

How is wishful seeing like wishful thinking?

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A Simple Argument

It is a commonplace that beliefs can be epistemically appropriate or epistemically inappropriate. Suppose Frank wishfully believes that today, all his best features are evident even to the most casual observation. Passers-by who greet him with neutral expressions are holding back their appreciation of him, because they're embarrassed to show it. Anyone who seems displeased with him is feeling inadequate in the face of his many assets. These interpretations make sense to Frank given his original wishful belief, but they are unreasonable, and that belief is the source of their unreasonableness.

Can a perceptual experience ever be a source of unreasonableness, because of its dependence on a desire? Could wishful seeing compromise the rational support offered by experience, just as wishful thinking compromises the rational support offered by Frank's wishful belief? For instance, suppose that because of Frank's wishful belief, a passerby wearing a neutral expression looks to Frank as if she is wearing an approving expression. If Frank took his visual experience at face value, would his visual experience provide the usual amount of rational support for believing that the passerby's expression is approving?

Both answers to this question can seem plausible. On the one hand, from Frank's point of view, concluding that the passerby is as she looks seems eminently reasonable. On the other hand, it seems odd that Frank could gain evidence that the passerby is approving from his experience, when that experience is generated by his wishful belief that the passerby is approving.

Here is a simple argument favoring the second answer. Wishful thinking is a route to belief, wishful seeing is a route to perceptual experience.

Premise: Beliefs can be ill-founded by wishful thinking.

Premise: Wishful seeing is possible.

Premise: If wishful thinking can ill-found beliefs, then wishful seeing can ill-found perceptual experiences.

Conclusion. Perceptual experiences can be ill-founded by wishful seeing.

The argument's conceit is that wishful seeing and wishful thinking are sufficiently analogous that they both have ill-founding effects. There are many places to probe the Simple Argument, starting with whether the idea of wishful seeing makes sense to begin with. Even if it does make sense, one might suspect that equivocation on "ill-foundedness" is unavoidable, on the grounds that beliefs are ill-founded if they are formed or maintained epistemically inappropriately, but experiences are not governed by epistemic norms. And even if equivocation on "ill-founded" can be avoided, why should anyone believe the third premise? Nothing in the argument explains why the fact that wishful *thinking* can ill-found beliefs should tell us anything about what wishful

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seeing can do to the epistemic status of experiences. This is a major gap. Perhaps wishful seeing and wishful thinking are psychologically similar phenomena, but their epistemic effects differ: wishful seeing does not compromise the rational powers of experience at all. This last idea motivates the opposite answer to the question about well-founding.

The Simple Argument may help explain why the answer to the question about Frank's visual experience is not straightforward. If the argument's conclusion is true, so that wishful seeing does compromise the rational powers of experience, then a major consequence follows. Experiences are not uniformly *receptive*. They are not always a landing pad for information (or misinformation) that tumbles in along a-rational channels, naively open to the objects, properties, and events that are there for us to perceive. Experiences can fail to be receptive in these ways, not because they are off the grid of rational assessment, as an undirected 'raw feel' would be, but because the grid has a place for experiences that arise in some of the same ways as irrational beliefs do. And that opens the possibility that the notions of ill-foundedness that we use to convict some beliefs might convict some experiences as well. Epistemic evaluation could then begin upstream of belief and knowledge, in the generation of perceptual experience.¹ This conclusion would expand the domain of epistemology. Reaching beyond belief, inquiry, and knowledge, epistemic normative assessment would extend into the realm of perception.

Let me lay some cards on the table, though they are probably showing already. The Simple Argument leaves much to be explained, but it helps us see what additional factors would be needed to clarify the premises and help them support the conclusion. I think those factors can be provided.

Do the most obvious suspicions about the Simple Argument survive? As I use the expression "wishful seeing", it denotes a route to a visual experience with content P, but doesn't entail knowing or believing that P. Some cases of wishful seeing are cases of wishfully seeing that P (where that state is factive), others are cases of wishfully experiencing that P. Understood in this way, wishful seeing is clearly coherent. Just imagine that Jill wants Jack to be happy, and as a result, she is subject to an illusion when she looks at him: he looks happy when she sees him – even though you would see his neutral expression for what it is, as would most anyone else who wasn't subject to the same distortion. Or imagine that as a result of wanting him to be happy, Jill fails to

¹ In a "knowledge-first" framework in which evidence = knowledge (Williamson 2000), some perceptual experiences with content P are already cases of knowing that P. There is nothing both perceptual and evidence-providing distinct from a state of knowing. But even in this framework, some experiences with content P fail to be a case of knowing that P. When properly enriched, the Simple Argument brings into focus a special way for an experience to fail to be a case of knowing: when they result from irrational routes to seeing.

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see his furrowed brow and slumped shoulders, focusing instead on his bouncy step and unfrowning mouth. For all she sees, it seems reasonable to conclude that he is happy. In both cases, Jill ends up with a visual experience of Jack as happy, with her desire for him to be happy playing a key role in producing the experience.

What about ill-founding: is the Simple Argument bound to equivocate in applying this notion to both beliefs and experiences? In the case of belief, we can distinguish between at least two aspects of ill-foundedness: improper relationships with other mental states, and lacking sufficient rational support. Both aspects can result in reducing (or eliminating) the rational support that the belief can offer to subsequent beliefs. Loss of epistemic power is incremental, because rational support can be reduced more by one factor than by another, and one belief's rational support can be reduced more than another belief's.

The idea that experiences could *lack* sufficient rational support seems puzzling, given the assumption that experiences don't need to be rationally supported in order to provide rational support to subsequent beliefs. This aspect of ill-founding has no analog for experiences. So if the only aspect of ill-founding for beliefs was that they lack sufficient rational support, the Simple Argument would have to be equivocating on 'ill-foundedness'.

But the idea that experiences could lack epistemic power due to their relationships to other mental states is not puzzling at all. The notion of losing epistemic power applies straightforwardly to experiences, given the assumption that that they can have epistemic power to provide support to subsequent beliefs – an assumption I'll be making here.² Experiences can lose rational power because of how they relate to other mental states, such as defeaters for the experience. The factors that explain why the subject has the experience would prevent it from providing any rational support for believing (at least some of) its contents, or from providing as much rational support as an experience could otherwise provide.

Given that beliefs can lose epistemic power due to their relationships to other mental states, such as dependence on desire, and that experiences can lose epistemic power and can depend on desire, the charge of equivocation in the Simple Argument could be answered by focusing on the types of ill-founding whereby beliefs lose epistemic power due to their dependence on desire. The issue is then whether experiences can lose epistemic power due to their depending on desire in the same ways as those that make beliefs ill-founded. The Simple Argument is an argument that they can.

² Providing *immediate justification* is one kind of epistemic power an experience could have in principle, but not the only kind. For discussion of different types of epistemic power of experiences, see Siegel and Silins 2015.

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The basic reasoning behind the Simple Argument lies in the third premise. But what if in wishful seeing, wishful experiences depend on desires in ways that are completely different from the ways in which beliefs depend on desires, when desires ill-found beliefs? If desires ill-found beliefs by controlling them in ways that can have no analog for experiences, then the basic reasoning behind the Simple Argument doesn't easily get off the ground. In contrast, if beliefs and experiences can depend on desires in analogous ways, then we can go on to ask whether those analogous modes of dependence have similar epistemic effects on beliefs and experiences. If desires can in principle influence experience in the same way as it influences and ill-founds beliefs, then the Analogy thesis is true:

Analogy thesis: It is possible in principle for an experience to depend on a desire, in ways that are structurally analogous to modes in which a belief that P depends on a desire, where that mode of dependence makes the belief ill-founded.

The Analogy thesis is the first brick we need to build a case for the third premise. The Analogy Thesis has an analogy part, and an ill-founding part. The analogy part is that experiences and beliefs can depend on desires in the same way. The ill-founding part is that this shared modes of dependence on desire can ill-found beliefs. By consisting of these two parts, the Analogy Thesis concerns psychological analogies between beliefs and experiences, but not epistemic analogies. It is therefore not enough to establish the conclusion of the Simple Argument. To do that, and to do it in a way that develops the Simple Argument's conceit, an argument for epistemic analogies is needed that takes as understood the psychological analogies between experience and belief. In this paper, I focus on the psychological analogies, by defending the Analogy thesis.³

Is the Analogy thesis true? If ill-founded wishful thinking were always simply a matter of a belief causally depending on desire (or a preference, motive, need, goal – I'll lump these under the broad category of desire), then the question would reduce to whether experiences can causally depend on desires.⁴ Ultimately, I'll argue that beliefs can be ill-founded by desire via some kinds of causal influence. But even if wishful thinking sometimes or always involves a causal relation between a desire and a belief, there must be more to the story about why that form of influence ill-founds the belief. Many beliefs that are not ill-founded causally depend on a desire (even a desire with the same content as the belief). Your hope that a hypothesis P is true might motivate you to

³ For defenses of the epistemic argument, see Siegel (2013a), (2013b), and (ms).

