TWO ARGUMENTS FOR EVIDENTIALISM

By Jonathan Way

Evidentialism is the thesis that all reasons to believe p are evidence for p. Pragmatists hold that pragmatic considerations—incentives for believing—can also be reasons to believe. Nishi Shah, Thomas Kelly and others have argued for evidentialism on the grounds that incentives for belief fail a 'reasoning constraint' on reasons: roughly, reasons must be considerations we can reason from, but we cannot reason from incentives to belief. In the first half of the paper, I show that this argument fails: the claim that we cannot reason from incentives is either false or does not combine with the reasoning constraint to support evidentialism. However, the failure of this argument suggests an alternative route to evidentialism. Roughly, reasons must be premises of good reasoning, but it is not good reasoning to reason from incentives to belief. The second half of the paper develops and defends this argument for evidentialism.

Keywords: evidentialism, pragmatic reasons for belief, reasoning, reasons.

I. INTRODUCTION

Evidentialism is the thesis that all reasons to believe p are evidence for p. Evidentialism implies that incentives for believing p are not, thereby, reasons to believe p. For instance, evidentialism implies that the fact that believing in God would make you happy is not, thereby, a reason to believe that God exists.

Why accept evidentialism? After all, if eating candy or watching baseball would make you happy that is, thereby, a reason to eat candy or watch baseball. Why should things be different for belief?

The most influential recent answer to this question is the *argument from reasoning*.

(1) Reasons for you to believe p must be considerations from which you could reason to believing p.

(2) No-one can reason from incentives for believing p to believing p.

(3) So, incentives for believing *p* are not reasons for anyone to believe *p*.[1]

The first premise here is an instance of a more general *reasoning constraint* (RC) on reasons:

RC Reasons for you to φ must be considerations from which you could reason to φ-ing.

RC enjoys wide-support.[2] It gives voice to the vague but plausible thought that reasons are supposed to guide us. Reasoning is the way in which we can be guided by reasons. So, if you are not capable of reasoning from a consideration, this consideration cannot do what a reason is supposed to do.

The second premise is a psychological claim about our capacities to reason. It has considerable initial plausibility. This is perhaps best brought out by comparison. If you believe that it is sunny and believe that if it is sunny, the match will go ahead, you will, ordinarily, be able to reason from these beliefs to the conclusion that the match will go ahead. But if you think that believing in God would make you happy, you will not ordinarily be able to reason from this belief to the conclusion that God exists. You might be able to reason from this belief to the intention to believe that God exists. And you might be able to execute this intention—perhaps by spending more time with believers, or selective evidence gathering, or taking a 'belief pill'. But although these processes involve reasoning, they involve more than that. Compare a case in which you think that an experience as of a red cube would make you happy. Here too you might reason to an intention to bring about this experience, and be able to do so. That does not make the experience a conclusion of your reasoning.[3]

The argument from reasoning promises to be highly dialectically effective. In drawing only on a plausible formal constraint on reasons and on a psychological claim about our capacities, it appeals to premises which should be acceptable even to *pragmatists*—those who hold that (at least some) incentives are reasons to believe. But I shall argue that the argument from reasoning fails. My strategy will not be to question RC. Instead, I distinguish several versions of the claim that we cannot reason from incentives. I argue that this claim is either false, because it ignores the possibility of reasoning *badly* from incentives, or does not combine with RC so as to support evidentialism.

That is the paper's negative conclusion. But I also have a positive ambition. In section IV, I offer a new argument for evidentialism. My argument also

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[1] Versions of this argument are presented in Shah (2006), Kelly (2002), Kolodny (2005), Raz (2013), and Persson (2007). It is also a natural reading of remarks in Gibbons (2013) and Parfit (2011). I comment on some differences in formulations between authors as we proceed.

[2] As John Searle (2001: 104) puts it, '[y]ou have to be able to reason with reasons'. Versions of RC are also endorsed by many on both sides of the debate over 'internal reasons'. See, e.g., Johnson (1999), Korsgaard (1986), Smith (1994), and Williams (1981).

