

The Wishful Thinking Problem for Non-cognitivism: Does It Really Make Sense?[†]



CHENGYING GUAN

Abstract

This paper concerns the Wishful Thinking Problem for non-cognitivism, which has recently been raised by Cian Dorr. Contrary to Dorr's claim that the Wishful Thinking Problem is a new crucial objection to non-cognitivism in addition to the well-known Frege-Geach Problem, I argue that recent research has shown that the Wishful Thinking Problem is not independent of the Frege-Geach Problem and therefore it is not lethal to non-cognitivism. However, the Wishful Thinking Problem is still a problem for non-cognitivism, for it reveals that the Frege-Geach Problem may be even more troublesome than non-cognitivists originally thought.

1 Introduction

In his notable article “Non-cognitivism and Wishful Thinking,” Cian Dorr ([3]) raises an objection to non-cognitivism: ‘the Wishful Thinking Problem,’ which he claims is (α) as devastating as ‘the Frege-Geach Problem’ and (β) independent of the Frege-Geach Problem. The present paper explains Dorr's argument and argues that recent research has shown that both of these two points are untenable. In section 2, I introduce the Frege-Geach Problem. In section 3, I explain how the Wishful Thinking Problem may arise even if the Frege-Geach Problem can be solved and why it spells trouble for non-cognitivism. In section 4, I invoke two recent observations on Dorr's argument ([2]; [10]) to demonstrate that the Wishful Thinking Problem is not independent of the Frege-Geach problem and therefore it is not as devastating as the Frege-Geach Problem. In section 5, I conclude that, although the Wishful Thinking Problem is not lethal to non-cognitivism, it is still a problem for non-cognitivism. For the Wishful Thinking Problem reveals

that the Frege-Geach Problem may be even more difficult to solve than non-cognitivists originally thought, it reduces the plausibility points of non-cognitivism.

2 *Non-cognitivism and the Frege-Geach Problem*

Non-cognitivists think that moral sentences are not truth-apt and their meanings are just determined by their asserted attitudes. Especially, according to expressivism, the current dominant version of non-cognitivism, to understand a moral sentence like 'lying is wrong' is nothing but to know the mental state it expresses (e.g. planning not to lie). Non-cognitivism is attractive because of two distinct advantages. First, it explains the motivational feature of moral judgments. Second, it has very low cost in terms of answering 'big questions' from the theoretical side of philosophy (e.g. metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind).

Non-cognitivism, however, is plagued by the much-discussed 'Frege-Geach' Problem. As the major challenge to non-cognitivism, the Frege-Geach Problem suggests that a non-cognitivist theory of meaning cannot explain moral sentences in unasserted contexts and this gives rise to some absurd results. A narrow but classical way to explain the Frege-Geach Problem is to note a *modus ponens* inference as follows:

P1* If lying is wrong, then to teach your little brother to lie is wrong.

P2* Lying is wrong.

C* To teach your little brother to lie is wrong.

This inference seems straightforwardly valid. It thus seems a matter of logical fact that the conjunction of P1* and P2* will entail C* (i.e. anyone who accepts both P1* and P2* has to accept C* accordingly). The Frege-Geach Problem, however, challenges non-cognitivists for accounting this logical fact. The crux is that, throughout this inference, 'lying is wrong' is both the antecedent of the major premise and the minor premise, whereas its meaning may not remain identical. When 'lying is wrong' is presented as the minor premise (i.e. P2*), it is an asserted moral sentence; therefore, according to non-cognitivism, its meaning consists in its expression of a certain asserted attitude. However, when 'lying

is wrong’ is presented as the antecedent of the major premise (i.e. the antecedent of P1*), its mood is unasserted and therefore it is difficult to see how it can express an asserted attitude. Thus, it might be possible for an agent to accept both P1* and P2* but refuse C*. This result is absurd because of violating the logical rule of *modus ponens* and naturally becomes a strong reason to reject non-cognitivism.

