

Zetetic Seemings and Their Role in Inquiry

Verena Wagner, University of Konstanz (April 2023)

v.wagner@uni-konstanz.de

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Abstract

The paper addresses the nature of seemings in light of their role in inquiry. Seemings are mental states or events with propositional content that have a specific phenomenology often referred to as “felt truth”. In epistemology, seemings are mainly discussed as possible (non-inferential) justifications for belief. Yet, epistemology has recently taken a zetetic turn, that is, a turn toward the study of inquiry. I will argue that the role of seemings in epistemology should be re-assessed from the perspective of inquiry and deliberation. Seemings may fall short of justifying beliefs, but there is an important role for seemings in the zetetic realm, which may also explain why seemings lack direct justificatory force for beliefs. Seemings, so I will suggest, can provide normative reasons for performing certain zetetic tasks, but they cannot provide normative reasons for making up one’s mind about the inquired question. In this sense, the zetetic role of seemings can be described as guiding rational inquiry. I will suggest that a modified version of the so-called *Taking Evidence View* about the nature of seemings is best fitted to accommodate their zetetic role. Yet, contra existing versions of the Taking Evidence View, my modified account acknowledges that seemings are genuine experiences (of one’s evidential standing during inquiry) that are accompanied by the characteristic phenomenology of what is called a “feeling of truth”. By doing so, my modified version of the Taking Evidence View incorporates the (as I take it) most important feature of the rival *Experience View* of seemings.

Introduction

Seemings are mental states or events with propositional content that have a specific phenomenology often referred to as “felt truth”. In epistemology, seemings are mainly discussed as a possible justification for belief. Prominent ways of making seemings relevant for non-inferential justification are Jim Pryor’s (2000) Dogmatism and Michael Huemer’s (2007) principle of *Phenomenal Conservatism* (PC), both of which state that seemings provide at least some justification for believing the respective seeming’s propositional content. William Tolhurst (1998), Chris Tucker (2010), and others have defended similar accounts.

[S]eemings provide psychological and epistemic support for belief. (Tolhurst 1998, 295)

[W]hen it perceptually seems to you as if p is the case, you have a kind of justification for believing p that does not presuppose or rest on your justification for anything else. (Pryor 2000, 519)

If it seems to S that p, then, in the absence of defeaters, S thereby has at least some degree of justification for believing that p. (Huemer 2007, 30)

Necessarily, if it seems to S that P, then S thereby has prima facie (non-inferential) justification for P. (Tucker 2010, 529)

Various worries and objections have been raised against the view that seemings are mental states that can provide epistemic justification for beliefs. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on two objections here. The first is about the nature or reality of seemings as distinct mental states, and about a peculiarity in how they manifest: seemings are hard to identify via introspection in cases of justified belief but surprisingly easy to be spotted in cases of known illusions, fallacies, and false memories. The second problem concerns the justificatory force of seemings in cases of benign cognitive penetration, as in expert cognition. If a seeming that p can be caused by a justified belief in q, and q supports believing the target proposition p, then believing p would be justified both by the belief in q and additionally by the seeming that p. Thus, the justification provided by the q-belief would be counted twice: once directly, and once via the seeming it has caused. This is called the *Double Counting Objection* (Tucker 2013, 13n; Tooley 2013, 322n; Huemer 2013, 339n).

In this paper, I want to address the nature and justificatory force of seemings (as well as the two problems described above) from a different perspective, namely, that of inquiry. I want to show that even if seemings cannot provide epistemic justification for doxastic attitudes, they do not have to be analyzed as mere epiphenomena or even as non-existent. Seemings are real experiences, and they are important for belief formation in the sense that they play a crucial role in the sort of rational inquiry that typically leads to the formation of doxastic attitudes. In this contribution, I want to take seemings seriously as mental events that are experienced by subjects when asking questions and assessing possible answers. For this purpose, I will introduce the position of the Zetetic-Seemings Realist.

Seemings, so this position suggests, provide reasons for engaging in certain zetetic, that is to say, inquiry related tasks and thus play a governing role with respect to the overall aim of answering the question that is currently on one's research agenda. The realist position about zetetic seemings acknowledges that seemings are experiences of felt truth (or at least felt support for the truth) of a proposition. As such, zetetic seemings provide automatic feedback for inquiring subjects regarding their own evidential standing. This feedback is brought to consciousness during deliberation if there is a 'zetetic push,' a push to find the correct answer for a question that is mentally entertained. Since a seeming that p might be caused by undue optimism or wishful thinking that do not provide evidential support for p , its mere occurrence cannot provide epistemic justification for making up one's mind about the correct answer to the question at issue; however, experiences of felt support for the truth (or falsity) of a possible answer provide (in the absence of zetetic defeaters) justification for pursuing the seeming's content in inquiry, e.g., as a to-be-checked working hypothesis, as a new sub-question, or as an answer that can be provisionally ruled out.