[3] Cf. Kelly (2002), Hieronymi (2005), Shah (2006), and Parfit (2011).

turns on a connection between reasons and reasoning. But the connection is not RC: instead it is the claim that reasons must be potential premises of *good* reasoning. And while RC plays a role in the case for this claim, it might also be accepted without RC. This new argument requires a normative premise and so lacks the 'knock-down' dialectical force which the original argument from reasoning promised. But I show that the argument's premises do not presuppose evidentialism, and can be motivated on grounds independent of it. So I submit that the argument should still be able to move the uncommitted. The overall moral of the paper is thus that we learn more about the possibility of non-evidential reasons by thinking about what makes for good reasoning than we do by thinking about our capacities to reason.[4]

II. PRELIMINARIES

I begin with some preliminary points about how RC is to be understood.

RC is a constraint on *normative reasons*—reasons which bear on what one ought to believe. I will write as if normative reasons are facts. For instance, the fact that it is sunny might be a reason to believe that the match will go ahead. However, if one prefers to think of reasons as propositions or mental states, one could reformulate the discussion accordingly.

RC connects reasons to *reasoning*. I assume that reasoning is a psychological process—in the cases of interest, a kind of transition between beliefs. The contents of the beliefs from which you reason are your *premises*, the content of the belief to which you reason is your *conclusion*. It will sometimes be convenient to describe reasoning just by indicating the premise and conclusion. For instance, we can describe reasoning from the belief that it is sunny to the belief that the match will go ahead by saying that you reason, 'it's sunny, so, the match will go ahead'.

You reason 'from a reason' by reasoning from a premise which represents that reason. [You might also need to know the premise (Hyman 1999); it will not matter here].

The other crucial term in RC is 'could'. I will say that you could reason from p to φ-ing just in case you have an ability or capacity which might be manifested by reasoning from p to φ-ing. Such abilities are naturally understood in terms of rule-following. To have the ability to reason in a certain way is to have internalized, and so be disposed to follow, a rule which either permits reasoning in that way, or can generate that reasoning through misapplication (cf. Boghossian 2008; Broome 2013). It is notoriously difficult to say what it is to follow a rule. But we can assume that the notion is in good order.

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[4] In this way, the paper mirrors Korsgaard's (1986) famous discussion of arguments from claims about our capacities for motivation to broadly Humean theories of reasons to act.

Understood in this way, RC is a fairly strong constraint. It implies that
p is a reason for you to φ only if you have internalized a rule which might
lead you to reason from p to φ-ing. Some might think we should only accept
something weaker. For instance, Nishi Shah says that the sense in which you
must be capable of reasoning from a reason p to φ-ing is that there 'must be
no unalterable feature of [your] psychology that prevents' you from reasoning
from p to φ-ing (2006: 485). This suggests a weaker constraint: reasons must
be considerations which you could *acquire* the ability to reason from. However,
if, as I shall argue, pragmatic considerations satisfy RC, then they also satisfy
this weaker constraint. Thus, I shall continue to focus on RC.[5]

We might also ask how RC relates to a familiar *motivational constraint* on
reasons:

MC   A reason for you to φ must be a consideration which could be your reason for
φ-ing.

Your reasons for φ-ing are the considerations in light of which you φ. They
are what are sometimes called 'motivating' or 'operative' reasons (Dancy 2000;
Scanlon 1998).

Reasoning and motivating reasons are closely connected. If you reason
from p to φ-ing, then, other things equal, p is a reason for which you φ. For
instance, if you reason 'it's sunny, so, the match will go ahead', a reason for
which you believe the match will go ahead is that it is sunny. So if, as I shall
argue, pragmatic considerations satisfy RC, they also satisfy MC. Thus, my
arguments will equally count against versions of the argument from reasoning
which appeal to MC, such as that offered by Kelly (2002). Since it is often less
cumbersome to talk about reasoning than motivating reasons, I will continue
the discussion in the former terms.[6]

III. THE ARGUMENT FROM REASONING

In this section, I will argue that the argument from reasoning fails. As stated,
its second premise is false: we can reason from incentives to belief. Nor is it

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[5] RC might also be weakened to require only that a reason to φ be capable of *inclining* or
disposing you to φ through reasoning (cf. Shah 2006: 484–5). This version of RC might be thought
to avoid worries about very weak reasons to φ, which might not be capable of moving a rational
agent to φ (cf. Schroeder 2007: 166). However, since these issues are orthogonal to the discussion
to follow, I will stick to the more straightforward formulation.

