State-Given Reasons: Prevalent, if not Ubiquitous*

Mark Schroeder

Abstract: In their contributions to this symposium, Graham Hubbs, Nishi Shah and Matthew Silverstein, and Pamela Hieronymi each take issue with my argument against the orthodox 'object-given'/'state-given' theory. In addition to contesting my examples, each alleges that I've failed to appreciate the resources of what I've called 'two-stage' theories. In this note I argue that there is much to be learned from each of their arguments, but that once we take these lessons on board, the conclusion of my original argument still stands: the 'object-given'/'state-given' theory is too restrictive to give us an adequate picture of which considerations bear on the rationality of intention, belief, and other attitudes.

I A Contemporary Dogma

A Easy Conclusions About Rationality

One of the great dogmas of twenty-first century moral philosophy is the 'object-given'/'state-given' theory. According to this theory, the difference between the 'right' kind of reasons that support the distinctive rationality of belief, intention, or other attitudes, and the 'wrong' kind of reasons that do not, is that the former "bear on the *objects*" of these attitudes, whereas the latter merely "bear on the advisability" of being in the *state* of having the attitude in question.[1] This theory's status as dogma enables a number of what I've called 'high-handed' arguments in both epistemology and moral philosophy. For example, it allows us to quickly draw the conclusion that a desire-based theory of reasons is committed to the consequence that desires themselves cannot be irrational, or the conclusion that stakes-related considerations cannot affect the rationality of belief.[2] My – unorthodox, I'll readily admit – view is that these conclusions are not only premature, but incorrect. And so in "The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons" I advanced a general argument against the object-given/state-given theory.[3]

Graham Hubbs', Nishi Shah and Matthew Silverstein's, and Pamela Hieronymi's challenges to this argument have given me a lot to think about. I believe that there is much that we can learn from each of these discussions, both

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[1] See, in particular, Derek Parfit, "Rationality and Reasons," in *Exploring Practical Philosophy*, ed. Dan Egonsson, Jonas Josefsson, Björn Petersson, and Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 17–39, and Christian Piller, "Normative Practical Reasoning," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 25, suppl. (2001): 195–216.

[2] Compare my *Slaves of the Passions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), chapter 10, and "Stakes, Withholding, and Pragmatic Encroachment on Knowledge," *Philosophical Studies* 160 (2012): 265-285.

[3] "The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons," *Ethics* 122 (2012): 457-488.

about what is wrong with some of the steps of the argument in my original article, and about what is nevertheless right about its conclusion.

B Ground Clearing

I'll begin, however, by clearing some ground. According to Shah and Silverstein, the problem with my argument is that I fail to appreciate the distinction between two kinds of reasoning. This is a little bit puzzling to me, because I don't use the word 'reasoning' anywhere in my central argument in that paper. Since I don't make any claims about reasoning, I'm not sure how I could be guilty of conflating two kinds of reasoning. The things that I do talk about in my argument are what is a reason for what, and what is rational or irrational. So if the two-stage theory makes a difference for my argument, it must be because of its consequences for claims like these.

Similarly, one of Hubbs' central contentions is that my paper suffers from unclarity about what it is for a reason to "bear on" an intention. But again, I don't see how this could be so. If anything, it is the object-given/state-given theory that is my target which suffers from an unclarity about what it is for a reason to "bear on" the *object* of one of the attitudes. After all, it is that theory which claims that this is the key to the distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' kinds of reason. I specifically tried to avoid this complication in my paper by stipulating that for purposes of my argument, I would understand the object-given/state-given theory as an attempt to formulate a generalization which predicted the following two principles as special cases:

BELIEVE OBJECT	R is a right-kind reason bearing on believing *p* just in case R is evidence for or against *p*.
INTEND OBJECT	R is a right-kind reason bearing on intending to do A just in case R is a reason bearing on whether to do A.

In addition to this stipulation, all that my argument needs is the assumption that both reasons for and reasons against believing *p* fall under the scope of the theory, and similarly, that both reasons for and reasons against intending to do A fall under the scope of the theory.

