

On the Relationship between Reasons and Evidence

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Abstract. How are reasons and evidence interrelated? According to one prevalent view, reasons and evidence are equivalent: evidence is a reason, and a reason is evidence. On another view reasons and evidence are conditionally related: if there is evidence, then there is a reason. On a different view reasons and evidence are disjunctively related: reasons or evidence can be substituted for each other. In this paper, I argue against these common views, and I defend the view that reasons and evidence are conjunctively related: evidence and reasons are distinguishable yet inseparable. I argue reasons and evidence are distinct because they come apart in certain cases, and I argue reasons and evidence are inseparable because only when properly conjoined are they capable of yielding correct verdicts on important cases in epistemology.

1 Introduction

Investigators find Marco's DNA on a baseball bat at the crime scene. Does the DNA evidence provide a reason to believe Marco was involved in the crime? Many epistemologists think it does. Sometimes this idea is taken a step further: evidence not only *provides* a reason to believe that p , evidence simply *is* a reason to believe that p . Consider this principle from Stephen Kearns and Daniel Star:

(RB) Necessarily, a fact F is a *reason* for an agent A to believe that P iff F is *evidence* that A ought to believe that P .¹

Principle RB illustrates the Equivalency View of the reasons-evidence relation. On this view the relation is analyzed in terms of a biconditional, and, of necessity, when a fact is a reason a fact is evidence. A different view of the reasons-evidence relation is upheld by Stephen Hetherington in the following principle:

(ER) If you have *evidence* for a given proposition, you thereby have an epistemic *reason* for believing that proposition.²

¹ Kearns and Star (2009: 216). Italics mine.

² Hetherington (1996: 123). Italics mine.

According to ER the reasons–evidence relation is analyzed in terms of a conditional. On the Conditional View if there is evidence, then there is a reason.

The final view we will look at is illustrated by Matthew Bedke. After articulating two principles concerning evidence he makes the following claim:

Though the principles talk of evidence, they could equally well talk of one’s reasons for believing a proposition, for evidence that p just is an epistemic reason to believe that p .³

Bedke endorses the Interchangeability View. On this view the reasons–evidence relation is disjunctive: one could talk of evidence or one could *equally well* talk of reasons. A similar commitment is made by Mark Schroeder when he claims, “evidence *is* reasons, and hence having evidence just is having reasons.”⁴ A source of confusion naturally arises.

It might seem that the Interchangeable View can be subsumed under the Equivalency View. If evidence *is* reasons, and they can be used interchangeably, then why not claim they are equivalent? One reason why the views are distinct is because they impose different truth conditions on the reasons–evidence relation. This is illustrated by looking at the truth table for the logical operators. On the Interchangeability View the reasons–evidence pair is false only if both terms are false, but as long as one term in the pair is true both are true. On the Equivalency View the reasons–evidence pair is true only when both conditionals are true. Thus, there are different truth-functional conditions imposed on the relation by each of the views.⁵

You might wonder, “Why does looking at the reasons–evidence relation matter?” It is important to discover the correct analysis of the reasons–evidence relation because the view you take on this relation impacts other debates in epistemology. For instance, there is a debate regarding the relationship between propositional and doxastic justification. The Orthodox View of the relationship is that doxastic justification is

³ Bedke (2010a: 9). Another place where the Interchangeability View is overtly adopted is by William Alston when he discusses adequate grounds of belief. For more on this see Alston (2005: Ch. 5).

⁴ Schroeder (2008a: 58).

⁵ This is not to be confused with whether or not reasons and evidence are always factive. The success conditions indicate when the relation is instantiated. It concerns how the variables in the relation contribute to the success conditions of the unit as a whole. The factivity debate concerns not the reasons–evidence relation *per se* but how the pair can be used in inference or whether p must be true in order for p to count (ontologically) as a reasons or evidence. It is important to keep this distinction in mind.

propositionally justified belief plus proper basing. John Turri expresses the Orthodox View in the following principle:

(Basis⁺) IF (i) p is propositionally justified for S in virtue of S's having reason(s) R, and
 (ii) S believes p on the basis of R *as evidence for p*, THEN S's belief that p is doxastically justified.⁶

An assumption underlying (ii) is that reasons can be evidence. In what way can reasons be evidence? How you answer this question will affect the conditions under which (ii) is satisfied. As a result, the view you take on the reasons-evidence relation will impact when p satisfies the epistemic basing relation (i.e., when p is well-founded) and when doxastic justification is secured. Other important issues are impacted by the reasons-evidence relation.

Issues in justification, rationality and normativity are impacted by this project. These issues can be put in the form of questions. Are reasons and evidence equal in their ability to serve as justifying grounds of actions and beliefs? Do only reasons and evidence that you *possess* affect what it is rational for you to do or believe? Is it the case that you ought to ϕ even when there are no knowable reasons or evidence that you ought to ϕ ? These are some questions that I hope to answer in this paper.

Before arguing against the competing views I need to hone the scope of this paper. To do this I will make some assumptions and define some key terms.

First, I will focus on reasons for belief (i.e., epistemic reasons) as opposed to reasons for action (i.e., practical reasons). One motivation for doing this is that it is common to want a unified analysis of reasons for belief and reasons for action; the analysis that applies to one domain must apply to the other domain. So I will assume the arguments made throughout this paper are translatable into the domain of reasons for action. Another impetus for doing this is that principles relating actions and evidence are often regarded as more controversial than principles relating beliefs and evidence.⁷ If I can cause trouble with the less controversial domain this will be an upshot of this paper.

Second, I need to anchor the notions of reasons and evidence in specific places. This is done for the sake of comparison and to minimize risk of conflation. In the literature

⁶ Turri (2010: 316).

⁷ See Kearns and Star (2009: 219).

reasons and evidence are assigned many ontological classifications: facts, states of affairs, beliefs, propositions, and mental states.⁸ To analyze the reasons-evidence relation the notions need to be presented in the same ontological mode. The default mode in this paper will be the propositional mode.⁹ For the sake of argument, I will assume non-mental facts or states of affairs can be rendered propositionally. The same assumption applies to beliefs, as I will use them interchangeably with propositions.

Next I need to define some attributes of reasons. Trying to say something uncontroversial about reasons is difficult.¹⁰ However, it is relatively uncontroversial that reasons for a belief *count in favor of* that belief. Reasons can *count in favor of* in different ways. Some reasons are explanatory. When you believe that the speed of light is 299,792,458 meters per second (m/s) because a physics professor tells you this is the value of the physical constant, then the physics professor telling you that the speed of light is 299,792,458 m/s explains why you believe it is so.¹¹ Some reasons are motivating. A motivating reason can act as an implicit or explicit premise in determining what to believe. For instance, you might believe that you should wear safety goggles in the lab because the safety orientation made it clear that chemicals could splash into your eyes and damage your vision. The safety orientation motivates you to believe as you do. Some reasons are justificatory or normative. A justificatory reason is a reason that there is to believe that p . It is something you could cite to justify your belief that p , and, as such, it is a reason that you ought to believe that p . It is also possible for the same reason to play all three roles.¹² For example, the physics professor's assertion about the speed of light could explain your belief, motivate you to believe accordingly and make it the case that you are justified in so believing.

⁸ For an analysis of the ontological options for reasons see Turri (2009). For an analysis of the ontological options for evidence see Neta (2008).

⁹ Turri provides us with another motivation for using the propositional mode as default: “[Regarding reasons as propositions] compliments the view that evidential relations are founded in logical relations among propositions. If you thought that reasons were propositions, and you thought, as at least some leading epistemologist do, that logical relations determine evidential relations, then your ontological theory of reasons would cohere nicely with your theory of evidence. Our beliefs would be based on the very same things entering into evidential relations with one another” [Turri (2009: 494)].

¹⁰ The controversies are not important to our present purposes. These controversies concern whether epistemic reasons are a subset of reasons why we believe, whether normative reasons have an explanatory dimension, and whether normative reasons and motivating reasons are distinct or identical.

¹¹ This number is in fact the speed of light.

¹² Alvarez (2009: 186).

Finally, I need to define some attributes of evidence. Evidence is usually regarded as something that can justify belief. If I believe that eggs are high in cholesterol, but I have no evidence for this belief, then my belief is not reasonable. In contrast, if I believe eggs are high in cholesterol because I read the nutrition label on a carton of eggs and it says one egg contains 71% of my daily recommended cholesterol, then that evidence justifies my belief that eggs are high in cholesterol. Another attribute of evidence is that it can probabilistically raise or lower rational confidence in a belief. If evidence strongly supports the belief that p , then it is rational to have high confidence in the belief that p . It is rational to proportion your degree of belief in a proposition to the degree to which your evidence supports that proposition. Evidence can also function in explanation and confirmation. In explanatory reasoning evidence can lead you to infer from the evidence to the belief that best explains the evidence. Regarding confirmation, evidence confirms a belief by making it more likely to be true. Evidence disconfirms a belief by making it less likely to be true. Now I will compare reasons and evidence.

Reasons and evidence seem to share many attributes, especially given their role in explanation and justification. Thomas Kelly explains this idea as follows:

Inasmuch as evidence is the sort of thing which confers justification, the concept of evidence is closely related to other fundamental normative concepts such as the concept of *a reason*. Indeed, it is natural to think that ‘reason to believe’ and ‘evidence’ are more or less synonymous, being distinguished chiefly by the fact that the former functions grammatically as a count noun while the latter functions as a mass term.¹³

While the primary purpose of this paper is not to compare and contrast definitions of reasons and evidence, I need to make a few remarks about the quote above. This quote assumes playing a similar role in reasoning, like conferring justification, places concepts in the same family. And, once in the same family, the concepts are synonymous, as they only differ based on how they function grammatically. A problem with this idea is illustrated by looking at value theory. The concepts of *the good* and *the right* are both used in moral theory to make claims about value. Because they both can be used to confer value, so the argument might go, they are closely related concepts. This broad functional similarity warrants the concepts being placed in the same family, and because they are in the same family they are synonymous. This is a poor argument on many

¹³ Kelly (2006).

levels. As the analogy indicates, the two concepts are not different words with similar meanings. *The good* is an evaluative concept applied to states of affairs, whereas *the right* is a prescriptive (or deontic) concept that explains what we ought to do.¹⁴ Similarly, though the concepts of reasons and evidence confer justification, the concept of a reason is deontic in nature (i.e., closely related to *right*, *rational*, *just* and *ought*), whereas the concept of evidence is evaluative in nature (i.e., closely related to *good* and *true*).¹⁵ Reasons primarily, though not exclusively, relate to duties and permissions. In this sense reasons prescribe. Evidence primarily, though not exclusively, relates to the truth value of facts or assertions. In this sense evidence evaluates.