The feedback that seemings provide for inquiring subjects regarding their own evidential standing is helpful for achieving a positive interpretation of Jane Friedman's *Zetetic Instrumental Principle*. By itself, ZIP does not give any guidance about when it is rational to engage in certain zetetic acts rather than others, e.g., when to gather new evidence, when to retrieve and re-evaluate stored pieces of information, or which possible answer to pursue first. Moreover, I will show that seemings, understood as psychological and justificatory support for zetetic activities, can deal with both problems mentioned above. Their zetetic role can explain the peculiar occurrence pattern of seemings (via the absence or presence

of a zetetic push), and it avoids the *Double Counting Problem* because cognitively penetrated seemings (of the benign sort) can justify zetetic activities without justifying beliefs.

In Section 2, I will address the two problems concerning the nature (the peculiar occurrence pattern) and justificatory force (*Double Counting Problem*) of seemings. In Section 3, I will introduce the zetetic turn and suggest that zetetic seemings are relevant for motivating and justifying zetetic activities and decisions. In Section 4, I will spell out the position of *Zetetic-Seemings Realism*, which suggests a view on the nature of zetetic seemings that is a fusion of the *Experience View* and the rival *Taking Evidence View*. Further, the realist position regarding zetetic seemings will explain the justificatory force of seemings and their role in justifying zetetic acts.

2. Epistemic Seemings: Two Problems

2.1. A Peculiar Occurrence Pattern

Seeming-realists emphasize the *phenomenal* character of seemings, which, they say, sets them apart from other mental entities: when it seems to S that p is true, S experiences p as revealing or recommending or representing its truth. Thus, if seemings exist as distinct mental events or attitudes with this special phenomenal character, it should be easy to point at occurrences of seeming truth. Chris Tucker formulates a typical objection from the point of view of someone who fails to find any seemings when introspecting (he ascribes this view to Timothy Williamson, 2007, 217):

I understand what a belief is. I understand what an inclination to believe is. When I introspect, I can find beliefs and inclinations to believe. But I don't have a grip of some sui generis propositional attitude thing you call a 'seeming,' and I can't find it when I introspect. (Tucker 2013, 5)

Admittedly it is not easy to “find” seemings via introspection, particularly when we look for them as entities involved in cases of justified belief. This is odd because that is where we would expect them to be if seemings have the role of justifiers for beliefs that dogmatists and phenomenal conservatives ascribe to them. If S believes that there is a cup of tea in

front of her because she visually perceives a cup of tea in front of her, it is not introspectively obvious that there is a *third* mental state involved – a *seeming* that there is a cup of tea in front of her – in addition to the perception and the belief.¹ Yet, contra (Tucker’s) Williamson, seemings are surprisingly easy to find via introspection in cases of known illusions where the corresponding beliefs would *not* be justified: a half-submerged stick in a water glass seems bent to us even if we know that it is not bent.

This effect is not restricted to perceptual seemings alone but can be found for memorial and for intellectual seemings as well. For example, S may unreservedly believe the conclusion of an argument because S believes in its validity and takes all its premises to be true. Nonetheless, S may lack any experience of felt truth with respect to the derived conclusion she has come to believe. The conclusion just does not reveal or recommend or represent itself as true to S. On the other hand, there are established solutions to theoretical problems that remain counterintuitive even when fully believed. Take the Monty Hall Problem², which makes it seem that the odds are equally distributed between the two closed doors. Even if one knows that one is statistically better off switching to the door that one initially did *not* choose, it still strongly seems to one that it is not so.

Similarly, S may recall her colleague’s room number without experiencing any ‘revelation of truth’ about the recalled information. It’s just a fact she remembers, but it does not specifically seem true to her (nor does it seem false). Yet, false memories may persist even in the presence of counterevidence and countervailing beliefs. Suppose that S has been caught in the tube with an invalid ticket that shows no sign of a stamp on it. Let’s further suppose S is shown the video tape that displays her walking by the stamping machine without using it. On this basis, S forms the belief that she didn’t validate her ticket. Yet, due to her false memory it still seems true to S that she has stamped her ticket. These cases show that we can find seemings, contra (Tucker’s) Williamson, but the context in which we find them is surely surprising.

