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In this paper, I want to discuss a problem that arises when you try to combine an attractive account of what constitutes evidence with an independently plausible account of the kind of access we have to our evidence. According to $E = K$, our evidence consists of what we know. According to the principle of armchair access, if a proposition is part of our evidence we ought to be able to know that this proposition is part of our evidence ‘from the armchair’. Combined, these claims entail that we can have armchair knowledge of the external world. Because it seems that the principle of armchair access is supported by a widely shared intuition about epistemic rationality, it seems we ought to embrace an internalist conception of evidence. I shall argue that this response is mistaken. Because externalism about evidence can accommodate the relevant intuitions about epistemic rationality, the principle of armchair access is unmotivated. We also have independent reasons for preferring externalism about evidence to the principle of armchair access.

0 INTRODUCTION

I want to discuss a problem that arises once we try to accommodate two independently plausible claims about evidence. The first is a claim about what our evidence consists of. It is the claim that evidence consists of knowledge:

(E = K) S’s evidence includes p iff S knows p .¹

The second is a claim about the kind of access we have to our evidence. It is the claim that we have ‘armchair access’ to our evidence:

(AA) If S’s evidence includes p , it is possible for S to know from the armchair that p is part of S’s evidence.²

¹ Williamson (2000) defends this view. Brewer (1999), Hyman (1999, 2006), Maher (1996), McDowell (1988), and Unger (1975) face essentially the same difficulty that Williamson faces insofar as their views can accommodate AA only if it is possible to have armchair access to contingent matters of fact.

² An anonymous referee asked whether armchair knowledge and *apriori* knowledge amounted to the same thing. That is hard to say. If you think that *apriori* knowledge does not include introspective knowledge, these notions do not come to the same thing. Armchair knowledge might include *apriori* knowledge (e.g., knowledge of moral truths or mathematical truths that is had by reflection or intuition), but it would also include introspective knowledge of one’s own mental life. Silins (2005) defends the principle of armchair access as it is stated here. Audi (1993: 344), Ginet (1990), as well as Conee and Feldman (2004: 47) seem to endorse the principle as well. Just to be clear, it is not obvious that if S has armchair knowledge that p is part of her evidence she must have armchair knowledge that p is the case. Perhaps S can have armchair knowledge that the proposition *that she has hands* is part of her evidence even if she does not know that she has hands.

To say that S knows something from the armchair is to say that it can be known in a way that does not depend constitutively upon experience. It is to say, in other words, that if p is part of S's evidence, it should be possible for S to know that p is part of S's evidence on the basis of introspection or reflection. The principle is *prima facie* plausible because it often seems that when we make non-culpable mistakes about how things are in the external world, the mistakes do not derive from prior mistakes about what our evidence consisted of. Upon learning that we were mistaken, we tend to think that our evidence misled us and not that we were misled about what our evidence was. That is, we often think that when we make mistakes about how things are in the external world, we discover that there was something we were right about (e.g., what reasons we had for making the mistaken inference) and that what we were right about had to concern some subject matter other than what we were mistaken about (e.g., considerations that pertained to us and how things seem to us rather than how things are outside of us).

To see what the problem is, let's suppose for the sake of this discussion that the sceptic is wrong. Suppose that it is possible to know contingent propositions about the external world such as the proposition that I have hands. Given this supposition and $E = K$, it follows that:

(E1) My evidence includes the proposition that I have hands.

It follows from AA that:

(E2) It is possible for me to know that (E1) is true from the armchair.

If $E = K$ can be known from the armchair, it follows from this further assumption, AA, (E1), and (E2) that:

(E3) It is possible for me to know that I have hands from the armchair.

But, that seems absurd. It seems absurd to think that I could know from the armchair that I have hands.³

Our problem is at least superficially similar to the problem that McKinsey raised for externalism about thought content.⁴ If the contents of our thoughts depended upon contingent matters of fact external to us (e.g., the presence of water), how could we consistently say that we have privileged access to our

³ Neta and Pritchard (2007) seem prepared to bite this bullet.

⁴ For discussion, see McKinsey (1991). While this is controversial, I believe that McKinsey's epistemological objections to thought content externalism rest on a mistake about the commitments of thought content externalism. If Putnam is right, we might know *a priori* that 'water' thoughts are wide but not that our 'water' thoughts depend upon the existence of water. (Our 'water' thoughts would have been wide in a dry world.) So, there is nothing we know *a priori* that allows us to knowingly deduce from the armchair that water exists if we know from the armchair that we are thinking that water is wet and know from the armchair that such thoughts have wide content. And, I doubt that knowing whether a thought is world-dependent in the way our 'water' thoughts happen to be but 'unicorn' thoughts happen not to be is necessary for knowing what we are thinking. I do not believe that critics of externalism about evidence have made any analogous mistakes about the commitments of evidential externalism, but I need not take a stand on that matter in this paper.

thoughts and insist that we cannot have privileged access to those aspects of the external world that go towards determining what the contents of our thoughts are? If our evidence depended upon contingent matters of fact external to us, how could we consistently say that we have a kind of privileged access to our evidence if we do not have a similarly privileged access to those aspects of the external world that go towards determining what our evidence consists of? Here, I shall defend an incompatibilist response. Perhaps we cannot reconcile externalist conceptions of evidence with the principle of armchair access. We should reject the principle of armchair access and recognize that externalism about evidence can accommodate the considerations taken to motivate the principle of armchair access.

In §1, I shall explain some of the motivation behind the principle of armchair access and externalist approaches to evidence that appear to be at odds with this principle. In this section, we shall see why someone might think that the principle of armchair access is needed to make sense of a widely held intuition about epistemic rationality. In turn, we shall see why someone might think that externalism about evidence ought to be rejected on the grounds that it clashes with our intuitions about epistemic rationality. In §2, I shall explain why we ought to give up the principle of armchair access. Not only is there a good case to be made for externalism about evidence, the principle of armchair access appears to generate some sceptical headaches. It is not obvious that the principle of armchair access is incompatible with the anti-sceptical view that we can have knowledge of the external world, but we shall see that it is incompatible with the anti-sceptical view that we can have non-inferential knowledge of the external world. In §3, I shall explain how to reconcile an externalist approach to evidence with the considerations having to do with epistemic rationality often taken to motivate an internalist approach to evidence and the principle of armchair access.

1 EVIDENTIAL EXTERNALISM AND ARMCHAIR ACCESS

In this section, I want to explain why someone might think that our evidence is limited to that which we can know belongs to our evidence from the armchair and explain why others think that our evidence consists of propositions that do not satisfy this access requirement. Before we get to that, some preliminary remarks about the notion of evidence at issue are in order.