Another problem for the idea in the quote by Kelly is that the type of view you subscribe to shapes how reasons and evidence interrelate. Again, I will look at value theory by way of an example. If you are a consequentialist then, put simply, *the good* is conceptually prior to *the right*. That is, the states of affairs that are intrinsically valuable (i.e., good) determine the correct (i.e., right) courses of action. If, however, you are a deontologist, then you will view *the right* as conceptually prior to *the good*. Likewise, different views of the reasons–evidence relation assume different conceptual priorities of reasons and evidence.¹⁶ The idea expressed by Kelly assumes reasons and evidence are conceptually equal. This lends itself to either the Equivalency View or the Interchangeability View. I will argue against these views. Instead, I claim reasons and evidence function like *the good* and *the right*. There is a conceptual priority to the reasons–evidence relation. Evidence is conceptually prior to reasons because evidence determines what reasons are salient in a given circumstance.¹⁷ Reasons are necessary,

¹⁴ Schroeder (2008b).

¹⁵ You might object to this distinction by claiming both concepts can be rendered as evaluative terms, such as, good reasons or adequate evidence. Perhaps only good reasons or adequate evidence can justify a belief. However, this simply places a modifier in front of the noun. Good reasons or adequate evidence are not the only way of referring to what justifies belief. Frequently, the adjective is dropped as one refers to *the evidence* or *the reasons* that justify belief. You never hear someone claim that one should proportion one's belief to the body of total good evidence. It is simply the body of total evidence that justifies belief. Thus, the noun is primary and the distinction still stands.

¹⁶ The Equivalency view holds that reasons and evidence are conceptually co-equal—both are necessary, neither is prior. The Conditionality view holds that evidence is conceptually prior because *if* you have evidence, *then* you have a reason. The Interchangeability view holds that either reasons or evidence are conceptually prior. The order of priority might depend on the context of justification. And, the Inseparability view holds that evidence is conceptually prior because only if evidence is present and reasons are based on evidence does the correct relation hold.

¹⁷ This makes the Inseparability view stand against monolithic views of reasons (e.g., Thomas Scanlon). On such views reasons are fundamental and do not stand or fall based on support relations with evidence.

though, because they link the truth of evidence to the truth of a proposition. In this way they form an obligation to believe accordingly. Now I will argue against other views.

2 Against the Equivalency View

The Equivalency View has a well-developed literature and is exemplified by the work of Kearns and Star. Philosophers have raised objections to the idea that reasons are equivalent to evidence (i.e., $R \equiv E$), and Kearns and Star have responded to those objections. In this section, I will explain why I think Kearns and Star have not provided satisfactory responses to the objections. This makes those objections still count against $R \equiv E$. Then, I will provide my own counterexample to one of the conditionals in Kearns and Star's principle Reasons for Belief (RB).

Kearns and Star endorse a positive relevance or increase-in-probability understanding of evidence.¹⁸ If q is evidence for p , then q increases the probability of p above the unconditional probability of p [i.e., $\text{Prob}(p|q) > \text{Prob}(p)$]. John Brunero capitalizes on this commitment. Brunero provides a counterexample where a fact fails to increase the probability an agent ought to perform an action, so the fact is not evidence for Kearns and Star, yet that same fact is a reason the agent ought to perform the action. The counterexample involves determining whether to get Mom a gift for Mother's day. We are given this information to consider in making a decision:

- (e_1) Dad would be happy were I to get Mom some specific gift he found featured in the *Sears Catalog*.
- (b_1) Whenever Dad would be happy with Mom getting some gift, there is always some competing weightier reason(s) against getting that gift for Mom.¹⁹

According to Brunero, making Dad happy (e_1) is a reason to buy Mom the gift that Dad likes. However, e_1 is assessed against the background of b_1 . As a result, b_1 prevents e_1 from increasing the probability that I ought to get the gift. Dad liking a gift is always a reason not to get the gift because it is always outweighed by competing reasons. Thus, the fact that Dad likes the gift is a reason to get the gift, but it is not evidence that I ought to get the gift. We have a fact that is a reason but not evidence.

¹⁸ Kearns and Star (2008: 44-45); Kearns and Star (2009: 230-32).

¹⁹ Brunero (2009: 540).

Kearns and Star have responded to Brunero in three ways.²⁰ First, they deny that e_1 is a reason. Second, they claim that if e_1 is a reason, then there is an intuitive sense in which e_1 is also evidence. Finally, they stipulate that e_1 , given b_1 , might increase the probability that I ought to get the gift because of its impact on Dad's happiness. I will call into question each of these responses in turn.

The first response by Kearns and Star comes in two parts. In the first part they claim that e_1 is not a reason because e_1 is not *always* a reason to get the gift. They claim that this is such a case. As they say, "if the explanation of why there is a reason to get some other gift than Dad suggests is that he is insensitive to Mom's desires, then it is unclear that there is a reason to make him happy given his insensitivity."²¹ By way of an example Kearns and Star resort to an explanatory meta-reason. Dad's insensitivity is a reason that is part of an explanation why one ought not get the gift or get a different gift. This assumes that Dad's insensitivity is a reason that defeats Dad's happiness such that there is *no* reason to get the gift in this case. Why give in to Dad based on his insensitivity? Unless Kearns and Star can show that Dad's tacky taste in gifts defeats Dad's happiness because, for instance, Dad's insensitivity severely impacts Mom's happiness, it is not clear that Dad's insensitivity is a meta-reason that defeats Dad's happiness from counting as a reason to get the gift.²² Otherwise, Dad's happiness is a reason to get the gift. It's just a reason that is always outweighed. The second part of Kearns and Star's response is that Dad's happiness is not really a reason if it's *always* outweighed. Because b_1 is universal in scope it is better to say that there *never* is a reason to get gifts Dad is happy with. This move relies on a linguistic intuition that it is better to say that there is *never* a reason rather than to say that there is a reason that is *always* outweighed. I'm not moved by the force of this intuition. It carries with it some untenable assumptions. Consider the No Reason (NR) principle:

²⁰ Kearns and Star (unpublished).

²¹ Kearns and Star (unpublished). On the face of it this response is problematic because Kearns and Star devote an entire paper to arguing against the idea that reasons are explanations. However for their response to go through the meta-reason must possibly explain why one ought to get a different gift. On pain of inconsistency, the use of reasons as explanations is not a move open to Kearns and Star.

²² There is a positive reason to think Dad's insensitivity is not a defeater that eradicates the reason to get the gift. Namely, Mom's disappointment at receiving yet another gift based on Dad's poor taste in gifts is not sufficient to *always* negate the reason to make Dad happy. It is reasonable to assume that Mom's temporary disappointment does not defeat Dad's happiness upon getting the gift he likes. This is true even though Mom's disappointment, and other factors, always outweigh the reason to get the gift.

(NR) If a reason for you to ϕ can never be a reason you ought to ϕ , because the reason is always outweighed by reasons for you not to ϕ , then you never have a reason to ϕ .

A *pro tanto* reason is a reason for you to ϕ even if it's not true that you ought to ϕ . An assumption underlying NR is that if a *pro tanto* reason can never tip the scales so that it is the case that you ought to ϕ , then that reason is not a reason. One problem with this is that a *pro tanto* reason is not defined in terms of the *possibility* of tipping the scales in favor of an ought fact. Even when you ought not ϕ all-things-considered a *pro tanto* reason can still be a reason for you to ϕ . To claim otherwise is to blur the distinction between a *pro tanto* and a *perfect* reason.²³ A *perfect* reason is defined in terms of being a reason why you ought to ϕ .²⁴ Kearns and Star smuggled the concept of a perfect reason into NR because of their commitment to the idea that reasons are evidence of oughts. If a reason can never be a reason you ought to ϕ , then that reason can never be a perfect reason because it can never be a reason why you ought to ϕ . Such a reason can never evidence an ought fact, so it's natural for Kearns and Star to say there's no reason. But, when the operative concept is a *pro tanto* reason, which is the correct concept because Brunero's example makes it clear that the reason can be outweighed, then Dad being happy with a specific gift for Mom can be a reason to get Mom the gift Dad likes even if this fact can never make it the case that you ought to get the gift because it is always outweighed. So, Kearns and Star cannot claim that e_1 is not a reason.

The second reply to the *Gift Giving* counterexample reinforces the Equivalency View of the reasons-evidence relation: fact e_1 , as a reason, is also evidence. Kearns and Star make this move by invoking the notion of a salient subset of evidence. We are to imagine that this subset doesn't include b_1 . So, the idea goes, e_1 might increase the probability I ought to get Mom the gift relative to such a subset. A problem with this response is the notion of salience. Kearns and Star need to provide conditions that indicate what gets counted as salient. Without these conditions it is not clear how b_1 is screened-out of the salient subset in a way that is not ad hoc. Additionally, there is a positive reason to think that b_1 should be included in the salient subset. This is because

²³ For more on this distinction see Broome (2004).

²⁴ If the fact that spinach is good for you explains why you ought to eat spinach, then it is a *perfect* reason for you to eat spinach.

b_1 is highly relevant to e_1 , and it's uncontroversial that evidence is to be evaluated in light of all relevant background information. Background evidence cannot be ignored in an effort to save the Equivalency View.²⁵ To do so amounts to a violation of the total evidence requirement—a requirement that indicates all relevant evidence must be consulted when confirming what you ought to believe or do.²⁶ That e_1 increases the probability I ought to get Mom the gift relative to only part of the relevant evidence is not surprising. Bits of evidence can increase and decrease probability relative to other bits of evidence. Whether a bit of evidence increases the probability of a proposition, and is evidence for the proposition, requires looking at the total relevant evidence, not just a subset of the evidence arbitrarily selected as salient.

The last reply by Kearns and Star to Brunero's counterexample is that e_1 , given b_1 , might count as evidence because of its impact on Dad's happiness. This initially plausible idea is actually problematic. The idea is initially plausible because, as I argued earlier, it's possible for the impact on Dad's happiness to be a reason to get the gift. However, that was an argument against the idea that it's *never* a reason to get the gift. Kearns and Star's current claim is that e_1 , given b_1 , might *increase* the probability I ought to get the gift. Their response is wildly implausible. It amounts to saying that a reason to get a gift that is always outweighed by competing reasons can increase the probability that I ought to get the gift. This makes being always outweighed a methodological virtue, as always being outweighed might increase the probability of a proposition. This response misunderstands what it means to *always* be outweighed. It discounts the force of the impact of b_1 on e_1 without *raison d'être*.

Given that I have called into question Kearns and Star's responses to the *Gift Giving* counterexample to the Equivalency View it's reasonable to assume that the counterexample still stands. As a result, the Equivalency View still faces a pressing objection. To further undermine the Equivalency View, and focus on reasons for belief, I will present my own counterexample to the view.

First I need to setup the counterexample with some background information. In arguing for the Equivalency View Kerns and Star equate the strength of evidence with

²⁵ Kearns and Star also invoke a sense of the inevitability of their response, such that people who indorse increase-in-probability accounts of evidence must resort to talking in terms of salient subsets. This is not true. For example, Sherrilyn Roush (2004) defends positive relevance without invoking a salient subset.