Michael Tooley (2013) does not reject the phenomenon of ‘felt truth’ but he is unconvinced that such an occurrence of what he calls cognitive qualia presupposes the

¹ This may not be a problem for Huemer and Tolhurst who take perceptual seemings to be perceptions. However, many other seemings-realists distinguish between perception and perceptual seemings (see Tucker 2013, 7).

² The Monty Hall Problem is a puzzle about subjective probabilities. There are three doors, behind two of which a goat is waiting, whereas there is a prize behind the other one. The player doesn’t know where the prize is and picks one door. Instead of opening the chosen door, the gamemaster opens one of the other two and shows a goat. Now, the player is asked whether she wants to remain with her chosen door or switch to the other door.

existence of a state or event other than occurrent belief. He thinks that there is “no ground for postulating the existence of a fundamentally different type of mental state – a seeming” (p. 313). He takes it that the phenomenon of felt truth or assent can be fully explained if we replace “the everyday concept of belief by the broader notion of degrees of belief or degrees of assent” (p. 313). So how would degrees of assent (or credences) help to explain the peculiar cases of felt assent like in the bent-stick scenario? In those cases, Tooley could say, S assigns a high credence to the proposition that is backed by the evidence (the stick is not bent, it’s statistically better to switch doors, I did not stamp my ticket), but at the same time assigns a non-zero credence to its negation. The countervailing seemings might then be explained as cognitive qualia being produced by the latter credence. If this works, there is no distinct type of mental state required to account for the seemings.

This suggestion fails to explain the data for two reasons. First, it is psychologically plausible and perfectly rational that one assigns a credence of 0 to the proposition that the stick is bent (p) and yet have the seeming that it *is* bent. A credence of 0 certainly cannot account for the cognitive qualia. Second, even if we accept that S is rational in assigning a high credence to p and a non-zero credence to not- p , the low credence involved here would not be able to account for the strength of the countervailing seeming. It’s not the case that S has merely a *subtle* seeming that the stick is bent; rather, it strongly seems to her that the stick is bent. Likewise, it strongly seems to S that it doesn’t make a difference which of the two doors she chooses, and it strongly seems to S that she validated her ticket before using the tube. If credences come with a feeling of assent, the degree of the credence assigned somehow needs to be reflected in the degree of felt assent. Thus, low credences cannot explain why people experience a strong ‘revelation of truth’ in these cases despite their countervailing beliefs.

It is a peculiar feature of seeming-experiences that they are not reliably found via introspection for those cases in which subjects have justified beliefs, but can be spotted easily in cases of countervailing beliefs. A theory of seemings should be able to explain this datum, especially if it is a theory that distinguishes between seeming states and other states (here perceptions, memories, and intuitions) as that of Tucker (2013).

2.2. The Double Counting Objection

Another worry concerning views like PC accepts the existence of seemings as distinct mental states (at least for the sake of argument) but doubts the legitimacy of the epistemic justification that such states can allegedly provide in addition to other justifiers. It is plausible that seeming-states may be caused by other mental states. As Tucker (2013) points out, this is not always a bad thing. Trained ornithologists, for example, have seemings that are partly caused by their knowledge about birds. This is a benign form of cognitive penetration. Yet, this form of benign cognitive penetration creates a problem for the alleged justifying role of seemings. When it seems to the trained ornithologist that the bird over there is a hawk, and her seeming is caused by her expert knowledge about hawks, there are two justifiers at work that are interdependent. One is directly provided by her justified beliefs about hawks, the other one is provided by her seeming that the bird over there is a hawk, which causally depends on her expert knowledge. Thus, if seemings provide additional epistemic justification for belief no matter their causal history, the expert's knowledge about birds is somehow counted twice. Tucker (2013, 13) calls this an "illegitimate boost" of the overall justification for the respective belief.

It is plausible to think that this problem not only pertains to seemings in the context of professional expertise but is prevalent in many situations. Most people are well trained in identifying certain objects in their daily affairs, and it is plausible to think that their seemings are cognitively penetrated by their background knowledge and experiences as well. Thus, it must be asked whether there are any seemings that are *not* somehow cognitively penetrated (in the benign sense) and, if there are, how to tell them apart from those that are. How can we distinguish seemings that provide a legitimate boost from those that do not?

