

Reasoning in Stages*

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Mark Schroeder has recently presented apparent counterexamples to the standard account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons. We argue that these examples appear to refute the standard account only because they blur the distinction between two kinds of reasoning: reasoning about whether to intend or believe that p and reasoning about whether to take up the question of whether to intend or believe that p .

In a recent *Ethics* article, Mark Schroeder attempts to refute the standard account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons.¹ This account understands that distinction in terms of a different distinction, namely, the distinction between object-given and state-given reasons. According to the standard account, for instance, evidence that God exists is the *right* kind of reason for believing that God exists because it bears on the *object* of that belief, namely, the proposition that God exists, whereas the fact that believing that God exists will make one happy is the *wrong* kind of reason because it bears merely on the desirability of being in the state of believing that God exists. Since we can assess every attitude along the two dimensions of object and state, the standard account is supposed to explain the right and the wrong kinds of reasons for all attitudes.

Schroeder's strategy for refuting this account is straightforward: he presents as counterexamples cases in which we have the right kind of reason but that reason is not object given. If Schroeder correctly describes these cases and the reasons involved therein, then the object-given/state-given account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons must be incorrect. We argue, however, that his

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1. Mark Schroeder, "The Ubiquity of State-Given Reasons," *Ethics* 122 (2012): 457–88; hereafter cited parenthetically.

descriptions are ambiguous. When the cases are clearly and correctly described, they do not constitute genuine counterexamples to the standard account.

I

The cases Schroeder discusses all involve reasons *not* to have—or to *forbear* having—some attitude. Here is one of the cases involving a reason to forbear forming an *intention*.

Suppose that I am trying to decide whether to drive to Los Angeles tomorrow morning. . . . One potential benefit . . . is that I might get to see my brother. If he is in LA, then that would definitely make it worthwhile to make the trip, but if he is not in LA, then the scenery will not be worth the traffic. Currently I think he is likely enough not to be there. . . . But fortunately, I'm expecting my brother to call later this afternoon to let me know whether he will be in LA or not. I'm expecting him to tell me that he won't, of course, but that's just my estimate—I also expect to be better informed after he calls, and it is quite possible that he will tell me that he will be there. And if he is there, that would make the trip worthwhile. In a situation like this one, it makes perfect sense for me to wait to decide whether to drive to LA tomorrow. (466–67)

Schroeder proposes, plausibly enough, that the fact that his brother will call later this afternoon to let him know whether he will be in LA is a reason for Schroeder to refrain from forming an intention about whether to drive to LA tomorrow. He makes two further observations about this case. First, he notes that his reason here is state given rather than object given. The fact that his brother will call later does not bear at all on the question of whether to drive to LA tomorrow, and so it does not bear on the object of the intention to drive. Nor does it bear on the object of the intention not to drive. Second, Schroeder contends that his reason to forbear forming an intention about whether to drive to LA has all the earmarks of the right kind of reason. For instance, it seems to be the sort of reason on the basis of which he can decide whether to form an intention: he can decide not to form an intention on the grounds that pertinent information is forthcoming. This reason also seems to bear on the rationality of forming an intention, another earmark of reasons of the right kind. We have what appears to be, then, a straightforward counterexample to the standard account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons.

We believe, however, that in discussing this and similar cases Schroeder conflates two different (although importantly related) kinds of reasoning: reasoning about whether to intend that *p* and reasoning about

whether to take up the question of whether to intend that p . We therefore endorse what Schroeder calls “the two-stage theory” (478). According to such a theory, reasoning about whether to form an intention with respect to p (which we call *stage 1 reasoning* or *stage 1 deliberation*) is different from reasoning about whether to intend that p (which we call *stage 2 reasoning* or *stage 2 deliberation*).² Put in terms of correctness, the question of whether it would be correct to form an intention with respect to p is different from the question of whether the intention that p is the correct intention to form. Moreover, we can engage in either stage of reasoning without engaging in the other. We often find ourselves in the midst of stage 2 deliberation about whether to intend that p without ever having decided or intended to engage in practical deliberation with respect to p . We can, in other words, engage in stage 2 deliberation without first engaging in stage 1. We can also engage in stage 1 deliberation without engaging in stage 2: we can deliberate about whether to form an intention with respect to p without deliberating about whether to intend that p . And thus we might decide on the basis of stage 1 deliberation to refrain from forming an intention with respect to p without ever considering the reasons for or against intending that p —reasons that would only be relevant in stage 2 deliberation.