[6] One might also take MC to imply a restricted version of RC. Roughly, the idea would be
that, in an important range of cases, p could be your reason for believing only if you could reason
from p to believing. Exceptions might include cases in which you can believe for a reason in virtue
of perception, memory, or intuition. Since it does not seem like we can believe for pragmatic
considerations in virtue of such processes, MC plausibly implies a version of RC which will serve
the evidentialist's purposes. This in turn may help to answer the worry, pressed by Rinard (2015),
that the pragmatist can reject RC since it rules out the possibility of non-inferential reasons, or
reasons for responses which cannot be conclusions of reasoning, such as, perhaps, action.

clear how it can be revised in such a way that it is both true and useful to the evidentialist.

To see that the second premise is false as stated, consider the following case:

> Carl believes that if God exists, then believing in God will make him happy. He also believes that believing in God will make him happy. And he is capable of affirming the consequent. So, Carl is capable of reasoning from the belief that believing in God will make him happy to believing in God.

This case is clearly possible: people do sometimes affirm the consequent. Thus, there is a perfectly good sense in which some of us are capable of reasoning from incentives to belief.[7]

You might be tempted to resist this case. For example, you might observe that Carl does not reason *just* from the premise that believing in God will make him happy. He also relies on the supplementary premise that if God exists, believing in God will make him happy. Perhaps RC should be understood so as not to allow for reasoning of this sort.

However, it is doubtful that this response saves the evidentialist. First, we need not think of Carl's further belief here as a premise. It might function instead as part of his background information; plausibly, we often form new beliefs on the basis of other beliefs in a way in which is sensitive to further things we believe, without explicitly reasoning from those further beliefs. Secondly, there are other examples which resist this treatment. Consider cases of self-fulfilling belief. Suppose that Brian believes that if he believes he will recover from his illness, he will recover. This is an incentive for believing that he will recover. And plausibly, he might reason from this belief to believing that he will recover without relying on any further premises.[8]

The basic problem is also clear enough in the abstract, without relying on the details of particular examples. The second premise of the argument from reasoning precludes reasoning from considerations which are *in fact* incentives for belief. But it is clear that we can reason *badly*—that is, we can reason to a belief in p from considerations which do not in fact support p. And there is no reason why some such considerations could not also, as it happens, be incentives for believing p.[9]

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[7] It should be clear that this case also counts against arguments for evidentialism which turn on MC, such as that of Kelly (2002). If Carl does affirm the consequent, he will believe that God exists for the reason that so believing will make him happy. Note also that he would clearly pass Kelly's (2002: 175) counterfactual test for motivating reasons: other things equal, if he ceased to believe that believing in God would make him happy, he would revise his belief that God exists.

[8] For extended discussion and defence of this sort of case, see Sharadin (forthcoming).

[9] Cf. Comesaña 2015. Shah (2006: 497) acknowledges a version of this point, when he notes that someone might mistakenly take an incentive to be an evidential consideration and thereby reason from it. The case of Carl shows that it is also possible to reason from an incentive without relying on a mistaken judgement about evidence.

As stated then, the argument from reasoning rests on a false premise about our abilities to reason. How might the evidentialist revise this premise?

The fullest and most explicit version of the argument from reasoning is due to Shah (2006). Shah's argument turns on what he calls the *transparency* of doxastic deliberation:

> When deliberating about whether to believe *p*, we can only take into account considerations which we take to bear on whether *p*.

Shah takes transparency to underwrite the claim that we cannot reason from incentives. This suggests the following revision to the argument's second premise:

> (2*) No-one can reason from incentives for believing *p* to believing *p* without taking those incentives to support *p*.[10]

(2*) supports evidentialism given the following revision to the argument's first premise:

> (1*) Reasons to believe *p* must be considerations from which you could reason to believing *p* without relying on falsehoods.

(1*) is plausible – RC would put little if any constraint on our reasons, if it could be met by relying on falsehoods. But should we accept (2*)?