First, we typically think of evidence as being evidence *for* some particular claim, belief, or hypothesis. It might seem strange to some to think of a subject's evidence as being coextensive with what the subject knows since it is not obvious that in knowing p it is necessary that p is evidence *for* some further matter.⁵ Since evidence is always evidence *for* something or other, doesn't this show that there's some difference between pieces of evidence and items of knowledge? It might be useful to distinguish the

⁵ An anonymous referee for this journal expressed the concern that $E = K$ commits us to an overly inclusive conception of evidence, but I should hope that $E = K$ is consistent with (a) any plausible view about when p can count as a subject's evidence for q and (b) the insistence that nothing can be evidence *simpliciter* unless it is evidence *for* something or other.

propositions that are a subject's evidence *for* believing some particular proposition and the subject's evidence *simpliciter*. To understand this talk of evidence *simpliciter* (i.e., talk about evidence that does not mention any propositions the piece of evidence is evidence for), I find the following analogy useful.⁶ We can say that someone has such and such piece of evidence without specifying what that is evidence for much in the same way that we can list the ingredients in someone's kitchen without saying what those ingredients are ingredients for. This should not be taken to support the dubious idea that there could be ingredients *simpliciter* that are not ingredients for anything at all and we similarly should be able to talk about what is in an individual's stock or fund of evidence without being taken to support the bizarre idea that there are propositions that are evidence *simpliciter* that is not evidence *for* anything. According to $E = K$, nothing gets to be part of that fund of evidence unless the subject knows that the proposition is true and nothing beyond knowledge is necessary for getting a proposition into that fund. It seems we can consistently add that none of these propositions are evidence *simpliciter* unless they are evidence *for* something or other. I cannot think of a case in which there is a proposition I know that could not serve as evidence for something I might consider believing. When I say that p is part of a subject's evidence without specifying what proposition(s) that proposition is evidence *for*, it is like saying that someone is a brother or aunt without saying to whom this person is a brother or an aunt.

Second, some authors find it helpful to distinguish between objective and subjective conceptions of evidence. On an objective conception of evidence such as Achinstein's conception of veridical evidence, it cannot be that p is evidence for S 's belief that q unless p is true.⁷ I see nothing wrong with acknowledging that we do use this concept of evidence while acknowledging that we also use something along the lines of Achinstein's subjective conception of evidence on which it can be the case that p is S 's evidence for q even if p is false (unbeknownst to S). Once we distinguish objective from subjective conceptions of evidence, the question arises as to which concept of evidence is at issue. One might worry that unless we fix on some single notion, there is the possibility that both sides to this debate will be talking past one another. Yes, someone might say, you should not combine $E = K$ with AA because the former has to do with an objective notion of evidence whereas the latter has to do with a subjective notion. It is not surprising that if you ignore this fact and try to combine the two you'll run into trouble, but don't we solve the 'problem' we started with once we disambiguate?

I don't think that we can solve (or dissolve) our problem so easily. First, think about the dialectical situation. Those who defend AA often taken it upon themselves to argue that the incompatibility between AA and $E = K$ is reason to reject $E = K$. I doubt that either party to this dispute could have thought that $E = K$ was ever intended as an account of the subjective conception of evidence. Those who defend AA

⁶ Hyman (2006: 892).

⁷ See Achinstein (1984).

presumably think that either the very idea of an objective conception of evidence is suspect or insist that even if there is some objective conception of evidence there are still access requirements that facts or propositions must satisfy in order to be included in our stock of (objective) evidence. Second, it seems there is some single, univocal notion of evidence at issue here that defenders of $E = K$ and AA can fight over. Parties to this debate think that the conception of evidence they have described is the notion of evidence that is involved in the justification of belief. These parties are not interested in the *activity* of giving justifications for a belief that might fail to show that the relevant belief is justified. Both sides are trying to characterize the kind of evidence that is largely responsible for ensuring that beliefs of ours have the *property* of being justified.⁸ So, if you worry about the potential ambiguity in talk of ‘evidence’, remember that we can disambiguate and introduce a subjective conception of evidence along with an objective one and then ask the crucial question: which of these notions is responsible for the justification of belief? Those who defend AA insist that the only evidence that can serve as a potential justifier is that kind of evidence we can know from the armchair to belong to our stock of evidence. Those who defend $E = K$ insist that this is an overly restrictive account of potential justifiers and urge us to accept that even contingent propositions we cannot know to be true from the armchair can give us evidence or reason to believe.

1.1 ARMCHAIR ACCESS

According to the principle of armchair access, your evidence is limited to that which you can know to be your evidence from the armchair. Your judgments about your own evidence enjoy a kind of epistemic security it seems our judgments about the external world lack. Why think that your evidence is so limited? Perhaps we ought to think of evidence as that which we have to go on if we are to settle some question.⁹ It might be that we need to have better access to the evidence that bears on whether q than we do to the fact that q , but that does not explain why we would need the sort of access that the principle of armchair access suggests we need. Maybe you wonder whether it rained last night. Since your sprawled on your back in bed with the shades drawn you cannot determine directly whether it rained last night. You need to gather evidence. Whatever evidence you might acquire for your belief about last night’s weather it should be that your access to this evidence is less problematic than the access you now have to the facts about last night’s weather, that does not rule out the fact that the streets are wet from being part of your evidence for believing that it rained last night. The principle of AA does rule this out. So, this platitude about evidence does little to motivate AA.

⁸ Silins (2005: 376) and Williamson (2000: 185) are explicit on this point, insisting that the notion of evidence at issue is the notion of that which justifies belief.

⁹ See Kelly (2008).

Let's try a different tack. The evidential externalist ('externalist' hereafter) thinks that it is possible for two subjects in precisely the same non-factive mental states to have different bodies of evidence. An internalist denies this. Their disagreement concerns the status of the following supervenience thesis:

(E-INT) Necessarily, if two subjects, S and S', are in precisely the same non-factive mental states, S and S' have precisely the same evidence.¹⁰

Anyone who accepts $E = K$ will deny E-INT and so anyone who accepts $E = K$ counts as an externalist as the term is being used here.¹¹ To see why, suppose S knows that she has hands but S' believes this mistakenly because S' has undergone a series of hallucinatory experiences that are indistinguishable from the veridical experiences that S has undergone. Then, the proposition that she has hands will be included in the first subject's body of evidence but not the second. So, S will have evidence for the inferential belief in the disjunctive proposition that she has hands or cats are robots from space that S' does not have. It seems that AA is consistent with E-INT. Indeed, it seems that the same intuitions motivate AA and E-INT. As the denial of E-INT is often taken to be deeply problematic, that might suggest a natural rationale for accepting AA and taking the incompatibility of AA with $E = K$ as a good, if not decisive reason, for rejecting $E = K$ and evidential externalism.