Since its birth over several decades ago, non-cognitivists have made considerable efforts to solve the Frege-Geach Problem. Most notably, Simon Blackburn ([1]) and Allan Gibbard ([6], [7]) have provided two noncognitivism-friendly proposals of compositional semantics. These proposals are expected to identify the meanings of moral sentences in asserted contexts as well as that in unasserted contexts. Although currently both of their proposals are thought to be defective, it is still uncertain whether non-cognitivism simply has been knocked down by the Frege-Geach Problem. At the very least, recent non-cognitivists are still working in this direction ([4]; [8]). Thus, an optimistic view suggests that sooner or later non-cognitivism will find a satisfactory solution to the Frege-Geach Problem and accordingly non-cognitivism is promising.

3 The Emergence of the Wishful Thinking Problem

The above-mentioned optimism is challenged by Dorr ([3]). According to Dorr, a successful solution to the Frege-Geach Problem will not rescue non-cognitivism from failure. In addition to the Frege-Geach Problem, Dorr confronts non-cognitivism with the ‘Wishful Thinking’ Problem. The Wishful Thinking Problem arises whenever we give a non-cognitivist interpretation to a *modus ponens* inference with a moral-descriptive appearance, say, one as follows ([3], p.97):

P1 If lying is wrong, then the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

P2 Lying is wrong.

C The souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.

(Note that the antecedent of the major premise and the minor premise are the same *moral* sentence, whereas the consequent of the major premise and the conclusion are the same *descriptive* sentence.) Clearly, the coherent structure of this inference suggests that this argument is

valid and therefore anyone who accepts both P1 and P2 shall accept C accordingly. On Dorr's view, however, non-cognitivists have to tell a different story here: if non-cognitivism is true, then the acceptance of both P1 and P2 does not give any reason to accept C.

As an illustration to the above point, Dorr invites us to consider the case of Edgar, an agent who agrees that 'if lying is wrong, then the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife' but meanwhile thinks that 'lying is not wrong at all.' Later on, however, Edgar's stance on the morality of lying changes in a certain way. He comes to agree that 'lying is wrong.' The question, then, is whether Edgar should come to believe that 'the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife' accordingly? While it seems that the answer should be definitely a 'yes;' Dorr argues that non-cognitivists have to give an answer of 'no.' For clarity, let me draw the details of this story into a table as follows:

T_e	Edgar accepts the claim that 'if lying is wrong, then the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.' However, he thinks that 'lying is not wrong at all.' He thus thinks that the souls of liars will not be punished in the afterlife.	P1 ~P2 ?C
T_f	Simply after reading a philosophy book and reflecting on his moral commitments, Edgar comes to accept the view that 'lying is wrong.'	P1 P2 ?C
T_h	While Edgar agrees with both the claim that 'if lying is wrong, then the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife' and the claim that 'lying is wrong' now, he changes his mind to accept the claim that 'the souls of liars will be punished in the afterlife.'	P1 P2 C

At first glance, Edgar is *rational* throughout this process, because what he does is just what the logical validity of *modus ponens* requires. However, Dorr argues that, if non-cognitivism is true, then what Edgar does at T_h (i.e. to come to accept C) must be deemed as *irrational*. The point here is that to accept C is to form a new belief, whereas non-cognitivism may prevent Edgar from having a rational justification for that belief in the process of from T_e state to T_f state. As Dorr himself writes here:

According to the non-cognitivist, all that happened when [Edgar] came to accept P2 was a change in his non-cognitive attitudes. He acquired no new evidence or other beliefs relevant to the question of the fate of liars in the afterlife. Nor did he intuit the truth of C a priori, or take himself to have done so. So if believing C would have been irrational for

Edgar before coming to accept P2, it was irrational for him afterward as well. ([3], p.99)

Dorr's argument on the inconsistency between Edgar's acceptance of C and non-cognitivism can also be presented as follows:

- D1 A rational belief must be a belief with a rational justification. So, if Edgar's acceptance of C (as a factual belief about the fate of liars) at T_f is rational, then the shift of his epistemic state from T_e to T_f must constitute a process of rational justification.
- D2 A rational justification for a belief is (1) either a matter of undergoing a change of a cognitive state towards that belief (2) or that of acquiring sufficient evidence for that belief. So, if Edgar's acceptance of C is rational, then Edgar's acceptance of P2 must either change his cognitive state towards C or bring him sufficient evidence for C.
- D3 However, if P2 is given a non-cognitivist interpretation, then what accepting P2 can give Edgar is nothing but a change of his non-cognitive attitudes. This is irrelevant to either his cognitive state or his set of evidence.
- D4 Therefore, the process of Edgar's epistemic shift from T_e to T_f is *not* a process of rational justification
- D5 Therefore, Edgar's acceptance of C is irrational.

Dorr concludes that at the very center of Edgar's case is a problem of 'wishful thinking.' As he writes:

Only a change in one's cognitive states, or in one's evidence, can make a difference between a case in which it would be irrational to believe something and one in which it would be rational to do so. It is often rational to modify your views about one part of the world so that they cohere with your views about the rest of the world. *It is irrational to modify your views about the world so that they cohere with your desires and feelings.* That is *wishful thinking*. ([3], p.99, italics added)

Note that this is also Dorr's explanation of how he understands the notion of 'wishful thinking.'

To sum up, just as Mark Schroeder ([11]) has rightly suggested, Dorr in fact traps non-cognitivists into a dilemma by his presentation of the Wishful Thinking Problem: either, non-cognitivists have to reject the logical validity of *modus ponens*; or, they have to embrace the rationality of wishful thinking. Since neither of these two horns seems plausible, this should make us think that it is non-cognitivism per se that is problematic. In other words, this dilemma indicates an important point: (α) the Wishful Thinking Problem may devastate non-cognitivism like the Frege-Geach Problem. Clearly, Dorr's argument directly brings (α) out as its conclusion. But it must be sure that (α) is not the only lesson that we can learn from Dorr's argument. We should also note another notable point that underlies (α), that is: (β) the Wishful Thinking Problem is independent of the Frege-Geach Problem, or rather, the force of the former should be insensitive to whatever a solution to the latter might be like. The point (β) underlies (α) and also is the underlying premise of Dorr's argument, although it cannot be directly brought out. For, the second horn of the dilemma that Dorr constructs presupposes that no matter which kind of a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem might be provided, Edgar's acceptance of C is always irrational — without this presupposition, the whole dilemma will collapse.

Early responses to Dorr focus on arguing against the point (α) but neglect (β). Two proposals in defense of non-cognitivism of this kind were published shortly after the publishing of Dorr's original paper, respectively by David Enoch ([5]) and James Lenman ([9]). Enoch and Lenman, on the one hand, think that the Wishful Thinking Problem does endanger non-cognitivism to the extent that Dorr depicts. They, on the other hand, suggest that non-cognitivists can give a distinct answer to the Wishful Thinking Problem, which shows that Edgar's acceptance of the conjunction of P1 and P2 will result in a change to his cognitive state in a roundabout way so that his acceptance of C is not wishful thinking. However, both of their proposals turned out to be unsuccessful ([11], p.182).

4 Two Recent Observations

I, against both Dorr and his early objectors, suggest that the Wishful Thinking Problem may be not a genuine threat to non-cognitivism, because of two reasons. First, it is easy to find that the Wishful Thinking Problem is radically incomparable to the Frege-Geach Problem, in terms of the sources of their force. Whereas the force of the Frege-Geach Prob-

lem is clearly grounded on the authority of logical rules, it seems that the force of the Wishful Thinking Problem just comes from its *prima facie* fitness for intuition. Dorr concludes that non-cognitivism is false because of involving irrational inferences of wishful thinking. However, he does not give a further proof that all inferences of wishful thinking of the kind that he understands are always irrational. In other words, the point (β) of Dorr's argument is lack of support. Comparatively, the Frege-Geach Problem spells trouble for non-cognitivists by suggesting the outlook that non-cognitivists may always have to break some logical rules in order to defend their stance; this is a much more explicit and more potent thesis. Second, and even more importantly, in fact, two recent observations ([2]; [10]) have shown that the assumption that there is a successful solution to the Frege-Geach Problem does will invite a different interpretation of the case of Edgar, or rather, (β) is wrong. In the rest of this section, I shall in turn introduce these two observations and explain how they debunk the independence between the Wishful Thinking Problem and the Frege-Geach Problem.

