

# Avoid Avoiding the Wishful Thinking Problem

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doi:10.48106/dial.v77.i3.01

Adam Patterson. 2023. "Avoid Avoiding the Wishful Thinking Problem." *Dialectica* 77(3): 1–1.  
doi:10.48106/dial.v77.i3.01.



# Avoid Avoiding the Wishful Thinking Problem

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The wishful thinking problem purported to be a new problem for pure non-cognitivist expressivist views in metaethics in addition to the similar, yet distinct, Frege-Geach problem. After a smattering of initial responses, discussion of the problem has faded. One might think this is because the responses were fatal, and the problem is not really a problem. I do not think so. I aim to re-start discussion of the wishful thinking problem. I do so by recasting it in terms of the distinction between propositional and doxastic justification. Doing so is instructive, for it shows some of the initial, prominent responses to the problem fail. The problem is thus not as dead as one might otherwise think.

Consider two things. First, consider the distinction between *propositional* and *doxastic* justification for some subject, S's, belief that *p*. On one hand, S is *propositionally* justified in believing that *p* when S has sufficient reasons, R, to believe that *p*. S's belief that *p* is *justifiable*, in other words. On the other hand, S's belief that *p* is *doxastically* justified when S believes that *p*, *given* (or *on the basis of*) R (Silva and Oliveira 2024). That is, S's belief that *p* is *justified* (Korcz 2000).<sup>1</sup> The crucial difference is the basing relation: there is a difference between *having* (available, or at hand) R to believe that *p* and actually believing *p based on* R (Alston 1985). Second, consider the younger cousin of the popular Frege-Geach problem for non-cognitivist, expressivist meta-ethical views: the oft-neglected wishful thinking problem (Dorr 2002). While the latter is about *validity*, the former is about *justification*. How are these two things related?

The above distinction plays an important role in both characterizing the problem and evaluating its proposed solutions. Yet few (if any) explicitly acknowledge this. I remedy that here. Doing so is instructive, for as we will see,

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth, "S *justifiedly* believes that *p*" (and similar expressions) means the belief is doxastically justified, and "S *justifiably* believes that *p*" means the belief is "propositionally justified."

understanding both the problem and its solutions with the above distinction in mind reveals the ways that the responses fail. This is an interesting result, for the problem is thus not as dead as it seems.

In section 1, I recast the wishful thinking problem in terms of two kinds of justification. In section 2, I do the same for several prominent responses. I also argue that they fail. In section 3, I conclude.

## 1 The Wishful Thinking Problem: Recast

Consider the following moral-descriptive<sup>2</sup> *modus ponens* (Dorr 2002). Call it the *Liar Argument* (Long 2016).<sup>3</sup>

### LIAR ARGUMENT

- (P<sub>1</sub>) If lying is wrong, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.  
 (P<sub>2</sub>) Lying is wrong.  
 (C) So, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

As we can see, moral-descriptive *modi ponentes* have as their major premise a conditional claim. That conditional's antecedent is a moral claim, whereas the conclusion is a non-moral (descriptive) claim.

Now consider Edgar. Edgar is reasoning himself through the **LIAR ARGUMENT**. The states of affairs as he does can be represented as follows (Dorr 2002, 98):

- T<sub>1</sub> Edgar's belief that (P<sub>1</sub>) and ?(C)<sup>4</sup> are both doxastically justified. He believes  $\neg$ (P<sub>2</sub>).

At T<sub>1</sub>, it seems *irrational* for Edgar to believe (C) for two reasons. First, it is incoherent to believe that (C) given that he already justifiably believes (P<sub>1</sub>)—on the basis of reliable testimony—and also believes that  $\neg$ (P<sub>2</sub>). Second, any belief that (C) at this time lacks *propositional* justification. Edgar, in fact, right now has *good reason* to be ambivalent about (C) and is ambivalent precisely because of those reasons (Dorr 2002, 98).