For reasons that we shall consider shortly, someone might dig in here and deny E-INT. For reasons that we shall consider shortly, some epistemologists will dig in here and deny E-INT. In support of E-INT, some have suggested that E-INT is a consequence of the following thesis about epistemic rationality:

(R-INT) Necessarily, if two subjects, S and S' are in precisely the same non-factive mental states, S and S' are equally rational/reasonable in believing what they do.¹²

¹⁰ Conee and Feldman (2004) defend this thesis. Because some believe in factive mental states that have as contents propositions that represent aspects of the external world, it is important to distinguish INT from the claim that evidence strongly supervenes on a subject's mental states. $E = K$ is consistent with that thesis, but is inconsistent with INT. In epistemology, there are disputes between internalists and externalists that do not directly concern INT. For example, you might think of the internalist about evidence as someone who thinks that we have a kind of immediate access to our evidence. Maher (1996) thinks that our evidence includes propositions known to us by observation. If you think that observation gives us access to the external world, Maher's view is inconsistent with INT but would be consistent with a kind of access requirement on evidence.

¹¹ An anonymous referee thought it was odd to describe $E = K$ as a version of externalism about evidence. There are perfectly good ways of drawing the distinction between internalism and externalism on which $E = K$ counts as an internalist view (e.g., you might think that the internal includes everything to which you have access or everything which you know). I'm following the lead of authors such as Conee and Feldman (2004) and Silins (2005) in labeling Williamson's view 'externalist' because $E = K$ is incompatible with E-INT.

¹² In addition to Conee and Feldman (2004), Audi (1993), Cohen (1984), and Wedgwood (2002) defend this claim.

To get a sense as to why someone might endorse R-INT, let's suppose S is wildly successful in her epistemic endeavors. Whatever she believes, she knows to be true. Suppose S' is in precisely the same non-factive mental states but her beliefs fail to constitute knowledge for various reasons. Perhaps S' suffers the odd hallucination. Perhaps S' is prone to forming accidentally justified, true beliefs. It seems that when she fails to know for these reasons, she is no less reasonable than S is.

If we think of epistemic rationality as a matter of respecting the evidence, we can argue from R-INT to E-INT as follows. Suppose White and Plum are in precisely the same non-factive mental states. Both believe that Mustard is the killer. White saw Mustard kill his victim. Plum underwent an indistinguishable hallucinatory experience and seemed to have seen Mustard kill. Suppose E-INT is false and some externalist view such as $E = K$ is correct. White's evidence includes everything that Mustard's evidence includes, but it includes more besides. Now, if Plum knew that her evidence included only the evidence someone would have in the 'bad' case (i.e., the case in which her beliefs are mistaken but she is in just the same non-factive mental states she is in now because of a hallucinatory experience), she ought to be significantly less confident in her beliefs than White is. Perhaps if she knew this she ought to suspend judgment as to whether some propositions White knew to be true really were true. If she knew that her evidence included just the evidence someone had in the 'bad' case and did not adjust her attitudes accordingly, she would not be as reasonable or rational as White is. But, if $E = K$ is true she is not in a position to know that her evidence is less than White's and her ignorance seems necessary for our saying that she is no less reasonable or rational than White. But, then we have to say that she is rational or reasonable only because she fails to know what her evidence truly consists of. How can we say both that she is nothing less than fully reasonable or rational and that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence when she is ignorant of what her evidence truly consisted of? That combination of views is puzzling. However, it seems that this combination of views is what any externalist is saddled with unless they are willing to deny that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence. So, it seems there is a plausible line of argument from R-INT to E-INT. Given the intuitive plausibility of R-INT, we have a good case for E-INT and a case for thinking that something in the neighborhood of AA must be correct.

1.2 EXTERNALISM ABOUT EVIDENCE

The externalist thinks that it is possible for two subjects in precisely the same non-factive mental states to have different bodies of evidence. Because it denies E-INT, $E = K$ is a version of externalism about evidence. Because it seems (to some) that the view comes with heavy costs, some might ask why we should not take the incompatibility of $E = K$ with AA to be conclusive reason for rejecting $E = K$. The answer is simply that there seem to be good reasons to endorse externalist accounts of evidence incompatible with

AA. Let me begin by sketching a case for $E = K$ and then a case for a weaker version of externalism about evidence.

For the sake of this discussion, let us assume that evidence and epistemic reasons for believing consist of either propositions or facts. There is some linguistic evidence that suggests that this view is right. Consider:

- (1) There is good reason for her to believe that Plum is innocent; namely, that Plum's prints were not the prints found on the murder weapon.

We ascribe reasons using that-clauses, so it seems that if reasons for belief just are bits of evidence, in ascribing someone evidence we refer to propositions or facts.¹³ Of course, not everyone believes that this sort of linguistic evidence is dispositive since not everyone believes that evidence consists of propositions or facts. Since it is consistent with AA, however, to adopt the view that evidence consists of propositions or facts, it might be useful for the purposes of our discussion to speak as if evidence consisted of facts or propositions and ask whether evidence is subject to the sort of constraint that defenders of AA suggest that it is. Even if you think that evidence cannot consist of propositions or facts, I hope you still want to know whether we ought to reject any view on which we could have evidence we cannot know from the armchair belongs to our evidence. We should consider two questions:

- (Q1) Is S's knowledge of p 's truth *necessary* for p 's inclusion in S's body of evidence?
- (Q2) Is S's knowledge of p 's truth *sufficient* for p 's inclusion in S's body of evidence?

Let's focus first on the necessity claim. Why think knowledge of p 's truth is necessary for p 's inclusion in S's evidence? Some have offered linguistic evidence in support of the necessity claim. As has been observed, it sounds contradictory to assert claims such as these:

- (2) White's reason for believing/saying Plum is innocent is that Plum was nowhere near the scene of the crime on the night of the murder but White does not know that Plum was nowhere near the scene of the crime on the night of the murder.

If such claims are contradictory, it seems that whenever p is S's reason for Φ -ing, S knows p .¹⁴ I have to confess that I do not place a great deal of confidence in this sort of argument. In some contexts, we use

¹³ For arguments in support of the thesis that reasons are facts or propositions, see Dancy (2000), Darwall (1985), Neta (2008), Unger (1975), and Williamson (2000).

¹⁴ See Unger (1975: 206).

'know' loosely, as something akin to firmly held true belief.¹⁵ I think these are contexts in which we use 'know' in such a way that considerations having to do with accidental connections to the truth are irrelevant. Consider this exchange:

Mustard: What reason does Plum have to believe that White is innocent?
Scarlet: White's reason for believing Plum is innocent is that Plum was
 nowhere near the scene of the crime.