(2*) is supported by an interpretation of transparency on which reasoning from some premises to believing *p* requires that you take those premises to support *p*. Paul Boghossian (2014) calls this the *taking condition*:

> You reason from believing *p* to believing *q* only if you take *p* to support *q*.

Should we accept the taking condition? That depends on what it is to *take* some premises to support a conclusion.

On the most natural interpretation, taking some premises to support a conclusion is just to *believe*, or perhaps to *judge*, that those premises support that conclusion. However, so understood, the taking condition is highly controversial. In particular, it seems to overintellectualize reasoning—allowing only creatures with the concept of evidential support to reason—and threatens a regress. The regress arises because it is plausible that a piece of reasoning can generate justified belief only if the 'taking belief' involved in that reasoning is itself justified. But taking beliefs concern the particular, often contingent, evidential support relations in your circumstances. It is hard to see how such beliefs could be justified unless they are in turn based on reasoning. And any

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[10] The move from transparency to (2*) assumes that transparency applies to reasoning as well as to deliberation. This might be queried—perhaps transparency is only a feature of conscious deliberation, rather than reasoning more generally. I consider below whether the argument from reasoning fares better when its second premise is restricted to conscious deliberation.

such reasoning will require a further taking belief. This interpretation of the taking condition thus seems to make inferentially justified belief impossible.[11]

These worries are not conclusive but they seem serious enough that the evidentialist would be ill-advised to rest her case on the taking condition, so understood. And the condition can be understood in a way that avoids these worries. In a more deflationary sense, you take your premises to support your conclusion by *treating* your premises as supporting your conclusion. One can treat something as an F without thinking of that thing as an F—compare 'treating like dirt'.[12] However, in this sense, treating one's premises as supporting one's conclusion seems simply to be *reasoning* from the latter to the former. And understood in this way, (2*) is trivial—it says that no-one can reason from incentives to believing *p* without reasoning from incentives to believing *p*. This triviality does not imply that in reasoning from incentives one must be relying on a falsehood, and so does not combine with (1*) to yield evidentialism.

I conclude that the prospects for repairing the argument from reasoning by appealing to (2*) are dim. The taking condition is either too controversial a premise for the evidentialist to rely on, or too easily satisfied to be able to rule out pragmatic reasons.

However, there is an alternative way to revise the argument's second premise. On this approach, the core thought behind the argument's second premise is that we cannot reason from what we *take* to be an incentive for belief. More exactly, given the possibility that some consideration might be both evidence for *p* and an incentive for believing *p*, the core thought is that we cannot reason from what we take to be a *mere* incentive. That is,

(2**) No-one can reason to believing *p* from considerations they take not to support *p*.

(2**) is, I think, much the most plausible version of the argument's second premise. However, given the ambiguity of 'take', we still need to be careful to identify the most plausible interpretation of (2**).

If taking is just believing, then (2**) is not obvious. For example, someone might have a standing belief that the fact that a coin has come up heads the last few times is not evidence that it will come up heads next time, and yet still be capable of reasoning from the latter to the former. Knowing about a fallacy does not always prevent one making it.

What does seem harder to imagine is someone reasoning from some premises to a conclusion while *consciously judging* that those premises do not support that conclusion. For example, it seems hard to imagine someone consciously thinking 'the fact that the coin came up heads last time doesn't support

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[11] For versions of these worries, see Boghossian (2014), among others. See Valaris (2014) for a reply. Shah (2013: 318) seems to agree that the taking condition does not apply to all reasoning.

[12] Cf. Comesaña (2015), Sylvan (2015).

the coin's coming up tails next time. Nonetheless, since the coin came up heads last time, it'll come up tails next time'. Thus, if taking is consciously judging, (2**) seems true.[13]

However, (2**) does not combine with the RC so as to support evidentialism. In order to rule out pragmatic reasons, the argument's first premise must now be revised as follows:

> (1**) Reasons for you to believe *p* must be considerations from which you could reason to believing *p* while making a true conscious judgment about whether your premises support *p*.

By itself though, (1**) seems unmotivated. It is not needed to capture the plausible thought, which motivated RC, that reasons must be able to guide us. And it is not clear why reasons to believe must be able to guide us in the presence of judgements about evidential support, as opposed to any other kind of judgements. The condition looks gerrymandered to support an argument for evidentialism.