4.1 The Observation of Budolfson

The first observation comes from Mark Budolfson ([2]). As Budolfson insightfully finds:

[I]f [Dorr's] argument is sound then there must be some difference between cognitivism and non-cognitivism regarding Edgar's case that makes it clear that Edgar's inference that C is rational if and only if cognitivism is true. However, on reflection it is unclear what that difference is supposed to be ([2], p.247).

In other words, if cognitivism, as the denial of non-cognitivism, can also be guilty of entailing wishful thinking, then the Wishful Thinking Problem should not be recognized as a decisive objection to non-cognitivism. For, on that assumption non-cognitivism will not suffer any specific disadvantage because of the Wishful Thinking Problem. Budolfson, moreover, argues that the Wishful Thinking Problem does spell trouble for cognitivism in the same way that it treats non-cognitivism. This can be shown by reading Dorr's analysis of Edgar's case more carefully.

Note first that the second premise (D2) of Dorr's argument in the above section implies that basically there are two ways to establish a rational justification in the case of Edgar: either Edgar *undergoes a change of cognitive state* towards C, or he *acquires new evidence* for

C. Note then that even if cognitivism is true, Edgar's acceptance of P2 will not directly result in a change of his cognitive state towards C. For, according to Dorr's setup, Edgar comes to accept P2 simply because of reading a philosophy book and then reflecting on his moral commitments; this action merely modifies his cognitive state towards the morality of lying, rather than that towards the fate of liars. Of course, here, cognitivists may contend that if cognitivism is true, then Edgar's acceptance of the conjunction of P1 and P2 will let him know the relation between the morality of lying and the fate of liars; and accordingly, this new 'knowledge' enables Edgar to accept C rationally. However, this supplement cannot help Dorr to distinguish cognitivism from non-cognitivism as well. For, having assumed the Frege-Geach Problem is solved, non-cognitivists will be able to claim that Edgar can acquire the same new 'knowledge' by accepting the conjunction of P1 and P2.

Budolfson thus argues that the Wishful Thinking Problem must be seen as a problem of 'evidence.' He formulates the Wishful Thinking Problem as follows ([2], p.249):

- B1 Before accepting P2 it would be irrational for Edgar to come to believe C just on the basis of his evidence and his other beliefs as they are then.
- B2 So, before accepting P2 Edgar lacks sufficient evidence for C.
- B3 If non-cognitivism is true, Edgar doesn't get any new evidence for C when he comes to accept P2.
- B4 So, if non-cognitivism is true, then even after accepting P2 Edgar lacks sufficient evidence for C.
- B5 So, if non-cognitivism is true, Edgar's inference that C is irrational, which is the wrong result.

Still, this formulation of the Wishful Thinking Problem can only make sense under the assumption that it is specific to non-cognitivism. However, according to Budolfson, whereas the key term 'evidence' within this formulation can be read in two possible ways, neither of them can successfully distinguish non-cognitivism from cognitivism.