2 The "moral-descriptive" label is from Schroeder (2011).

3 Mabrito (2013) calls this "the damnation argument."

4 The "?C" denotes ambivalence about C. I borrow this from Guan (2014).

Now suppose that Edgar then reads some moral philosophy. As a result, he reconsiders his moral beliefs and thereby comes to immediately, justifiably believe (P<sub>2</sub>). Thus:

T<sub>2</sub> Edgar has doxastic justification for (P<sub>1</sub>), ?(C), and (P<sub>2</sub>).

He now does as attitude-coherence demands: He revises. Given that Edgar has doxastic justification for (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>), he jettisons his previous ambivalence about (C). So, he comes to believe (C) on the basis of (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>). Hence:

T<sub>3</sub> Edgar has doxastic justification for (C).

According to Dorr (2002), pure non-cognitivist expressivism<sup>5</sup> struggles to explain cases like this. Why is that?

At T<sub>1</sub>, it is irrational for Edgar to believe (C). This seems plausible. After all, Edgar has no justification to believe that (C). Moreover, he cannot justifiably believe that (C) on the basis of what he believes at T<sub>1</sub> on pains of incoherence. So, any belief that (C) of Edgar's is neither propositionally nor doxastically justified.

Now, from T<sub>1</sub>–T<sub>2</sub>, Edgar's mental states changed. In particular, it seems like he underwent a change in beliefs; he gained a new one. He *came to believe that* (P<sub>2</sub>) for the first time at T<sub>2</sub>, and justifiably so. Now, a diachronic change in mental states in general is compatible with non-cognitive expressivism. The trouble is that on non-cognitive expressivism, Edgar did not gain a belief. Rather, his *non-cognitive states changed*. That is, Edgar only gained a new *non-cognitive* state. This is because (P<sub>2</sub>), remember, is a moral claim. And that the state of accepting a moral claim is a *non-cognitive state* is part and parcel of non-cognitivist expressivism.

This is bad for non-cognitive expressivism. It means that on that view, Edgar *still* cannot justifiably believe that (C) at T<sub>2</sub>. That is, at T<sub>2</sub>, Edgar's belief that (C) still lacks doxastic justification for him—just as did for him at T<sub>1</sub>. This is because a new non-cognitive state cannot be that on the basis of which Edgar justifiably believes that (C). So, for the non-cognitive expressivist, nothing changed from T<sub>1</sub>–T<sub>2</sub> that explains why it seems intuitively rational for Edgar to believe (C) *on the basis of* (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>), or why Edgar seems rational to justifiably believe that (C) on the basis of only accepting the premises.

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5 I henceforth drop the "pure."

Said differently, it is intuitively plausible that the following two states can obtain over time in the Edgar case:<sup>6</sup>

- (i) At  $T_1$ , it is *irrational* for Edgar to believe (C). For he justifiably believes (P<sub>1</sub>), ?(C), and believes  $\neg$ (P<sub>2</sub>). So, the belief that (C) is not propositionally justified and cannot be doxastically justified (C) given what he believes;

and

- (ii) It is *rational* for Edgar at  $T_3$  to believe (C). He has doxastic justification for both (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>), and he accepts (C) on their basis. So, he has doxastic justification for (C).

Yet on non-cognitivist expressivism, both cannot obtain. On that view, (ii) is not possible. This is because Edgar's belief that (C) at  $T_3$  is neither justified nor justifiable. Remember: this was also true at  $T_1$ . The only diachronic change in Edgar's mental states was his attaining a new *non-cognitive state* at  $T_2$ . But non-cognitive states cannot be justifiers, things on which it is rational to base our beliefs; they are just the wrong kinds of things.<sup>7</sup>

Call this the *wishful thinking problem* for pure, non-cognitivist expressivism.<sup>8</sup> It concerns justification. More precisely, given the *doxastic/propositional justification* distinction, one can see that it concerns whether Edgar's coming to believe (C) over time is rational because (and insofar as) said belief