In a second conversational exchange, Peacock says to Green that White does not believe that Plum was nowhere near the scene of the crime. He says that White believed that Plum was at the scene of the murder on the relevant night. Or, suppose that Peacock says that Green that Plum was at the scene of the murder on the relevant night. As an outside observer, it seems to me that both of Peacock's assertions are inconsistent with Scarlet's response to Mustard's question. However, if Peacock starts to tell Green about Plum doppelganger's in White's neighborhood or false newspaper stories that White knows nothing about, we might be inclined to say that White does not know that Plum was nowhere near the scene of the crime for purely Gettierish reasons. It does not seem to me, however, that such considerations thereby show that Scarlet's assertion is mistaken, false, or incorrect. And that suggests that it is a loose use of 'knows' that figures in (2).

On its face, pointing to such Gettierish considerations is just not a way of challenging the veracity of Scarlet's claim which means that the apparent contradiction of asserting (2) is not evidence for the necessity claim. That does not show that S's knowledge of *p*'s truth is *not* necessary for *p*'s inclusion in S's evidence. However, I think there is a good reason to say that S's knowledge of *p*'s truth is *not* necessary for *p*'s inclusion in S's evidence. Here's the reason. Suppose that S knows that there is at least one barn visible from the road she has been driving down because she saw that there was a barn a little ways back. Suppose that S fails to know that there is at least one barn visible from the road that she has been driving down because while she did in fact see a barn, there is a sufficient number of fakes in her vicinity for us to say that her belief failed to constitute knowledge. If we hold everything else equal (i.e., facts about their mental states, their dispositions to reason in certain ways, the accuracy of those mental states, etc...), it strikes me as highly counterintuitive to say that S has evidence that S lacks. This, however, is something that a defender of $E = K$ would have to accept.

Note that while such cases might give us reason to revise $E = K$, they give us little if any reason to revise $E = K$ to bring it in line with AA. While I doubt that S must know that *p* is true for *p* to be included in S's evidence, it seems there is some linguistic evidence that suggests that *p* must be true in order to be included in S's evidence. Consider two exchanges. Here's the first:

Scarlet: Does the prosecution have solid evidence against Mustard?

¹⁵ See Goldman (2002).

Green: Yes, they have all sorts of evidence against him: namely, that he was the last one to see the victim alive, that his alibi did not check out, that his fingerprints were on the murder weapon, and that he had written a letter containing details the police think only the killer could have known.

Here's the second:

Plum: How good is the prosecution's evidence against Mustard?

Peacock: It seems that the evidence is pretty strong. However, Mustard's prints are not on the murder weapon, his alibi checks out, and he was not the last one seen with the victim. This is all perfectly consistent with the evidence that the prosecution does have.

It seems as if Peacock's assertion flatly contradicts Green's assertion. But all that Peacock has done is assert that the falsity of certain propositions is consistent with other propositions about what the prosecution's evidence consists of. So, unless we say that claims about what someone's evidence consists of entail that those claims are true, it's hard to see how Peacock's assertion could contradict Green's assertion. Peacock's assertion speaks to the veracity of the prosecution's claims rather than speaking directly about the evidence that they have. This bit of linguistic evidence does little to support $E = K$. It does, however, support the idea that ascriptions of evidence are factive:

(ET) If S's evidence includes p , it is the case that p .

If we say that some subject's evidence includes p , we cannot remain neutral with respect to the question as to whether p is true.

Let's suppose that S's knowledge of p 's truth is not necessary for p 's inclusion in S's evidence. Let's suppose for the time being that truth is. Let's turn to our second question. Is knowledge *sufficient*? On its face, it seems it is. Suppose the logical connection between two propositions is sufficiently obvious to both the speaker and the subject being spoken of. It seems contradictory to say things like this:

(3) This is a candlestick and Plum knows it, but that is no reason for her to believe it is not a wrench.

To my ear, (3) is as bad as the abominable conjunctions that lead some to endorse closure principles for knowledge.¹⁶ The natural explanation as to why (3) sounds so bad is that (3) cannot be true. But, the natural explanation as to why (3) cannot be true is that there cannot be further epistemic hurdles to cross to get some proposition into your evidence or treat some proposition as a reason than knowingly determining that it is true.

¹⁶ See DeRose (1995).

In a similar vein, suppose we think of evidence as a reason that provides a subject with a justification for holding a belief.¹⁷ Some have defended the view that knowledge of p 's truth is sufficient for it to be epistemically permissible to treat p as a reason for action or including p in a piece of practical reasoning.¹⁸ Various arguments have been given for the view, but rather than reviewing those, let me add one of my own. Were it not permissible to treat p as a reason for action and include p in practical deliberation, there would be a conclusive reason to refrain from so doing. But, if there were a conclusive epistemic reason to refrain from including the belief that p is the case in practical deliberation, it would seem that such a reason ought to constitute a conclusive reason not to believe p in the first place. The existence of such reasons would seem to ensure that the subject could not satisfy the justification condition on having knowledge that p . Thus, it seems that the principle could admit of no counterexamples. Now, the principle is about the permissibility of treating something as a reason rather than whether something is a reason. While this is a distinction that might matter to some, it is hard to see how someone who accepts an access principle such as AA could make use of such a distinction. For according to AA, on the hypothesis that something is a piece of evidence or a reason, the subject is in a position to know that this item is a piece of evidence or a reason. It is hard to imagine how someone might permissibly treat a non-reason as a reason when they were in a position to know that the non-reason could not be a reason. So, I have a difficult time seeing how someone who accepts AA could say that it is permissible to treat what you know as a reason for action while saying that it might nevertheless be the case that what is treated as a reason is no reason at all. It seems there is good reason to think that it is permissible to treat what you know as a reason for action. It seems that knowledge of p 's truth, then, ought to suffice for p 's inclusion in your evidence if we say that the reasons that can properly figure in practical deliberation constitute evidence for, say, beliefs about what ought to be done. The identification seems perfectly apt given the gloss on evidence as that which gives you a reason that can justify a belief.

I suppose that if someone were to be picky about the matter, they might insist on drawing a distinction between basic and derived reasons for belief, where basic reasons for belief are acquired without inference or reasoning whereas derived reasons are derived from basic reasons by means of inference.¹⁹ They might say that our evidence includes only non-derivative reasons for belief. They might, for example,

¹⁷ This is Silins' (2005: 376) gloss on the notion of evidence.

¹⁸ See Hawthorne and Stanely (2008).