Since neither Hubbs nor Shah and Silverstein take issue in their replies with my formulation of the commitments of the object-given/state-given theory, it seems safe to assume that at least as far as they are concerned, it is not at issue whether I have fairly characterized my target.[4] In contrast, Hieronymi does explicitly take issue with this. When I wrote 'Ubiquity', I assumed that even though by any ordinary characterization of the object-given/state-

[4] This is complicated slightly by the fact that at one point Shah and Silverstein appear to endorse my conclusion that there are right-kind reasons against belief that are neither evidence for *p* nor evidence for ~*p*. They say, "The fact that the evidence with respect to *p* is evenly balanced is indeed a reason to forbear forming a belief with respect to *p*, but this reason operates exclusively at the level of stage-two deliberation. It is a purely doxastic or theoretical reason" (MS 19). Since the fact that the evidence is balanced does not, on the face of it, appear to be either evidence for *p* or evidence for ~*p*, this passage gives up the game, as I've explicitly understood it.

given theory, she does not accept it, Hieronymi was nevertheless committed to both BELIEVE OBJECT and INTEND OBJECT. This is why I took her view to fall under the scope of my argument. I assumed this because according to Hieronymi, a reason is a consideration that bears on a question.[5] For belief, the question is whether *p*, and for intention, the question is what to do. Since the only answers to the question whether *p* are that *p* and that ~*p*,[6] I took it that a reason can bear on this question only by supporting one of the answers to that question, *p* or ~*p*, and this led me to think that Hieronymi was committed to BELIEVE OBJECT.

Similarly, since the only answers to the question whether to do A are to do it and not to do it,[7] I took it that a reason can bear on this question only by supporting one of its answers, to do A or not to do it. And this led me to think that Hieronymi was committed to INTEND OBJECT. Since I characterized my opponent as accepting INTEND OBJECT, I took her to be my opponent. However, Hieronymi now clarifies that she does not accept INTEND OBJECT (though she does not explain what is wrong with the foregoing reasoning). So it turns out that she is not a target of my main argument after all. But Hieronymi does say what she thinks about a different example in my paper – one which was intended to show that even a weaker principle is false:

INTEND OKAY R is a right-kind reason to intend to do A just in case R is a reason to do A.

Hieronymi's response to my counterexample to this principle is very similar in structure to both Hubbs' and Shah and Silverstein's responses to my counterexamples to INTEND OBJECT.

C The Crux of the Argument

The crux of my main argument against INTEND OBJECT and BELIEVE OBJECT is simple: grant, at least for the sake of argument, that right-kind reasons *to* intend or believe are all object-given. But now I wonder: why should right-kind reasons *against* intending or believing all be object-given? For suppose that the right-kind reasons to believe *p* are all and only the evidence for *p*. Then the only relevant evidence left over to be right-kind reason against believing *p* will be evidence for ~*p*. But by parity of reasoning, these are all right-kind reasons to believe ~*p*. And so from the object-given/state-given theory, we can derive the conclusion that there are no right-kind reasons against believing *p* that are not reasons to believe ~*p*.

But this is strange! Surely something could count against believing *p* that did not count in favor of believing ~*p*. After all, even when the reasons to believe *p* are better than the reasons to believe ~*p*, it can still fail to be rational to believe *p*. Indeed, when the reasons to believe *p* are only slightly better than the reasons to believe ~*p*, it is in general

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[5] See especially Pamela Hieronymi, "The Wrong Kind of Reason," *The Journal of Philosophy* 102 (2005): 437-457, in addition to "The Use of Reasons in Thought," this issue.

[6] For this orthodox view of questions, see C. Hamblin, "Questions," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 36 (1958): 159-168.

[7] On such 'deliberative questions', see Fabrizio Cariani, "Ought and Resolution Semantics," forthcoming in *Noûs*, but also Justin Snedegar, *Contrastive Reasons*, PhD dissertation, University of Southern California (2013), and Stephen Finlay and Justin Snedegar, "One Ought Too Many," forthcoming in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*.

irrational to believe *p*. So something seems to be counting against believing *p* that does not itself count in favor of believing ~*p*. And it is no surprise how this could be, because after all, believing *p* and believing ~*p* are not the only options. In addition to having either belief, you could also remain agnostic as to *p*. Since *something* counts against the rationality of your believing *p* in this case without thereby counting in favor of the rationality of your believing ~*p*, it seems hard to deny that there are right-kind reasons against believing *p* that are not reasons to believe ~*p*.

The same considerations go for intention. Suppose that the right-kind reasons for an agent to intend to A are all and only her reasons to A. Then the only reasons for or against A that are left over will be the reasons against A. But by parity of reasoning, these are all right-kind reasons to intend not to A. And so from the object-given/state-given theory, we can derive the conclusion that there are no right-kind reasons against intending to A that are not reasons to intend not to A. But again, this is strange. For surely something could count against intending to A without counting in favor of intending not to A. After all, there is a third option – remaining undecided. And not only is this option sometimes rational, sometimes it is in fact uniquely rational. So whatever makes remaining undecided rational would seem to count against the intention to A without counting in favor of the intention not to A.