6 This is how Mabrito (2013) perspicuously frames the problem.

7 Dorr (2002, 99) seems to implicitly rely on this to explain why "only a change in one's cognitive states, or in one's evidence, can make the difference between a case in which it would be irrational to believe something and one in which it would be rational to do so." But why think that non-cognitive states cannot be justifiers? Because revising your views about the world is rational when the change coheres with your *belief set*. It is, he says, "irrational to modify your views about the world so that they cohere with your desires and feelings" (Dorr 2002, 99). But again, one might ask: Why? Pryor's (2005) discussion of Davidson might be relevant. According to Pryor (2005), for Davidson, if some state,  $x$ , is a justifier, then  $x$  has propositional content, content that is expressible with "that-clauses" and which functions to assertively represent the world as being-such-and-such-a-way. This is because only by standing in *logical* relation to a belief can some state doxastically justify a belief. And since the state of accepting (P<sub>2</sub>) is, by dint of non-cognitive expressivism, a *non-cognitive state*, and these do not function to assertively indicate anything about the world, it cannot stand in a logical relation to Edgar's belief that (C). Hence, Edgar's coming to believe (P<sub>2</sub>), on pure non-cognitivist expressivism, cannot doxastically justify (C).

8 On non-cognitive expressivism, moral evaluations seem like danglers qua justifiers.

becomes *doxastically justified* after having been not previously even propositionally justified, i.e., *justifiable*.

With this in mind, let us now re-evaluate some proposed solutions. As we will see, I find them all wanting, given this understanding of the problem.

## 2 Re-Evaluating Some Proposed Solutions

### 2.1 The Decalogue Proposal

Consider the following argument (Lenman 2003). Call it the *decalogue argument* (Schroeder 2011). Suppose that S is reasoning through it over time, and we can represent how his beliefs seemingly rationally change over time like this:

- T<sub>1</sub> (P<sub>3</sub>) S never contravenes the Decalogue.
- (P<sub>4</sub>) All and only contraventions of the Decalogue are wrong.
- (P<sub>5</sub>) S never does anything wrong.

Currently, for S to believe the descriptive claim that “S never looks at a woman with lustful intent” would be neither *justified* nor *justifiable*. It is irrational for S to believe that at T<sub>1</sub>. Now, suppose that on the basis of (P<sub>3</sub>) and (P<sub>4</sub>), S comes to *justifiably believe* the following:

- T<sub>2</sub> (P<sub>6</sub>) If looking at a woman with lustful intent is wrong, then S never looks at a woman with lustful intent.

Thus, at T<sub>2</sub>, the belief that (P<sub>6</sub>) is doxastically justified for S; it is justifiedly believed on the basis of a pair of claims, (P<sub>3</sub>) + (P<sub>4</sub>). However, S’s belief in the descriptive claim “S never looks at a woman with lustful intent” is still neither justified nor justifiable at T<sub>2</sub> and is irrational to believe.

Moving on, S subsequently comes to believe two *more* things:

- T<sub>3</sub> (P<sub>7</sub>) Looking at a woman with lustful intent contravenes the Decalogue.
- (P<sub>8</sub>) Looking at a woman with lustful intent is wrong.

More precisely, here S gains at least one new belief: (P<sub>8</sub>). S believes it, given (or on the basis of) his belief in (P<sub>4</sub>) + (P<sub>7</sub>). So, the belief that (P<sub>8</sub>) is doxastically justified for S. Also, at T<sub>3</sub>, notice that it is *justifiable* for S to believe that “S

never looks at a woman with lustful intent.” This is because (P<sub>3</sub>) + (P<sub>7</sub>)<sup>9</sup> is sufficient reason to believe it. Finally, after all this, S comes to justifiedly, rationally believe that (C) on the basis of (P<sub>6</sub>) + (P<sub>8</sub>).

T<sub>4</sub> (C<sub>1</sub>) S never looks at a woman with lustful intent.