Huemer (2013) and Tucker (2013) suggest we must consider what the respective subject knows or believes about the (in)dependence of the two justifications. According to Tucker, if S reasonably believes that the two are fully independent, then the provided boost is legitimate, but if S believes them to be fully *dependent* it is not. Tucker correctly points out that the problematic cases are those in between, where subjects do not have any evidence about the (in)dependence of the two justifications. He may also be right that this problem is a general problem for any account of justification. However, the proposed solution that subjects must consider the interdependency of their seemings and other justifiers as their

potential causes does significant damage to the purported simplicity and intuitiveness of the project pursued by Dogmatism and Phenomenal Conservatism. Also, this move is rather surprising if one considers the objection usually levelled against higher-order accounts of seemings, which require reflection on one's own mental states, as 'over-intellectualized, or over-introspectivized' (Huemer 2013, 334). As I will show later (Section 3.3), the subject's consideration of the dependence relation between one's seemings and their causes comes naturally for a zetetic interpretation of seemings.

3. The Zetetic Turn

Epistemology has recently taken a zetetic turn, that is, a turn toward the study of inquiry (Friedman 2017, 2019, 2020; Staffel 2019; Thorstad 2021). I will follow Jane Friedman in taking inquiry to be a state of mind that is best characterized as mentally asking a question or as 'having a question on one's research agenda' (Friedman 2017, 308). A question can be characterized by the set of its complete, possible answers. Each complete, possible answer in the set closes the target question, but only one of the complete answer propositions is true: this is the *correct* answer.

The inquisitive mindset of asking a question is to be distinguished from the activity typically involved when a subject has the goal of resolving the question on her research agenda. To use a common example, a detective who investigates a crime is in the inquisitive *state* of mentally asking the question 'Who committed the crime?' and performs certain investigative *acts* like questioning witnesses and searching the crime scene with the overall aim of answering the target question. Friedman stresses that one can be in the *state* of inquiry independently of performing any inquiry-related *acts*, and vice versa. In support of the latter, Friedman introduces Detective Morse, who knows or believes that he himself committed the crime he has been called in to solve. He performs the necessary acts for the purpose of covering up his involvement, but without being in the relevant inquisitive mindset. Thus, the state of inquiry must not be confused with the actions that are typically performed to make progress in resolving the question on one's research agenda.

Julia Staffel (2019) suggests an additional distinction between 'inquiry' and 'deliberation': inquiry is the inquisitive *state of mind* that Friedman describes, while

deliberation is a mental *activity* or process of evidence assessment and evaluation. I will introduce the notion of *zetetic acts*, which includes all kinds of activities that are pursued by the inquiring subject for the purpose of figuring out the answer to the question on her research agenda. Zetetic acts include the deliberative tasks of evidence assessment and evaluation that Staffel suggested, but it is broader insofar as it further includes *all* activities (mental or otherwise) that are performed with the aim of making progress with respect to the target question. The notion of zetetic acts comprises activities as different as the mental act of opening a relevant sub-question (Who has an alibi? Who has a motive?) and the physical act of picking up objects at the crime scene. These acts, as different as they may be, are both zetetic in my sense if they are done for the purpose of resolving the question on the subject's research agenda (Who committed the crime?). Morse, who committed the crime himself, may act *as if* he inquires, but the actions he performs are not zetetic because they are not done for the aim of figuring out who committed the crime. Similarly, going for lunch in between questioning witnesses does not count as a zetetic act of the inquiring detective if she doesn't do it with the aim of resolving the question.

Subjects typically have various options for how to proceed and to structure their zetetic activities for resolving the target question. Some of these options will be more sensible than others, given that the time, cognitive capacities, and resources of zetetic subjects are limited. On these grounds, it is possible to assess subjects as more or less rational when engaging in certain zetetic tasks. Thus, it is plausible that zetetic decisions and acts are assessable by zetetic norms that differ from epistemic norms. Friedman suggests that inquiry is governed by the Zetetic Instrumental Principle (ZIP) which is an instance of the general norm of instrumental rationality applied to the end of inquiry:

ZIP If one wants to figure out $Q^?$, then one ought to take the necessary means to figuring out $Q^?$. (Friedman 2020, 503)