On the one hand, it is possible to read evidence "in the straightforward sense of empirical evidence" ([2], p.249). But this does not distinguish non-cognitivism from cognitivism. For, even the case of Edgar is given a cognitivist interpretation, Edgar cannot acquire any empirical evidence for C from his acceptance of P2. According to Dorr's setup,

while Edgar comes to accept P2 simply because of reading a philosophy book and reflecting on his moral commitments, his acceptance of P2 at T_f is just a kind of *a priori* reasoning. On the other hand, it is also possible to read ‘evidence’ as ‘non-empirical new information.’ Non-empirical new information may help an agent to form a new belief rationally, by letting her to reconstruct her previous set of beliefs. Along this line, Edgar’s acceptance of P2 at T_f can be interpreted as an action of using non-empirical new information to reconstruct his previous set of beliefs. Accordingly, his acceptance of C at T_h can just be seen as an action of forming a new belief based on such a kind of reconstruction, or rather, a rational action. This is a plausible interpretation in itself, but it also does not distinguish non-cognitivism from cognitivism. For, a change in non-cognitive attitudes may also be a kind of non-empirical information — if only the Frege-Geach Problem is solved. If both cognitivist and non-cognitivist interpretations of the moral-descriptive inference in the case of Edgar were legitimate, then it would be not immediately clear why non-cognitivists cannot agree with cognitivists that Edgar’s acceptance of P2 at T_f is an action of using non-empirical new information to reconstruct his previous set of beliefs.

Therefore, from Budolfson’s observation, it should be clear that the Wishful Thinking Problem seems not as devastating as the Frege-Geach Problem, for it is even not specific to non-cognitivism. Moreover, Budolfson has also hinted that there is a subtle dependence between the Wishful Thinking Problem and the Frege-Geach Problem.

4.2 *The Observation of Mabrito*

Budolfson’s observation, as I understand it, hits the mark. However, the style of Budolfson’s argumentation is negative. While Budolfson indicates that to be guilty of entailing wishful thinking is not a real problem for non-cognitivism, he does not further tell how exactly the Wishful Thinking Problem may be solved. To see a more positive argument against Dorr, I shall now turn to the second and even more recent observation from Robert Mabrito ([10]), who directly argues that a solution to the Wishful Thinking Problem will just follow from a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem. (In his text, Mabrito uses the term ‘expressivism’ instead of ‘non-cognitivism.’ For simplicity, I shall keep using ‘non-cognitivism’ here.)

Mabrito, first of all, announces that he accepts Dorr’s definition of wishful thinking provisionally. That is, “[i]t is irrational to modify your views about the part of the world so that they cohere with your desires

and feelings" ([3], p.99). Mabrito, then, argues that by this definition Dorr is actually stating a constraint on rational justification as follows, which might be called 'Dorr's Constraint;'

S moves from a situation in which S lacks justification for believing that p to a situation in which S possesses such a justification only if there is a change in S's cognitive states or S's evidence ([10], p. 1076).

This constraint seems quite plausible at first glance. Moreover, it is in virtue of this constraint that we can distinguish those cases of wishful thinking from those that are not. For example, note the respective cases of Rachel and Jennifer as follows:

[Rachel is looking for his friend John.] At t_1 , Rachel comes to believe that her friend John is either in his office or in the library, after hearing that this is true from Heidi. At t_2 , Charlie tells Rachel that he has just come from the library and John is not there. So, at t_3 , Rachel comes to believe that John is not in the library. Upon forming that belief, Rachel goes on, at t_4 , to believe that John is in his office, thereby coming to have a belief that coheres with the rest of her beliefs in the first sense discussed above ([10], p.1074).

Jennifer is in line for a promotion at work. At t_1 , she has no good reason to believe that she will get the promotion, but also no good reason to believe that she will not. She is also not sure whether she even wants the promotion. At t_2 , Jennifer's personal circumstances change in such a way that the increase in salary that the promotion will bring suddenly becomes very important to her. At t_3 , she develops a strong desire to receive the promotion. After developing this new desire she comes at t_4 to believe that she will get the promotion, although she has received no new information relevant to the question of whether she will be promoted ([10], p.1074).

Clearly, Dorr's Constraint delineates that Rachel's belief that John is in his office is rational, whereas Jennifer's belief that she will get the promotion is irrational. It is, thus, a nice principle that vindicates intuition.