The evidentialist must thus provide more by way of support for (1**). I cannot consider here all the ways in which this might be done. But I will briefly consider one option.

It might be suggested that (1**) follows from the thought that we are *self-consciously rational*: we are not merely subject to reasons, nor merely guided by reasons; we can also be guided by reasons in full awareness of the way in which our reasons support our responses.

While there is something attractive about this idea (cf. Boghossian 2014: 16; Korsgaard 1996: 17), we should not ignore the fact that it is highly demanding. Even if a full awareness of one's reasons is a part of ideal rationality, we should not assume that only creatures capable of ideal rationality are subject to reasons. Furthermore, there are many cases in which responding to reasons seems to preclude conscious judgement about one's reasons (Arpaly 2000; Markovits 2011). For example, it might not be possible to execute a well-placed return in a tennis match, or make a well-timed joke in conversation, while consciously thinking about whether to do so.[14] Finally, we can capture the attractive idea just by positing conscious understanding of one's reasons as an ideal. Since ideals need not be capable of realization, this does not imply (1**).

I conclude that (1**) remains insufficiently supported. Thus, both of the ways of revising the argument from reasoning seem to fail. We have not found an interpretation of the argument's second premise on which it is both true

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[13] I do not mean to suggest that it's undeniable. Sharadin (forthcoming) seems to deny it. And as Nayding (2011) observes, people do sometimes cite considerations which are clearly pragmatic as their reasons for belief.

[14] Note that for broadly similar reasons, 1** would also be denied by the many philosophers who think that morality, or practical rationality, might be 'self-effacing'. See Parfit (1984) for a famous discussion.

and combines with RC, or a plausible revision of that constraint, so as to rule out pragmatic reasons. While there may be other options here, I will now turn to presenting an alternative way to argue for evidentialism, one which does not face these challenges.

IV. THE ARGUMENT FROM GOOD REASONING

The problem with the argument from reasoning, as initially stated, is that it rests on a false premise about our capacities to reason: we can reason from incentives to belief. However, we have not seen how to reason *well* from incentives to belief. In our earlier example, Carl reasoned from an incentive by affirming the consequent—a paradigm case of bad reasoning. This suggests that we might argue for evidentialism by restricting RC as follows:

*RC** Reasons for you to φ must be considerations from which you could reason *well* to φ-ing.

However, if RC* does support evidentialism, it is not its appeal to *capacities* which is doing the work. Instead, the case for evidentialism is coming from the following consequence of RC*, the Good Reasoning Constraint (GRC):

GRC Reasons to φ must be premises of good reasoning to φ-ing.

While RC* implies GRC, GRC does not imply RC*. Thus, one might accept the former but not the latter.[15]

Given GRC, we can state the *argument from good reasoning*.

(1′) Reasons to believe p must be premises of good reasoning to believing p.

(2′) It is not good reasoning to reason from an incentive for believing p to believing p.

(3′) So, incentives for believing p are not reasons to believe p.

(1′) is just GRC applied to belief. (2′) generalizes our observations about the examples of the previous section. And (3′) follows from (1′) and (2′). I think that (1′) and (2′) are plausible on their face. Nor do either presuppose evidentialism. Like the first premise of the original argument from reasoning, (1′) follows from a formal constraint on reasons. (2′) is a normative claim but one that concerns good reasoning—it does not by itself imply that incentives are not reasons. So the argument promises cogent support for evidentialism. In the next two subsections, I provide further argument for each of its premises.

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[15] cf. Setiya (2014). Certain examples where someone is unable to perform a good piece of reasoning may incline some readers to accept GRC but not RC*—the case discussed in III.1 below might be one such example (cf. n.17).

IV.1. In defence of the good reasoning constraint

The core idea behind the GRC is the same simple thought which motivated RC. Reasons are supposed to guide us and the way in which reasons guide us is through reasoning. On a natural understanding, this thought supports GRC more directly than it supports RC. The basic thought is normative: reasons are what *should* guide us, and so there must be a good route from our reasons to the responses they support. Reasons must be premises of good reasoning.