What is the point of all of this? In general, Lenman’s (2003) goal seems to be to show that it can be rational to infer the conclusion of a moral-descriptive *modus ponens* without wishful thinking. This is achieved by showing that S is guaranteed to have evidence for (C<sub>1</sub>) that can justify S’s coming to believe (C<sub>1</sub>) without wishful thinking; S’s justification for believing (C<sub>1</sub>) is guaranteed to be overdetermined, in other words.<sup>10</sup> For in the very act of accepting a moral claim like (P<sub>8</sub>), one is guaranteed to accept beliefs that support it and also support (C<sub>1</sub>) independently of (P<sub>6</sub>) and (P<sub>8</sub>).

I have said nothing yet about propositional/doxastic justification. But now I ask: how can one understand the *decalogue argument* and this proposed solution in general, given the propositional/doxastic justification distinction? Asked differently: how can this solution be recast with the distinction—with it, how can one explain the way in which this proposal vindicates non-cognitive expressivism from the wishful thinking problem?

To see, recall (C<sub>1</sub>):

(C<sub>1</sub>) S never looks at a woman with lustful intent.

Also, recall that the solution works, in part, by guaranteeing overdetermined justification for S’s belief that (C<sub>1</sub>) by the very process of coming to believe it in the first place. Further, recall: this overdetermined justification is secured by finding two pairs of claims. One is (P<sub>6</sub>) + (P<sub>8</sub>):

(P<sub>6</sub>) If looking at a woman with lustful intent is wrong, then S never looks at a woman with lustful intent.

(P<sub>8</sub>) Looking at a woman with lustful intent is wrong.

The other is (P<sub>3</sub>) + (P<sub>7</sub>):

(P<sub>3</sub>) S never contravenes the Decalogue.

9 And remember: both (P<sub>3</sub>) and (P<sub>7</sub>) were each part of the arguments for claims that make S’s belief that (C<sub>1</sub>) doxastically justified, namely (P<sub>6</sub>) and (P<sub>8</sub>).

10 I borrow characterizing this proposal in terms of guarantees from an anonymous referee.

(P7) Looking at a woman with lustful intent contravenes the Decalogue.

Both sets justify S's coming to believe (C1). Hence, with the relevant distinction between kinds of justification in mind, the proposal works by establishing one of two things. S's belief is guaranteed to have, for S,

(iii) overdetermined doxastic justification;

(In which case, the *decalogue case* shows that S's belief that (C1) is always partly based on (P3) + (P7). So, said belief is doxastically justified, i.e., based on two sets of claims, one set of which lacks a moral claim. And thus, basing the belief on (C1) is always, in part, not wishful thinking on S's part.) or,

(iv) overdetermined propositional justification.

(In which case, two sets of claims always support (C1), and thus S's coming to believe (C1) is rational. This is because (and insofar as) while S's believe that (C1) is *justifiedly inferred* on the basis of a non-cognitive claim—(P8)—the inference is guaranteed to be *justifiable* given (P3) + (P7).) This puts the non-cognitivist in a dilemma.

If the proposal establishes (iii), then it relies on the following assumption: Namely, for all of S's doxastically-justified moral beliefs, whenever a moral belief is doxastically justified for S on the basis of R, and that moral belief entails some non-moral claim, then R doxastically justifies S's belief in the non-moral claim. This is dubious, though. S can be unaware of what *propositionally justifies* the non-moral belief, which is the fact that it is entailed by the moral belief. This means that S need not necessarily form the non-moral belief *on the basis of* the moral belief, in which case that non-moral belief is not doxastically justified.

Moreover, if the proposal establishes (iii), then S is still basing their belief that (C1) *in part* on the basis of (P8). There is still wishful thinking present; there is just less of it on this proposal since it is also based on (P3) and (P7)—neither of which are non-cognitive claims given non-cognitive expressivism. The proposal would be better to establish the following: in coming to believe (C1) at T<sub>4</sub>, S's belief is *only* based on that other pair of claims—the pair that lacks a moral claim, namely, (P3) + (P7)—and thereby makes the justified belief in (C1) not a case of wishful thinking.