My basic view is that once we distinguish clearly between intending not to A and not intending to A, and similarly between believing ~*p* and not believing *p*, it should simply be immediately deeply puzzling why anyone would ever think that the object-given/state-given theory might be true of reasons *against* belief and intention, as well as reasons in favor. My own, perhaps not particularly charitable, diagnosis is simply that people were persuaded that right-kind reasons *to* intend and *to* believe need to be object-given, and generalized inappropriately. Once this dogma was entrenched near the center of the web of belief, however, philosophers have been willing to engage in all kinds of contortions in order to preserve it. So in 'The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons' I discussed a range of possible examples, and appealed to common earmarks of right-kind reasons in order to help make the case that if we considered these cases from a neutral, unbiased, perspective, we would surely classify them as belonging to the 'right' kind.

Hieronymi does not like my use of these earmarks. She thinks that though we may start with some earmarks, once we have a theory, we can see why some things which bear the earmarks of ducks (which 'quack like ducks') are not really ducks, after all. But this lets us off too easy. Hieronymi is right in the sense that once we understand the distinction between whales and fish, we know why whales should not be classified as big fish, just because they have fins and swim in the ocean. But there are theories and theories. If my account of fish left out tuna, that would indeed be a mark against that theory. And there is no other way of explaining what would be so bad about leaving tuna out of a theory of fish, than to document the many ways in which it looks like they share the distinctive features that make us interested in classifying salmon, trout, lampreys, skates, sharks, and cichlids together. It would hardly do for me to defend my theory of fish from which it follows that tuna do not count, by noting that my theory explains why they do not count. My appeal to 'earmarks' is simply an invitation for you to consider my examples in this light. Do they seem like cases of hunting decoys painted to look like ducks? Or are they like tuna among fish? I leave it to the impartial reader, rather than Hieronymi's theory, to decide.

II The Examples

A Grad School Decisions

Neither Hubbs nor Shah and Silverstein address the general structural question of why there should not be any reasons against belief or intention that are not reasons to have the contrary belief or intention. Instead, they focus on rebutting my examples. My paper contains four main examples of putative state-given right-kind reasons: the *driving to LA* and *grad school decision* cases of reasons against intention, the *cancer diagnosis* case of a reason against belief, and a variation on the *driving to LA* case involving a right-kind reason in *favor* of intention. Of these four examples, both Hubbs and Shah and Silverstein focus on the first and third examples, while Hieronymi focuses on the fourth. This is ironic, because their arguments have convinced me that I was wrong about the example that they do not discuss: *grad school decision*.

In the case of the *grad school decision*, I have been admitted to graduate school and must decide between Old School Eastern and Western Powerhouse. All of the relevant information has come in, but there are still a few weeks until the deadline, and at the moment I am on the telephone with my mother-in-law, the smoke detector is going off, and my wife is asking me to take out the garbage. In my original article, I alleged that this was a case of a right-kind, state-given reason against intention. My critics have convinced me, however, that this was wrong, and that I had fallen into the fallacy of everything looking like a nail, now that I had a hammer. It is far more plausible, I now think, that the reason that it is rational for me to be undecided, in this case, about where to go to graduate school, is simply that there are strong reasons for me not to deliberate now about that question. And this, of course, is the diagnosis of the Shah and Silverstein version of the two-stage theory.[8]

Moreover, I think that we can explain at least an important part of why this diagnosis is so plausible, in this case, and why my earlier treatment of the case is so implausible. For distinguish two versions of the case – one in which I have not yet made up my mind as to where to go to graduate school (as in the original case), and one in which I have already made up my mind, and I've decided to go to Old School Eastern, allured in disproportion to my reasons by the name of the university and the fact that many famous philosophers trained there between thirty and forty years ago. In each case, the fact that the smoke alarm is going off is a reason for me not to deliberate. In the former case, not deliberating entrenches the status quo of my being undecided about where to go, and hence serves to support the current rationality of my being undecided. But in the latter case, not deliberating entrenches the status quo of my intending to go to Old School Eastern, and hence serves to support the current rationality of my intending to go there. It may or may not be, in this case, that intending to go to Old School Eastern is the right choice for me (though by description of the case, I'm inclined to think that it's not), or that it is rational or rationally required for me to eventually reconsider it, but certainly given that my smoke alarm is going off and I am on the phone with my mother-in-law, it is rational at least for the interim to stick with this intention.