Suppose though that we do begin with the thought that reasons must be capable of guiding us and thus accept RC, in the first instance. Still, if we accept RC, we should also accept RC*, and so GRC. For surely it is not enough for reasons to be capable of guiding us. A consideration that can only guide through bad reasoning cannot do what reasons are supposed to do. Reasons must be capable of guiding us *well*. That is just to say that RC* is true.

Moreover, accepting RC but not RC* leads to problems. To accept RC but not RC* is to accept that the difference between considerations from which you cannot reason and considerations from which you can only reason *badly* is normatively relevant—a difference which can make a difference to whether some consideration is a reason. But on the face of it, this is not a normatively relevant difference. It seems peculiar to think that a consideration could count as a reason partly because it can motivate through bad reasoning.

To make this more concrete, consider:

> Holmes, Watson and Jones each know some set of facts pertaining to some crime – call these facts *r*. Holmes and Watson are capable of reasoning from *r* to *c*, the conclusion that Smith committed the crime; Jones is not. Holmes' reasoning from *r* to *c* is impeccable but complex and subtle. Watson is unable to follow this reasoning. He is, however, capable of reasoning fallaciously from *r* to *c*. Jones is unable to follow Holmes' reasoning but also unable to make Watson's mistake.[16]

RC implies that *r* is not a reason for Jones. But RC leaves open whether *r* is a reason for Holmes and Watson. And insofar as other conditions on *r* being a reason are met—after all, it is very plausible that *r* is a reason for Holmes to believe *c*—it seems to follow that *r* is a reason for Watson to believe *c*. But this seems odd. Watson's capacity to engage in fallacious reasoning should not allow him to have reasons that less sloppy thinkers lack. Watson and Jones should be treated alike: either *r* is a reason for both of them to believe *c* or for neither.

RC thus draws distinctions in cases where there seems no difference. RC* avoids this problem. In the case above, only Holmes is capable of reasoning

[16] For related cases, used for different purposes, see Firth (1978), Millar (1991), Turri (2010), and Lord and Sylvan ms. Given the plausible assumption that people differ in their abilities to reason, cases like this must be possible.

well from *r* to *c*. So *r* is only a reason for Holmes to believe *c*. It is not a reason for Jones or Watson. This is further grounds for those who accept RC to accept RC*.[17]

So GRC is highly plausible in its own right. And anyone who accepts RC should also accept RC*, and thus GRC. While there is more that could be said here, and objections which might be considered, I take there to be a strong prima facie case for GRC, and so for (1′) of the argument from good reasoning.

IV.II. *Against reasoning from pragmatic reasons*

I now provide further support for (2′)—the claim that it is not good reasoning to move from an incentive for believing *p* to believing *p*.

Begin with a worry. Reasoning from incentives to belief is clearly good in some respects—it is, for instance, *beneficial*. For sure, it is not *epistemically* good. But it would surely beg the question for the evidentialist to insist that reasons to believe be premises of epistemically good reasoning.

The answer to this worry is that 'good' in 'good reasoning' should be understood as attributive. Good reasoning is reasoning which is good *as* reasoning (McHugh and Way ms). On this interpretation, GRC remains plausible and begs no questions. It is not trivial or question-begging to claim that reasoning from incentives to belief is not good as reasoning.[18]

How though can we tell what makes something good as reasoning? The discussion so far has tacitly assumed that good reasoning corresponds to good arguments:

(Link) It is good reasoning to move from believing *p*, *q*, *r*. . . to believing *c* only if '*p*, *q*, *r*. . ., so, *c*' is a good argument.

Since the argument 'Believing in God would make me happy, so, God exists' is plainly a bad argument, it follows that the corresponding reasoning is bad. Link thus supports (2′).[19]

Link is, I think, the natural place for a pragmatist to resist the argument from good reasoning. But I take Link to be intuitively plausible. It is very natural

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[17] You might be inclined to think that *r* is a reason for Jones and Watson. If so, you can take the thought behind the Reasoning Constraint to support only GRC, and not RC or RC*.