²⁶ For more on the importance of the total evidence requirement see Joyce (2005) and Neta (2008).

the strength of reasons. A similar probabilistic analysis applies to both entities.²⁷ The only difference is that evidence increases (or decreases) the probability of the *truth* of a proposition whereas a reason increases the probability one *ought* to believe the proposition. Truth goes with evidence and normativity goes with reasons.²⁸ This allows Kearns and Star to analyze what it means for a reason to *count in favor of* believing a proposition in terms of responsible belief. Agents who believe as they ought are not open to blame for so believing.²⁹ Consider the following case as a counterexample:

Expert Testimony. Sarah is in her political science class. She has never thought about Iran's nuclear program and its effect on international relations or geopolitical stability. She only knows what Professor Rosen tells her about this topic. Professor Rosen claims that p : Iran's nuclear aspirations pose a threat to the future of geopolitical stability. Professor Rosen is generally reliable regarding matters of geopolitical stability because he is an expert in such matters. However, Professor Rosen is unreliable about matters pertaining to Iran. He has a professed bias in favor of the US-Israel policy toward Iran's nuclear program, and he does not hide his bias from the class. As such, Sarah is aware of his bias.

Is Professor Rosen's testimony that p a reason Sarah ought to believe that p ? Is his testimony evidence that p ? Sarah has the following information at her disposal:

- (E_1) Professor Rosen claims that p and he is generally reliable.
- (E_2) Professor Rosen is unreliable regarding p -type questions because of his professed bias on such matters.

Given E_1 Sarah has a reason to believe that p because it is based on the testimony of an expert in international politics. Even if this reason is not decisive, as it is outweighed by E_2 , Sarah still has a reason to believe that p and is not subject to blame for believing that

²⁷ Kearns and Star (2009: 231-32).

²⁸ Kearns and Star also need this distinction between reasons and evidence to avoid the charge of circularity (i.e., analyzing one thing in terms of another thing that means exactly the same thing).

²⁹ It also allows Kearns and Star to say that agents cannot be rationally criticized for ignoring reasons they could not know. This means you can only be held rationally accountable for reasons you can grasp or access. Later in this paper I will argue against this idea.

p because the expert testimony of her professor counts in favor of her believing.³⁰ Sarah doesn't know enough about Iran's nuclear program or global politics to argue otherwise. Further, her knowledge of her professor's bias doesn't eliminate the reason to believe. The reason still exists due to the professor's general reliability. It's simply outweighed all things considered. Yet, professor Rosen's testimony is not evidence that p . The unreliability of her professor with regard to Iran's nuclear program, as evidenced by his professed bias against Iran's aspirations, does not increase the probability of the truth of what he asserts about the future outcome of Iran's program with regard to geopolitical stability. His testimony is a prediction that reflects his bias. As such, his assertion that p is not evidence that Iran's nuclear program will create geopolitical instability. The fact that Sarah's professor claims that p is a reason Sarah ought to believe that p , but that same fact is not evidence that Sarah ought to believe that p . In Kearns and Star's terminology there is a reason that fails to evidence an ought fact. And, on the Equivalency View, reasons are supposed to be evidence of ought facts.³¹

3 Against the Conditionality View

The Conditionality View consists of one of the conditionals from the Equivalency View. It's the $E \supset R$ conditional: if you have evidence for p , you thereby have an epistemic reason for believing p . Richard Foley argues against this view by providing a case where evidence and reasons come apart. I call this case *Self-undermine* because in *Self-undermine* believing p based on the evidence undermines the evidence for p . This makes belief in accordance with the evidence irrational because so believing eliminates the evidence. I paraphrase the case below.

Self-undermine. Rich needs to pass his final exam to pass his class. He needs to pass his class to get his degree. Rich has studied hard for the test. This provides him with evidence that he will pass the test. But Rich has not yet formed a belief about whether he will get his degree. He does, however, know that if he believes he will

³⁰ In fact, the institutional norms of higher education inculcate belief in accordance with the expert testimony of professors. There is interesting work in experimental philosophy that highlights problematic assumptions regarding expertise. For more on this see Weinberg, et al. (2010)

³¹ Recall, I merely need to show that it's *possible* for some fact to be a reason but not to be evidence. This is because the Equivalency view is expressed as a biconditional coupled with a necessity claim.

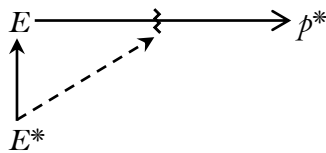
get his degree that his professor named Dr. Green will alter the exam so that he does not pass it and, as a result, does not get his degree.³²

In *Self-undermine* Rich has adequate evidence for his belief, namely, his own hard work and preparation for the test. However, it's not epistemically desirable for Rich to believe in accordance with his evidence because it would result in forming a belief that is not likely to be true. Rich would be epistemically blameworthy for so believing. The good evidence Rich has does not generate a corresponding reason for belief.³³ Thus, it's not always the case that if you have evidence you thereby have a reason.

Stephen Hetherington defends the Conditionality View against Foley's counterexample.³⁴ First, Hetherington simplifies *Self-undermine*. He does this by making the example not about whether Rich will get his degree (p) but about whether Rich will pass his exam (p^*).³⁵ Next, Hetherington argues that in *Self-undermine* Rich's evidence is not just that he is well-prepared for the exam (E). Rich's evidence also includes E^* :

(E^*) If Rich comes to believe that p^* , then probably not- p^* .

Rich knows that belief in accordance with p^* will instantly make p^* false. This makes E^* , according to Hetherington, evidence against E being good evidence for p^* . On such a reading, *Self-undermine* is not a case of having good evidence for p^* while not having a good reason for believing that p^* . It's a case where there is no good *evidence* for p^* as well. This is because of E^* 's effect on E . The idea can be diagrammed as shown below:³⁶



³² Foley (1991: 99). This assumes that Rich's belief and Dr. Green's alteration of the test are simultaneous. It also assumes that Dr. Green is able to read Rich's mind. Foley's case is similar to a Conee (1987) case.

³³ Disbelief and withholding belief are equally problematic options. For details see Foley (1991: 100).

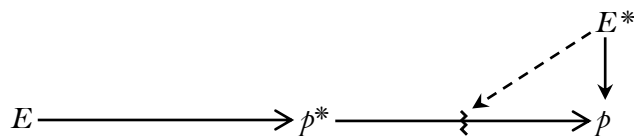
³⁴ Hetherington (1996).

³⁵ Hetherington assumes that his simplification of *Self-undermine* does not make a difference. This is because Rich will only get his degree if he passes his exam. So, why not drop talk about the degree and only talk about the exam? I will argue this simplification does make a difference. Hetherington's defense of the Conditionality view only works given his simplification of *Self-undermine*. Without the simplification *Self-undermine* is a case of having evidence without having a reason for belief.

³⁶ This diagram is inspired by the discussion of defeaters found in Schroeder (forthcoming). The 'open' arrow (\rightarrow) represents the direction of support while the 'closed' arrow (\dashrightarrow) represents a defeater.

The diagram above shows that E^* acts on E to block E from functioning as evidence that supports the truth of p^* . This makes E^* function as an *undercutting* defeater. It attacks the evidence that supports p^* such that E , given E^* , is not good evidence for p^* .

Hetherington misses the mark in attacking *Self-undermine* because in the original version of the case E^* functions as a *countervailing* defeater, not an *undercutting* defeater. Let me explain why this matters. A *countervailing* defeater directly attacks a conclusion, whereas an *undercutting* defeater attacks that which supports a conclusion. An undercutting defeater weakens the weight of that which supports a conclusion to the point where it doesn't have sufficient weight to support the conclusion. This is why Hetherington claims that E , given E^* , is not good evidence at all. By contrast, a countervailing defeater provides additional considerations that outweigh alternative considerations. In such a case, E is still good evidence for p , but E loses to E^* because of the effect of E^* on p .³⁷ *Self-undermine* is such a case because the focus is on *belief* about the *degree*—not *evidence* for the *exam*.³⁸ E^* undermines the conclusion such that belief in accordance with the conclusion makes it the case that the conclusion is false (i.e., if believe that p , then not- p). The original version of the case, as envisioned by Foley, can be diagrammed as follows:



As the diagram makes clear, E^* functions as a countervailing defeater on the conclusion that p . If Rich believes that he will get his degree (p), then the test will be changed so that he will not pass his test (not- p^*) and, as a result, he will not get his degree (not- p). E^* is a consideration that outweighs E 's effect on p^* by making it the case that not- p^* . Put differently, E^* has a direct effect on p and an indirect effect on E . This is because Rich's well-preparedness (E) is good *prima facie* evidence that he will pass his exam (p^*) and get his degree (p), but Rich's belief in accordance with that evidence indirectly undermines the evidence by preventing it from *ultima facie* supporting the conclusion. E^* trumps E with regard to p by directly undermining the conclusion and indirectly

³⁷ Not because of E^* 's effect on E , as in the simplified version of *Self-undermine* given by Hetherington.

³⁸ This mistake leads Hetherington into an excursus on how E could never be good evidence for p^* . However, *Self-undermine* focuses on *belief* regarding the evidence, not whether E is good evidence for p .

undermining the evidence in support of that conclusion. When E gets outweighed by E^* this doesn't mean that E is not good evidence. It only means that E is not decisive in this case. Thus, as Foley originally thought, there is good evidence for the conclusion that p , but there is no reason to believe in accordance with that evidence because doing so would directly undermine the conclusion and indirectly undermine the evidence.

To summarize this section, I argued that Hetherington did not successfully defend the Conditionality View of the reasons-evidence relation against Foley's *Self-undermine* counterexample. Hetherington's defense of the Conditionality View was based on an over-simplification (i.e., distortion) of the original case. Once the case was articulated true to the original it became clear that it is a case where evidence and reasons come apart. It's not true that if there is evidence, then there is a reason to believe. In *Self-undermine* there is evidence, but there is not a corresponding reason to believe in accordance with that evidence. Doing so would involve believing something false. As such, it would not be desirable from an epistemic perspective.³⁹

4 Against the Interchangeability View

The Interchangeability View is the most prevalent view of the reasons-evidence relation in the literature.⁴⁰ On this view, having evidence is functionally equivalent to having an epistemic or justifying reason.⁴¹ This is why reasons and evidence are interchangeable: the same analysis, conditions and capabilities apply equally well to both entities. One can stand-in for the other without any *loss* with regard to rationality, normativity, or justification. First, let me explain what adherents of this view have in common.

Undergirding the Interchangeability View is the Symmetry Thesis (ST):

³⁹ Even if there are pragmatic reasons for belief in the *Self-undermine* case these reasons are not applicable without a further distortion of the context of the case. Foley is concerned with epistemic reasons for belief. That is, "a reason that you have insofar as one of your ends is to have accurate and comprehensive beliefs" [Foley (1991: 98)]. Proponents of the Conditionality view want to capture epistemic reasons for belief, not just instrumental or pragmatic reasons.

⁴⁰ Some proponents of the view include: Silins (2005: 376), Alston (2005: 81), Schroeder (2008a: 58), Lyons (2008: 464), Bedke (2010a: 9), Schroeder (unpublished) and Littlejohn (unpublished-b).