Compliance with ZIP can be approached from a negative and a positive side. On the one hand, rational subjects should *avoid* certain things in order to remain focused on the to-be-resolved question $Q^?$, and on the other hand, they should *do* certain things to reach their end of resolving $Q^?$ efficiently. Friedman is concerned with what subjects should avoid in order to comply with ZIP, because her aim is to point to a tension between zetetic and standard epistemic norms. To stay focused on resolving $Q^?$ within a given time frame, one

must avoid all kinds of distractions, also those that come in the form of Q^2 -irrelevant evidence one already possesses and Q^2 -irrelevant information one could easily acquire. Friedman argues that complying with ZIP means that “we should sometimes not follow our evidence, and we should sometimes not come to know things we are in a position to know” (2020, 503). She concludes that compliance with ZIP by avoiding Q^2 -irrelevant evidence is in tension with traditional epistemic norms, which generally permit the formation of beliefs based on whatever evidence one possesses or can easily obtain.

In this paper, I will not pursue the alleged tension between epistemic and zetetic norms that Friedman suggests. Thus, I will not be concerned with how epistemic and zetetic norms interact or how potential tensions can be resolved.³ Rather, I will be concerned with a positive approach to pursuing one’s inquiry. It is one thing to remain focused on the to-be-resolved question Q^2 by avoiding various distractions, as described by Friedman, but there are still many ways to actively pursue the aim of finding the correct answer to Q^2 . Being in the inquisitive mindset does not suggest any route by itself. Subjects who comply with ZIP by avoiding various distractions can still do better or worse zetetically: how to start, which possible answer to pursue first, which information to assess as potential evidence, what information to double-check, when to pause and think again, etc. Seemings, so I will argue, will be crucial for answering some of these questions. For this purpose, I will introduce the notion of *zetetic seemings* and the figure of a realist about zetetic seemings (the ‘zeemings realist’), who accepts that zetetic norms are distinct from epistemic norms but who focuses on the positive side of advancing inquiry. In the next section, I will introduce the realist position about the nature and justificatory force of seemings.

4. Zetetic-Seemings Realism

4.1. The Nature of Zetetic Seemings

The realist position about the nature of zetetic seemings suggested here is a modified version of the so-called *Taking Evidence View* (TEV) about epistemic seemings which is combined with the most striking feature of the rival *Experience View* about seemings. TEV is attributed to Earl Conee (2013) and Michael Tooley (2013). Both analyze epistemic seemings as involving higher-order mental states of taking oneself to have evidence for

³ See Friedman’s (2020) *Unity View* and, alternatively, Thorstad’s (2021) *Focal Point View*.

some proposition *p*. Their views differ in various respects, but they both take a seeming that *p* as involving the combination of two psychological facts: (1) a mental state the subject is aware of, e.g., believing or recalling that *q*, and (2) an inclination to believe (or a belief) that the state in (1) evidentially supports the target proposition *p*. Given these two facts, the subject is under the impression that she has evidence in support of the truth of *p*.

The to-be-suggested modified view adopts the idea of taking oneself to have evidence in support of *p* but is different from TEV in at least two respects. First, according to the seemings realist, the subject does not have to be aware of the mental state in (1). Second, the subject does not have to *believe* that the mental state is evidentially relevant for *p* but may rather merely *experience* herself as having evidence. The connection between the mental state that is potentially relevant for supporting *p* and the higher-order state that tracks this relevance is of a causal nature and gives rise to a specific experience of felt support. In accordance with TEV, we may well imagine a case in which *S*'s impression of having evidence for *p* is caused by *S*'s recalling that *q*, in combination with *S*'s believing that the truth of *q* is evidentially relevant for the truth of *p*. Yet, contra TEV, *S* may also be under this impression even if the described causal connection is not fully transparent to *S* and even if *S* cannot access the potentially justifying mental state. One may be caused by some (not yet occurrent) mental state (e.g., a stored belief that *q*) to *experience* oneself as having evidence for *p* even if one does not immediately know which mental state caused this impression and thus without knowing whether that state really qualifies as evidence in the first place. Often, subjects just have the raw feeling of having evidence for or against the truth of some proposition and cannot point to the respective mental state that has caused this feeling.

While this may sound mysterious, we must consider that seemings do not occur out of the blue but in the context of inquiry. If a subject has a question on her research agenda, the mind is prone to consider and evaluate possible answers. This happens automatically as a psychological response to questions that are open in thought. This psychological feedback mechanism is what I call the 'zetetic push'. Seemings are suggestions for correct answers to the question currently entertained that are pushed into consciousness. In this sense, a possible answer reveals (or recommends or represents) itself as the correct answer to the target question.