These two stages of reasoning can be difficult to discern, especially in cases in which both stages look like instances of practical reasoning. If, however, we turn to a case involving reasons not to form (or to forbear forming) a belief, the differences become apparent. Here is Schroeder’s example of such a case.

Suppose that several times in the past my doctor has found spots on my skin that are suspicious for cancer, but that each time biopsy has revealed them to be benign. Once again, my doctor finds a suspicious spot on my skin and takes a tissue sample to send to the lab. Based on inductive evidence, the tissue is likely to be benign, but it makes sense to wait on the test results before concluding that it is really benign. The fact that the lab is soon going to report its results isn’t evidence that my skin spot is benign, and it isn’t evidence that it is not benign, but it is a reason to not yet make up my mind as to whether it is benign. (471)

In this case, the two stages of reasoning are easier to distinguish since they involve different kinds of reasoning. Deliberation about whether to believe that the spot is benign is *doxastic* deliberation. Deliberation about whether to engage in doxastic deliberation is not itself doxastic deliberation.

2. When we say that stage 2 deliberation is *about* whether to intend that p , we mean only that it is deliberation aimed at arriving at an intention with respect to p . We do not mean to imply that such deliberation involves explicitly asking oneself whether to intend that p . The only explicit question may be, what to do?

ation; it is *practical* deliberation—deliberation about what to do. One can take up the practical stage 1 question of whether to engage in doxastic deliberation without taking up the doxastic stage 2 question and thus without engaging in doxastic deliberation.³

If we accept that these are two distinct stages of reasoning, then Schroeder's conclusions about his reasons in these cases become ambiguous. In particular, it becomes unclear on which stage of deliberation the reasons Schroeder identifies are supposed to bear. Consider the example involving intention. Does the fact that pertinent information is forthcoming bear on his stage 1 deliberation about whether to form an intention with respect to driving to LA tomorrow? Or does this fact bear instead on his stage 2 deliberation about whether to intend to drive to LA tomorrow? Put another way, does the fact that pertinent information is forthcoming bear on the correctness of his engaging in practical reasoning and thereby forming some intention or other with respect to driving to LA tomorrow, or does it bear instead on the correctness of the intention to drive to LA tomorrow? We think it is clear that the reason Schroeder identifies bears only on the former—his stage 1 deliberation. The fact that pertinent information is forthcoming is indeed a reason to refrain from forming an intention with respect to driving to LA tomorrow. This fact does not bear at all, however, on the question of whether to drive to LA tomorrow. That is, it does not bear at all on the correctness or incorrectness of intending to drive to LA tomorrow. And so Schroeder has not identified a state-given reason that is also a reason of the right kind for or against an intention. The reason in question does not bear on the intention itself at all. The same goes for the case involving belief. The fact that pertinent information is forthcoming is certainly a reason for Schroeder to forbear engaging in doxastic deliberation and, thereby, forming a belief about whether his spot is benign. It is not, however, a reason that bears on the correctness or incorrectness of the belief that the spot is benign. And so Schroeder has not identified a state-given reason that is also a reason of the right kind for or against a belief. The standard account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons for and against such attitudes therefore seems unthreatened.

II

Unfortunately, matters are not that simple. Schroeder acknowledges the two-stage theory and provides two arguments that are supposed to show that it cannot do the work we have assigned to it. Before we address these

3. As before, when we say that stage 2 deliberation is *about* whether to believe that *p*, we mean only that it is deliberation aimed at arriving at a belief with respect to *p*. We do not mean to imply that such deliberation involves explicitly asking oneself whether to believe that *p*. The only explicit question may be, whether *p*?

arguments, though, we want to consider an argument Schroeder does not make—at least explicitly. At times Schroeder suggests that the reasons he has identified bear on his stage 2 deliberations (and thus on the correctness or incorrectness of his intentions and beliefs) *because* they bear on his stage 1 deliberations. “The fact that my brother will call me later . . . doesn’t bear on the object of the intention to drive to LA tomorrow or on the object of the intention to not drive to LA tomorrow. But . . . *it bears on these intentions nonetheless, because being aware of it can make it rational—even uniquely rational—to have neither one*” (468; emphasis added). Here, the idea seems to be that a consideration can bear on the correctness of a particular intention with respect to p , by bearing on the correctness of forming any intention at all with respect to p . And so, because it would be incorrect or irrational for Schroeder to engage in practical deliberation and thereby to form an intention with respect to driving to LA tomorrow, any particular intention with respect to driving to LA tomorrow he might now form would also be incorrect or irrational.