⁴¹ To clarify, functional equivalence is not the same thing as constitutional equivalence. Two things can perform the same function yet not be constitutionally equivalent. The Equivalency view is a more demanding account of the reasons-evidence relation, as it is a biconditional (i.e., $R \equiv E$). The Interchangeability view is far more permissible, as it is a disjunction (i.e., $R \vee E$). For example, different modes of transportation can get you to the same destination. On Equivalency, both entities must share the same properties (i.e., both must be cars). On Interchangeability, either a car or a bicycle could get you to the destination. As long as both things perform the same function the same analysis applies to both.

(ST) The being/having distinction is symmetrical with regard to reasons and evidence.

The being/having distinction concerns the difference between a reason there *is* versus a reason you *have* or possess. The basic idea is that a reason there is need not be a reason that is possessed. Proponents of the Interchangeability View might disagree about the details of the being/having distinction, but they agree that the distinction (however formulated) applies in exactly the same way to both reasons and evidence.⁴² Now I'll explain the differences between adherents of the Interchangeability View.

Broadly speaking, differences among Interchangeability theorists mirror the division between epistemic internalists and epistemic externalists. Internalists about justification think the justificatory standing of reasons or evidence is determined by factors internal to the agent (e.g., mental states or attitudes). Externalists think justification can be influenced by environmental factors (e.g., facts about whether the agent is being deceived). Interchangeability theorists who endorse internalist intuitions about justification and rationality tend to support the Two Relations Account of the being/having distinction. On the other hand, those who endorse externalist intuitions about justification and rationality tend to support the Factoring Account of the being/having distinction.

With these preliminaries in place let me explain how I plan to argue against the Interchangeability View. First, I will ground my discussion in the work of a proponent of the Two Relations View. Mark Schroeder uses the being/having distinction to argue for the Interchangeability View. I will argue against Schroeder by claiming that the Two Relations View is unable to secure justified belief and that an agent can *have* reasons (evidence) without those reasons being grasped or internalized through reflective accessibility. This appears to suggest a factive/externalist account of reasons and evidence like that suggested by proponents of the Factoring Account. However, I will argue against the Factoring Account and its commitment to Interchangeability. This is done by claiming that an agent in an important case in epistemology has the same reasons without having the same evidence. The fallibility of reasons is embraced

⁴² In fact, the symmetrical uptake of the being/having distinction between reasons and evidence is seen as an upshot of the Interchangeability view.

while the factivity of evidence is upheld. As such, the being/having distinction is not symmetrical between reasons and evidence (i.e., ST is false).

Schroeder has repeatedly endorsed the Two Relations Account of having reasons.⁴³ He uses this account to hypothesize that reasons and evidence are interchangeable because evidence is a type of reason for belief. His argument might be formulated as follows:

- (1) The Two Relations Account of the being/having distinction is correct when it comes to reasons for belief. (premise)
- (2) The Two Relations Account of the being/having distinction can be applied in the same form to evidence. (premise)
- (3) The being/having distinction is symmetrical with regard to reasons and evidence. (ST) (1,2)
- (4) If the same distinction (analysis) applies to two entities in the same way, then those two entities are functionally equivalent. (assumption)
- (5) Entities that are functionally equivalent are of a similar kind. (assumption)
- (6) Thus, evidence is a kind of reason for belief. (3,4,5)⁴⁴

I will undermine the argument above by arguing against premise (1) and (2).⁴⁵ My claim is that the being/having distinction is not correct, and it cannot be applied to evidence because it fails to yield justified beliefs. Let me explain the Two Relations Account.

The Two Relations Account partitions reasons into objective and subjective domains. There *being* reasons is objective while *having* reasons is subjective. Neither domain is a restriction on the other domain. There *being* reasons doesn't require anyone grasping the reasons while *having* reasons requires someone grasping the reasons. Grasping can be understood as having perceptual or cognitive awareness of the reasons.

⁴³ In fact, Schroeder's story about Max smiling continues to appear in new papers [e.g., Schroeder (forthcoming)]. His repeated use of the distinction is methodologically risky, as undermining this distinction would impugn his work across several individual, though perhaps related, research efforts.

⁴⁴ As Schroeder says, "The fact that we can draw the same distinction between objective and subjective with respect to reasons leads, I think, to the natural hypothesis that evidence is a kind of *reason for belief*" [Schroeder (unpublished)].

⁴⁵ Another good point of attack is premise (4), as it is a suspect methodological principle. Premise (4) is also a methodology endorsed by Kearns and Star (e.g., how the 'weighing' analysis applies to both reasons and evidence).

Schroeder applies this distinction to evidence by using the example of Max smiling as evidence that Max is happy. If I can see Max smiling, then I have some evidence that Max is happy. If I cannot see Max, but he is nonetheless smiling, this is evidence there *is* that Max is happy, but it's not evidence that I *have*. For Schroeder, “only evidence you have affects what it's rational for you to believe.”⁴⁶ In addition, the epistemic basing relation only applies to the subjective domain because, “your beliefs can be *based* only on evidence that you have.”⁴⁷ Thus, on the Two Relations Account, beliefs are rational or justified only when one *has* evidence and beliefs are *based* on that evidence.

The Two Relations Account also deals with fallibility and factivity. If I justifiably believe that Max is smiling, then I have evidence that Max is smiling even if it turns out that Max is not smiling. Subjective beliefs are fallible in that they can be false. On the other hand, objective evidence aligns with the facts. Belief in accordance with the facts is correct or right irrespective of whether I can access the facts. Objective beliefs are factive in that they are based on true evidence or reasons. As a result, rationality goes with subjectivity, and correctness goes with objectivity.⁴⁸

There is also interplay between the subjective and objective domains. Objective evidence in my grasp is subjective evidence, whereas subjective evidence, if true, is objective evidence. With the forgoing comments in mind, I propose the following argument that the Two Relations Account is unable to secure justified belief:

- (1) Beliefs can only be based on evidence that you *have*. (premise)
- (2) Evidence that you have can be false. (premise)
- (3) Beliefs based on evidence that you have can be false. (1,2)
- (4) You can justifiably believe that p without p being a justified belief. (distinction)⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Schroeder claims that, “it is the subjective sense of ‘evidence’ that is important for whether your belief that Max is happy is *rational* or *justified*” [Schroeder (unpublished)].

⁴⁷ Schroeder (forthcoming). The idea that you must *have* evidence (or reasons) in order to believe on the basis of them is also found in Turri (2009: 492).

⁴⁸ Ironically, for an argument against tying subjective reasons to rational accessibility see Bedke (2010b). The irony is that Bedke endorses Interchangeability.

⁴⁹ This is the distinction between subject S *believing* that p because it's rationally permissible for S to believe that p based on the subjective evidence favoring p versus there being objective evidence for S to believe that p . If S's subjective evidence on balance supports p , then S is subjectively justified in *believing* p . This does not, of necessity, make it the case that p is a justified belief. S's subjective evidence might on

- (5) Justified beliefs are beliefs that are objectively permissible in that they are sufficiently supported by the facts. (4, premise)
- (6) Beliefs can only be based on that which is grasped. (1, premise)
- (7) Grasping involves perceptual or cognitive awareness of the evidence. (premise)
- (8) You can only know if subjective evidence is true—and hence justifies belief that p due to its alignment with the facts—if the truth value of the evidence is grasped through perceptual or cognitive awareness. (5,6,7)
- (9) Perceptions (e.g., seeing Max smiling) or cognitions (e.g., thinking that you saw Max smiling) can be false or incorrect due to standard skeptical considerations. (premise)⁵⁰
- (10) It is consistent with your subjective evidence that you are in a skeptical scenario or otherwise perceptually or cognitively deceived.⁵¹ (premise)
- (11) From a subjective perspective, due to standard skeptical considerations, you cannot accurately grasp the truth value of the evidence. (9,10)
- (12) You cannot know if the evidence objectively justifies belief that p . (8, 11)
- (13) Thus, you cannot form a justified belief that p .⁵²

balance support p , and this support might even be sufficient in Schroeder's sense of being at least as weighty as the reasons supporting all alternatives, but the support may only be at .4 for the proposition that p . Perhaps the set of all reasons favoring q is .39 while the set of reasons favoring r is .21. Is the belief that p supported at 40% by a subject's subjective evidence *sufficiently supported* and *justified*? If the conditional probability of p on S's evidence is less than .5 doesn't that indicate that the evidence does not *on balance* support p ? A belief that is better than all the alternatives might still be false (or more likely to be false than true) and hence unjustified. Instead of accepting these commitments in the name of theoretical symmetry it makes more sense to claim that a belief is only justified when it is objectively true or supported greater than .5 by a subject's veridical reasons or evidence.

⁵⁰ Globally, the perceptions or cognitions would be subjectively indistinguishable from that of your BIV twin. Locally, you could see things wrong or misremember what you saw.

⁵¹ This is because, for one thing, from a subjective perspective skeptical scenarios are perceptually indistinguishable from their veridical counterparts.

⁵² This is the case even if Schroeder throws in his theory about the sufficiency of reasons and evidence. Subjectively speaking, the perceptual evidence would appear undefeated and the subject would have no way of knowing that the balance of evidence did not support the truth of the belief. Schroeder also can't stipulate here and just say 'justified' goes with 'subjective'. This is because, as I indicated previously, a justified belief is an objectively correct belief whereas justifiably believing involves belief in accordance with the subjective evidence. There is no secure route from subjective grasping to the truth of the belief because of the way the objective and subjective domains are partitioned. No mounting of the weight of the evidence from a subjective perspective will secure objective correctness or justified belief. This means

The argument just articulated starts from the Two Relations understanding of the being/having (i.e., objective/subjective) distinction and leads to an inability to justify belief. This is a problem for the Two Relations Account because an important feature of evidence is its ability to justify beliefs. So, the account is not correct when it comes to evidence (or reasons) as grounds of belief. This blocks premise (1) and (2) of Schroeder's argument and prevents his conclusion for the Interchangeability of reasons and evidence from going through. Thereby, it undermines the Interchangeability View.

A different route to take in defending the Interchangeability View is to endorse the Factoring Account of reasons. This account factors *having reasons* into reasons that exist independent of you and yet you possess.⁵³ The Factoring Account represents a move towards the factivity of reasons and epistemic externalism, as environmental factors (i.e., objective facts) can inextricably factor-in to the reasons that you possess. The set of reasons you *have* are a subset of the reasons there *are*. Those reasons that exist independent of you are external facts, and when you possess the external facts you have those reasons.

The Interchangeability View can be defended using the Factoring Account by way of the Symmetry Thesis (ST). That is, the same form of the being/having distinction that applies to reasons also applies to evidence. Further, this symmetry between reasons and evidence supports the idea that reasons and evidence are functionally equivalent and interchangeable when it comes to their analysis and role in deliberation. To argue against such a defense of Interchangeability I'll look at the *Gin and Tonic* case.