[8] Shah and Silverstein spend a whole section of their article attributing to me and arguing against the 'implicit' commitment that reasons will count against intention because they count against deliberations. Like Shah and Silverstein, I reject this principle (in fact, one of my examples from the paper is a counterexample), which is probably the best explanation of why I don't endorse it explicitly.

These observations support the Shah and Silverstein 'two stage' interpretation of this case, I believe, because they show that the only reason that my smoke alarm supports being undecided is that it is the status quo, and a failure to deliberate will always leave me with the status quo. Consequently, when we change the status quo, we change what receives apparent support from a reason not to deliberate. I conclude that I was wrong in my original article, and that the two-stage diagnosis of such cases really is correct, after all.

B Driving to LA

However, Hubbs and Shah and Silverstein allege not only that they have the right diagnosis of my grad school decision case, but that they have the right diagnosis of my driving to LA case. And this, I think, is a mistake – one that I perhaps encouraged by being insufficiently attentive to important differences between the cases in my original article. To see why not, we need only reflect for a moment on what was so convincing about the claim that in the grad school decision case, the reason is really a reason against deliberating. This was because, as I've just argued, what this reason really does is to entrench the status quo. If the status quo is that I am undecided about where to go, then that is entrenched, but if the status quo is that I've formed an intention to go to Old School Eastern, then that is also entrenched, at least so long as I am busy with other things.

Not so, I think, with my reason not to intend not to drive to LA tomorrow. Let us again consider two versions of the case. In each version, let us suppose that nothing much hangs on whether I decide now or later – for example, I don't need to coordinate yet with my wife about who gets the car. And in each version, given my uncertainty about whether my brother will be in LA, it doesn't make sense to go – but were I to know that he would be there, then it would make most sense for me to go. But in the first case, imagine that I have not yet decided whether to go into LA tomorrow. This is the case suggested by my original stipulation that 'I am trying to decide whether to drive into LA tomorrow' (466). But in the second case, imagine instead that earlier this afternoon, when I believed that I wouldn't find out today whether my brother will be in LA or not, I formed an intention not to drive to LA. But now I learn that my brother will call later and let me know for certain whether he will be there.

Whereas in the grad school decision case, I think that it is clear that the smoke alarm entrenches the status quo, whatever it is, my view is that in this case the fact that I will soon be in possession of decisive information supports being currently undecided – no matter what the status quo. After all, on one version of the case, I might be as confident as 90% that my brother will in fact be in LA tomorrow – but the 10% chance of not seeing him simply does not make it worth the drive. On that version of the case, even though my decision not to go was rational on the assumption that I would not get any new information, now that I know that I will soon get decisive information, I believe that there is a 90% chance that I will soon be rationally required to change my mind. And there is something peculiar, to say the

least, in having an outright intention to do something that one predicts that there is a 90% chance that one will later be rationally compelled to decide not to do.[9]

There are several distinct ways of drawing out what is irrational about my continuing to intend to stay home tomorrow, in this case.[10] But none of them turn on any reasons not to deliberate right now – indeed, none of them turn, as Hubbs suggests, on 'the good of waiting to deliberate until all of the relevant information is in' (MS 9). In the vast majority of cases, we must deliberate before all of the relevant information has come in, and it would be easy to construct versions of the driving to LA case in which I have nothing better to do while waiting for my brother's call than to deliberate about whether to go. What counts against intending now to stay home when I will soon have decisive information is simply whatever counts against intending to do what one thinks there is a significant possibility – or even a significant probability – that one will be rationally required to change one's mind about before the time comes to act. Whatever this is, it is something distinctive about the rational character of intention, not a problem with deliberating about what to intend.

Similarly, I also see no reason to call into question my diagnosis of the fourth kind of case that I consider – a variant of the future information case in which the fact that I need to coordinate with my wife who will have the car is a right-kind reason in favor of intending now, but which does not favor either intention over the other, but only over the alternative of being undecided. In this case, likewise, what is supported is having an intention – not deliberating. For if I'm currently undecided, deliberation is supported because that allows forming an intention, but if I've already formed an intention, then the fact that my wife and I need to coordinate does not support deliberating. On the contrary, in such cases I should *not* deliberate. And though it is more controversial, I think that similar remarks go for my case about belief, as well. So I conclude that the two-stage diagnosis cannot be correct about each of my other cases.