⁴ I'll use the phrase "desire that P", even though some of the states I am lumping under the category of desire are better described using infinitival complements, such as "motive [or goal or preference] to phi", or nominal complements, such as "I want F" or "I want an F/ the F". I will gloss over these differences, since there is usually a straightforward translation into the propositional locution. If you want to phi, then you want it to be case is that you phi. If you want an F or the F, then you want it to be the case that you *phi* an F, for some action phi.

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investigate whether it is true, and once you look into the matter, you might end up believing that P on the basis of the strong evidence that you find. Or you might start out believing P on the basis of a hope, then lose the hope, but come to base your belief properly on evidence for P. At the later time, your belief causally depends on your desire, but it is not then ill-founded by the desire.⁵

Analogous points hold for experiences. You might want to see Jack as he crosses the finish line, and so you position yourself accordingly. When you see him finish the race, your visual experience causally depends on your desire, but if wishful seeing is ill-founded, your visual experience is a poor candidate for wishful seeing. Similarly, an experience of Jack approaching the finish line could start out as a desire-induced hallucination, and morph into a veridical experience that is sensitive to what Jack actually does; or it could start out sensitive to what he does, but morph into a total hallucination that is insensitive to Jack's actual movements.

So beliefs, like experiences, can depend on desires, without the desire ill-founding them. But how do beliefs depend on desires, when that dependence is ill-founding? The paradigmatic ill-founding relation is between beliefs and bodies of evidence. A desire that P does not generally provide evidence bearing on P, and it does not seem psychologically possible in explicit reflective reasoning to treat a desire that P as rationally supporting a belief that P, or even a desire that Q as rationally supporting a belief that P, when P is congruent with that desire.⁶ And you can't move your mind voluntarily into belief, in the way you can move your foot voluntarily into the air. So the type of influence of desires on beliefs that ill-founds them remains to be explained. And even in the simplest case where a desire causes a belief directly, without causing a poor response to evidence along the way, we can still ask what it is about the causal influence of desire on the belief that makes the belief ill-founded.

I'm going to describe two ways in which beliefs can and often do depend on desires, where the desires ill-found the beliefs, and I'll argue that experiences can in principle depend on desires in those same two ways. If those arguments succeed, then the analogy part of the Analogy Thesis is true twice over. I'll call the first shared mode of dependence *responsive or evidence-related*, and the second one *selective or inquiry-*

⁵ Conversely, you could start out believing P on the basis of evidence that supports P, but subsequently your desire that P might make you disposed to keep believing P, even if: you learn that all the evidence on which you based your belief in P is discredited, or you gain evidence against P. Here, wishful thinking is a mode of maintaining a belief in P, rather than a mode of initially forming it.

⁶ We may be able to respond directly to some desires in forming beliefs in something like the way we respond to directly to evidence, as when we respond to a desire to fly by believing that flying would be a good thing for us to do. But many cases where desires influence beliefs in a way that ill-founds them do not have this structure, and so the question of how they can ill-found them remains.

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related. Actual cases of wishful thinking are likely to combine both modes of dependence, but for the purpose of examining the Analogy Thesis, it is useful to distinguish them.⁷ In the responsive mode of dependence, desires control which beliefs you form in response to evidence, and which experiences you have, in response to low-level perceptual inputs. In the selective mode of dependence, desires select which evidence you have in the first place, and which distal stimuli you perceptually experience in the first place. Ultimately I'll argue that the Analogy Thesis is true because:

- responsive wishful seeing is structurally analogous to responsive wishful thinking,
- selective wishful seeing is structurally analogous to selective wishful thinking, and
- both responsive and selective wishful thinking can give rise to ill-founded beliefs.

What are responsive and selective wishful seeing? Wishful seeing in the responsive mode is a form of cognitive penetration of experience by a desire. Here the desire influences how an object looks when you see (and attend) it. If experiences are cognitively penetrable, then the processes that generate perceptual *experiences* are not all *modular*. I've emphasized "experience" because usually the thesis that perceptual processes are modular is not formulated (either by proponents or opponents) in a way that applies specifically to perceptual experiences. Roughly, a process is modular, if it is triggered by a limited and distinctive range of stimuli and unfolds in the same way, regardless of what the subject wants, fears, or believes about the environment.⁸ Although cognitive penetrability of experiences is incompatible with modularism about the processes that generate perceptual experience, it is *compatible* with modularism about perceptual processes that generate pre-conscious perceptual states.

Wishful seeing in the selective mode is a selection effect on experience, in which a desire selects objects and properties for you to experience, without necessarily influencing how the objects or properties look when you see them. Selection processes can also inhibit experiences, by anti-selecting objects or properties for experience. Unlike wishful seeing by cognitive penetration, wishful seeing by selection is compatible with modularism about perceptual experience – and with standard modularism. Modularists about perceptual experience will deny that our experiences are ever cognitively penetrated, but this empirical controversy is irrelevant here. Our interest is in the coherence of the wishful seeing in either form – and in what its epistemic upshot actually is, if modularism about experience is wrong.

⁷ For discussion of wishful thinking as it is found in the wild, see Molden (2012).

⁸ Fodor (1983). For further discussion of modularism, see Mandelbaum (2014). For relationship between cognitive penetrability and modularism, see the papers in Zeimbekis and Raftopoulos (2015).

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Although selection effects and cognitive penetration are psychologically different, my defense of the Simple Argument entails that epistemically, they are similar. Cognitive penetrability per se has no special epistemological significance: an important category in the psychology of perception is less important in the epistemology of perception.⁹ That outlook leaves me with two main tasks: defend the Analogy Thesis for responsive modes of dependence (Part II), and defend it for selective modes of dependence (Part III). Each of these tasks requires an examination of varieties of wishful belief in their own right, so that we may understand how beliefs can be ill-founded by desires. I'll begin in Part I by identifying the type of wishful thinking that's operative in the Analogy Thesis and by offering a framework for understanding in general terms how beliefs may depend on desires.

Part I. Wishful thinking

1. The core phenomenon of wishful thinking

Wishful thinking is a diverse phenomenon, going by the range of cases uncovered by experimental psychology in which needs, goals, and preferences influence beliefs, and given the various mechanisms by which the influence occurs. What a person believes about the causes of illness can be influenced by a desire for circumstances to be under our control, rather than left to fate; how one answers an important question can be influenced by their desire for a simple or concise answer – regardless of whether the answer is well-supported by what else they know; beliefs already formed can be maintained in the face of counterevidence by a desire not to be wrong.¹⁰ The category of wishful thinking (also called “motivated cognition” or “motivated reasoning”) sprawls even farther if we factor in the ways that desires could in principle influence belief, even if no experimental results speak to whether it does. Perhaps the ways are too obvious to warrant experiments, or too hard to operationalize. But through the sprawl, we can identify an overarching phenomenon: a subject forms, tries to form, or maintains some of her beliefs by manipulating her own evidential situation, or responding to the evidence she has in ways that facilitate her ending up believing P, when she wants P to be true, or when P's being true would satisfy some other desire the subject has, or when believing P would satisfy some other desire she has.

So far, this characterization of wishful thinking is free of any normative element. It allows that the desire could be mediated by epistemically well-founding processes

⁹ For more on the un-special status of cognitive penetrability with respect to epistemic questions about perception see Siegel (2015).

¹⁰ On beliefs about causes of illness, see Hirschberger 2006, Mandelbaum and Ripley 2012. On desire for concise answers, see Kruglanski and Webster 1996. Wanting not to be wrong will be discussed shortly. For an overview of experimental work on wishful thinking, see Molden 2012.

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(where those are processes that result in epistemically appropriate beliefs). Sometimes it is unobvious whether the mediating processes are well-founded or not. Suppose you unknowingly manipulate your evidential situation so as to screen out any evidence against P and against your grounds for P, but your belief remains sensitive to the evidence you have. Is your belief ill-founded, or not? Kelly (2008) argues that beliefs maintained in this way could be well-founded, whereas Kornblith (1983) suggests the opposite. For all we have said, perhaps some cases of wishful thinking are epistemically innocuous, while others consist in ill-founded beliefs. Given the ultimate goal of filling in the Simple Argument, we can focus on cases of wishful thinking in which a belief depends on a desire in a way that makes the belief ill-founded. I'll call this the core phenomenon of wishful thinking. By holding fixed that the core phenomenon of wishful thinking ill-founds the resulting beliefs, we can then ask which cases of the overarching phenomenon plausibly have this result, and why.

The core phenomenon of wishful thinking differs from a neighboring phenomenon that I'm going to exclude from discussion here, even though it is discussed under the heading of motivated cognition.¹¹ In the neighboring phenomenon, which I'll call *wishful entertaining*, a desire that P obscures your evidential situation, interfering with memory and introspective access to the evidence you once had bearing on P, and to your previous attitudes toward P. Suppose you have wanted your distant acquaintance X to win a prize. Someone asks you: Did X win the prize? --That X won sounds plausible, but you can't recall whether it really happened, or you just wanted it to be true. You recall that Y nominated X for the prize, and that the influential Z said he thought X should win the prize, but not whether you heard subsequently that X really did win it. If you exit from this haze by judging that X won the prize, that could be a core case of wishful thinking. But the haze-inducing interference with memory and introspection per se isn't the core phenomenon as defined here, though it may be a precursor to the core phenomenon. Just as we can be subject to wishful belief, so too we can be subject to wishful suspension of judgment, or wishful dawdling in inquiry.