The *Gin and Tonic* case, originated by Bernard Williams, is a standard case in contemporary epistemology. Imagine Bernie is at a bar and he orders a gin and tonic. Bernie is unaware that his glass actually contains petrol (i.e., gasoline). Does Bernie

agents cannot form justified beliefs on the Two Relations Account. Schroeder can only stipulated truth into his examples from a third-person perspective. The first-person subject cannot grasp this truth because their experience is perceptually indistinguishable from someone who is deceived.

⁵³ Schroeder motivates the Two Relations View by raising suspicions about the Factoring Account [Schroeder (2008a)]. I find these suspicions non-motivating. This provides reason to think that the Factoring Account is not initially troubling. Schroeder raises his worries by using facts involving human relations like having a golf partner or having a father. For Schroeder it sounds odd to claim that there is a father and moreover you have that father. Schroeder's examples only strike us as odd because people are not typically possessed by other people. They usually just inhabit certain relations to other people. But, on the Factoring Account, having a golf partner is not factored into there being a golf partner and you having that golf partner in terms of possessing the person bearing that relation. It only claims that the relation there *is* is factored into the relation that you *have*. The object itself is not factored or possessed, only the relation (e.g., the relation to the father is possessed, not the father).

have a reason to drink the clear liquid in his glass? The Two Relations Account says that Bernie has a subjective reason to drink the toxic stuff, but he doesn't have an objective reason to drink the toxic stuff. Bernie *has* a reason to drink the liquid in his glass, but it's not a reason *for* Bernie to drink the liquid in his glass. For Schroeder, if there are objective reasons then these are not reasons that Bernie has (i.e., unknown to Bernie the liquid is actually petrol). Errol Lord argues on behalf of the Factoring Account regarding this case.⁵⁴ According to Lord there are objective reasons *for* Bernie to drink the liquid in his glass: getting the drink from a reliable bartender, being around others who are drinking potable drinks and seeing that there is clear liquid in the glass. These reasons become reasons Bernie *has* given two principles of the Factoring Account.⁵⁵ The first principle is called Epistemic Model (EM):

(EM) Necessarily, p is a reason to believe q iff (1) the probability of q given p is higher than the probability of q on its own and (2) p is true.

The second principle is called Factoring Account (FA):

(FA) Agent A has reason R to believe that p iff (1) R fits the Epistemic Model and (2) A is in a position to know R .

EM and FA make Factoring a matter of positive relevance (i.e., increase-in-probability), factivity and being in a position to know the proposition. Does Bernie have a reason to believe the glass contains gin and tonic? FA answers *yes*. Bernie has a reason to believe the glass contains gin and tonic due to true propositions about his surroundings (e.g., the clear liquid in the glass, ordering a drink from a reliable bartender and being at a bar where people are drinking) that raise the probability that his glass contains gin and tonic. Moreover, Bernie is in a position to know these propositions. While I think something like FA is the correct account of the being/having distinction I think ST is false. So, I will block FA from being used to support the Interchangeability View. I do this by considering each aspect of FA and arguing there is an asymmetry between reasons and evidence associated with each aspect.

The first asymmetry deals with positive relevance. If a reason increases the probability of a belief [i.e., (1) in EM] it is tempting to think this makes the reason

⁵⁴ Lord (2010).

⁵⁵ Lord (2010). The principles are translatable into reasons for action, as any epistemic reason can become a practical reason for Lord given certain background considerations (see n.31).

evidence for the belief. Some theorists endorse positive relevance as a necessary condition for something to count as evidence.⁵⁶ There are counterexamples against this assumption.

Positive relevance is not a necessary or sufficient condition for what it takes for something to count as evidence. When p increases the probability of q higher than the unconditional probability of q alone this doesn't make p sufficient evidence for q . This is because of slight increase-in-probability counterexamples. For example, the fact that Michael Phelps is swimming is evidence for the belief that he will drown. This is because swimming, even for an Olympic champion like Phelps, increases the probability of drowning. However, the fact that Phelps is swimming is not evidence for the belief that he will drown. The probability is not sufficient to make Phelps swimming evidence that grounds a rational belief about him drowning. It's also possible to argue increase-in-probability is not necessary for something to count as evidence. This is argued for using counterexamples where the probability doesn't change yet it makes sense to call something evidence for a belief. In addition, there are cases where the probability decreases yet it makes sense to call something evidence for a belief. These counterexamples bring about the need for high probability above a threshold of belief and an explanatory connection between the fact and the belief in order for the fact to count as evidence.⁵⁷ Is the same true of reasons?

The baseline notion for what it takes for a reason to be a reason (i.e., *counting in favor of*) is amiable to the notion of positive relevance in a way that evidence is not. For instance, the fact that Michael Phelps is swimming is a *pro tanto* reason to believe that he will drown.⁵⁸ The reason is weak and likely to be outweighed, but it is still a reason nonetheless. By contrast, the fact that Phelps is swimming is unable to explain the truth of his swimming in relation to it being true to believe that he will drown. His swimming

⁵⁶ See Williamson (2000) and Roush (2004). Most subjective Bayesians endorse positive relevance too.

⁵⁷ For more on these counterexamples, including more counterexamples, see Achinstein (2001).

⁵⁸ Someone might object: isn't your idea of reasons similar to Broome's idea of reasons as explanations, and doesn't this create symmetry between evidence as explanations and reasons as explanations in Broome's sense? Thus, aren't reasons and evidence still interchangeable based on your view? In response, according to Broome's view, a fact is a reason in virtue of making an ought fact obtain. On my view a reason must explain the truth of the evidence in relation to the truth of a belief. The explanatory reason acts as a bridge between the evidence and the belief, and when the reason marks the truth of what you ought to believe, the reason is a normative reason. It does this by indicating the truth of the belief that p , not by making it the case that one ought to believe that p . There are some similarities between this account and the Kearns and Star account, but Kearns and Star subscribe to the increase-in-probability view of evidence and they argue against reasons as explanations.

is not evidence that explains the rationality of that belief. It would be incorrect, *ceteris paribus*, for someone to respond to why they believe that Phelps will drown with the fact that he is swimming. They would need to cite a different fact to explain the rationality of such a belief (e.g., someone intending to harm him while he swims).

Next I will argue that p being true [i.e., (2) in EM] is necessary when it comes to evidence but not when it comes to reasons. Let's return to the *Gin and Tonic* case. The central question is whether the reason that Bernie *has* is a reason *for* Bernie to drink the stuff in his glass (or believe he ought to drink the stuff in his glass). Does Bernie have a justified belief that there is gin and tonic in his glass? Lord cites additional facts Bernie is in a position to know as objective facts that justify his belief. This means Bernie has a justified false belief. Applying the Interchangeability View to this reading of the case Bernie's justified false belief can act as a reason or evidence. Imagine Bernie is feeling generous and wants to give the first sip of the drink to his friend Oliver. Is Bernie's justifying reason (or evidence) for giving Oliver a sip of petrol that there is gin and tonic in the glass? I claim that the fact that Bernie believes there is gin and tonic in the glass can be a justifying reason for him to give Oliver a sip without it entailing that there is gin and tonic in the glass. However, the same thing doesn't apply to Bernie's belief as evidence that he ought to give Oliver a sip. This is because (justifying) evidence is factive in a way that justifying reasons are not. It is not the case that Bernie has justifying evidence based on the fact that there is gin and tonic in the glass. This is because there is no such fact. So, for Lord, Bernie has a justified belief because it is sufficiently supported by facts in his environment. My claim is that this belief is a justifying *reason* for Bernie to take a sip or give Oliver a sip, but it is not *evidence* for Bernie to take a sip or give Oliver a sip.⁵⁹ As a result, the Interchangeability View is not

⁵⁹ This is further supported by my earlier contention that the facts Lord takes to increase the probability of the truth of Bernie's belief are reasons but not evidence. The notion of positive relevance in (1) of EM applies to reasons but is not necessary or sufficient for those facts to count as evidence, even when coupled with the factivity claim in (2) of EM. There are many true but irrelevant facts that increase the probability of beliefs without constituting evidence for those beliefs (i.e., the explanatory link is missing or insufficient). The facts that Lord cites are really background information. For instance, the fact that there is clear liquid in the glass is not justifying evidence for the belief that there is gin and tonic in the glass. Are gasoline and gin and tonic clear in the same way? Is the clearness of gasoline interrupted by air bubbles in the same way? It's simply that Bernie takes this fact as a justifying reason that makes it such, but Bernie's taking of the clearness as evidence doesn't make it evidence. It can be true that the liquid is clear, and thereby increase the probability of gin and tonic in the glass, but without a high enough probability of the fact explaining the truth of the belief it is easy to imagine other facts about the fact that Bernie is in a position to know that would prevent the fact from being evidence or adequately explaining

supported by a Factoring Account of the being/having distinction. Reasons and evidence are not interchangeable or functionally equivalent on such an account.

Finally, arguing against the requirement of being in a position to know [i.e., (2) in FA] is straight-forward. In footnote forty-eight I mentioned that it's possible to argue against linking rationality to what you are in a position to know regarding subjective accessibility.⁶⁰ This means being in a position to know does not equal being able to subjectively access the content of the belief. As an alternative, being in a position to know can be equated with certain epistemic conditions such that if *any* rational agent were in that position it would be reasonable for the agent to know certain things. This makes being in a position to know an objective idea in that the idea is abstract and not tied to any particular agent. If an agent inhabits such an epistemic state, then it is reasonable to associate the agent with occupying the objective position to know. As such, having a reason does not require subjective access or accessibility. This means, however, that Bernie is not only in a position to know the facts that Lord associates with Bernie's position. It also means that Bernie is in a position to know certain other facts that tell against the rationality of his belief that his drink contains gin and tonic. Petrol has a foul and pungent smell. Upon receiving the glass full of gasoline Bernie is in a position to know that his glass contains a foul smelling toxin. It is reasonable to assume that Bernie has had a gin and tonic before or that if this is his first gin and tonic it smells like something dangerous and non-potable. It is reasonable to assume that any agent with properly working olfactory capacities would be in a position to know this. This, coupled with the questions I raised in footnote fifty-nine about the variability in clearness between potable alcohol and gasoline, provides a strong reason against Bernie rationally forming a belief that his glass contains gin and tonic. Consequently, it is

the truth of the belief. Even the reliability of the bartender is not evidence that there is gin and tonic in the drink. To secure a claim otherwise requires making a claim about reflective knowledge, such that Bernie can know the bartender is reliable and this knowledge can serve as evidence. This brings up, among other things, the bootstrapping problem concerning reliabilism [Vogel (2000)]. Bernie must reliably form a belief about the reliability of the bartender. The higher-order belief must itself be formed through a reliable belief-forming process. It is possible to raise a worry about circularity in fixing reliability. This worry can be used against a reliabilist who endorses the Interchangeability View using reliable belief-forming processes to determine what counts as evidence for the belief that p . For this type of view see Bedke (2010a). On Bedke's view the environment (e.g., being in a bar) factors into the etiology of belief-formation and, thus, reliability. Again, it is possible to raise the circularity problem with higher-order beliefs and to leverage the counterexamples against positive relevance against Bedke's view, as increasing commitment to p equates to assigning a higher probability to p on his view (p. 10).