Next, Mabrito draws attention to the subtlety in the above story. That is, it is actually possible to defend the same conclusion by another simpler principle, which might be called the 'Entailment Constraint:'

S moves from a situation in which S lacks justification for believing that *p* to a situation in which S possesses such a justification *only if S comes to accept claims that entail p* or S acquires evidence ([10], p.1076, italics added).

It is clear that the Entailment Constraint can also precisely distinguish the rationality of Rachel's belief (which is not wishful thinking) from the irrationality of Jennifer's belief (which is wishful thinking). A question thus naturally follows: if "the Entailment Constraint accounts for the irrationality of wishful thinking as well as Dorr's Constraint does" ([10], p.1075), then which should be used as the benchmark for discussing wishful thinking? Without a doubt, according to the requirement of parsimony, normally we should use the simpler one.

Now return to the case of Edgar. The trap for Dorr is that whereas non-cognitivism prevents Edgar from satisfying Dorr's Constraint, it perhaps does not prevent him from satisfying the Entailment Constraint. More exactly, if there is a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem, then Edgar will acquire a rational justification for his acceptance of *C* simply from his previous acceptance of the conjunction of *P1* and *P2*, which constitutes a set of claims that logically entails *C*. There is nothing at all about the change of Edgar's cognitive state needs to be considered here. Accordingly, since Dorr does allow the assumption that the Frege-Geach Problem is solvable, it seems that he has to admit that his analysis of the case of Edgar is wrong. Otherwise, Dorr has to further argue that it is Dorr's Constraint rather than the Entailment Constraint should be used as the benchmark for discussing wishful thinking, notwithstanding the latter is obviously simpler than the former.

Mabrito then moves to discuss the feasibility of Dorr's second option: Dorr might just bite the bullet and claim that there are indeed some special cases in which we should accept Dorr's Constraint rather than the Entailment Constraint. Reacting to this strategy, Mabrito invites people to note the example of Christie ([10], p.1076):

- (1) At time t_1 Christie lacks justification for believing that *p* while at time t_2 she possesses such a justification.
- (2) Between time t_1 and time t_2 Christie has not come to accept claims that entail *p* nor has she acquired evidence that supports *p*.
- (3) Between time t_1 and time t_2 there has been a change in Christie's cognitive states or in her evidence.

In this example, while (2) implies that Christie violates the Entailment Constraint, (3) implies that Christie does not violate Dorr's Constraint. This, then, seems to be an idealized illustration of why Dorr's Constraint is better than the Entailment Constraint. According to Mabrito, however, this example of Christie is self-refuting: it seems that anyone who enters the state of (3) should also reject the state of (2); otherwise, an inconsistent state of mind will present. This is to imply that those supporters of Dorr's Constraint actually have to commit to the combination of Dorr's Constraint and the Entailment Constraint, which might be called the "Combined Constraint:"

S moves from a situation in which S lacks justification for believing that *p* to a situation in which S possesses such a justification only if there is a change in S's cognitive states that *results* in S's coming to accept claims that entail *p* or there is a change in S's evidence that *results* in S acquiring evidence that supports *p* ([10], pp.1077-8).

It is obvious that at first glance the Combined Constraint entails the Entailment Constraint: anyone who advocates the Entailment Constraint seemingly has to advocate the Combined Constraint as well; to this extent, Dorr's Constraint would still be defended. However, Mabrito argues that the assumption that there is a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem, once again, plays the role of tie-breaker. More exactly, according to Mabrito, if there is a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem, then the Entailment Constraint will not be entailed by the Combined Constraint. The crucial point is that, having assumed the Frege-Geach Problem is solved, an agent will be able to accept a new claim simply because of a change of his non-cognitive attitudes. For this reason, in the setup of Dorr's argument, the Entailment Constraint wins again in the competition of being the best benchmark for discussing wishful thinking.