[18] But can't we still distinguish what's epistemically good as reasoning and what's practically good as reasoning? I don't think so. Compare: although there are aesthetically good toasters, there is no such thing as being aesthetically good *as* a toaster. (There's such a thing as being aesthetically good *for* a toaster; but that is just to be aesthetically good by comparison with other toasters).

[19] Two clarificatory points. First, as I use the expression, a good argument need not have true premises. Secondly, one might worry that Link ignores Gilbert Harman's (1986) warnings about conflating reasoning and logic. But this is a mistake: a good argument is not the same thing as a logically valid argument. (This is another version of Harman's point).

indeed to think that there is a tight connection between good reasoning and good arguments. Here are four related points to bring this out.

First, reasoning is expressible: we express reasoning from believing p to believing c by saying 'p, so, c'. In expressing our reasoning, we thereby state an argument. Indeed, as John Broome (2013) has emphasized, we can reason actively by 'saying to ourselves' such arguments. We can add that reasoning may also be a shared activity—something we do together. We do this by stating arguments to each other with the aim of reaching a shared conclusion. All of this makes it very plausible that assessment of reasoning is tightly connected with assessment of the corresponding argument.

Secondly, Link fits well with Pamela Hieronymi's (2005, 2013) attractive suggestion that reasoning is directed at a question. Reasoning is often explicitly aimed as answering a question—you might reason about whether it will be sunny, or who committed the crime, or whether evidentialism is true. And even when reasoning is not so explicitly aimed, we can see a conclusion to a piece of reasoning as the reasoner's answer to a question. Since reasoning can be characterized in this way, it is natural to suppose that good reasoning is reasoning which corresponds to good grounds for the answer to the question it arrives at—that is, a good argument for its conclusion.

Thirdly, Link fits well with the plausible idea that beliefs are correct only if their contents are true.[20] Since reasoning is a way of forming new beliefs, it is natural to think that there will be a close connection between correct belief and correct, or good, reasoning. Link offers a plausible connection of this kind.[21]

Finally, Link fits well with a more general claim about good reasoning. Consider practical reasoning—reasoning to intention. Link itself does not apply to practical reasoning: reasoning from belief in p to an intention to φ is not good only if p supports the claim that you will φ. However, practical reasoning can be assessed in a parallel way. For practical reasoning is also expressible: we express reasoning from belief in p to an intention to φ by saying 'p, so, I shall φ'. It is plausible that our assessment of such reasoning *as* reasoning is tightly connected to our assessment of what is thereby expressed— that is, roughly, to whether p supports φ-ing. In general then, it is plausible that reasoning can be assessed, at least in part, by looking to its expression. Link is an instance of this general point.

This discussion does not conclusively establish Link but I take it to bring out its considerable plausibility. Since Link clearly supports (2'), we should therefore accept (2').

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[20] See Wedgwood (2002), among many others. Note also that this does not beg the question against the pragmatist. The pragmatist claim concerns *reasons* for belief. It is a substantive question how reasons for belief connect to correctness in belief.

[21] For more on connections between correct belief and correct reasoning, see McHugh and Way (forthcoming a, b).

V. CONCLUSION

The argument from reasoning promised to establish evidentialism on the basis of an uncontroversial psychological claim. This argument fails but in a way that suggests an alternative route to the same conclusion. Incentives for belief are not reasons to believe because they are not premises of good reasoning to belief. This argument lacks the 'knock-down' force promised by the argument from reasoning; it requires a normative premise, which the committed pragmatist may reject.[22] However, insofar as the dispute between evidentialists and pragmatists is a normative one, it should not ultimately be surprising that it must be decided on normative grounds. And as I have tried to bring out, the normative premise my argument requires is made plausible by reflections on the nature of reasoning which do not presuppose evidentialism. So this argument should at least be able to move the uncommitted. More generally, I hope that the discussion here has highlighted the importance of the connection between reasons and good reasoning—a connection, I have argued, that those who accept the more familiar connection between reasons and our capacities to reason are committed to. I believe that this connection has an important role to play in several other debates about reasons.[23] But exploring these implications is a task for another time.[24]

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[22] Although, to repeat, they need not. The normative premise (2′) does not by itself imply evidentialism.

[23] Cf. McHugh and Way (forthcoming a), Setiya (2014), and Way (forthcoming).

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