In some cases of wishful thinking, the desire and the belief may have the same content. If you desire and believe that P, then you want it to be the case that P and you think it is the case that P. Alternatively, the belief may concern a specific situation, while the desire is much less specific, such as the desire to control one's circumstances, or a desire to reach a simple and concise conclusion. In other cases, a preference is implicit in the structure of processing incoming information that pertains to a prior belief. Suppose that taking in *uncongenial information* motivates you to avoid processing that information further (you forget it immediately, or fail to recognize that it counts against P), or to discount it (you suspect it isn't true, or doesn't count very much against P).¹² Relative to a belief or a desire that P, uncongenial information is evidence against P,

¹¹ The neighboring phenomenon is discussed in Moskowitz, Golwitzer, et al 1999, Sinclair-Kunda 1999, and Lieberman, Ochsner, Gilbert et al, 2001.

¹² On discounting, see Simon et al 1995.

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evidence against your grounds for P, or evidence against what you take your grounds for P to be. These responses to the incoming information could encode a preference to maintain the belief that P, or a preference not to be wrong about P. Those are ways of being invested in believing that P.

A desire to keep believing that P differs from a desire that P. You might be invested in believing that winters where you live are especially severe, while wanting badly to move to Hawaii. You don't want to live where the winters are severe. Desiring (e.g., preferring) to believe that P also differs both from desiring to: believe that P only if P. It also differs from desiring to: believe that P only if P is well-supported by evidence, (or) desiring to: believe that P only if P is epistemically appropriate to believe. People who believed the world would end generated highly implausible explanations for its continuation, even though they presumably did not wish for the end of the world. They also, apparently, did not desire to: believe the world will end, only if that belief was evidentially well-supported, true, or epistemically appropriate.¹³

2. Motivated dispositions and ill-founding

How can we understand the mode of dependence of belief on desire in wishful thinking?

Let's say that a disposition to believe P is *motivated*, if you are disposed to believe P because, or primarily because, believing that P is congruent with your desires. Likewise, a belief that P is motivated, if you have the belief primarily because you have a motivated disposition to believe P.

What kinds of desires can a belief that P be congruent with? Most directly, it could be congruent with a desire that P, or a desire to believe P. But a belief that P could also be congruent with a desire that Q, or a desire to believe Q, where the subject takes P to support Q, or takes P to explain away apparent counterevidence to Q.

Consider a desire to be in control of your health. If your friend gets sick, that desire might make you come to believe, or want to believe, that they got sick by making unwise lifestyle choices. You might review what you know about what they eat, how much they exercise, their exposure to toxins, etc, in the hope of finding something to explain their illness. Explanations you previously dismissed as superstitious might come to seem worthy of consideration. Let P = your ill friend is partly to blame for his illness, rather than being unlucky. You believe that P. Let Q = you can control your health by making wise lifestyle choices. Q is something you want to be true. If Q is true, then you won't be vulnerable to bad luck in health. P would thus explain away counterevidence to Q. If P was false and your ill friend was just unlucky, then you could be unlucky too – and that is at odds with Q. Your belief that P is congruent with your desire that Q.

¹³ Festinger 1956.

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We can say that the desires that motivate believing P are *rationalizing*, not in a normative sense, but in a psychological sense that tracks the ordinary notion of a rationalization. The notion of a rationalizing desire helps us characterize modes of dependence on belief in wishful thinking. Such modes of dependence can be seen as psychological dispositions that explain why the subject believes that P, where she has these dispositions, because she has a desire that rationalizes P.

As a strategy for finding factors that make beliefs ill-founded, this way of thinking about modes of dependence on desire has its limits. Not every belief explained by a motivated disposition is thereby ill-founded. At least not obviously so. Suppose you believe P on good grounds (it doesn't matter what P is). Let Q = you are not misled by misleading evidence against P. You don't want to be misled, so you avoid encountering evidence bearing on P. Perhaps some versions of this holding pattern for your belief that P don't ill-found it.

When a motivated disposition ill-founds a belief, which features of the dependence relation between the belief and the desire are normatively relevant? In the rest of the paper, I argue that desires can *control* beliefs in ways that make those beliefs ill-founded, and that this type of control by desire is both normatively relevant and shareable by experiences.

3. The Simple Evidentialist Proposal

To make the case that control of belief by desire can be ill-founding, it is useful to start with a foil: a Simple Evidentialist proposal. This proposal is a theory of doxastic justification. The goal of such theories is to show us how we should apply our epistemic norms to how well or badly beliefs are formed or maintained. In the case of wishful belief, the challenge for a theory of doxastic justification is to explain what sorts of dependence of beliefs on desires ill-founds the belief.

The Simple Evidentialist Proposal has an explanatory part and a normative part, and both part center on the notion of a *response* to evidence. A subject can respond to evidence that she has, but not to evidence she doesn't have. The explanatory part of the proposal is that it is enough for a belief to be based on evidence if the subject responds to that evidence. (It is not enough simply for the subject to *have* the evidence.) The normative part of the proposal is that a belief is well-founded or ill-founded, to the extent that its response to evidence is epistemically appropriate or inappropriate.¹⁴

¹⁴ The standard evidentialist proposal is a poor candidate for identifying all the normatively relevant factors that can explain why we have our beliefs. For one thing, there could be beliefs that do not belong to any disposition to respond to evidence. For another, even if for every belief a subject has, there is some evidence that she is disposed to respond to in adjusting or maintaining that belief, it is doubtful that such

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Beliefs are ill-founded by desires, when desires explain why a subject comes to respond to her evidence in a way that is epistemically inappropriate.

A belief can be a response to evidence, even if the evidence does not rationally support the belief, and even if it does not bear on the topic of the belief at all. In those cases, to qualify as evidence, the factors that the subject responds to must be proper evidence for other beliefs, even if the subject lacks those other beliefs. Absent further specification of what evidence is, the Simple Evidentialist proposal is under-described. But the under-specification won't matter for the rest of the discussion. What matters more is the notion of *responding* to evidence - whatever evidence turns out to be.

What is it to respond to evidence? Consider ordinary adjustments of beliefs. If you see someone in the room walk through an exit, normally you'll believe they are not in the room anymore. This is an automatic adjustment of belief in response to changing perceptions. Responses to evidence are often less automatic, when it takes some effort to recall the relevant facts (how far are you from your destination? how many miles per gallon does the car get?) and to think the matter through. In both cases, responses to evidence involve some ordinary sense in which you appreciate the force of the evidence you are responding to, even if the "appreciation" does not take the form of a higher-order belief that the evidence rationally supports the proposition you come to believe.¹⁵ As the notion of response is used here, a response to evidence is a primitive psychological relation that one can stand in to evidence.

When it issues in belief, the belief is part of the response. Other modes of response besides belief include various other forms of acceptance, such as the kind involved in suppositional reasoning. These modes may be responses to something other than evidence. We should not rule out that the forms of acceptance that responses to evidence could issue in include perceptual experiences, though responses to evidence may be explanatorily prior to responses to other things. My case for the Analogy Thesis

dispositions always explain why she has the belief. Some dispositions to respond to evidence will reveal only post-hoc rationalizations of a belief, for instance. Consider the morphing lie: you start out lying that P, but lose track of the lie and come to believe P, where your belief is not controlled by any changes in what you take the evidence for it to be. Or consider innate principles that constitute what Carey and Spelke call "core cognition", such as the principle that objects move as bounded wholes. One might point to experiences of objects as rational support for the principle, but such experiences at best derivatively explain why we have the belief in the first place, given that they are generated by core cognition; and experiences that seem to contradict it do not easily, if ever, make us give it up. These examples do not sink the simple evidentialist proposal. But they suggest that the proposal's normative story is at best incomplete, because some beliefs lie outside its explanatory scope, and yet remain normatively assessable.

¹⁵ For useful discussion of other forms the 'appreciation' might in principle take, see Audi (1986) and Boghossian (2014).

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in this paper does not rely on the idea that experiences could be responses to evidence (or to anything else).

The notion of a response to evidence is a primitive notion. It can be brought further into focus by contrasting it with other relations that beliefs can stand in to evidence, distinct from responding to it.

A first contrast is between responding to evidence and bypassing it. You could have some evidence that the café is closed on Mondays (for instance, by knowing that it is closed on Mondays), and yet nonetheless plan to have lunch at that café on Monday, failing to take into account your knowledge that the café will be closed then. You are not discounting that evidence, because you are not even responding to it at all in believing that you will have lunch at that café on Monday.

Another example of bypassing evidence comes from a kind of change-blindness, in which you fixate an object that changes size, yet you fail to adjust your beliefs in response to the information from the object that we may presume you have taken in, given your fixation on it. This phenomenon is illustrated by an experiment that uses a virtual reality paradigm.¹⁶ In the experiments, your task is to select the tall yellow blocks from a series of blocks that come down a belt, and move them off to one side. Short yellow blocks and blocks of other colors should stay on the belt. In the experiment, after you have picked up a tall yellow block but before you have put it in its place, the block shrinks (hence the virtual reality set-up). But many subjects keep on with their routine of putting the shortened block where it doesn't belong - in the place designated for tall yellow blocks. They are fixating the block, and for the sake of illustrating bypass, we can presume they are experiencing the block as short. But they are not discounting this information when they maintain their belief that the block belongs with the other tall yellow ones. They are not even responding to this information. Their belief that the block is (still) tall and yellow bypasses evidence that it is short.