C Wrong-Kind Reasons Against Intention and Belief

What we've just seen is that once we have a clear diagnosis of why Shah and Silverstein's two-stage theory is right about the *grad school decision* case, we can see why it is *wrong* about each of my other cases. So I conclude that the two-stage theory does not help us to get around the structural problem for the object-given/state-given theory. Indeed, in my original paper I explicitly considered whether the two-stage theory would help, and again I think that the criticisms of my paper provide us with an opportunity to refine and strengthen these arguments.

I have no objections to the idea that deliberation can be divided into two stages – indeed, in order to accept the two-stage diagnosis of the *grad school decision* case, as I've now argued we should, we need to accept a version of this

[9] Note that although Hieronymi does not comment specifically on this case, she does agree with what is problematic about intending to do what you think it is likely that you will soon have conclusive reason to decide not to do (MS 16), and so I take it that she would agree with my diagnosis of this case. Presumably, this is why she denies INTEND OBJECT and chooses to focus on my counterexample to the weaker principle, INTEND OKAY.

[10] For example, we could focus on the fact that I intend to do something that I am very confident that I will not do, or on the fact that this case involves a violation of a reflection-like norm on intention.

view. My objections are intended, therefore, specifically as objections to whether the two-stage theory can help to defend the object-given/state-given theory. The two-stage strategy is based on the hope that the right-kind/wrong-kind distinction only applies at the *second* stage, and that all of my examples are reasons at the *first* stage. I offered two objections to this hope: first, that it is not so easy to divide the reasons into these two stages, and second, that there is still a right-kind/wrong-kind distinction at the first stage.

My main example of a wrong-kind reason against intention is that of being offered $1000 not to form an intention about whether to wear clothes to my talk tomorrow in the Oxford Moral Philosophy Colloquium. I claimed that this contrasts with the *driving to LA* case in that it is difficult to remain undecided for this reason. But Hubbs and Shah and Silverstein allege that what makes this so difficult is merely that I loaded the case by imagining a case in which it is too obvious what to do.[11]

I take this point, and I think that we can make it sharper by posing it as a dilemma: the challenge to me is based on the thought that every case is going to be one in which it is very obvious what to do, or a case in which it is not very obvious what to do. If it is a case in which it is very obvious what to do, then it will be difficult for me to stay undecided for the monetary offer, but only because the choice is so obvious, but if it is a case in which it is not so obvious what to do, then it will be easy for me to stay undecided and get the money, simply by paying attention to other matters.

In a sense, I think all of this is right, and that these considerations do complicate the transparency of my example. That is because if it is unobvious what to do, then it is easy to preserve your status quo state of decision as to what to do about it simply by thinking about other things. This, after all, is what happens in the *grad school decision* case. But let's be more careful: why should the obviousness of the decision play this role? After all, in the *driving to LA* case, it can be as obvious as you like that the thing for me to do, given my current information, is to stay home – but when I learn that my brother will soon tell me whether he will be in LA, that still makes it easy and rational to remain or become undecided as to whether to go. So the fact that the obviousness of the decision makes a difference, I think, again shows that what is going on in these cases is very different from what is going on in the *driving to LA* case.

Moreover, I don't think that any complicating considerations apply to my third contrasting case of a 'wrong'-kind reason – which neither Hubbs nor Shah and Silverstein consider. In that case, a variation on the *driving to LA* case, I contrast the fact that my wife and I need to coordinate over who gets the car with the fact that I've been offered money to make up my mind now rather than later. This case, I believe and argued in my original paper, should be convincing for all of the same reasons that the original toxin puzzle case is convincing, and Hieronymi also endorses the contrast between these cases in her reply (MS 16-17). But since both Hubbs and Shah and Silverstein ignored these examples, it is no wonder that they did not find my second objection to their use of the two-stage theory in any way persuasive.

[11] This objection follows a point made by Justin D'Arms and Dan Jacobson in a PEA Soup discussion of my article: http://peasoup.typepad.com/peasoup/2012/06/i.html.

III Separating the Stages

A Asymmetric Cases

My other original objection to using a two-stage view to defend the object-given/state-given theory is not taken seriously by Shah and Silverstein, and Hubbs suggests that it 'can be handled quickly' (MS 11). This objection is that it is difficult to disentangle two stages at which we evaluate the rationality of an intention. In my original article I placed more emphasis on my other objection, because I thought that it would be easier to land in a concise treatment. But in fact I think that the problem of disentangling the two stages (in a way that will locate all non-object-given reasons against belief in the first stage) is highly non-trivial. Indeed, for a very simple reason I think it cannot possibly be done. This is because reasons not to believe or intend are not all symmetric – they don't count equally against either belief or intention. If all putative reasons not to intend really counted against deliberation, or against 'making up one's mind', then we should expect that they count equally against making up one's mind in either direction. But although I think this is what we observe in cases like my grad school decision, which I've just argued really are best treated by the two-stage theory, it is far from generally true of the best cases of reasons against belief or intention.