¹⁹ On Maher's (1996) account of evidence, inference from things known through observation does not provide us with new evidence. Bird (2004) defends the idea that there can be inferential evidence. If Bird's (2004) arguments are successful, then perhaps we do acquire new evidence via inference and the sceptical worry I raise in the next section is even worse than I suggest below. For if knowledge of p 's truth suffices for p 's inclusion in a subject's evidence regardless of whether that knowledge is inferential or non-inferential, the argument below would show that it follows from AA that knowledge of the external world is unattainable.

balk at the idea that deductive or inductive inference is a way of acquiring new evidence. If so, we might have to modify (KSE) slightly and say that non-inferential knowledge of a proposition's truth is sufficient for that proposition's inclusion in the subject's evidence (NIKSE). It should be clear that if we work from the assumption that it is impossible to have armchair knowledge of contingent propositions about the external world (e.g., that I have hands), then anyone who accepts AA has either to deny ET or deny NIKSE. Similarly, the conjunction of ET and NIKSE is incompatible with E-INT. This pair of claims is more modest than $E = K$ and seems not to face the objections that $E = K$ faces. For example, if you accept $E = K$ you have to say that if one subject knows p but the second fails to know p just because she is in a Gettier case it thereby follows that the second has less evidence than the first. The conjunction of ET and NIKSE carries with it no such implication. In the next section I shall argue that we ought to prefer a view that accommodates NIKSE and ET over one that accommodates AA.

2 REJECTING ARMCHAIR ACCESS

In this section, I shall argue that given that we must choose between AA and externalism about evidence, we ought to reject AA on the grounds that it carries with it an unpalatable sceptical consequence. In particular, it seems to follow from AA that we can never have non-inferential knowledge of facts about the external world. It does not follow directly from this that we can never have knowledge of the external world, but if you take a dim view of accounts of our knowledge of the external world on which all such knowledge can only be inferential knowledge based on knowledge of the internal world of our own minds, this should worry you. Myself, I think that even if there is some story about how we could acquire inferential knowledge of the external world in spite of the (alleged) impossibility of non-inferential knowledge of the external world it would be better if we did not have to tell such a story because of our account of evidence and our access to it. So, if the argument is successful, it suggests that we have some reason for preferring a view that does not accommodate AA to one that does. And that suggests that the apparent incompatibility between AA and externalism about evidence is not to be taken as some indication that we have good reason to reject externalism about evidence.

Here is the argument:

- (1) My evidence is limited to propositions I can know from the armchair belong to my evidence. [AA]
- (2) If p is part of my evidence, p is the case [ET].
- (3) If I non-inferentially know that p , p is part of my evidence [NIKSE].

- (4) If my evidence includes the proposition that I have hands, then I have hands and I know from armchair that I have hands [(1), (2), (3)].
- (5) But, it's absurd to think I could know from the armchair that I have hands [Assumption].
- (6) If my evidence cannot include the proposition that I have hands, either I'm handless or I cannot know non-inferentially that I have hands [NIKSE, ET].
- (7) My evidence cannot include the proposition that I have hands [(4), (5)].
- (8) Either I'm handless or I cannot know non-inferentially that I have hands [(6), (7)].
- (9) If I have hands, I cannot know non-inferentially that I do [(8)].
- (10) If I do not have hands, I cannot know non-inferentially that I do [Factivity of 'knows'].
- (11) Thus, whether I have hands or not, I cannot know non-inferentially that I have hands [(9), (10)].

It seems, however, that I can have non-inferential knowledge that I have hands and know various other contingent propositions about the external world without having to infer that these propositions are true from propositions I can know only on the basis of introspection or reflection. So, it seems that we ought to reject AA.

Someone sympathetic to AA might object that the argument from AA to the sceptical conclusion rests on two assumptions that defenders of AA would not accept. The argument assumes that evidence consists of truths (ET) and that any truth that we know non-inferentially is included in our body of evidence (NIKSE). The quick response to this objection is that it seems that so far as scepticism is concerned, ET and NIKSE are completely innocuous. Taken in combination, they seem perfectly compatible with the sort of anti-sceptical view that most of us take for granted, a view on which we have expansive knowledge of the external world including immediate knowledge of our immediate surroundings. The same cannot be said for AA. By raising the bar on what it takes for something to be properly counted as part of our evidence it seems more natural to think that this is precisely the sort of assumption that could lead to sceptical troubles.

The careful response is this. This problem cannot be solved if we deny ET or NIKSE and so the right response to this problem is to reject AA. To see this, suppose that instead of denying AA we were instead to reject ET. Suppose that your evidence includes the proposition that you have hands. It follows from this assumption and AA that:

- (12) You should be able to know from the armchair that your evidence includes the proposition that you have hands.

Since knowledge entails belief, if you do know what AA says you can know, it follows that:

- (13) You believe that your evidence includes the proposition that you have hands.

It seems that if you are minimally rational and reflective, if you believe that your evidence includes p , you believe, *inter alia*, that p is the case. So, if you are rational and reflective:

- (14) You believe that you have hands.

It seems that if you are minimally rational and reflective, you will not both believe p and believe yourself not to know that p . So, having given the matter reflection you accede that you believe yourself to know that you have hands. So:

- (15) You believe that you have hands and that you know you have hands.

Assume also that you believe the assumption crucial to the argument against evidential externalism:

- (16) You believe that you cannot know that you have hands from the armchair.

Now our question is this. How can you square (15) and (16) with the additional claim that you should be able to know just on the basis of what you know from the armchair that your evidence includes the proposition that you have hands? It seems as if you acknowledge that you are committed to the truth of a proposition in virtue of what you take yourself to know from the armchair alone. Yet, you know that the truth of that proposition is not something that can be known from the armchair alone. If we agree that you should not believe what you believe yourself not to know, it seems you should not believe that you have hands just given what you know from the armchair. Thus, you should not believe that the proposition that you have hands is included in your evidence. However, if you could know non-inferentially that you had hands, it follows from this and NIKSE that you should be able to know from the armchair that your evidence includes the proposition that you have hands. So, what are we to say? It seems that problems for AA arise given just the assumption that NIKSE is true. Rejecting ET will not make the problems for AA go away.

Now, the reader might say that the problem arises because we are assuming AA, NIKSE, and that it is possible for someone's evidence to include propositions such as the proposition that you have hands. A moment's reflection, however, and we should all appreciate that to deny that your evidence can include the proposition that you have hands is to force us to choose between the unattractive sceptical view that non-inferential knowledge of propositions about the external world is unattainable or NIKSE. So, it really does look as if acceptance of AA comes with a cost. It forces you to deny NIKSE. I think this is bad. There is a kind of sceptical conclusion we wished to avoid (i.e., that you cannot have non-inferential knowledge of the

external world) and it seems exceptionally odd to say that this is best avoided by saying that we have *less* evidence than we initially thought having accepted that there is no further obstacle to the collection of evidence than having non-inferential knowledge of the truth of the propositions included in the evidence. Setting aside *this* sceptical worry, there is a further sceptical worry that we ought to consider. To deny NIKSE in order to save AA is to insist that all evidence is provided by introspection or reflection. It is, in other words, to deny that perception is a basic or autonomous source of evidence. On its face, it seems that a basic source of knowledge is a basic source of knowledge only if it is a basic source of evidence or reasons. If we cannot plausibly accept AA and say that perception provides pieces of evidence that introspection alone cannot, I have to confess that I am somewhat at a loss as to how I might then say that perception is a source of knowledge. To concede that perception is not a source of knowledge is to concede a lot to the sceptic.