Bypassing evidence thus contrasts with responding to it. The Simple Evidentialist Proposal ties the normative facts about well-founding and ill-founding to responses to evidence. In the conflicting appointments example, if your response to your evidence supports your belief that you will have lunch at the café on Monday, then the Simple Evidentialist proposal predicts that the belief is well-founded. Similarly, in the block case, you are not responding to your perceptual evidence that the block has been shortened, but you may be responding to your perceptual memory of it before the change.

The central evidentialist idea is that the well-foundedness or ill-foundedness of a belief depends exclusively on its relation to the evidence you have, but not necessarily only on the evidence that you respond to. This idea therefore need not take the form of

¹⁶ Treisch (2000).

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the Simple Evidentialist proposal, because nothing in it requires that the normative facts depend exclusively on *responses* to evidence, as opposed to depending on how beliefs stand in relation to all the evidence you have – including any evidence that you bypass.¹⁷ But the Simple Evidentialist proposal is nonetheless useful as a foil, because it helps us highlight the distinctive epistemic contribution of factors other than responses to evidence. In Part II, I argue that one such feature is *control* of responses to evidence. In Part III, I argue that another feature is *selection* of evidence. The normative relevance of responses to evidence will lead us to the first case of the Analogy Thesis.

Part II. Responsive mode of dependence on desire.

Earlier I distinguished between responsive and selective wishful thinking. In responsive wishful thinking, a subject's desire influences her responses to evidence. In selective wishful thinking, a subject's desire influences which evidence she has to begin with. For both of these modes of dependence of belief on desire to shore up the Simple Argument, they have to be shareable by both beliefs and experiences, and they have to ill-found beliefs.

One might have the impression that responsive and selective modes of dependence each fall short of providing what the Simple Argument needs. Responsive modes of dependence are good candidates for ill-founding beliefs, but it might seem obscure how experiences could depend on desires in anything like the same way. They seem apt for the ill-founding part of the Analogy Thesis, but not for the analogy part. Selective modes of dependence seem to have the opposite shortcoming. It is clear that desires can select which things we experience and what evidence we have, but the fact that a desire guides how evidence is selected may seem quite a poor candidate for ill-founding beliefs. They seem apt for the analogy part of the Analogy Thesis, but not for the ill-founding part. If these impressions survive, then the prospects for the Analogy Thesis are dim. To dispel them, my discussion of responsive modes focuses mainly on their applicability to experiences, and my discussion of selective modes focuses mainly on their potential to ill-found beliefs.

4. Which features of responsive wishful thinking are ill-founding?

In responsive wishful thinking, a rationalizing desire explains why a subject responds badly to evidence, or is disposed to respond badly to evidence.

¹⁷ Even in the examples of bypass, the response to evidence may be improper because evidence the subject responds to has less evidential power to support the belief formed in response to it, due to the fact that bypassed evidence retains its rational force. For discussion of the normative relevance of compartmentalized belief, see Siegel 2013b, and for discussion of normative relevance of inattentive experiences, see Siegel and Silins 2014.

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Does the influence of a desire on a response to evidence contribute any extra layer of epistemic badness to the resulting belief? If we focus only on cases where a desire explains why the subject responds poorly to evidence, then we are stuck with a confound: even if the desire has a special role in ill-founding the belief, we cannot easily pull it apart from the role of poor response to evidence. But suppose there are cases in which a subject's desire explains why she believes that P, and the belief is intuitively epistemically problematic, yet the subject has good evidence for P and believes that P by responding to that evidence. Then the influence of the desire is a candidate for an ill-founding factor. Here is an example.

Consider three subjects who all have the same excellent evidence for P, and who all respond to it by believing P, but who differ in how sensitive to that evidence they are. **Perfect S** is disposed to adjust her belief rationally in response to any change in the excellent evidence. **Wishful S** and **Less-wishful S** are imperfect. Any weakening of the evidence, short of overwhelming counterevidence to P, would leave Wishful-S still believing P. Less-wishful S's disposition is a bit better, but only a bit: some weakenings of the evidence, short of overwhelming counterevidence to P, would leave Less-wishful-S still believing P, but not all weakenings. If the initially excellent evidence weakens a little, S will back off in proportion. But if the initially excellent evidence weakens a lot, S's desire will kick in, and she will keep believing P in response to the weakened evidence. Faced with overwhelming counterevidence to P, S would give up her belief that P.

In believing P, both the wishful and the less-wishful subjects respond properly to the evidence they have. But their beliefs are differently controlled by that evidence, and neither of their beliefs are optimally rationally controlled by that evidence. More exactly, the wishful and less-wishful subjects are resistant to evidence in the following sense:

Resistance to evidence

Across a range of (actual or counterfactual) evidential situations in which a subject S responds to bodies of evidence that differ from her actual total evidence, where some of the bodies of total evidence in that range at best weakly support P, S is disposed to believe P.¹⁸

¹⁸ I leave it open whether being resistant to evidence differs from having conditional beliefs about: the probability of P, given weakenings of evidence. Here are some considerations that seem to favor distinctness. At the time that they respond to their excellent evidence for P by believing P, a subject can have a series of conditional beliefs about how likely P is to be true, in various different situations in which the evidence is weaker. But on the face of it, those conditional beliefs need not reflect the dispositions they have to adjust their belief in response to changes in their evidence that weakens it. Once faced with the weakened evidence, their mind might be moved by any number of factors to respond to the evidence differently from the way they currently believe

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Resistance to evidence is a form of modal instability that differs from both standard insensitivity and un-safety.¹⁹ Insensitivity to evidence differs from both two kinds of modal instability often said to be necessary for knowledge: insensitivity of a belief to truth (in the nearest $\sim p$ worlds, S believes p), and unsafeness of belief (in the nearest worlds where S believes p, p is false). Resistance to evidence can include both evidential insensitivity (in the nearest worlds at which S's evidence for p changes, S doesn't base her belief in that evidence if she believes p) and evidential un-safety (in the nearest worlds where S believes p, her belief is not properly based on her evidence). Resistance to evidence does not specify how near or far the worlds in the range are, because it is designed to admit of increments, and one dimension along which resistance could strengthen is that the worlds in which the subject manifests her resistance are closer rather than farther away in modal space.

Given the distinction between evidential and truth-related modal instability, it is natural to wonder whether evidential instability in the form of resistance to evidence is compatible with knowledge. If a subject believes p, but is resistant to evidence bearing on p, can she know p? If she can't know p, then evidential stability in a believing p is a potentially necessary condition on knowing p. If she can know p, then knowledge can survive alongside evidential insensitivity, which I'm going to argue is a kind of epistemic shortcoming. I'm going to focus on making the case that resistance to evidence is an epistemic shortcoming, and leave aside what its relation to knowledge is.

The fact that a subject's belief is resistant to evidence bearing on P (or bearing on the grounds of her belief that P) allows that S has excellent evidence for P and believes that P in response to it – just as the wishful and the less-wishful subjects do. But it disallows that the evidence controls the belief, by disallowing that the subject is disposed to adjust the belief properly in response to changes in evidence.

Resistance to evidence is motivated, if having a rationalizing desire explains why the subject is disposed to resist changes in her evidence, or why she has specific dispositions that mediate that resistance. For example, absent a rationalizing desire (and modulo overdetermination), a subject might interpret evidence against P properly,

would be appropriate. For example, I have strong evidence now that no monkeys are on my porch. I might believe now that if the police call to tell me that monkeys have congregated my porch, I will adjust my current belief, and believe instead what the police tell me. But for all that, I might be disposed to yell at the police when they call, insist that they have the wrong house, and in other ways manifest my disbelief that monkeys are on my porch. On the other side, if having conditional beliefs requires evidential sensitivity, then one's conditional beliefs may determine how sensitive one is to evidence after all.

¹⁹ Thanks to Jane Friedman for her insights into the relationship between knowledge and resistance to evidence. This paragraph and the next one owe a lot to her.

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instead of misinterpreting it as supporting P, or recognize strong evidence against P, or not question the legitimacy of a sources of evidence against P. But if she has a desire that rationalizes a belief that P, that desire might lead her to interpret evidence against P improperly, fail to recognize that a body evidence is strong evidence against P, or question the legitimacy of sources of evidence against P.²⁰ Having motivated dispositions of any of these sorts is a way of being resistant to evidence.

If the Simple Evidentialist proposal were true, then there would be no differences in the epistemic appropriateness of the three beliefs of Perfect, Wishful and Less-wishful subjects, because the only factor that can determine ill-foundedness is the response to evidence that one has, and by hypothesis that factor is the same all three times.²¹ The Simple Evidentialist proposal allows well-foundedness to come in increments determined by the strength of evidence one responds to. But it can't capture increments of control of those responses. The Simple Evidentialist proposal thus predicts that the wishful, less-wishful, and perfect subject's beliefs are all equally well-founded.