If the proposal establishes (iv), then it does not help with the wishful thinking problem. It needs to be shown that S is rational because (and insofar as) S went from, at one time, having no justification for believing (C<sub>1</sub>) to having doxastic justification for it (and crucially without believing (C<sub>1</sub>) on the basis of a non-cognitive attitude). But if the proposal establishes (iv), this still happens: S still comes to accept (C<sub>1</sub>) on the basis of (P8). So, S's belief is based on, problematically, a non-cognitive attitude. That S's belief is guaranteed some bonus propositional justification may lessen the sting of a charge of irrationality. But it stings nonetheless.

So, if the proposal showed that S's belief in (C<sub>1</sub>) is rational insofar as the belief is guaranteed to be always *justified* or *justifiable* for S without wishful thinking, then it either relies on a false assumption or fails to address the problem. Either way, the wishful thinking problem remains.

## 2.2 *The Modified Proposal*

Another way to deal with the *wishful thinking problem* is to attempt to argue that, in reasoning through the **LIAR ARGUMENT**, S is guaranteed to be *propositionally justified* in believing (C). So, for example, whenever S argues through the **LIAR ARGUMENT**, S has available to them at any time via introspection the following modified, companion argument (Enoch 2003):

### MODIFIED ARGUMENT<sup>11</sup>

- (P<sub>9</sub>) If I accept that lying is wrong, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.  
 (P<sub>10</sub>) I accept that lying is wrong.  
 (C) So, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

This **MODIFIED ARGUMENT** is always available through introspection. The idea is thus that the **LIAR ARGUMENT** will never lead Edgar to irrationally believe (C) in the sense that S believes it without that which sufficiently justifies it.

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<sup>11</sup> Here, I continue the sequential numbering of premises from the decalogue argument. This does not mean that the **MODIFIED ARGUMENT** is a part of (or some extension of) the *decalogue argument*. I use this numbering convention to avoid referring to one premise in a distinct argument with the same expression.

This line is also problematic. It fails to guarantee that S's belief that (C) is justifiable for S. Why is that? The **MODIFIED ARGUMENT** is "available" to S in a weak sense. It is guaranteed to be possible that S can come to possess a **MODIFIED ARGUMENT**. But this does not entail that S actually *has available* (or is in the possession of) the relevant argument. The mere *presence* of the **MODIFIED ARGUMENT** only propositionally justifies Edgar's acceptance of (C) only if Edgar actually *has accepted* (P<sub>9</sub>) and (P<sub>10</sub>).

Suppose that I am wrong. Suppose that, on this strategy, any time S accepts (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>), S will always possess (in some suitably strong sense) propositionally justification for (C) since there will always be other things that propositionally justify (C).

This proposal does not address the problem, either, for familiar reasons. In particular, the problem is that when S forms the belief that (C) *on the basis of* both (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>),

- (P<sub>1</sub>) If lying is wrong, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife;
- (P<sub>2</sub>) Lying is wrong;

then S's subsequent belief that (C) is doxastically justified. And that means that S's belief that (C) is doxastically justified whether S is also justified in having some *other, auxiliary belief(s)*. Said differently: what generates the problem in the original case is that it seems rational to believe that (C) because the belief is doxastically justified for S regardless of whether S has some other, auxiliary claims available that are themselves doxastically justified.

### 2.3 *The Entailment Proposal*

Another way to think about the *wishful thinking problem* is that there is a condition that needs to be met for the states (i) and (ii) (section 1) to simultaneously obtain, and the pure non-cognitivist expressivist cannot satisfy it. As we saw, the constraint seems to be something like this: S's belief that *p* goes from not doxastically justified to being just that only if S acquires a new *cognitive state*. Call this *Dorr's constraint* (Mabrito 2013, 1072). Given this, the *decalogue problem* and *modified proposals* can be thought of as attempts to show that the non-cognitivist expressivist can meet *Dorr's constraint*.