3 EXTERNALISM AND EPISTEMIC RATIONALITY

In the previous section I argued that if the principle of armchair access is incompatible with externalism about evidence, we have good reason to reject the principle of armchair access on the grounds that this principle appears to be incompatible with the anti-sceptical thesis that we have non-inferential knowledge of propositions about the external world. In this section, I need to attend to some unfinished business. There seemed to be good reasons to think that our evidence is limited to propositions we can know from the armchair to be part of our evidence. Here, I shall explain how an externalist about evidence might respond to the arguments offered in support of armchair access.

Suppose White and Plum are in precisely the same non-factive mental states. White believes that Mustard is the killer because he saw Mustard batter the victim with a candlestick. Plum likewise believes that Mustard is the killer. She believes this because she underwent a series of hallucinatory experiences indistinguishable from White's veridical experiences. It follows from $E = K$ and the weakened version of evidential externalism defended above that:

- (1) White's evidence includes propositions that are not part of Plum's evidence.

It seems, however, that:

- (2) Plum is not less than fully rational for believing what White does.
- (3) Plum and White are equally reasonable in believing Mustard to be guilty.

If we think of epistemic rationality in terms of a subject respecting her evidence, we have a problem. If evidential externalism were true, Plum's evidence would consist of a smaller set of propositions than her evidence would if she were in the good case. If Plum *knew* that her evidence consisted of just this smaller set

of propositions but believed just what someone does in the good case Plum would surely be less than fully reasonable. So, evidential externalists can only say that (2) and (3) are true if we think of Plum being ignorant of what her evidence truly consisted of. And therein lies the rub. Can the externalist say that our subjects are equally rational if epistemic rationality is a matter of ‘respecting the evidence’ when only White truly knows what his evidence consists of?

We have seen above that this sort of worry is one of the primary motivations for adopting an internalist conception of evidence. The internalist reasons that since all agree that White and Plum are equally reasonable in believing what they do, the subject in the bad case might be doing worse epistemically than the subject in the good case in some sense, but not in how the subject in the bad case responds to her evidence. But, if she is doing just as good a job responding to the evidence, she cannot be any more ignorant about her evidence than the subject in the good case is. She would be, however, if externalism were true. Thus, we must affirm E-INT and AA.

It is worth considering two things that Williamson has said that seem relevant to this argument. First, he acknowledges that we might fail to know what epistemic rationality requires of us when we do not know what our evidence is but is quick to point out that the demands of rationality are not the sort of thing we should expect to be luminous.²⁰ Second, he has suggested that when we compare a good and bad case (e.g., a case of knowledge based on veridical perception and a corresponding case mistaken belief based on a subjectively indistinguishable hallucination) it is possible to say that the subjects in these two cases have different evidence while insisting that both have sufficient evidence to justifiably believe that things are in their surroundings much as they appear to be.²¹

I do not see how to combine these two responses. It is hard to see how someone can both justifiably believe some proposition while not knowing what rationality requires of her given the evidence she has that is relevant to the proposition believed. It is not as if in cases of hallucination the subject fails to know what epistemic rationality requires of her because, say, she has to engage in some sophisticated form of inferential reasoning to see what sort of support her evidence provides for her belief. Let us consider these two responses separately to see if either is of any help to the externalist.

While sympathetic to Williamson’s program and his insistence that little if anything worth caring about is luminous, I think many would be bothered by the suggestion that Plum does not know what rationality requires of her *just* because she has undergone a series of experiences that were hallucinatory. Her experiences were indistinguishable from White’s experiences and the failure to detect the difference between hallucinatory and veridical experience is hardly a failure of reason or in reasoning. That Plum is rational in holding her beliefs based on hallucinatory experiences is supported by intuitions held by

²⁰ Williamson (2000b: 624).

²¹ Williamson (2000: 197).

internalist and externalist alike. Unless someone can explain how Plum could be rational to believe p under the very same circumstances in which she believes (in part) because she fails to know what rationality requires of her with respect to her belief about p , it seems we should move on to consider the second response.

Perhaps what we ought to say is that both White and Plum are rational or reasonable to believe what they do because both have sufficient evidence to justify their beliefs. The problem that someone like Williamson faces if they say this is that it seems he is attracted to the view that the evidence that White has and that Plum lacks is part of the explanation as to why White justifiably believes what she does. It is hard to see how we could offer a 'disjunctive' explanation as to why Plum and White are both rational in believing what they do since we think that they are rational to the same degree. It seems that the reason we regard Plum as rational in her beliefs is that given the proximate cause of her belief formation was the appearance of Mustard striking the victim it makes sense for her to have formed this belief if her aim was the truth and we do not think that more could have been reasonably expected of her than that she take appearances at face value. (If we thought more was expected of her, this would presumably lead us to say that White was less than fully responsible for having likewise taken appearance at face value, but this is not what we tend to think about this case.)

The problem that Williamson faces, however, is that he seems attracted to the view that the explanation as to why it is that White is justified in her beliefs appeals to propositions that are not part of Plum's evidence. So, while part of White's evidence consists of contingently true propositions about the external world (e.g., that Mustard clubbed someone with a candlestick) that are not part of Plum's evidence, it is not clear that we can offer a 'disjunctive' explanation for the fact that both White and Plum are equally rational in their beliefs. It seems that the reason we regard Plum as rational in her beliefs is that given what the proximate cause of her belief formation was (i.e., the appearance of Mustard clubbing someone with a candlestick), it just makes sense what belief she'd form given her aim of getting at the truth. It also seems that the same proximate cause triggered White's belief. We know that such a cause is sufficient for explaining why someone is rational in believing what these two subjects believe, and to say that the explanation as to why White is rational involves considerations beyond those that we use to explain why Plum is rational violates a kind of proportionality constraint. In general, if there is some fact that is partially constituted by some second fact (e.g., that she knows p is partially constituted by her believing p ; that she perceives that p is partially constituted by her seeming to see that p) and a certain effect would have been produced even if the second fact obtained in the absence of the first, it seems that what explains the effect is the second fact rather than the first. Applied to the case at hand, White veridically perceives something and Plum seems to see the very same scene. The veridical experience and the seeming are sufficient for producing the same belief and triggering the intuition that the belief is rational. If we apply our explanatory

assumption, it seems that the same aspects of the conscious mental episodes (i.e., that it seems to White that such and such and that it seems to Plum that such and such) explain the belief and how the belief attains the epistemic status that it does.²²

