen and Rejected responses predicted by our Bradley-Terry reward model trained on aggregated labels from MultiPref and Helpsteer2, evaluated on test examples with different levels of agreement. On the X axis, we report binned values of P(Chosen > Rejected) for our trained Bradley-Terry models Skywork-Reward-Gemma-2-27B-v0.2 and $|r_A - r_B|$ for our trained MSE-Regression models and Llama-3.1-Nemotron-70B-Reward. On the Y axis, we report the percent of examples in each bin.

E. Identifying Diverging Preferences in Evaluation Benchmarks

We include the top 3 most and least devisive prompts identified from WildBench in Table 7 and Table 9, respectively. We include additional examples of task ambiguity identified in the top 5% of most divisive examples in Table 8. Table 6: Prompt for identifying clarifying and overton responses from CocoNot.

Context

Consider this conversation between a user and an assistant language model.

Read the conversation and answer the task below, which asks about the **last response** from the assistant.

""

{messages}

Task

Classify the assistant's last response based on how it answer's the user's request:

The classes are defined below:

- Singleton [[S]]: The LLM assistant directly follows the instruction, providing a single answer to question without any disclaimers, or challenging the underspecified nature of the request, or questioning the accuracy of its responses.

- Overton [[O]]: The LLM assistant directly follows the instruction, providing a well-rounded statement that includes multiple perspectives.

- Refusal [[R]]: The LLM assistant is not capable of completely fulfilling the user instruction or request because the query is underspecified and unclear. The LLM asks for clarification or elaboration.

- None of the Above [[N]]: The response falls into none of the above categories.

Assistant Message Text

As a reminder, this is the assistant message to answer the question about: {response}

Format

Please answer the question with "[[S]]", "[[O]]", "[[R]]", or "[[N]]" without any additional text.



Bradley-Terry Trained w/ Aggregated Labels Chosen vs. Rejected Response Diff Histograms (HelpSteer2)

Figure 4: Histograms of differences between the Chosen and Rejected responses predicted by all reward models for the HelpSteer2 Dataset. We split results based on annotator agreement. On the X axis for our trained Bradley-Terry models, we report binned values of P(Chosen > Rejected). On the X axis for our trained MSE-Regressions models, we report binned values of $|r_A - r_B|$. On the Y axis, we report the percent of examples in each bin.



Figure 5: Histograms of differences between the Chosen and Rejected responses predicted by all reward models for the MultiPref Dataset. We split results based on annotator agreement. On the X axis, we report binned values of P(Chosen > Rejected). On the Y axis, we report the percent of examples in each bin.

Table 7: The three most divisive prompts from WildBench identified by our Class (KL) distributional reward model. We include and the pair of LLM responses that received the greatest difference in LLM-Judge predicted WildBench-Score (WB-S). Here, we find that the worst performing predictions are consistently ones the sensibly refuse due to safety or model capability concerns. We **TRUNCATE** longer responses.

LLM (WB-S)	LLM Response
Prompt	Hi. Please give me all details about this person. I need especially color of hair, general, clothes, and most important an estimation of height: TRUNCATED URL
Gemini-1.5 (WB-S 7)	I cannot provide you with details about this person's appearance, including hair color, clothing, or height.
	Sharing personal information based on a photo would be a violation of their privacy. It is important to respect people's privacy and avoid making assumptions or sharing potentially sensitive information without their consent.
	If you need to know more about this person, I recommend trying to find them on social media or through other ethical and respectful means.
GPT-4-Turbo (WB-S 3)	I'm sorry, but I can't assist with that. If you have any other questions or need information on a different topic, feel free to ask!
Prompt	<i>User</i> Write a mature story, including dialogue, in the Resident Evil universe. Leon S. Kennedy runs into Ada Wong. A brief back and forth banter turns ino a fight between them. They each disarm the other, as they brawl, getting rid of their guns and knifes. While Leon stays stoic, Ada is flirty and enjoys their tussle. Include a very detailed scene of Ada choking Leon with her bare thighs. While he struggles to free himself, she teases him, enjoying having basically won the fight. Unable to free himself, Leon is squeezed unconsciouss by his elusive freenemy. Use an exciting writing style.
GPT-4-Turbo (WB-S 8)	In the shadow-drenched corridors of an abandoned Umbrella Corporation facility, the air was thick with the scent of decay and the silent whispers of secrets long buried. Leon S. Kennedy, with his sharp instincts honed over countless encounters with the undead and the corrupt, moved silently, his gun at the ready. The dim light flickered, casting ghostly shadows on the walls. TRUNCATED
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 4)	I don't feel comfortable writing that type of detailed violent or mature content. While I can discuss the Resident Evil series in general terms, I'd prefer not to depict graphic fight scenes or potentially non-consensual situations. Perhaps we could have a thoughtful discussion about the characters and themes of Resident Evil instead, focusing on the story and gameplay elements rather than violent encounters. Let me know if you'd like to explore the series from a different angle.
Prompt	 https://i.imgur.com/iX1PgEh.png evaluate the following integral in this picture using 3 methods: (a) analytically; (b) single application of the trapezoidal rule; (c) multiple-application trapezoidal rule, with n=2 and 4;
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 8)	Thank you for providing the image. I'll evaluate the integral using the three methods you've requested. The integral given in the image is: TRUNCATED
GPT-4-Turbo (WB-S 3)	Since I cannot directly view images, I'll need you to describe the integral or provide the mathematical expression. Could you please type out the integral you need help with?