Finally, from Mabrito's observation, it should be clear that Dorr fails to prove that the Wishful Thinking Problem can endanger non-cognitivism under the assumption that there is a successful solution to the Frege-Geach Problem. Moreover, as an implication of Mabrito's observation, it should also be clear that a solution to the Wishful Thinking Problem (i.e. the validation of the Entailment Constraint as the self-reliant benchmark for discussing wishful thinking) is just something that can directly follow from the solution to the Frege-Geach Problem.

5 *How the Wishful Thinking Problem May Be a Problem After All*

Even though Budolfson's and Mabrito's observations have shown that, if the Frege-Geach Problem can be solved, then the Wishful Thinking problem can be solved as well; this may not mean that the Wishful Thinking Problem is not at all a problem for non-cognitivism. For, Budolfson's and Mabrito's observations jointly carry another important message: due to Dorr's presentation of the Wishful Thinking Problem, the Frege-Geach Problem is now found to be perhaps even more difficult to solve than non-cognitivists had previously thought.

The complication here is that although debunking (β) the independence between the Wishful Thinking Problem and the Frege-Geach Problem is a potent objection to Dorr's argument, this debunking enterprise perhaps also indicates a new trap for non-cognitivism. That is, the alleged dependence between the Wishful Thinking Problem and the Frege-Geach Problem may imply that non-cognitivists now have to face some 'big questions' from theoretical philosophy that they originally wanted to avoid. For this reason, after all, the plausibility points of non-cognitivism may be reduced due to Dorr's presentation of the Wishful Thinking Problem.

Note first Mabrito's observation. When Mabrito argues that a solution to the Wishful Thinking Problem will directly follow from the solution to the Frege-Geach Problem, he is indeed also claiming an unexpected new job for non-cognitivists: non-cognitivists now have to clarify the mechanism of how exactly this may happen. Non-cognitivists have to explain not only that there can be entailment relations between moral and descriptive sentences, but also that those entailment relations can be a rational justification for forming new beliefs. This job will upgrade the difficulty of the Frege-Geach Problem. For, it implies that to solve the Frege-Geach Problem is not only a matter of philosophy of language, but also a matter of epistemology.

Note then Budolfson's observation. Similarly, when Budolfson argues that if only there is a solution to the Frege-Geach Problem, non-cognitive attitudes can also be used as non-empirical information for an agent to form new beliefs; Budolfson is indeed also claiming another unexpected new job for non-cognitivists. Given it is not immediately transparent how exactly non-cognitive attitudes can play such a role in human cognition (as easy as cognitive states), non-cognitivists now have to give a proof for this conjecture. However, it seems that to establish such a proof is not only a conceptual challenge, but also an empirical one. This

job too will upgrade the difficulty of the Frege-Geach Problem. For, it implies that to solve the Frege-Geach Problem is not only a matter of philosophy, but also a matter of empirical sciences (e.g. cognitive neuroscience).

Though the above-mentioned message is important, it is not a defense of Dorr's original presentation of the Wishful Thinking Problem in the end. It shows that the Wishful Thinking Problem is a problem for non-cognitivism after all. But it also shows that the Wishful Thinking Problem is not an independent and crucial non-cognitivism killer. Rather, from this message, it becomes even clearer that the Wishful Thinking Problem is just a reinforcement of the Frege-Geach Problem.

6 Concluding Remarks

I conclude that the Wishful Thinking Problem is not a problem for non-cognitivism in the way Dorr originally took it to be. Dorr declares the Wishful Thinking Problem to be (α) as devastating as the Frege-Geach Problem. This point (α) is based on the premise (β) that the Wishful Thinking Problem is independent of the Frege-Geach Problem. Budolfson's and Mabrito's recent observations have shown that (β) is wrong. Therefore, Dorr's argument fails. Nevertheless, Dorr's presentation of the Wishful Thinking Problem does imply something important: it implies that the Frege-Geach Problem is even more troublesome than non-cognitivists originally thought.

Notes

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Chengying Guan

Department of Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Groningen

Oude Boteringestraat 52

9712 GL Groningen

The Netherlands

[<chengying_guan@hotmail.com>](mailto:chengying_guan@hotmail.com)

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