It seems that the evidential externalist must say either only White knows what rationality requires of her or that both White and Plum know what rationality requires of them. If they opt for the former, it seems they can consistently maintain that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence, but they have to deny the commonly held intuitions that support R-INT. If they opt for the latter, it seems they can accommodate intuition, but at the expense of the idea that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence. If they opt for both the view that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence, insist that both Plum and White know what their evidence is, and say that their evidence is the same, they have just given up on externalism. That is an option, but not an option for the externalist. Insofar as pursuing this option leads us back to armchair access and the problems that come with accepting it, let us look elsewhere. Of the two options available to the externalist, I think that the externalist ought to embrace the second. The externalist does not have to deny that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence; rather, they have to give an account of what it is to respect the evidence consistent with the fact that someone like Plum might fail to know what the evidence is and what the evidence requires of her because of some non-culpable mistake due to something like hallucination, faulty memory, unreliable testimony, etc...

It will help to understand the response I am offering on the externalist's behalf if I could introduce an externalist account of justified belief that goes beyond evidential externalism. Whereas the evidential externalist uses the concept of knowledge to explicate the concept of evidence, the knowledge account of justification uses the concept of knowledge to explicate the concept of justified or permissible belief:

K: Your belief that p is justified/permissibly held iff you know p .²³

On this view, if you fail to know that something is true, there is a conclusive reason for you to refrain from believing that it is true. Such an account seems to be inconsistent with our intuitions regarding White and Plum. Not every failure to know is a rational failure, after all. Yet, how can we do justice to this point

²² This objection is due to Wedgwood (2002). The objection, if sound, seems to force Williamson to choose between saying (a) that both White and Plum are justified in their beliefs and that this fact is explained in virtue of the evidence they share in common or (b) that the evidence that White has and Plum lacks is necessary for having a justified belief. It seems to rule out the position Williamson seems to favor on which both White and Plum are justified in their beliefs and the explanation as to why this is need not be reduced to some common justifying factor. You can save justificatory externalism by opting for (a) and denying that the common pieces of evidence had by White and Plum are sufficient for justifying their beliefs, thus reconciling Wedgwood's explanatory principle with Williamson's account of justification, but that seems to force the externalist to deny a commonly held intuition about justification. Rather than explain the intuition away, [omit] argues that externalism is not incompatible with ordinary intuition.

²³ Sutton (2005) defends such a view.

while insisting that there is a conclusive reason to refrain from believing any proposition you would not know to be true?

We cannot say both things if we assume that the relationship between rationality or reasonability and reasons is to be understood along these lines:

- (R1) What it is for S to be rational/reasonable in Φ -ing is for S to Φ
iff there is overall reason for her to Φ .

Anyone who holds to such a view has to understand 'reason' in a certain way. Reasons would have to be the sorts of things a subject could not fail to identify unless the subject were less than fully rational. If they were not, we would not regard the failure to conform to the demands the reasons place upon us as less than rational or reasonable. But, it seems that there is an alternative formulation of the relation between reasons and rationality that does not force us to 'internalize' reasons in this way. We could formulate the relation between reasons and rationality as follows:

- (R2) What it is for S to be rational/reasonable in Φ -ing is for S to Φ
when it is not the case that S should have expected that there
would be an undefeated reason against Φ -ing.²⁴

There is nothing internal to the externalist's view that would compel them to prefer (R1) to (R2). If (R2) does a better job representing the relationship between reasons and rationality than (R1), then the externalist about justified belief can say that the reason that White and Plum are rational in believing what they do is that it is not the case that either should have expected there to be an undefeated reason against their believing that Mustard committed the crime. There is no such reason for White because she saw him do it. There is no such reason for Plum, for while her hallucinating constitutes a reason for her to refrain from her belief according to the knowledge account, it is not a reason she should have anticipated and taken account of owing to her hallucination. Applied to the evidential externalist's view, if we think of pieces of evidence as epistemic reasons, we can say essentially the same thing. Given what their evidence was, it is consistent with saying that (a) White and Plum's beliefs should have differed and (b) that there were reasons for Plum to refrain from believing given what her evidence was that (c) she was rational in her belief. She was in no position to judge that her evidence was the evidence of someone in the bad case. That judgment depends upon empirical information inaccessible to her. To block this maneuver, it seems the internalist will have to say that (R1) is preferable to (R2). All externalists have to do to block the internalist argument is show that (R2) is internally coherent and coheres with observations about how judgments about rationality and reasons work.

²⁴ This view seems to be more along the lines of the views defended by Broome (1999), Dancy (2000), Raz (1999), and Parfit (1997).

If we deny (R1) and replace it with (R2) or something along the lines of (R2), then the evidential externalist can undercut the argument for armchair access. Yes, the externalist will say, epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence or the reasons we have for believing. True, they will concede, situations will arise in which a person will non-culpably fail to know what her evidence truly is and what the epistemic reasons demand of her. These claims are incompatible only on the assumption that respecting the reasons involves, *inter alia*, knowing what reasons there are and knowing how to respond to them correctly. But, it seems odd to say that someone who non-culpably failed to identify what the reasons were or what they demanded of her thereby did not show proper respect for the reasons. Someone who non-culpably failed to identify a certain reason has not thereby shown that she is the sort of subject who has no respect for the reasons. She has not thereby shown that she does not know what a type of reason requires of her.

Externalists about evidence, justification, reasons and the like are likely to be partial to the view that aspects of the world have normative significance.²⁵ That some claim misrepresents the situation, for example, is something of normative significance. It means that the claim ought not be trusted and should be excluded from consideration for the purposes of theoretical deliberation. Judgments about rationality are judgments about the subject's exercise of her capacity for responding to reasons. On (R1), the correctness of such judgments depends upon whether the subject correctly identifies what the reasons demand. On (R2), the correctness of such judgments depends upon something slightly different. The idea is that not every failure to conform to the demands of reasons is a failure of rationality in the strict sense. The identification of states with normative significance can depend upon memory, perception, and testimony and if these fail the subject, she might fail to do what the reasons require without being irrational because she has not failed in her capacity of someone who responds to the reasons as they are presented. On this sort of view, the failure to pick up on the visual clues that someone is confabulating, for example, may well lead to a failure to conform to a certain kind of reason such as the reason to refrain from believing lies, without being a rational failing because had the subject's perception of the situation been correct, her response would have been what the reasons required.²⁶

To make sense of a view on which claims about what is rational for someone to believe turn on how things stand with that subject's non-factive mental states and claims about what there is overall reason to

²⁵ For a discussion of this sort of view, see Raz (1999).