This is not the only way to vindicate non-cognitive expressivism, though. One can also attempt to argue that S can meet the constraint and still be rational (Mabrito 2013). How might one show this? One idea is to say that

while the Edgar case violates *Dorr's constraint*, it is compatible with another, independently motivated constraint (Mabrito 2013). The obedience of *this* constraint vindicates the intuitive rationality of Edgar coming to believe (C) in the LIAR ARGUMENT. Here is the argument again:

LIAR ARGUMENT

- (P1) If lying is wrong, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.
- (P2) Lying is wrong.
- (C) So, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

This other constraint is called the *entailment constraint* (EC). With respect to the *wishful thinking argument*:

ENTAILMENT CONSTRAINT (EC). S moves from  $T_1$  (during which S lacks justification for believing that  $p$ ) to  $T_2$  (during which S has justification for believing that  $p$ ) only if S comes to accept claims that entail  $p$  or acquires evidence that supports  $p$  (Mabrito 2013, 1074).

Edgar's case seems compatible with this because the *wishful thinking problem* assumes that the *Frege-Geach problem* is solved: it concedes that moral-descriptive *modi ponentes* are valid. So, while Edgar initially lacks justification for believing (C), he later comes to accept two claims that entail (C)—securing the obedience of the ENTAILMENT CONSTRAINT—and is thereby rational for believing (C) on the basis of them.

Again, though, we should think of how this solution goes in terms of the doxastic/propositional justification distinction. To illustrate, consider the ENTAILMENT CONSTRAINT itself. As a necessary condition, with respect to changes in what kinds of justification is the condition plausible? And obeying which of these various formulations also helps with the *wishful thinking problem*?

Suppose that the relevant change concerns a belief's status with respect to being propositionally justified:

ENTAILMENT CONSTRAINT 2 (EC<sub>2</sub>). S moves from  $T_1$  (during which S lacks propositional justification for believing that  $p$ ) to  $T_2$  (during which S has propositional justification for believing that  $p$ ) only

if S comes to accept claims that entail  $p$  or acquires evidence that supports  $p$ .

(EC<sub>2</sub>) is plausible but irrelevant. No one denies that Edgar's belief that (C) of the **LIAR ARGUMENT** is justifiable—i.e., denies that there are reasons to accept it. The worry is that Edgar's belief seems *justifiedly inferred* from his belief in the premises. So, a case that obeys *this* constraint is explanatorily moot with respect to the relevant intuitive rationality that needs preservation on the *wishful thinking problem*.

Suppose that the salient change is from a belief being not justifiable to actually being justified. Thus:

ENTAILMENT CONSTRAINT 3 (EC<sub>3</sub>). S moves from T<sub>1</sub> (during which S lacks propositional justification for believing that  $p$ ) to T<sub>2</sub> (during which S has doxastic justification for believing that  $p$ ) only if S comes to accept claims that entail  $p$  or acquires evidence that supports  $p$ .

(EC<sub>3</sub>) is false. One can both believe that  $p$  for no reason and then only later base one's belief that  $p$  on very good reasons, and yet neither come to believe that which entails  $p$  nor acquire evidence for  $p$ . This happens in cases where one dogmatically believes that  $p$  but only later comes to accept  $p$  on the basis of good reasons that one already had. This is because one can fail to recognize good reasons for beliefs when they have them. Hence, one can fail to base that which they already believe on the basis of those good reasons.

## 2.4 *The Hopeful Proposal Proposal*

Another proposed solution to show that wishful thinking is sometimes rational is accepting that the premises of arguments akin to moral-descriptive *modi ponentes* do make the belief in the conclusion justifiable (Long 2016). As an example, consider the following argument that S is reasoning through. Call it the *hopeful proposal argument*.

