

Styles of reasoning are descriptive tools to accommodate salient features of scientific practice; in particular, they provide conceptual devices to represent continuity despite significant theoretical and conceptual changes throughout the history of the sciences (Crombie [1994], Hacking [2002] and [2012]). But can they also provide normative standards for the evaluation of scientific endeavors? In this paper, I argue that they can. After providing a characterization of styles of scientific reasoning, I argue that a crucial role within such styles is played by evidence and how it is gathered, employed, and assessed. Despite the variety of conceptions of evidence available, there is a crucial core that remains constant, in terms of ruling out possibilities that would undermine the hypothesis or the phenomena under consideration, and this provides support for the normative traits that styles of reasoning exhibit.