²⁶ Raz explains this point perfectly when he remarks, "... to be rational in the first sense, that is, to be people with the ability to perceive reasons and respond to them, we need a range of capacities which do not directly contribute to our rationality. They include some perceptual ability, and the capacity to control our movements at will. An impairment of our perceptual ability does not diminish our rationality. Nor does lack of muscular control, or other neurological or physical impairments of our ability to move at will. Possession of at least some perceptual ability, and of some ability to control one's movements at will, are presupposed by capacity-rationality. But they are not themselves constituents of rationality" (1999: 68).

believe (or refrain from believing) turn on how things are ‘on the ground’, as it were, consider two arguments. Even if neither is decisive in establishing the truth of (R2), it should help the reader understand the attraction of (R2). First, think about some morally difficult situation about which reasonable people can disagree. We should be able to imagine that two subjects, White and Plum, consider the situation carefully, White judges that one ought to Φ rather than Ψ , Plum judges that one ought to Ψ rather than Φ , and we judge that neither is unreasonable in their judgment. Now, it seems perfectly consistent with these judgments that we add that unbeknownst to either of them there is no more reason to Φ rather than Ψ or there is more reason to Φ rather than Ψ . But, either way, we sever the connection between what is reasonable or rational to judge and decide to do and what there is overall reason to judge and decide to do. If we bought into (R1), whatever made it true that, say, there was more reason to Φ rather than Ψ would compel us to say that someone who judged otherwise and decided to act otherwise was less than rational or reasonable. But, that is to deny that we are considering a case of reasonable disagreement. And, to say that in such cases there can be no more reason to Φ rather than Ψ would also force us to deny that White and Plum are rational since both thought that, morally speaking, one course of action was better than the other. Presumably, this is why it is a case of reasonable moral disagreement and not a case in which reasonable people are indifferent.

There is a second argument against (R1), which is that it prevents us from making sense of certain familiar distinctions between ways of responding to the charge that someone should be blamed for wrongdoing. Strawson helpfully distinguished between three ways of showing that someone’s blaming another for wrongdoing is out of order.²⁷ We can cite reasons or justifications on behalf of the subject to negate the charge that the action was wrongful. To do this, we show that there was overall reason to do the action the agent in fact did. We can show that the subject in question is not the sort of subject that can be held responsible (e.g., the subject has gone temporarily insane, the subject was drugged or hypnotized, etc...). To do this, we offer an exemption. Third, there are the cases in which we try to show that subjects that can be held accountable should not be blamed for some particular wrong. In order to remove blame in these cases, we do not have to show that the agent’s action was the action there was overall reason to do. We do, however, have to work from the assumption that the agent can be held responsible and had a capacity for responding to reasons. To remove blame, we have to tell a story about how a competent agent with the right sorts of concerns could nevertheless fail to do what there is overall reason to do. In these cases of excusable wrongdoing, it seems that we cannot explain why an excuse is in order unless we can show that the subject was rational in deciding what she did even though she failed to do what there was overall reason to do.

²⁷ Strawson (1974).

To make this somewhat concrete, think about three shootings. Somewhere in between cases of self-defense and cases in which someone shoots another because, say, they have gone temporarily insane is the case in which the subject shoots at a jogger believed to be a mugger. If we decide that they are non-culpably mistaken in their belief that the person approaching them is a dangerous mugger carrying a club rather than a jogger carrying a flashlight and acknowledge that had this belief been true, it would not have been wrongful to fire on the person approaching, it seems we have told a story in which the subject is no less reasonable than the subject whose actions are justified on grounds of self-defense. It also seems that we have told a story in which there was not overall reason for the person to act as they did. This is evidenced by the fact that certain kinds of violent intervention are justified in the case of ‘imperfect’ self-defense, but not in the case of proper self-defense.²⁸

In order to make sense of the distinction between justifications, exemptions, and excuses, it seems we needed to make use of the sort of distinction between what there is reason to do and what rationality requires. Because this gives us some reason to reject (R1) in favor of something along the lines of (R2), we can see that there is something going for the distinction between reasons and rationality. If the externalist can use this distinction to make sense of the idea that someone respects the reasons and respects the evidence even if they fail to know what those reasons are or what the evidence happens to be, then the externalist can say that they do not need armchair access to accommodate these observations about epistemic rationality. What it is to be rational in believing p is (roughly) form one’s beliefs in such a way that it is not to be expected that there is some undefeated reason against believing p . If one knows or should know that one has no evidence or weak evidence, one should not expect that there will not be an undefeated reason against believing p . If one fails to determine what the evidence truly because perception, memory, or testimony fails to indicate what the reasons truly are, this is not a failure of rationality *per se*. Not if the subject responds in the way she should have had the evidence been what it seemed to her to have been at the time.

While I do not think that the reply I have offered on behalf of the externalist is the last word on the subject, hopefully it shows that more has to be said to motivate the charge that the externalist cannot

²⁸ I owe the term ‘imperfect’ self-defense to Moore (1993) who says that such cases can include ones in which the subject correctly identifies what would be justified on grounds of self-defense, acts according to such a belief, but performs an action that is not justified on grounds of self-defense because the subject non-culpably, but mistakenly, believes that someone is threatening them. Now, I am well aware of the fact that some will want to say that in cases of imperfect self-defense, the subject’s actions were justified on grounds of self-defense since she non-culpably, but mistakenly, believed that she was about to be attacked. As I am merely trying to show that a certain picture of the relationship between reasons and rationality is not wholly unmotivated and not obviously incoherent so as to make sense of an externalist view about evidence that respects the general idea that rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence, this is not the time to argue that my description of the case of imperfect self-defense as an excusable wrong is the correct one. Darley and Robinson (1998) show that this is how lay people describe it even if some philosophers do not. Moore (1993) and Robinson (1996) defend this description on conceptual grounds.

accommodate the platitude that epistemic rationality is a matter of respecting the evidence. Specifically, we need to know what would be wrong with a view on which claims about epistemic rationality depend upon how things are internal to the subject even if claims about what evidence there is and what reasons there are for belief depend (in part) upon how things stand in subject's external surroundings. Without some reason to think such a view is incoherent, the argument from armchair access has no force. Not only is the principle of armchair access something we are better off without, it does not appear that our intuitions about epistemic rationality support it since those intuitions can be accommodated by an epistemic externalist who embraces both ET and NIKSE.

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