### HOPEFUL PROPOSAL ARGUMENT

- (P<sub>11</sub>) If I hope that my proposal will be accepted, then my proposal will be accepted.  
 (P<sub>12</sub>) I hope that my proposal will be accepted.  
 (C<sub>2</sub>) So, my proposal will be accepted.

This argument is *wishful thinking* as it is normally understood outside the seminar room: forming *beliefs* about how the world *is*, given one's wants, desires, hopes, dreams, etc. (which tell us how the world is *not*). Now, how does one argue that it is rational to infer (C<sub>2</sub>)? The idea is that “accepting of the [...] premises is often a reason to accept its conclusion, since paradigm cases of wishful thinking are often valid” (Long 2016, 3).

Once again, the propositional/doxastic justification distinction renders this proposal ambiguous. So, for example, either S's belief that (C<sub>2</sub>) is rational because (and to the extent) that it is *doxastically* or *propositionally* justified given the fact that *modus ponens* is valid.<sup>12</sup>

No one would deny that S coming to believe (C<sub>2</sub>) is justifiable, given the validity of *modus ponens*. The issue, recall, is whether S is justifiably rational in going on to believe (C<sub>2</sub>) *on the basis of* the premises—as it intuitively seems. So, if this proposal is to work, the very fact of the argument's validity must be a part of that set of things on the basis of which S believes that (C<sub>2</sub>).

Here is how this works with respect to the **LIAR ARGUMENT**. S rationally, justifiably infers (C),

(C) So, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife;

when the belief that (C) is based on the following:

(P<sub>1</sub>) If lying is wrong, the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife;

(P<sub>2</sub>) Lying is wrong; and

(P<sub>13</sub>) (P<sub>1</sub>) and (P<sub>2</sub>) entail that the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

The trouble is that this proposal misses the mark. The mere availability of (P<sub>13</sub>) does not mean that S is doxastically justified in believing (C). S can fail to base their belief in (C) on (P<sub>13</sub>). S would need to be shown to, in every case, in fact base their belief in (C) on the basis of (P<sub>1</sub>) + (P<sub>2</sub>) + (P<sub>13</sub>).

Moreover, the *wishful thinking* problem remains. The non-cognitivist expressivist still cannot make sense of how S's belief that (C)—even in that case—is doxastically justified. For (P<sub>2</sub>), on their view, is still a non-cognitive state. And S cannot, it seems, justifiably believe (C) *on the basis of* (P<sub>1</sub>) + (P<sub>2</sub>) + (P<sub>13</sub>) for that very reason: (P<sub>2</sub>) is the wrong kind of thing for one to justifiably believe something else on the basis of. It would help if (P<sub>3</sub>) was itself sufficient for S to justifiably believe (C) on the basis of. We saw attempts at this. But the problem

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<sup>12</sup> This assumes a solution to the Frege-Geach problem.

with those attempts remains. It would have to be shown that in every case, S in fact believes the conclusion on the basis of the stuff that is both guaranteed to be present; would, in fact, make the belief doxastically justified if the belief was based on them; and are the right kinds of things to base beliefs on.

### 3 Conclusion

The wishful thinking problem seemed dead, the recipient of several fatal blows. I hope to have shown that the distinction between propositional/doxastic justification helps clarify the nature of the problem, the nature of proposed solutions, and why those solutions are dubious. Perhaps, then, it is premature to ignore the wishful thinking problem.\*

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\* I received many great comments on this paper. I'd like to thank the audiences at the Philosophy in Progress conference at the University of Nottingham and the Syracuse Working Papers Workshop for helpful comments and discussion. In particular, I'd also like to thank the following individuals for their useful feedback: Neil Sinclair, Preston Werner, Kris McDaniel, Hille Paakkunainen, Nate Sharadin, and Evelyn Hudson. Finally, I would also like to thank anonymous referees from the following journals for their thorough comments: *Dialectica*, *Analysis*, *Thought*, and the *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy*.

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