I'll start with a controversial case, in order to illustrate. In a familiar example, you are driving home from work on Friday, with the idea of stopping by the bank to deposit your check. Your mortgage payment is due on Sunday, and if it doesn't clear, then your house will be foreclosed on. So it's very important that your check is successfully deposited before then. But there are very long lines, and you have dinner guests arriving at your home before too long, and you recall from somewhere that the bank is open on Saturday mornings. Several theorists have claimed that given the high stakes for you, you need more evidence that the bank will be open on Saturday in order to know than would someone for whom the stakes are lower.[12] I've argued that this is because the stakes are an epistemic reason against believing that the bank will be open on Saturday, raising the bar on how much reason *to* believe you must have, in order for it to be epistemically rational.[13] But in cases like this one, though the proposition that the bank *will* be open is high stakes for you, the proposition that it will *not* be open is not similarly high stakes. So while the stakes are a strong reason against believing that the bank will be open, they are not a similarly strong reason against believing that the bank will not be open.[14]

What I take to be the lesson from such cases is that reasons against belief like these cannot be understood as reasons in a 'first stage' of deliberation, no matter how we finesse our definition of that first stage. For no matter whether we understand the first stage as being about whether to deliberate (as Shah and Silverstein claim), or about whether to form a belief (as Hubbs claims), either way we are going to treat considerations which count against belief symmetrically – they will count against having one's mind made up, or against making it up. But phenomena like

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[12] Compare, in particular, John Hawthorne, *Knowledge and Lotteries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) Jason Stanley, *Knowledge and Practical Interests* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), and Jeremy Fantl and Matthew McGrath, *Knowledge in an Uncertain World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[13] Schroeder "Stakes, Withholding, and Pragmatic Encroachment on Knowledge," especially section 3.2.

[14] *Ibid.*

stakes-related reasons against belief are *asymmetric*. They are reasons that count against one belief, but not against the other.

Now, if the only cases of such asymmetric reasons are such highly controversial cases as stakes-related reasons against belief, then it would be easy to dismiss this argument. But in fact, many of the best examples of right-kind state-given reasons against intention are asymmetric as well. For example, in *driving to LA*, once we control for the fact that in the absence of further information, it is most rational for me to stay home tomorrow, the fact that further information is forthcoming looks like a much better reason against intending to stay home, than it does like a reason against intending to drive to LA.

B Conclusion

My argument against the object-given/state-given theory advances what I take to be counterexamples to that theory. Here I've agreed with my critics that I was wrong about one of those counterexamples, but argued that the very points which show this most conclusively also show that I am right about the others. So I conclude that state-given reasons against intention are, if not exactly as ubiquitous as I claimed, still prevalent.

But I think the main force of the negative point I was trying to make in 'The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons' does not turn on the success of any particular example. It turns on the fact that in addition to particular intentions and particular beliefs, there is always the possibility of being undecided. According to two-stage theories, this just shows that there is a separate question of whether to deliberate, or whether to decide, and that for a belief or intention to be rational, it must both be rational to deliberate/decide, and rational for that deliberation/decision to lead to a certain result.

I've tried to point to some reasons why I think this picture is forced. In addition to leaving insufficient room for considerations which count against one intention or belief without counting against the other, it paints a strange picture on which the only natural conclusions of deliberation whether *p* or whether to do A are a belief about whether *p* or an intention about whether to do A, and if one of those does not result, then the deliberation must have been interrupted somehow by deliberation about some other but related issue. In contrast, aporeia is I think a perfectly ordinary conclusion of deliberation – we would be very strange beings indeed, if, once having begun to wonder about the ageless questions of philosophy, we needed to constantly change the topic and deliberate about whether to deliberate, in order to keep ourselves from making up our minds one way or the other. Our agnosticism is rational not because it is a mistake to deliberate about these questions, but because they are hard. If right-kind reasons are to play any important role in helping us to understand the distinctive rationality of belief, intention, and other attitudes, we need them to be able to do more than to support particular beliefs or intentions.