To see this prediction in action, consider beliefs in the context of belief polarization – a phenomenon in which subjects who start out with opposing beliefs about a complicated empirical issue (such as whether the death penalty deters crime) fail to converge, when given exactly the same additional evidence bearing on that issue. Actual polarization operates both through selective dispositions and through epistemically poor responses to evidence. People are disposed both to avoid uncongenial information, to respond epistemically poorly to uncongenial information if they confront it, and to fail to scrutinize congenial information in ways that would uncover flaws in it.²² If people on opposite sides of an issue both behave in these ways in response to the same new information, or in response to the opportunity to take in such new information, then their positions will remain divergent, rather than converging.

Tom Kelly (2008) considers a highly circumscribed fictional case of belief polarization in which only some of these dispositions operate. In his scenario, a subject starts out with a rationally supported belief that P, and gets a body of new information that includes both congenial and uncongenial information in the form of experimental studies concerning whether the death penalty deters crime. (Another subject in an exactly parallel situation starts out with rationally supported beliefs that not-P and gets the same body of new evidence). As it happens, all of the studies are flawed. But the

²⁰ On misinterpreting evidence that doesn't favor P as evidence that does, see Stillwell and Baumeister 1997. On taking sources of counterevidence to be illegitimate, see Lord et al 1979, Allyn and Festinger 1961.

²¹ I'm also assuming that evidential modal instability does affect the strength of the evidence that the subject responds to.

²² Lord 1979, Simon et al 1995.

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subjects only find the flaws in the uncongenial information, because they scrutinize uncongenial information in a way that reveals its flaws, while taking the congenial information at face value. After all of the new information has been either taken at face value or legitimately discounted, the subjects end up believing what they started out believing. Kelly argues that their beliefs are not made any less rational by the uneven distribution of scrutiny to congenial and uncongenial information. If so, he argues, then belief polarization is epistemically legitimate, so long as it arises in the way just described.

For a subject who started out rationally believing P, and ended up still believing P after a process of the sort described, could that process leave their belief that P at least as rational as it was at the outset? Kelly focuses just on the fact that uneven distributions of scrutiny determine which evidence each subject has. He accepts a version of evidentialism on which all that matters for justification is which evidence you have. Facts about evidence you don't have don't matter. He concludes that both subjects end up with well-founded beliefs.

But Kelly's situation is under-described with respect to evidential modal instability. For all he says about his scenario, the subject may be disposed to resist weakenings of her excellent evidence – like the wishful and less-wishful subjects. If Kelly's subject had this disposition, she would avoid manifesting it by having the good fortune to be in an experiment in which the uncongenial information she does encounter is flawed, and by failing to scrutinize new (and flawed) congenial information in ways that would uncover its flaws.

Kelly's own conclusion that the polarized beliefs are epistemically appropriate seems much more plausible if we assume that the subjects are disposed to respond perfectly to any weakening in congenial evidence – like the perfect subject considered earlier. The experimentally controlled set-up he considers does not put them in this situation. If we further specify the case so that subjects are disposed to discount genuine flaws in congenial information, then the conclusion seems much less plausible.

The suspicion that the polarized beliefs are not well-founded – a suspicion that Kelly himself acknowledges – seems to arise from the natural assumption that the dispositions that explain the beliefs of the subjects in Kelly's situation are of a piece with disposition to discount genuine flaws in congenial information.²³ That is after all familiar

²³ Kelly (2011) agrees that a belief that is resistant to evidence could have an epistemic flaw, even if the resistance would only show up in counterfactual circumstances. His label for this epistemic flaw is 'failing to follow an argument where it leads'. We agree on the substantive point that their beliefs are not formed epistemically well, though perhaps he would not agree with me that a belief's having this flaw is at odds with its being properly based on evidence. A merely verbal dispute between us concerns the application of "doxastically justified". Kelly considers a belief analogous to the belief

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doxastic behavior. Kelly makes the case that the dispositions he describes are epistemically innocuous, in that if those dispositions explained why someone believed that P, that belief would not thereby be ill-founded. But if someone believed that P because they preferred to maintain their belief that P, where that preference operates through a disposition to both avoid uncongenial information and respond epistemically badly to it when it is not avoided, then the belief is not maintained epistemically as well as it would be, if it were properly controlled by evidence. Intuitively, the epistemic appropriateness of the wishful, less wishful, and perfect beliefs has an obvious ranking. Of the three beliefs, wishful subject's belief is epistemically the worst, the perfect subject's is best, and less-wishful belief is in between. The simple evidentialist proposal lacks the means to distinguish between these incremental differences in ill-foundedness.

At this point, one might object that when the disposition to avoid or discount uncongenial information is not activated, it plays no role in explaining why the wishful subjects have their beliefs, and if it plays no such role, then it is a poor candidate for making that belief ill-founded. In response, the fact that the disposition is not manifested is no bar to its being a cause of the belief, but rather puts the unmanifested disposition in the causal role of an enabling bystander that allows the subject to respond properly to her evidence. Compare Lewis's censor (Lewis 1986): a subject has a visual experience that matches the scene before her eyes. But if the scene were different, the censor would step in to ensure that the subject had the same visual experience. In the world where the subject's experience matches the scene, the censor is not operating, yet it plays a causal role in making it the case that the subject's visual experience matches the scene. Both the censor and the dispositions to avoid or discount uncongenial evidence play a role akin to bystanders that allow something to happen. In the case of belief and evidence, if a subject (such as Kelly's subject) has such dispositions, then when unactivated, they play an enabling-bystander causal role. When we ask which person-level psychological factors of such subject explain why he has the belief, this causal role becomes explanatorily relevant.

Reflection on the Kelly case suggests that if control of belief by desire is ill-founded when the disposition is not manifested, it is ill-founded when the disposition is manifested as well. When a subject responds epistemically badly to evidence she has because her poor response is motivated, the fact that it is motivated is epistemically bad-making.

When the disposition to respond poorly to evidence is manifested, exactly what does control of belief by desire contribute to ill-founding? Consider two cases in which a subject responds poorly to her evidence. In one case, the epistemically poor response is motivated in the sense that it manifests a disposition to control those responses, and in

that p held by wishful and less-wishful S, and says it could be doxastically justified. I would not extend the label to that case.

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the other case the poor response isn't motivated. If the disposition to control the belief is epistemically bad making, then does the motivated belief have to be more ill-founded than the unmotivated but evidentially unsupported belief? Not necessarily. The two beliefs could be equally ill-founded, if the disposition exerts its epistemic bad-making power by being that in virtue of which the motivated belief is ill-founded. Here the beliefs in the two cases would differ in the *ground* of ill-founding, but not in its increment. Alternatively, the disposition could exert its epistemic bad-making power by adding an increment of ill-foundedness to the belief. Either way, to the extent that control by desire contributes to ill-founding a belief, we have a feature that both ill-founds belief, and is a good candidate for carrying over to the case of experience, since experiences can be controlled by desires.

In sum, desires can influence beliefs in ways that are more complex than simply causing a poor response to the evidence that the subject actually has. I've argued that the features that are responsible for ill-founding trace back to control of the belief by the desire. We can now ask whether this control structure can be found in the dependence of experiences on desires. What kind of analogy might there be between control of belief by rationalizing desires, fears, or suspicions, and control of experiences by these same states?

This question brings us to the analogy part of the Analogy Thesis. Experiences are not formed in response to evidence in the way that these beliefs are. I've left open whether experiences are responses to anything in the same way that beliefs can be. But in a less loaded, untechnical sense, experiences are formed partly in response to the things we see, in the case of visual experience, and to the pre-experiential perceptual states that seeing those things engenders. Given that we can see ordinary objects, events, places, the sky, etc., we can ask how things look when we see them. The next section makes the case that experiences can depend on rationalizing desires in a way that is structurally analogous to resistance to evidence that stems from rationalizing desires. This is what happens in wishful seeing by cognitive penetration. Wishful seeing by cognitive penetration lets us see why the analogy part of the Analogy Thesis is true.

5. Wishful seeing by cognitive penetration: responsive wishful seeing

In wishful seeing by cognitive penetration, a subject's rationalizing desire helps explain why her visual experience has the contents it has. We can characterize such control by desire generally in terms of resistance to pre-experiential perceptual states, leaving open whether or not these states are individuated by external things one sees.²⁴

²⁴ The exact kind of motivated resistance will differ, depending on whether the pre-experiential perceptual states are individuated in part by external things one sees. If these states are individuated in part by external things, then the resistance to the pre-experiential states is also a form of resistance to distal stimuli. Otherwise they won't be.

Motivated resistance to pre-experiential perceptual states

Across a range of pre-experiential perceptual states: if you are in any of those pre-experiential perceptual states, you are disposed to end up with an experience attributing F-ness to them, because of a desire that is congruent with the experience of F-ness.