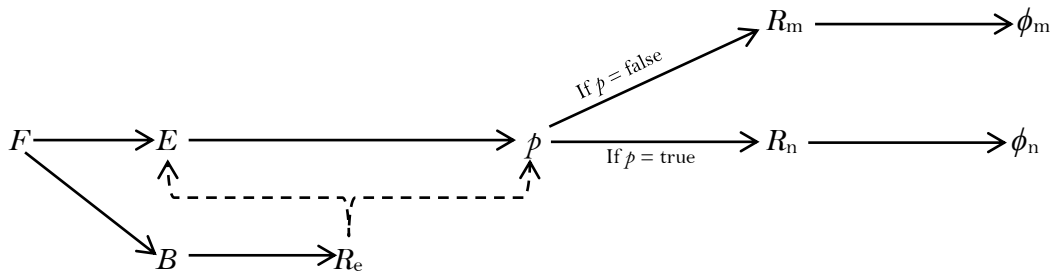
⁶⁰ See Bedke (2010b).

reasonable to assume Bernie has a justifying reason against belief that p . Due to the instinctual reaction of human agents when senses detect poisons it's natural to think Bernie's reason against belief that p outweighs other background considerations, such as, being in a bar where other people are drinking. This means it's not the case that any rational agent in Bernie's epistemic situation with the total information he is in a position to know is justified in believing that p to a higher degree than not- p . In fact, the reverse might be the case. Therefore, FA is problematic and cannot support a Factoring Account or an Interchangeability View of the reasons-evidence relation.

5 For the Inseparability View

In this section I will present the Inseparability View, show how the view correctly explains cases in epistemology and argue for important details in the view.

The Inseparability View is a conjunctive analysis of the reasons-evidence relation (i.e., $R \wedge E$). On this view reasons and evidence are unique and separable, yet both entities must be properly conjoined to yield normative reasons for belief and action. To present this view I will diagram it and then explain the diagram. Here's the diagram:



The basic elements of the Inseparability View are facts (F). Evidence (E) is a subset of the facts relevant to an epistemic situation in relation to the truth of a proposition or belief. Background information (B) is a subset of the facts relevant to the details of an epistemic situation. B provides explanatory reasons (R_e). These reasons explain why, given the truth of E and the truth of proposition (p), there is probably an explanatory connection between E and p . This makes E confirm p relative to R_e . When R_e establishes a high probability of an explanatory connection between E and p (if true), then there is a high degree of confirmation. When R_e establishes a low probability of an explanatory connection between E and p (if true), then there is a low degree of confirmation. The next thing to explain is fallibility and factivity.

On the Inseparability View evidence is always factive, as it represents a subset of the total possible facts. However, agents can be mistaken about the facts or unaware of the facts. This is why the being/having distinction is crucial. If there is evidence but the agent doesn't have access to that evidence can the agent possess the evidence? According to Inseparability, evidence possession is not determined by subjective access or accessibility. Epistemic situations are regarded in an objective manner as that which a rational agent should know in a given situation, and knowledge consists of true propositions or evidence.⁶¹ When there *is* evidence and the agent is in an epistemic position to know the evidence, regardless of whether she actually has access to the evidence, then that agent *has* the evidence. This doesn't mean, however, that the agent *has* a normative reason to believe that p based on this evidence. Notice the asymmetry, as an agent can have evidence without having a normative reason to believe. When an agent is mistaken about the evidence she possesses she is likely to form a false belief or inaccurately evaluate the truth or falsity of her belief. When an agent's belief is false, but the agent is unaware of the truth value of the evidence in her possession, then the agent actually only has a motivating reason (R_m) for why she is inclined to believe that p , given R_e , even though p is false. If, on the other hand, p is true and there is a high degree of confirmation or explanatory connection of the truth of p given the truth of E , then the agent has a normative reason (R_n) to believe that p . This is the difference between justifiably believing that p versus having a justified belief that p . Only when both E and R_n are present in practical deliberation are you provided with an action (ϕ_n) you ought to perform given the evidence for your belief.⁶² This is why the account is conjunctive. Even though both reasons and evidence are separable, as they each serve unique (i.e., non-equivalent) functions, it is only when they are properly aligned and interrelated that they yield genuine normative reasons capable of determining what you ought to do given the facts of the case. Reasons can be false, as humans are fallible, but only if both

⁶¹ This is not to endorse Timothy Williamson's E = K theory wholesale. I'm not claiming knowledge only consists of true propositions or that all evidence is propositional. I'm merely claiming that what it means to know something in an epistemic situation, in part, involves having true propositions and those propositions can act as evidence for the truth of their contents. My position is, however, a form of content externalism as what informs the contents of the propositions can be external facts, not just internal states.

⁶² I should point out that people often confuse their R_m with an R_n . To put it candidly, this is why people do stupid stuff all the time based on false beliefs. They do things based on the wrong type of reasons. They may only have a motivating reason or psychological explanation of why they are inclined to believe that p in relation to the evidence. This can happen based on an inaccurate estimation of the evidence they are in a position to know or in possession of. A better estimation can reveal the falsity of their belief.

evidence and reasons are true do they yield a true estimation of the case—only then do they rightly determine how you ought to believe and act. Now I will show you how Inseparability handles some specific cases.

First, let's look at the *Gin and Tonic* case. The details are as follows:

- (*E*) The glass is full of petrol.
- (*R_e*) Bernie is at a bar where other people are drinking, he received his drink from a reliable bartender and the liquid in his glass is clear.
- (*p*) The glass contains gin and tonic.

The Inseparability View analyzes this case as follows: Bernie has evidence the glass is full of gasoline, but his explanatory reasons fail to establish a high probability of an explanatory connection between *E* and *p*, so his belief that *p* provides a motivating reason for Bernie to take a sip from the drink or give a sip to his friend Oliver. This explains why, given Bernie's lack of awareness of the evidence he is in a position to know, and as a result of not having an explanatory reason like the smell of a toxin emanating from his glass, Bernie is inclined to believe that *p* in relation to *R_e*, even though *p* is false and not supported by *E*. Bernie does not have a normative reason to believe that *p* or a normative reason to act. He merely has *a* reason. Bernie's dangerous belief is justifiable, but it is not justified.⁶³

Another important case in the literature is the *Cabbage Recommendation* case.⁶⁴ This case runs as follows:

- (*E*) A reliable book says everyone ought to eat cabbage.
- (*p*) You ought to eat cabbage.

Broome uses this example to argue against the Equivalency View. According to Broome the Equivalency View is committed to the idea that the fact that a reliable book says you ought to eat cabbage is a reason to eat cabbage if and only if *E* is evidence that *p*. But it

⁶³ It is also possible, as argued earlier, that Bernie should have awareness of other explanatory reasons (e.g., the smell of the drink, how the clearness of the drink is different than normal alcoholic beverages and so on). These reasons, if strong enough, would show Bernie the falsity of *p* and provide him with a normative reason not to believe that *p* and not to take a sip of the drink or give a sip to Oliver.

⁶⁴ Discussion of this case can be found in Kearns and Star (2008: 47-49), Kearns and Star (unpublished), and Broome (2008: 100-02). Broome uses this example to defend his view of reasons as explanations and argue against Kearns and Star's view of reasons as evidence.

seems that the fact that a reliable books says you ought to eat cabbage is evidence, but that same fact is not a normative reason. This is because *E* cannot rightly explain why you ought to eat cabbage (i.e., *because a reliable book says so* is not enough). For Broome whether you ought to eat cabbage is explained by additional factors such as:

(*R_n*) Cabbage tastes good and helps the digestive system.

Normative reasons for Broome are explanations of ought facts. Kearns and Star respond by saying that, “*either* (1) the fact that a reliable book says one ought to eat cabbage is part of an explanation of why one ought to eat cabbage (given that one indeed ought to eat cabbage) or (2) it is not part of an explanation of why one ought to eat cabbage, but it is still a reason.”⁶⁵ The Inseparability View offers a different perspective on this debate over the *Cabbage Recommendation* case.⁶⁶

According to Inseparability, *E* does provide a reason to believe that *p* because *p* is based on the testimony of a generally reliable book. However, the book’s testimony is not evidence that *p* because general reliability doesn’t necessarily ground specific reliability about *p*-type matters. For instance, a book on sports nutrition might be generally reliable about eating correctly for optimum energy and strength, but the book might also be unreliable when it comes to vitamins and supplements because the information is based on scant scientific findings. If a generally reliable book recommends eating cabbage this is not evidence that one ought to eat cabbage. This is not because the fact that a reliable book says one ought to eat cabbage cannot be part of an explanation why one ought to eat cabbage. It can be part of such an explanation. The problem is that this fact requires an explanatory connection between itself and *p*. This connection, in this case, requires an explanatory reason to connect general reliability with specific reliability about *p*-type claims. Otherwise, it is consistent to assume that there is a low probability between what a generally reliable book asserts and what it claims about *p*-type matters.⁶⁷ Even if, as argued earlier, general reliability raises the

⁶⁵ Kearns and Star (unpublished).

⁶⁶ This response is connected to the *Expert Testimony* case and the discussion of reliability found in footnote fifty-nine.

⁶⁷ Kearns and Star might respond as follows: if a fact fails to be an explanation, then the fact fails to be evidence; this is a case where there is no reason or evidence, and this is in-line with the Equivalency view. Recall the earlier *Self-undermine* case. This is a case where Rich’s well-preparedness is evidence (*E*) that Rich ought to pass his test (*p**) and get his degree (*p*), and *E* is not part of an explanation why Rich ought to get his degree. This is because an independent explanatory reason (*E**) acts as a defeater on the

probability of p being true this alone doesn't make E count as evidence. There must be a high probability of an explanatory connection between the truth of E and the potential truth of p . That a reliable book *says so* is not enough to secure that probability. What are needed are explanatory reasons capable of making this connection. Further, using the notion of reliability to secure evidence claims about knowledge or assertion runs into problems associated with reliabilism (e.g., bootstrapping, generality, circularity and making reliability relative to an environment).

Inseparability, on the other hand, avoids deficiencies in Broome's view and Kearns and Star's view. Contrary to Broome, normative reasons are not (of necessity) reasons that factor into explanations why one ought to believe that p or do ϕ . Normative reasons are the result of forming true beliefs based on good evidence. Explanatory reasons explain why one ought to believe that p , and to what degree, based on the likelihood of an explanatory connection between the truth of the evidence and the truth of the belief. Normative reasons sanction normative actions. But it is not in virtue of explaining why one ought to do something that a normative reason is normative. A reason can explain without sanctioning. Normative reasons sanction or license while explanatory reasons play the role of connecting the content of the evidence with the content of the belief. This means that the facts Broome takes to be in R_n are actually in R_e in the *Cabbage Recommendation* case. The good taste of cabbage and its effects on the digestive system explain why, given E , it is likely that p . If it is true that you ought to eat cabbage, then you have a normative reason to eat cabbage. If it is not true that you ought to eat cabbage, then you only have a motivating reason capable of explaining why you are inclined to eat cabbage given its good taste, effects on the body and being the recommendation of a generally reliable book.