The zetetic perspective also helps with avoiding typical objections brought against TEV. Huemer (2013) charges higher-order theories of seemings that involve beliefs about other mental states to be psychologically ‘over-intellectualized, or over-introspectivized’ (p. 334). These accounts, says Huemer, cannot explain the immediacy of seemings and the passive character of the subject to whom the proposition presents itself as true. The modified version of TEV suggested here does not view reflection on one’s own mental states to be required for experiencing seemings. What is psychologically required is, to have a question open in one’s mind which is not overly complicated and does not require higher-order reflection. Subjects don’t have to think or ask about their mental states—they simply have a question on their research agenda, and as a result of the zetetic push, possible answers recommend themselves, caused by potentially relevant mental states. If everything goes well, this feedback is caused by mental states that really provide evidence for the truth of the possible answer, but this is not necessarily the case. To illustrate the modified version of TEV, let me introduce detective Zet:

Detective Zet

Detective Zet is called to a crime scene to start with her new case. Upon arrival, she searches the scene and talks to witnesses. Zet cannot determine what it is, but one witness, Will, just seems guilty to her. Thus, Zet decides to treat Will as if he were the prime suspect: Zet puts Will (but none of the other witnesses) under police surveillance and searches for potential links between Will and the victim.

Zet is following a hunch. Her seeming that Will is guilty is triggered by the inquisitive mode of asking who committed the crime. By having this question on her research agenda, her mind pushes possible answers into consciousness that are somehow connected to what she believes, experiences, has experienced, remembers, or wishes to be true. Zet experiences herself as having evidence in support of Will’s being guilty even if she does not yet know what it is that makes it seem so to her. When Zet reflects on her impression, she may become aware of what it was that led her to think that Will is guilty. She may realize retrospectively that Will was nervously picking his right ear and that her previous experience with guilty suspects behaving similarly caused her hunch.

This provides us with enough material to explain the peculiarity of seeming-occurrences. As experiences, seemings are fleeting mental events that are different from standing attitudes like belief. They don't show in introspection for cases where there is no question to be settled. Seemings are elusive experiences that show up if there is a zetetic push. Such a push is present in those cases where subjects focus on a *conflict* within their body of evidence (e.g., visual information of a bent stick vs the stick's actual straightness) which typically prompts re-inquiry and double-checking. Introspection into *unchallenged* beliefs does not prompt inquiry and, thus, no possible answer propositions are brought up to consciousness. Think of the unstamped-ticket case: It is plausible to think that S lacked any seeming about having stamped the ticket before she was challenged by the ticket inspector. Only due to the challenge does her false memory prompt an experience of having evidence of having validated the ticket.

The same process would occur if S *correctly* remembered having stamped the ticket in a situation where someone, let's suppose, secretly switched her validated ticket against an unstamped one. In response to the planted evidence, S might give up her true belief and question her sanity, but she would still experience herself as having evidence for having validated the ticket. Psychologically, it is the same situation as in the false memory case. It doesn't matter whether it is the seeming or the countervailing belief that is false. What matters for the occurrence of seemings is the zetetic push that is here provided by challenging evidence. Thus, it is not the falseness of the memorial seeming (or the falseness of the bent-stick perception) that accounts for the peculiar occurrence pattern of seemings. Seemings are not rationally assessable. They just give us prompts and hints about our own evidential standing. In the next section, I will turn to the justificatory force of seemings.

4.2. The Justificatory Force of Zetetic Seemings

Subjects who comply with ZIP by avoiding various distractions can still do better or worse in what they *do* (and not only *avoid*) zetetically. Some zetetic acts will be more rational than others because inquiring subjects have limited time, limited cognitive capacities, and limited resources. Zetetic decisions need to be made: how to start, which possible answer path to pursue first, which information to assess as potential evidence, what information to double-check, etc. The zeemings realist suggests that seemings provide zetetic reasons for pursuing

inquiry into their respective content proposition. For this purpose, the zeemings realist suggests the following zetetic version of PC:

ZPC If it seems to S that p, and p is somehow relevant for S's figuring out the currently asked question Q?, then, in the absence of zetetic defeaters, S has zetetic justification for pursuing p in her inquiry into Q?.