For example, suppose you hope that the shapes in front of you are squares. Call this hope the square-hope, and suppose it partly explains why you have square-experience when you look at the shapes in front of you. If your square-hope makes your square-experience resistant to pre-experiential perceptual states, then we can say the desire tends to distort the shapes that you see. More exactly, the desire would distort their shape, if you perceived them – modulo over-determination. Of course some of the shapes you see might really be square, making it sound odd to say that the desire distorts them. But the pattern of experiences that defines the mode of dependence is meant to make explicit a way in which the F-experiences of *any* stimulus in the range is controlled by the F-desire. Even a veridical F-experience could be controlled by an F-desire, and in that sense, even a veridical F-experiences could be resistant to pre-experiential perceptual states, and even F-stimuli could be distorted by the desire.

Resistance to pre-experiential perceptual states varies in strength along three dimensions. We can ask: how wide is the range of distal stimuli that give rise to the pre-experiential perceptual states to which your F-experience is made resistant by the F-attributing desire? There are different respects in which the range might be more or less wide.

First, there is the sheer quantity of different types of stimuli. For instance, suppose the desire controls a subject's F-experience across a small range of stimuli. Jack sees Jill, who is wearing a neutral expression. Jack wants her approval, and as a result, has an experience attributing happiness to Jill's face. If her face were nearly-happy, he would still experience it as happy, but if it were clearly sad (or clearly angry), Jack would experience it as it is. In a facial morphing task, where a range of faces that differ slightly in their expression are lined up, with sad (or angry) Jill-faces at one end that change gradually and end up with happy Jill-faces at the other end, approval-craving Jack places the line between sad and happy faces closer to the sad end, whereas on a different day, when he's feeling more autonomous, he puts the line farther away from the sad end.²⁵

This difference is important, and I'll go on to talk about the pre-experiential perceptual states as if they were individuated by the distal stimuli. But even if we drop the distal stimuli from the picture entirely and consider resistance pre-experiential perceptual states, the resulting form of resistance will be equally analogous to resistance to evidence.

²⁵ The facial morphing task illustrates this dimension of strength, on the assumption that it operationalizes how the faces look to Jack, not just how he interprets them.

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Second, there is the relationship between the stimuli that get experienced as F (= faces experienced as happy), and F-ness (=happiness). This relationship captures the degree of exaggeration imposed by the desire. For instance, in the case of redness, there is an intuitive sense in which a desire making an orangish surface look red constitutes less of a distortion of the stimuli, compared to a desire making a greenish surface look red. In the case of squareness, a desire that x is square that led your experience it as square would distort a nearly-square rectangle that you perceived less than it would distort a circle. As we saw in the case of happiness, a desire that x is happy that led to your experiencing a face as happy would distort the stimuli less, if the face would normally be experienced as neutral, compared to if the face would normally be experienced as furious. Perhaps not every property that can be represented in experience will be associated with a similarity structure that lets us define this sub-dimension, but some properties clearly will.

The face example illustrates the independence of the exaggeration-dimension from the quantity-dimension. A desire could distort only small range of stimuli, yet still yield exaggerated misperceptions. For instance, in principle, a desire to see a face as happy might distort an oddball pattern of stimuli, such as producing happy-face experiences of very angry faces and neutral faces, but not of nearly-angry or nearly-sad faces.

A third dimension along which wishful seeing by cognitive penetration can be more or less extreme concerns what happens when you look longer or more carefully at a distorted stimulus. Suppose your desire to be facing a square makes a nearly-square rectangle look square (when normally it would not look square). What happens when you examine it more closely, trying to discern what shape it is? Will the effect of the desire persist, given subsequent sensory inquiry, or will subsequent inquiry make the experience more dependent and less resilient to the pre-experiential perceptual states that are engendered by distal stimuli? The more resistant to further sensory inquiry it is, the longer the effect of the desire will persist.²⁶

If we think of distal stimuli that are examined longer or more carefully, beyond the point when they are initially experienced as F, then we can understand resistance to this type of sensory inquiry as a special case of the resistance to pre-experiential perceptual states. Consider a pair of cases in which your desire to be facing squares makes you experience the shapes you face as square, across a range of circumstances,

²⁶ The idea that experiences are resistant to stimuli applies most clearly to case of perception, rather than total hallucinations involving no perceptual contact with anything. But one dimension of this resistance, resistance to further inquiry, applies to cases of hallucination as well. If a desire causes a hallucination that is congruent with the desire .e.g, a desire to see Jack causes a hallucination of Jack walking toward you), we can ask how strongly the desire prevents the subject from perceiving.

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in some of which the shapes aren't square. We can say that one of the experiences in the pair resists further sensory inquiry than the other, if the desire makes the first experience resist some pre-experiential states engendered by long-gazed stimuli, but doesn't do the same for the second experience.²⁷

Do these observations bolster the Analogy Thesis? They do, if all three dimensions of strength of resistance to pre-experiential perceptual states are analogs to dimensions of resistance to evidence. The analogies seem straightforward. First, just as resistance to pre-experiential states engendered by non-F stimuli is more extreme, when the subject is disposed to have F-experiences in response to more non-F stimuli, so too resistance to evidence is more extreme, when the subject is disposed to believe that P, in response to more bodies of evidence she considers that don't support P. Second, just as resistance to experiential states engendered by non-F stimuli is more extreme, when the subject disposed to have F-experiences in response to non-F stimuli that are not only not-F, but are in an intuitive sense far from being F, so too resistant to evidence is more extreme, when the subject is disposed to believe p, in response to bodies of evidence that an intuitive sense do not come close to supporting p.

Third, just as resistance to experiential states engendered by non-F stimuli is more extreme, when the subject is disposed to keep having F-experiences after further sensory inquiry into non-F stimuli that she already experienced as F, prior to looking longer or more carefully at it, so too resistance to evidence is more extreme, when the subject is disposed to keep believing p, even after examining evidence she has on which she bases her belief, when it does not in fact support P, or doesn't support P as much as she takes it to.

So it seems that in the responsive mode, wishful seeing by cognitive penetration and resistance to evidence are structurally analogous. The experience and beliefs cases depend on desire in similar ways. And they can be resistant in the same variety of ways,

²⁷ I've focused so far on cases in which a desire that P penetrates an experience with content P, and so the contents of both states attribute the same properties. But the same type of resistance can be found in cases where the contents differ. For instance, suppose you want to be near a gun, and you believe that there are lots of shiny guns around. If you see something vaguely gun-shaped, your desire to be near a gun will make you experience the thing as shiny, and from there you'll conclude that it is a gun. Let's say that your desire does not control the conclusions you draw from your experience. Those conclusions are sensitive to the properties presented in experience, together with your background beliefs. But your desire to be near a gun, together with your belief that the guns you are likely to see are shiny, jointly make your experience resistant to a range of illumination properties other than shininess. If you lost either the belief or the desire, then (*ceteris paribus*, and assuming no over-determination, etc), your experience would be less resistant with respect to illumination.

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which mediate the influence of desires on beliefs and experiences. Together with the ill-founding role of control by desire of belief, we have a first case for the Analogy Thesis.

Part III. Selective modes of dependence on desire

We have seen that desires can control beliefs by controlling how a subject responds to evidence. Desires can also control which beliefs one has, by controlling which evidence a subject has in the first place, and hence which evidence she has available to respond to. Whether the selective mode of dependence on its own is normatively relevant turns on cases where a subject's responses are properly proportioned to that evidence, but the evidence has been selected in a way that systematically avoids uncongenial information. When beliefs depend on desires in this way, the mode of dependence is selective. In the second defense of the Analogy thesis, I argue that control of beliefs by desire in the selective mode can also make beliefs ill-founded.

We can say that a subject has a selective (inquiry-related) disposition, if she is disposed to maintain a belief that P, in part by being disposed in any of these ways:

- to avoid encountering evidence against P.
- avoid encountering any evidence bearing on P.
- to quickly forget prima-facie evidence against P, or against propositions that the subject takes to support P, while remembering well evidence for P.
- to scrutinize new putative evidence for not-P, or putative undercutters for evidence for P, while taking new putative evidence for P at face value.²⁸

I'm going to focus exclusively on a more general selective disposition that includes the disposition to avoid evidence against P, for P that you already believe. This is the disposition to avoid encountering information that is uncongenial to your belief or desire that P. Relative to a belief or a desire that P, uncongenial information is evidence against P, evidence against your grounds for P, or evidence against what you take your grounds for P to be. For instance, suppose you are looking at a crowded display of colored shapes. You hope (for some reason) that all the squares in the display are red, and that hope makes you disposed to overlook squares that aren't red. You end up believing on the basis of perception that all the squares in the display are red. You're disposed to overlook non-red squares, because you're disposed to avoid encountering

²⁸ On not scrutinizing whether new evidence supports P, see Lord et al 1979. On quickly forgetting putative evidence against P while remembering well evidence for P: Santiago, Kunda and Fond 2009. On not gathering further evidence bearing on P: Hart 2009. On scrutinizing new putative evidence against P while taking new putative evidence for P at face value: Hart 2009, Ditto et al 1998, Giner-Sorolla 1999, Sherman et al 2005. On avoiding likely sources of evidence against P: Hart 2009, Tagliacozzo 1981.

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uncongenial information – and by experiencing non-red squares, you'd get information that's uncongenial to your hope that P. Of course, it needs to be explained how this could happen. The next three sections address that question.

Selective modes of dependence in general are excellent candidates for the analogy part of the Analogy thesis, because both selection of evidence and selection of distal stimuli are inevitable. We usually can't consider all possible evidence bearing on what we believe, and of course never visually experience everything there is to see.