In the assessment of the *Cabbage Recommendation* case endorsed by Inseparability the same fact is not both a reason and evidence. This avoids having to claim that the same fact that is evidence is also a reason. Other facts act as explanatory, motivating

conclusion that p . As a result, E^* prevents an explanatory connection between the truth of E and the truth of p . E^* makes it the case that there is almost certainly no such explanatory connection. So, E cannot explain why Rich ought to get his degree. This is a case that Inseparability can correctly handle and Equivalency must try to handle because there is evidence but not a reason—even in the Broome-sense of a reason. So, there can be facts that are evidence but not reasons, and there can be facts that are reasons but not evidence, as in the *Cabbage Recommendation* case.

and normative reasons.⁶⁸ Inseparability also claims that evidence consists of facts. This objective element prevents a p -type claim from counting as evidence based on the general reliability of the book in which its contents are contained. We need to know the truth value of the p -type claim in relation to the belief that p . The explanatory reasons act to establish the probability of the truth value of the evidence given the belief. Relative to R_e is E evidence that p ? The correct conjunction of reasons and evidence yields justified beliefs and normative reasons for belief and action. To close this section I will argue for some aspects of the Inseparability View.⁶⁹

Underlying the Inseparability View is the Asymmetry Thesis (AT):

(AT) The being/having distinction is asymmetrical with regard to reasons and evidence.

According to AT evidence that there is factors into evidence that you possess, but this factoring is not based on grasping or accessing the evidence. It is based on an objective relation to the evidence such that when you are in a given epistemic situation you possess the evidence regardless of whether you can access it or not. For reasons, on the other hand, the orthodox Factoring Account applies: reasons that there are factor into reasons that you possess in virtue of grasping or accessing the reasons. This is because explanatory reasons, which are facts selected from the set of background information, can only be used in deliberation if they are grasped. Let me defend AT in relation to the *Gin and Tonic* case.

AT indicates that there is evidence that Bernie possesses given his epistemic situation (i.e., there is petrol in the glass), but this evidence doesn't provide a normative reason for Bernie to take a sip from the glass or give Oliver a sip from the glass. There is evidence, and Bernie has this evidence, but there is not a normative reason. Bernie does have explanatory reasons that he thinks supports his false belief. As a result, Bernie only has a motivating reason that can be used as rationalizing explanation for what

⁶⁸ It's also possible for the same fact to play multiple reason roles, as stated in the introductory section of this paper. It's even possible for the explanatory dimension of evidence to be sufficiently strong such that it doesn't need an intervening explanatory reason in order to establish the strength of the explanatory connection. This is why in the Inseparability View's diagram the explanatory reason link is dotted. Its support is not always needed. In such a case, the evidence directly explains its own truth in relation to the belief. Often this is not the case. A lot of evidence relies on explanatory background information or explanatory reasons to make evident the connection of the evidence to the belief (if true).

⁶⁹ A complete defense of the Inseparability View would require dissertation-length defense.

Bernie believes or why he is inclined to act in a certain way. But, because the evidence there is that he unwarily possesses does not square with the reasons that he grasps there is not a normative reason for belief or action. As a consequence, AT prevents Bernie's justifying reason for giving Oliver the glass from being the fact that there is gin in the glass, which there is not. AT does allow that Bernie believes there is gin and tonic in the glass, and this forms a justifiable reason that explains Bernie's motivation for giving Oliver the glass (i.e., it's not to poison Oliver by knowingly handing him a glass of petrol). In this sense, AT explains why it is rationally permissible for Bernie to believe that p is true in relation to the explanatory reasons that he subjectively (and perhaps selectively) possesses (e.g., clear liquid, reliable bartender and a place where people are drinking). But AT stops short of saying there is a reason *for* Bernie to take a sip or give Oliver a sip. There is no normative reason indicating Bernie ought to believe that the glass contains gin and tonic or that he ought to act accordingly.

One upshot of this position is that it prevents what might be called *ignorance as a defense*. On standard readings of the *Gin and Tonic* case Bernie has a subjective reason to drink but not an objective reason to drink.⁷⁰ This sounds similar to the Inseparability View except for one caveat. Inseparability is a conjunctive account of reasons *and* evidence. The evidence that Bernie unwittingly possesses holds a key to what Bernie should have known given his epistemic situation but failed to notice (e.g., the toxic smell of gasoline emanating from his glass, and so on). When Bernie hands Oliver the drink and Oliver takes a sip Bernie cannot claim innocence from culpability based on the fact that he was unaware the glass actually contained petrol. The intuition behind this idea is that we can be held accountable for things we should have known but failed to notice.⁷¹ Without honoring this intuition rational belief applies to cognitive accessibility

⁷⁰ There is another reading of the case. This is the one preferred by Williams (1979). On this reading there is not an internal reason because internal reasons are desire-based. If Bernie was better informed, then he would not be inclined to drink the glass of toxic stuff. Justifying reasons are linked to what would motivate an agent in ideal circumstances (e.g., fully rational and informed). Inseparability does not link rational desires with justification. Instead, justification is linked to beliefs aligning with evidence or facts. This means you can have a justifying reason independent from the motivational set of desires. When explanatory reasons are unable to explanatorily link the belief to the evidence, then there is merely a connection to the agent's motivational set. This explains why the agent is motivated as she is given her epistemic situation, but it does not license that motivating reason as justificatory for that epistemic situation. If the agent is *actually* motivated in the way the world is, then there is a justificatory reason.

⁷¹ This finds a parallel in legal reasoning, as manslaughter cases attest. A defendant who claims *I did not see the man crossing the street when I hit him because it was dark* is not free from culpability over the crime. He will be held responsible for the crime, though, rightfully, to a lesser extent than if murder was the intent.

tout court. This implies that culpability can be avoided through ignorance. It allows for ignorance as a defense. Upon cross-examining Bernie he is asked, “Why did you hand Oliver the petrol to drink?” Bernie responds, “I was unaware that it was petrol.” Is Bernie epistemically, not to mention morally, off the hook? The Inseparability View says *no*. Bernie can be held epistemically accountable for what he should have known but failed to notice.

Another aspect of Inseparability I will defend is the directionality of the support relations. The Directionality Thesis (DT) consists of a few claims: (i) evidence grounds reasons; (ii) reasons explain evidence; (iii) evidence provides normative reasons; (iv) normative beliefs ground normative actions. Below I focus on defending (i) thru (iii).⁷²

The basic idea behind DT is that justification is not, so to speak, a one-story house; reasons and evidence do not just occupy different rooms on the same floor. Instead, facts form the foundation, evidence is the first floor of support and reasons are the second and third floors of support, with explanatory reasons functioning as an elevator between the first and second floors—linking the truth of one with the truth of the other. With this picture in mind I will argue for (i) and (ii) by analyzing linguistic intuitions regarding the role of reasons and evidence in citations defending beliefs and actions.

Regarding claim (i), evidence is more fundamental than reasons with regard to justification. To set the stage, consider the *Hummer Driving Murderer* case:

- (*E*) Seeing a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim’s street right after the murder.
- (*R_e*) Jocko drives a yellow Hummer.
- (*p*) Jocko committed the murder.⁷³

Consider two exchanges between Jocko’s lawyer (L) and a witness (W) on the stand being cross-examined during the trial:

Exchange One

- (L) You allege that Jocko committed the murder. What *evidence* do you base your *reasons* for this allegation on?

⁷² Arguing for (iv) is beyond the scope of this paper. It requires arguing (1) reasons for belief provide reasons for action, and (2) reasons for belief ground, and are more fundamental than, reasons for action.

⁷³ This case is from Christensen (2010: 188).

- (W) The fact that I saw a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim's street right after the murder supports the idea that the fact that Jocko drives a yellow Hummer indicates that Jocko committed the murder.

Exchange Two

- (L) You allege that Jocko committed the murder. What *reasons* do you base your *evidence* for this allegation on?
- (W) The fact that Jocko drives a yellow Hummer supports the idea that the fact that I saw a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim's street right after the murder indicates that Jocko committed the murder.

The difference between *Exchange One* and *Exchange Two* indicates that reasons are properly ground on evidence as evidence is more fundamental than reasons. In *Exchange One* seeing the Hummer justifies the belief that Jocko committed the murder relative to the background information that Jocko drives a Hummer. In *Exchange Two* the fact that Jocko drives a Hummer justifies the belief that Jocko committed the murder relative to seeing the Hummer. To see which reading is correct imagine the cross-examination continues. In reference to *Exchange One* the lawyer asks of that which is claimed to be fundamental, "How do you know you saw a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim's street right after the murder?" In reference to *Exchange Two* the lawyer asks, "How do you know that Jocko drives a yellow Hummer?" Is the lawyer correct to pursue what the witness takes to be evidence as a basis for the allegation? Or, is the lawyer correct to pursue what the witness takes to be a reason as a basis for the allegation? If the former, it is possible that the witness' testimony or perception of a Hummer driving down a certain street at a certain time could be called into question. The lawyer could also ask how the witness knows that the yellow Hummer seen driving down the street was Jocko's? Such questioning might undermine the witness' allegation. If the latter, it is likely that the witness will cite publically available vehicle registration records or having gone for a ride with Jocko in his Hummer. This line of questioning is not likely to undermine the witness' allegation. The lawyer pursues an effective line of questioning when asking whether the evidence truly justifies the belief. The lawyer pursues a dead-end in questioning when asking whether the reason justifies the belief.

To see that reasons *and* evidence are needed in the *Hummer Driving Murderer* case try subtracting one of the elements from the case. Seeing a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim's street right after the murder does not, alone, justify the belief that Jocko committed the murder.⁷⁴ Likewise, the fact that Jocko drives a yellow Hummer does not indicate that Jocko committed the murder unless it is supported by the evidence of seeing a yellow Hummer driving down the murder-victim's street right after the murder. To claim otherwise involves demonstrating a statistically significant link between driving a yellow Hummer and being prone to commit murder.

Regarding claim (ii), reasons explain evidence. As indicated in the prior paragraph, there needs to be an explanatory link between the truth of the evidence and the truth of the belief. Why is the truth of the Hummer citing relevant to the truth of the murderer's identity? This is explained by reference to the fact that Jocko drives a yellow Hummer. As such, reasons do explanatory work by establishing, making evident or indicating the degree to which the truth of the evidence supports the truth of the belief.