A proposition p is *somehow relevant* for S's figuring out the currently asked question Q? if p is or entails a possible answer to Q? that partially or completely closes Q?, or so S believes. *Zetetic defeaters* are reasons that speak against pursuing a particular zetetic path, e.g., information that pursuing this path would be too costly or too time-consuming, or is unlikely to deliver useful results. Epistemic reasons that are sufficient for *adopting* the belief that p can also be zetetic defeaters against pursuing p further in inquiry (provided that the adoption of a p-belief closes the relevant question). A subject can *pursue a proposition in inquiry* in multiple ways: one can inquire whether p is true, one can treat p as a to-be-checked working hypothesis, or one can temporarily rule out not-p in one's inquiry. Zetetic justification is practical justification with respect to zetetic tasks and activities.

Let me apply ZPC to the example of Detective Zet. Zet's zetetic decisions to treat witness Will as a suspect, put him under surveillance, and check out his connection to the victim are *motivated* by her seeming that Will is guilty. If there are no defeaters, Zet's zetetic acts are also rationally supported by her seeming. Zet would have a defeater if there were a more promising path to pursue, for example, if there were another suspect, who was identified by several witnesses, or if Zet knew that she tends toward suspecting innocent witnesses.

As I introduced the case in the previous section, Will's behaviour together with Zet's expertise in witness and suspect behaviour caused Zet's experiencing herself as having evidence for Will's guilt even if Zet was not immediately aware of the specific body language she automatically processed as she was talking to Will. This makes Zet's seeming a paradigm case of expert cognition and a case of benign cognitive penetration. In this context, it is easy to see that zetetic seemings are not challenged by the *Double Counting Problem*. Zetetic seemings are caused by other mental states and are thus cognitively penetrated by definition. However, there is no double counting of their justificatory force because seemings alone

do not provide *epistemic* justification. A seeming that *p* merely provides justification for zetetic acts, such as treating *p* as a working premise, inquiring into *p*'s truth, or inquiring into the seeming's causes.

While Zet is justified, based on her seeming, to pursue the hypothesis that Will committed the crime, Zet is *not* justified to *believe* that it is so. This is plausible because Zet's seeming could be caused by mental states that are either not justifiers for belief at all or are of insufficient strength for the adoption of the respective belief. For example, Will might have been nervous for a reason that is completely unrelated to the case, maybe because he was driving his car without a license and does not want the police to find out. Only by pursuing the content of her seemings in inquiry will Zet be able to find out whether the cause of her seeming is actual evidence for believing its content or not. This fits well with what Audi (2013) has in mind when he writes about finding the seeming's 'basic source':

[S]uppose I reflect on how to justify a proposition I believe which I want others to believe. If I can say to myself only that it seems true to me and can find no story associating it with a basic source, I will very likely wonder if I have failed and would be widely taken to have failed. (Audi 2013, 193)

Zetetic seemings do not provide us with epistemic justification for believing their contents but they hint at potential evidence that might need to be assessed. Yet, there are exceptions. If a subject has evidence that her seemings (in a certain field) are mostly reliable, this constitutes both an epistemic justification for the seeming's content as well as a zetetic defeater. In this case, *S* has no reason to pursue *p* in inquiry but a reason to adopt the corresponding belief directly. If it seems to the ornithologist that the bird over there is a hawk, and if she has a good track record in identifying local birds at first sight, then she is justified to believe that the bird over there is a hawk. The same goes for trained gold diggers, chess champions, experienced fire fighters as well as non-professional experts who have evidence that their seemings are reliable in a certain field. What these subjects have in common is that their seemings are reliably caused by mental states that directly justify belief in the content proposition. These subjects have evidence that their seemings are reliable shortcuts to relevant and sufficient evidence that does not have to be confirmed by inquiry. This is true even if the causally responsible mental states that also provide the justification

are not accessible to the subject. Even if the expert firefighter cannot explain what caused her seeming that the burning house would collapse any minute, she is justified in so believing if she has a good track record in identifying imminent dangers arising from fires.

5. Conclusion

My zetetic account of seemings takes the phenomenology and experiential character of seemings seriously and offers a unified view of seemings in light of their role as experiences of having evidence that can monitor and guide inquiry. It can explain the peculiar occurrence pattern of seemings by the presence or absence of a ‘zetetic push’ and avoid the *Double Counting Problem* by restricting the justificatory force of seemings to the zetetic realm. My account can also explain under which conditions expert seemings can provide epistemic justification.

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