In fact, defending the analogy part of the Analogy thesis for a selective disposition is much simpler than defending the analogy part of the Analogy thesis for responsive modes of dependence. I've said little so far about what evidence is. But on the plausible assumption that avoiding seeing distal stimuli can be a way of avoiding uncongenial evidence, it is trivially true that both experiences and beliefs can depend on desire in the selective mode. The assumption that avoiding seeing distal stimuli can be a way of avoiding uncongenial evidence does not imply that a bloody knife is evidence (in the relevant sense), or that you can *have evidence* that a raw steak was just sliced by picking up the bloody knife that sliced it. What's important is that if you saw the bloody knife, you could have evidence that a raw steak was just sliced, by seeing that the knife is bloody.²⁹ On this way of understanding the relationship between distal stimuli and evidence, no special case for the analogy part of the Analogy thesis needs to be made, for the selective mode of dependence.

To defend the Analogy Thesis for selective modes of dependence, what's needed is a defense of the ill-founding part of the Analogy thesis. And for that, we need a better understanding of how selective modes of dependence can operate, together with some reasons to think that when they operate that way, they can ill-found beliefs.

Outgroup hiring

Hiring committees tend to respond differentially to outgroup applications and ingroup applications, in ways that perpetuate those groupings.³⁰ Since these effects occur absent explicit intentions to exclude outgroup members, and even when the subjects explicitly profess commitments to equality and fairness, they operate without generating awareness of what is being ignored.

What psychological mechanisms underlie these responses? The experimental evidence speaks more clearly to the responses themselves than it does to their cognitive underpinnings. But there are some natural hypotheses. First, the positive features of the ingroup applicants could be weighted more heavily than positive features of outgroup applications – in which case responsive dispositions are involved (presumably, bad

²⁹ Or by having an experience that represents that the knife is bloody (or that a metallic oblong object is covered in red liquid).

³⁰ Steinpreis et al 1999, Goldin and Rouse 2000, Dovidio 2000.

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evidential responses). Second, negative features of the application could be selected for further processing, while positive features are anti-selected – in which case selective dispositions are involved. I'm going to suggest that this second type of mechanism gives us an example of the kind of selective disposition we were looking for when the prejudice is unreasonable. In the most familiar and well-studied cases, it is unreasonable. Nothing in the structure of these cases, however, ensures this. Imagine a sub-population of robots who tended to want to become accountants, but who on the whole were known to be poor at accounting. Actual cases tend not to be like this.

To see the selective disposition in action, suppose that S on the hiring committee forms the belief that outgroup candidate X is a weak candidate, on the basis of examining X's application, finding it not to have many positive features, as a result of a desire-dependent disposition to avoid encountering uncongenial information (we will examine later how this disposition might operate). Where $P = X$ is a weak applicant, and $Q =$ outgroup candidates tend to be weak, S has a preference to keep believing Q. Because she has this preference, she is disposed to avoid encountering positive features of X's application, and this disposition explains why she overlooks those features. S ends up believing that X is a weak candidate, manifesting her disposition to classify applications that seem to have mainly negative features as weak applications. By hypothesis, the disposition to avoid uncongenial information explains why S believes that X is unqualified. Does the fact that such a disposition explains why S ends up with this belief contribute to making the belief ill-founded?

You may find yourself with a strong intuition that the belief that X is unqualified is ill-founded. But the case exhibits a basic puzzle that challenges this intuition. We've met the puzzle before, in the wishful subject who responds well to their evidence, yet who ends up with a belief that seems epistemically compromised. Here, an unreasonable prejudice clearly makes an impact on S's belief that P, but its impact is mediated in part by a disposition to classify applications that seem to lack positive features as weak applications. So is the belief made rational by its dependence on this evidentially good disposition, or is it made irrational by its dependence on the prejudice – the prejudice that selects the body of evidence over which the evidentially good disposition operates?

One might try to explain away the impression that the belief is irrational, by finding a type of non-epistemic irrationality to assign to the hopeful subject, such as the prudential irrationality that might go with systematically overlooking some features of applications when you're trying to find the best ones. But this type of strategy seems unpromising in this case. Relative to the goal of assessing applications and preferring to maintain the belief that outgroup applicants are unqualified, avoiding uncongenial information is prudentially *rational*. And if there are conflicting goals or preferences,

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then the norm of prudence is harder to apply.³¹ So this strategy for immunizing the epistemic status of beliefs against epistemic impropriety does not seem promising.

If there is some distinctively epistemic impropriety involved in believing that X is unqualified in response to evidence that X's application is weak, then in principle, the impropriety could take a form other than the belief's being ill-founded. For instance, the belief could instead fail to be knowledge (for all the case specifies, the belief might be true), yet still be rationally supported by the evidence. But considerations about confirmation of the prejudice suggest that the belief is ill-founded. If the belief isn't ill-founded, then it provides incremental rational support for the generalization that outgroup candidates are weak, or even for the weaker generalization that the outgroup candidates in your pile are weak. But it seems dubious that the belief that the application you examined is weak rationally supports the generalization in this way. This may be a good sociological explanation of how prejudice perpetuates itself, but that explanation does not make the strengthening epistemically appropriate.

If we accept that the belief that X is unqualified is ill-founded, we have to solve a puzzle. What makes the belief ill-founded, if it is formed in response to evidence that supports it?

Here is a first answer. Suppose that full processing of all uncongenial information in an outgroup application either remained unconscious in its entirety, or was immediately forgotten, and that conscious assessment of the application was guided only by conscious information. Does being unconscious or forgotten remove the uncongenial information from the domain of evidence that you have? One might argue that the domain of evidence includes some unconscious perception, on the grounds that in some cases where unconscious perception guides beliefs and behavior, it seems to retain some of its rational impact on the subject's beliefs.³² I won't defend the rational status of unconscious perception or forgotten evidence any further here. But given the assumption that these factors can impact the rational status of a subject's belief, selective dispositions that operate through them can end up generating beliefs that are ill-founded.

A second answer is independent of the epistemic claims about unconscious perception and forgotten evidence, and independent of any psychological hypotheses about how selective dispositions can operate (such as whether they cause the subject to forget uncongenial information, or prevent it from becoming conscious). If we zoom out from these specific psychological mechanisms of selection, we can see that the course of inquiry often involves assessment that any new information subsequent searching

³¹ I'm indebted to Shantia Rahimian for extensive discussion of this type of strategy, which he uses to argue for epistemic reasons for furthering inquiry in Rahimian (ms).

³² For defense of this view, see Siegel and Silins (forthcoming). For a defense of the view that forgotten evidence can retain its rational force, see Carr (ms).

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turns up is unlikely to change the direction the total evidence points in, or otherwise significantly change your evidential situation. We can call these assessments of absence of significant new information.

Sometimes this assessment takes the form of a feeling. To bring the feeling into focus, imagine that on the third forkful of a nutty meal, you bite down with a suspicious crunch. It might be a small rock which could chip a tooth, or it might just be a hard nut. You try to locate the source of the suspicious crunch, chewing carefully in case there really is a rock in your mouth. At some point you go back to chewing normally, teeth intact. All sorts of factors might explain why you stop searching when you do. A fire alarm might go off making you swallow and forget about the problem, or you might find a rock, or you might decide it's so unlikely to be a rock that there's no point in worrying. But even absent factors like these, or alongside them, you might just have a sense that any new information subsequent searching turns up is unlikely to significantly change your evidential situation.³³

The feeling of trust is a feeling, it need not be a perceptual experience in which one takes in information (or misinformation) about the things one is perceiving. In some cases, the feeling of trust in a search might be accompanied by a perceptual experience that represents, for some F in the scene, that the visible F's are all the F's there are in the scene. For instance, in red square example at the start of Part II, one might have perceptual experience that the red squares one sees are all the squares there are. Or looking at an egg carton that holds exactly three eggs, might have a perceptual experience with the content that there are exactly three eggs (or egg-shaped volumes) in the carton – as opposed to representing that there are three eggs, while remaining neutral on whether the carton contains any more. Perceptual experience is arguably not so neutral.³⁴ It has what we could call “that's-all” content.

Whether or not one has a perceptual experience with that's-all content, the course of a searching inquiry for F's includes a 'that's-all' factor, when one concludes from what one has found so far that there are no more F's, or are likely not to be any more F's. Inductive generalizations linking F's to G's include a that's-all factor as well. For instance, from a series of experiences of red squares and non-squares, the subject concludes that all the squares in the display are red. From a series of what appear to be

³³ Railton (2013) discusses the idea that trust takes the form of a feeling, sometimes one that is made salient once it is gone. I am indebted to his discussion of the phenomenal life of trust in doxastic contexts.

³⁴ The contents of such an experience would be universally quantified. This type of content is arguably common. Imagine seeing an otherwise empty egg carton with three eggs in it. Your experience is not neutral on whether there are any other eggs in the egg carton besides the ones you see. It is difficult for contents to reflect this aspect of the experience without universally quantifying over something – locations, eggs, egg-shaped compartments, etc.