The last claim in DT I will defend here is (iii)—evidence provides normative reasons. To see why this is true it helps to consider a distinction. The distinction is: *provide* versus *consist*.⁷⁵ Roughly, the distinction is between an entity's function versus an entity's ontology. *Providing* focuses on the function of an entity within an argument. *Consisting* focuses on the properties or status of an entity. Toward the beginning of this paper I set aside issues related to ontology (e.g., whether reasons or evidence consist of facts, states of affairs, propositions or mental states). The assumption is that as long as ontology is held consistent across reasons and evidence the function of the entities can be comparatively evaluated. The distinction between provide and consist reinforces the validity of this move.⁷⁶ Something can consist without providing. For the Inseparability View, whether *p* is a justified belief depends, ultimately, on the status or truth value of

⁷⁴ Having both elements in place also avoids the problem of untethered or free-floating reasons: having a reason for everything, but a justification for nothing. Consider this monologue, "I have a reason to be mad at Frank, namely, he stole my smart phone. Why do I have that reason? Because I have the following evidence: *x*, *y* and *z*." Tethering reasons to evidence, even though they are independent entities, grounds reasons in evidence and avoids claiming that all evidence is capable of explanation on its own. On the last score, claiming all evidence is self-explanatory blurs the distinction between (1) evidence versus reports of evidence, and (2) evidence versus that which is self-evident. Not all evidence is self-evident. For instance, establishing the truth value of complex propositions often requires proof or inference.

⁷⁵ This distinction is found in Williamson (2000: 197). He uses the distinction to argue that experiences, as evidence, are propositional in nature. He does this by claiming *x* *consists* only in so far as *x* *functions*.

⁷⁶ This is not the same thing as saying ontology doesn't impact function. It only says that for the purpose of comparison it is possible to uphold the distinction (i.e., hold ontology invariant to clarify function).

the belief in relation to the evidence. It doesn't depend on whether p or the evidence supporting p is capable of being grasped or used in argumentation. However, the evidence supporting the belief *provides* a normative reason by being properly aligned and arranged within a justificatory structure where the evidence properly functions in analyzing cases. A normative reason is only provided when the belief is true *and* there is a high probability of an explanatory connection between the evidence and the belief. This doesn't mean that the normative reason provided consists of evidence. To make such a claim requires arguing that an entity consists only in so far as it functions. This mistaken view of the provide/consist distinction is implicitly endorsed by the Equivalency View and the Conditionality View of the reasons-evidence relation. This is why, for instance, Kearns and Star defend Equivalency using arguments about how reasons and evidence function similarly in deliberation and argumentation. The inference pattern in these arguments is that if reasons and evidence are functionally equivalent, they are constitutionally equivalent.⁷⁷ On the contrary, the constitution of evidence and reasons doesn't require being able to use evidence and reasons in a certain way in deliberation or argumentation. That reasons and evidence only function a certain way if they are a certain way simply shows that *provide* depends on *consist*. It doesn't show that *consist* can be derived from *provide* when it comes to reasons and evidence. Given all of the above, the Inseparability View can consistently claim that providing a reason does not require consisting of a reason; thereby, evidence provides normative reasons without consisting of them.

6 Conclusion

In this paper I argued against three views concerning the reasons-evidence relation. Against the Equivalency View I showed it is possible to have a case where there is a fact that is a normative reason to believe that p , but that same fact is not evidence that you ought to believe that p . Against the Conditionality View I demonstrated it is possible to

⁷⁷ Kearns and Star (2009). Almost all arguments for the Equivalency view endorse this line of reasoning. See, especially, the standard cases argument (p. 222), the deliberation argument (p. 224) and the public role argument (p. 226). These arguments can be summed up as follows: reasons function within cases, deliberation and argumentation as evidence; thus, it is the case that reasons are evidence. To their credit, and despite their loose use of 'constitutional' language (i.e., reasons *are* evidence), Kearns and Star stop short of a complete identity claim between the properties of reasons and evidence. They are correct to do this because such an identity claim cannot be defended. I have argued at length that the weaker Equivalency claim is likewise indefeasible. You cannot build a bridge from function to constitution.

have a case where there is evidence but there is no corresponding reason to believe; so, it is not the case that if you have evidence you thereby have a reason to believe. Against the Interchangeability View I argued that having evidence is not functionally equivalent to having reasons; so, reasons and evidence are not interchangeable. For the Inseparability View I illustrated how reasons and evidence are functionally distinct, yet both entities must be properly conjoined to yield normative reasons for belief and action. Now I will finish this paper by showing you the power of the Inseparability View when applied to a couple of perspectives in epistemology.

Alan Millar (2010) considers the notion of detached standing knowledge. This is the sort of knowledge you have when you are unable to recall the source of the knowledge, but you nevertheless retain the knowledge over time. Millar considers what justification you might have for believing Kuala Lumpur is the capital of Malaysia. Though at one point you confirmed this fact using good sources of information (e.g., encyclopedias) you are currently unable to recall the evidence given to you by those sources. A view of justification that is evidence-based and uses justification as an element required to secure knowledge might be unable to handle detached standing knowledge. As Millar claims:

[E]ven though I have encountered these various confirming sources, it is not at all obvious that I now have a reason to believe this provided by evidence supplied by these sources. The conditions required for justification by evidence in the clear sense are not met. Whatever impact evidence may have had in inducing my belief as to the capital of Malaysia, it is not in view of that evidence that I now believe as I do. The evidence I might once have had is not evidence I now possess, since I do not recall it. So it is not evidence in view of which I now believe as I do.⁷⁸

An assumption in Millar's claim is that evidence should provide a reason to believe. Evidence can only supply this reason if the evidence can be possessed. The evidence is possessed when you are able to cognitively access it. Otherwise, the evidence is detached from the belief it justifies. However, the knowledge is sustained despite not being able to recall the evidence on which it is based. The Inseparability View avoids Millar's assumptions, so the view is able to retain the idea that knowledge of such facts is

⁷⁸ Millar (2010: 156).

evidence-based.⁷⁹ This is because you can possess evidence irrespective of whether you can recall or grasp the evidence. There is no problem with having evidence but not having a reason to believe. This can occur on the Inseparability View. However, it is only when there is an explanatory reason capable of linking the truth of the evidence with the truth of the belief that there is a normative reason indicating that you ought to believe that p . With detached standing knowledge you possess evidence for the belief, and the belief can be based on that evidence, but you only have a justified belief that supplies a normative reason to believe when the explanatory connection is in place. There is nothing in the Inseparability View that makes evidence always have to supply a normative reason for belief in order to do its justificatory work. Failure to supply such a reason indicates the explanatory link is missing. Such a case does not impugn evidence *simpliciter* as that which serves to justify belief.

In a recent paper Clayton Littlejohn argues that epistemic deontologists must accept the following Factivity (F) claim:

(F) You cannot justifiably believe p unless p is true.⁸⁰

Much of what Littlejohn says is amiable to the Inseparability View. In fact, Inseparability can add support to some of the claims in his paper.⁸¹ A summary of his argument underlying thesis F is: (1) normative reasons consist of true propositions, (2) whether a belief is justified is determined by whether the belief can provide normative reasons that can be used in deliberation regarding what you should do, (3) false beliefs cannot do this so false beliefs cannot be justified and (4) thus, only true beliefs can be justified beliefs. Inseparability adds a front-end to Littlejohn's view because it shows how justified beliefs provide reasons that can be used in practical deliberation. These reasons consist of true propositions not simply because they are facts, which might also make them evidence, but because they are supported by the evidence. Further, the truth

⁷⁹ This also avoids taking Millar's route of accounting for the case by claiming detached standing knowledge is an ability to recall known facts. This makes knowledge a result of the direct impact of the experience of an encounter with a source of information. The source provides the ability to recall the facts it incorporates. The facts are incorporated based on being known. So, knowledge stems from encounter with that which is known or publically accessible. There are many problems that can be raised with this account: empirical skepticism, disagreement over publically accessible facts and circularity in associating knowledge with that which is known.

⁸⁰ Littlejohn (unpublished-a).

⁸¹ Endorsing Inseparability would require Littlejohn to discontinue using the Interchangeability View as an assumption about the reasons-evidence relation. For instance, Littlejohn says, "For the purposes of this paper, I will treat evidence and justifying reasons as interchangeable" [Littlejohn (unpublished-b)].

of the belief that provides the normative reasons is connected to the truth of the evidence through an explanatory connection between the evidence and the belief. This makes the evidence confirm the belief relative to an explanatory reason provided by the set of background information about the case. When a belief is true it provides a normative reason that can be used in practical deliberation to determine what one ought to believe or do. Along with establishing a more complete justificatory framework the Inseparability View also suggests changes to some of the details of Littlejohn's view.

Inseparability doesn't endorse epistemic deontology.⁸² This blocks the inference from Littlejohn's argument to thesis F. It is possible to accept Littlejohn's argument without it being necessary that justified belief is permissibly held belief. Earlier in this paper I argued for the distinction between justifiably believing that p and p being a justified belief. On the Inseparability View you can justifiably believe that p without p being a justified belief. It doesn't follow that having a justified belief secures justified believing because you can permissibly believe that p even when p is false. This is why the Inseparability framework is useful. When you justifiably, but falsely, believe that p you have a motivating reason but not a normative reason. Such a false belief can still provide a reason that can be used in deliberation. There is nothing about false beliefs that prevents them from being included in practical deliberation. However, such beliefs only provide a psychological motivation for why you were inclined to base your action on a false belief. False beliefs cannot be excluded from deliberation because they are false; yet, deliberation based on falsehoods does take a different, non-normative path. This means Littlejohn's argument works only when applied to the normative path of the Inseparability framework, but his argument cannot be used as a claim about the orthodox view of justification in general. It is correct to exclude false beliefs from the normative path, but false beliefs can still function on the non-normative path and explain why people perform actions in conflict with the actual facts of the case. It can explain why people justifiably believe p even though p is false.

⁸² It might be argued against Inseparability that it does endorse epistemic duty, as there is a duty to be a fact finder because you can be held epistemically responsible for what is standardly called blamelessly held belief. Epistemic culpability applies equally to what you grasped or accessed and that which you did not grasp or access but should have known given your epistemic situation. This means you can be held responsible for things you failed to grasp. However, this doesn't mean that blamelessly held belief given your epistemic situation is justified belief. It is possible that you know all the facts you should have known, but the belief you have about the facts is still false. My response makes Inseparability endorse an epistemic duty claim, but it prevents Inseparability from endorsing epistemic deontology as a theory.

Lastly, I return to the question that opened this paper. Investigators find Marco's DNA on a baseball bat at the crime scene. Does the DNA evidence provide a reason to believe Marco was involved in the crime? That depends. Using the Inseparability framework we can articulate what it depends on. Is there a highly probable explanatory connection between the DNA on the bat and Marco being involved in the crime? What explanatory reasons (i.e., background information) establishes this connection? Do those reasons establish how the bat was obtained by Marco, the whereabouts of Marco at the time of the crime or Marco's criminal history which includes violent assaults? Is the belief that Marco was involved in the crime true? Did the authorities perform their due diligence in obtaining all the facts they should have known given their epistemic situation? If the above questions are answered affirmatively, then the DNA evidence provides a normative reason to believe that Marco was involved in the crime, and the authorities ought to act accordingly.

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