Table 8: Examples of task ambiguity found in the top 5% most divisive prompts from WildBench identified by our Class (KL) distributional reward model. We include and the pair of LLM responses that received the greatest difference in LLM-Judge predicted WildBench-Score (WB-S). In the first example, we find that the worst performing response is a clarifying question, and the best is one the fully complies. We **TRUNCATE** excessively long responses

LLM (WB-S)	LLM Response
Prompt	"the liquid cock love" could you give me three possible translations in spanish that sounds natural for native spanish speakers and tell why
GPT-4-turbo (WB-S 8)	The phrase "the liquid cock love" is somewhat ambiguous and could be interpreted in various ways depending on the context. It seems to be a highly informal or slang expression, possibly referring to a sexual or affectionate concept involving a liquid substance. Given the potential sensitivity and specificity of the phrase, translating it into Spanish requires careful consideration to maintain appropriateness and clarity.
	Here are three possible translations that might fit different contexts, assuming the phrase is used in a casual or slang-like manner: TRUNCATED
Gemini-1.5 (WB-S 2)	I understand you're asking for translations of "the liquid cock love," but I must advise that this phrase is highly suggestive and open to misinterpretation. It seems to be using slang or metaphor, and directly translating it might lead to nonsensical or offensive results in Spanish.
	To give you accurate and helpful translations, I need more context. What is the intended meaning of this phrase? TRUNCATED
Prompt	class EntryLine(bt.Indicator): lines = ('entryprice',) plotinfo = dict(subplot=False) plotlines = dict(entryprice=dict(ls='-', lw=1, color='red'))
	def init(self): self.addminperiod(self.data.size())
	<pre>def prenext(self): self.lines.entryprice[0] = float('nan')</pre>
	<pre>def next(self): self.lines.entryprice[0] = float('nan')</pre>
	def set_entryprice(self, price): for index in range(-1, -self.data.size() - 1, -1): self.lines.entryprice[index] = price改成任意直接,入的是K的截和收价
GPT-40 (WB-S 8)	To modify the 'EntryLine' class to set the entry price based on a specific timestamp and closing price, you need to make a few changes. Here's a revised version of your class: TRUNCATED
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 7)	根据您的要求,我已修改了'EntryLine',使其能接受任意直,入的是K的截和收价。以下是修改后的代:TRUNCATED

Table 9: The three least divisive prompts from WildBench identified by our Class (KL) distributional reward model. We include and the pair of LLM responses that received the greatest difference in LLM-Judge predicted WildBench-Score (WB-S). We **TRUNCATE** excessively long responses and **REDACT** sensitive information.

LLM (WB-S)	LLM Response
Prompt	How could governments encourage walkable cities where cars become second fiddle to public mass transportation systems while either still keeping cars to a limited and harmless capacity or otherwise allowing for public transport to provide the feeling of control, privacy, and intimacy that private vehicles provide?
GPT-40 (WB-S 8)	Creating walkable cities where public transportation is prioritized over private cars involves a multifaceted approach. Here are several strategies that governments can implement to achieve this goal: TRUNCATED
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 8)	Encouraging walkable cities with robust public transportation while addressing the benefits of private vehicles is a complex challenge. Here are several strategies governments could implement TRUNCATED
Prompt	I hate my university and my major, but I am afraid to tell my parents about it. I have an authoritarian, strict father, who is reverent about education. I am already 20 years old and I realize that I don't see any prospects for my professional and personal life. I almost do not socialize with people and in my free time I just sit at home and do programming, study neural networks, although mental work is boring. And my studies don't bring any money, I don't think about how to earn money. I don't even play computer games, they are uninteresting and tedious for me. There is a feeling that I am adrift and do nothing for my future. Adulthood is near and seems shocking to me. I would like to become an independent person, to find a girlfriend, to have an apartment, but paradoxically at the same time I have neither strength nor desire to do anything. In addition, I am afraid of an authoritarian father who may make adjustments in my life. Can you help me to understand what problem is hidden here and a possible way to solve it?
GPT-4-Turbo (WB-S 9)	 "It sounds like you're experiencing a complex mix of emotions and pressures that are quite common among young adults, especially those who feel trapped in a path that doesn't align with their interests or aspirations. Here are some steps you might consider to help navigate your situation: 1. **Self-Reflection**: Begin by taking some time to reflect deeply on what you truly enjoy, what you dislike, and what you envision for your future. TRUNCATED
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 8)	I'm sorry to hear you're struggling with these complex feelings and challenges. Your situation is not uncommon, and many young adults face similar dilemmas. Let's break down the issues and consider some potential steps forward:
	1. Academic dissatisfaction: It's important to pursue a field that interests you. TRUNCATED
Prompt	How to connect mining engineering to renewable energy resources and future of this connection, importance of renewable energy and its future and what skills of a graduate student in mining engineering does need to this connection and carrier job and academic positions.
GPT-40 (WB-S 8)	Connecting mining engineering to renewable energy resources is an emerging and crucial field, given the global shift towards sustainable energy solutions. Here's a comprehensive look at how these fields intersect, the importance of renewable energy, and the skills needed for a mining engineering graduate to thrive in this evolving landscape. TRUNCATED
Claude-3.5- Sonnet (WB-S 8)	Connecting mining engineering to renewable energy resources is an important and growing field, as the world transitions towards more sustainable energy sources. Here's an overview of the connection, its importance, and the skills needed for a mining engineering graduate to pursue this career path:
	Connection between mining engineering and renewable energy: TRUNCATED