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mediocre qualities, the reader concludes that the application is weak. We can think of the route to these generalizations as structured roughly into two components: the evidence they have, plus a 'that's-all' component that purports to license the transition to the generalization:

Evidence (red squares) + That's-all (probably: no non-red squares) = Belief (All the squares are red)

Evidence (mediocre qualities) + That's-all (probably: no non-mediocre qualities) = Belief (All qualities mediocre)

In these cases, the evidence (perception of red squares, detection of weakening features) by itself does not speak directly to the generalization, so the 'that's-all' factor is needed.

The hiring case is complex in ways that the red square case is not, by involving sub-inquiries from which the inquirer ultimately transition to a local verdict (such as 'no more evidence of leadership qualities'), and eventually from those sub-inquiries (assuming no loss of memory along the way) to an overall verdict (such as 'applicant X is a poor candidate for the job'). The course of inquiry into whether X is a strong candidate could involve several sub-inquiries and transitions out of those into 'that's-all' verdicts about their subject.

Whether the that's-all factor occurs within a sub-inquiry or at the transition to an ultimate verdict in the search, it has two important features from the point of view of the Analogy Thesis. First, it clearly plays a major role in determining which evidence the subject has, by regulating assessments of absence. Second, it is arguably a locus of rational evaluability. Let us focus on the second point. I will argue first that assessments of absence are rationally evaluable, and then rely on this argument to conclude that in the special case where the assessment takes the form of a that's-all perceptual experience, that experience is rationally evaluable.

My argument has a negative part and the positive part. The positive part focuses on the fact that in the outgroup hiring case, the unreasonable prejudice includes a background assumption that no uncongenial evidence is likely to be found, and this assumption regulates the assessments of absence. The that's-all factor is an artifact of the unjustified assumption. The positive part of the argument says that when the that's-all factor is an artifact of an unjustified assumption, verdicts that are reached in response to the that's-all factor are thereby ill-founded.

The negative part addresses the idea that the feelings of trust in a search process get an epistemic free ride, by making transitions out of inquiry rational while not needed any rational support themselves. If this idea were correct, then the feelings of trust would not be rationally evaluable at all, and the positive part of the argument would be mistaken.

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According to the negative part, this idea is not correct. We can look more closely to see why we should not embrace the idea.

Both the outgroup case and the red square case involve searches for information that end in belief. They thus involve transitions out of inquiry into belief. Even outside search contexts, such transitions can also be found. Even if you aren't looking for Pierre, you could look in the café and find: no Pierre. Here too, the transition can be mediated by a feeling of trust in the search process. You reach a conclusion about the things in the café – none of them are Pierre. The feeling of trust in a search process is an instance of a more general feeling of trust in the transition out of inquiry. But I'll focus on trust in a search process here.

The transition out of inquiry is subject to epistemic norms. It is an aspect of well-foundedness distinct from the "reason for which" one forms a belief. Since the feeling of trust in a search process is rationally assessable, it is a potential locus of epistemic impropriety in the Outgroup hiring case, the red square case, and other cases in which one forms a belief on the basis of experiences that are generated by covertly motivated selection effects.

What is the rational status of the feeling of trust in the Outgroup hiring case? A first hypothesis is that whenever one feels that a search is unlikely to turn up any new information, the feeling is reasonable. This hypothesis is obviously too strong, since you could have the feeling but know that it is unreliable. A second hypothesis ascribes the rational status to such feelings of trust that *dogmatists* ascribe to perceptual experiences: the feelings of trust in a search process are reasonable, absent defeating information that is available to the subject. On this hypothesis, absent reason to think the feeling is unreliable, it provides rational support for the transition out of inquiry.

This proto-dogmatist hypothesis about feelings of trust is less plausible on the face of it than dogmatism about perception seems to be. Dogmatism in the perceptual case could be motivated in part by the idea that generally, the specific character of perceptual experiences is explained by how things are in the part of world that one is perceiving. In principle, the same experiences could have a wide range of causes, none of which match the character of the experience itself. But even so, perceptual experience seems to give us highly specific information about the environment. If you were told that your experience as of a quiet empty beach was in fact caused by a bustling airport, you would have to give up an assumption that the beach-experience naturally suggests, which is that your beach-experience is due to your perceiving a beach. Perceptual experience seems to tell us simultaneously what we should believe and why we should believe it (e.g., that the display contains red squares).

By comparison, the feeling of trust in a search process is relatively undifferentiated. It is phenomenally the same feeling for each search process (perhaps

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differing only in intensity). The feeling of trust in a search process does not seem from a first-person perspective to be intrinsically tied to the subject-matter of the search, or to its length or quality. It simply tells us that it is time to consider a question closed, but does not disclose anything about the situation that explains why we should do that. It is more like an undifferentiated indicator of a fact about the flow of information and what it indicates, rather than a revelation of factors that explain why more relevant information is not forthcoming. In the rock-in-the-mouth case, for instance, one could easily have a strong conviction that there's no rock in your mouth, without any aspect of your search experience speaking to the question of what makes it reasonable to transition out of inquiry into belief.

To the extent that dogmatism about perceptual experience is motivated by the fact that such experience purports to reveal why we should believe our eyes, there is no analogous motivation for dogmatism about feelings of trust in a search process. The feeling of trust in a search process do not even apparently seem to start out endowed with rational power to justify transitions out of inquiry, absent defeaters. One route to the that's-all factor is a feeling of trust in the search process. If such feelings always licensed transitions out of inquiry and into belief, as per proto-dogmatism about feelings of trust, then any inductive generalization could be rational, just by virtue of being mediated by such an undefeated feeling. Consider the case where you have no strong expectation about whether all the squares in the display are red. After seeing a few red squares and no non-red ones, your general good mood generates a feeling of trust in the search process, and you conclude that all the squares in the display are red. This would seem to be a paradigm case of jumping to conclusions. But if proto-dogmatism about feelings of trust were true, then the generalization could be epistemically appropriate.

We can now put the positive and the negative parts together. If the feeling of trust in a search does not enjoy such rational powers, then we can ask: when is it rational to rely on a feeling of trust, in transitioning out of inquiry into belief? Is special justification for it needed or does it enjoy a default status? We do not have to answer this question in order to maintain both the positive and negative parts. When the feeling of trust is an artifact of an unjustified belief, it is ill-founding.

This conclusion accommodates the intuition that underlies the philosophical interest of the outgroup hiring case. The cases are challenging because it seems unreasonable to conclude that a file-reader could gain justification for their prejudice by exercising their prejudice-driven selective disposition in a way that (unknowingly) leaves them only with congenial evidence, anti-selecting uncongenial evidence.³⁵ If the positive

³⁵ Nothing in the example is specific to outgroup hiring. The same facts could make it reasonable to expect the selective dispositions to operate with ingroup candidates as well, by leading the subject to select congenial information and overlook uncongenial

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conclusion is true, then we can explain why the prejudice does not gain epistemic strength from this case, even though the file readers are responding to evidence that seems to support it.

I've argued that feelings of trust in a search process are epistemically evaluable. If this true in general, then it is true if it turns out that feeling of trust takes the form of a perceptual experiences with that's-all contents. Similarly, if such experiences are the immediate precursors to the perceptual experience, then the rational evaluability of the feeling of trust suggests that whatever kind of epistemic power the perceptual experiences has, its rational impact can be modulated by unreasonable assumptions.

In sum, beliefs can be ill-founded by virtue of resulting from motivated but unreasonable transitions out of inquiry. When such transitions move from perceptual experiences that are left over from systematic *anti*-selection of certain stimuli for experience, those leftover experiences are cases of wishful seeing.

Conclusion.

We have seen two instances of the Analogy Thesis, in two ways that beliefs can be ill-founded by being controlled by desire. First, desires can control beliefs through dispositions to respond poorly to evidence. Second, desires can control beliefs by controlling transitions out of inquiry into belief. In both cases, a motivated disposition explains why the subject ends up with the belief she has, and can contribute to making that belief ill-founded.

This brings us back to the Simple Argument with which we began.

Premise: Beliefs can be ill-founded by wishful thinking.

Premise: Wishful seeing is possible.

Premise: If wishful thinking can ill-found beliefs, then wishful seeing can ill-found perceptual experiences.

Conclusion. Perceptual experiences can be ill-founded by wishful seeing.

With the two defenses of the Analogy Thesis in hand, we can see that the third premise of the argument can be broken down into three parts:

Basing premise: Beliefs can be ill-founded by virtue of being controlled by a desire.

information. The undervaluation of outgroup candidates could just as easily be an overvaluation of ingroup candidates.

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Psychological analogy premise: Experiences can be controlled by desires in the same way that beliefs can be controlled by desires, when the beliefs are ill-founded by virtue of being controlled in that way.

Epistemological symmetry premise: Control of experience by desire can make experiences epistemically powerless.

The defense of the Analogy Thesis makes the case for Basing and Psychological analogy premises. To go the rest of the way in defending the Simple Argument, what's needed are reasons to think that selective and responsive wishful seeing do to experiences what the same forms of wishful thinking can do to beliefs: ill-found them. Combined with the arguments offered here, a defense of the epistemological symmetry premise would take us to the conclusion that experiences can be ill-founded by wishful seeing.*

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