We reject this inference. The fact that pertinent information is forthcoming does indeed count against Schroeder’s forming an intention with respect to driving to LA tomorrow, but it does not thereby count against the intention to stay home.⁴ Consider again Schroeder’s example involving belief. Suppose that the process of forming a belief about whether the spot on his skin is benign will be time consuming and anxiety inducing. The fact that pertinent information is forthcoming may indeed, then, be a good reason for Schroeder to forbear forming such a belief. But it does not follow from this that believing that the spot is (or is likely to be) benign would be in any way irrational qua belief. To see why, suppose that the fictional Schroeder cannot help himself. Even though he knows that pertinent information is forthcoming, he engages in doxastic deliberation anyway and concludes—on the basis of the strong inductive evidence available to him—that the spot is benign. We agree with Schroeder that in this case his fictional counterpart is in some way irrational. We disagree, however, about the nature of his irrationality. It seems clear to us that the fictional Schroeder’s failings here are practical rather than doxastic. His doxastic deliberation is conducted flawlessly: he takes into consideration only facts that bear on the truth of the proposition that the spot on his skin is benign, and he accords them the appropriate weight. In short, his belief that the spot is benign is based on an accurate assessment of the evidence available to him. It is therefore a paradigm of rational belief. Of course, this does not mean that the fic-

4. Of course, if Schroeder has already formed the intention to drive to LA tomorrow, then the information that is forthcoming might make it rational for him to reconsider that intention. But here the reason is not the fact that further information is forthcoming but rather whatever facts are contained in that information.

tional Schroeder is immune from criticism. For he was impatient: he chose to settle the question before he should have. Crucially, though, impatience of this sort is a practical failing, not a doxastic one. His problem is not that he is bad at doxastic deliberation. Rather, his problem is that he is bad at deciding when to engage in doxastic deliberation. The fictional Schroeder is certainly irrational, then, but not *qua* believer.

This point generalizes. Considerations that bear on stage 1 deliberation about whether to engage in stage 2 deliberation do not *ipso facto* bear on stage 2 deliberation. And so the reasons Schroeder identifies are not reasons against particular intentions or beliefs. They do not count against these attitudes. They merely count against engaging in the kind of reasoning that issues in those attitudes. They are stage 1 rather than stage 2 reasons. And so Schroeder has not identified state-given reasons that are the right kind of reasons against beliefs or intentions.

III

Let us now turn to Schroeder's explicit arguments against the two-stage solution. We begin with the second of these arguments. Schroeder insists that even if the state-given reasons he has identified are stage 1 rather than stage 2 reasons, they still constitute counterexamples to the standard account of the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons. For, he maintains, these state-given reasons are clearly reasons of the right kind, and they can be contrasted with state-given stage 1 reasons of the wrong kind. If both the right and the wrong kinds of stage 1 reasons are state given rather than object given, then we cannot explain the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of stage 1 reasons in terms of the distinction between object-given and state-given reasons.

But does the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons apply to stage 1 reasoning? We have already seen Schroeder's examples of the right kind of stage 1 reasons: the fact that pertinent information is forthcoming is often a reason of the right kind to forbear forming an intention or belief. What would a reason of the wrong kind to forbear forming such an attitude look like? "Suppose that I am offered one thousand dollars to not make up my mind about whether to wear clothes or go naked to the talk I am giving tomorrow in the Oxford moral philosophy colloquium series until thirty minutes before I am scheduled to begin" (469).

According to Schroeder, the fact that he has been offered money has all the earmarks of a reason of the wrong kind. For instance, it does not seem to be the sort of consideration on the basis of which he could easily act. "Although I can imagine taking indirect strategies toward achieving this—by spending the time on the phone with my nudist friends, for example, and distracting myself from thinking about the look I expect to

appear on John Broome's face if I show up in the buff, it is not at all an easy thing to do, simply for the prospect of money—and not simply because the financial reward isn't large enough" (469).

Nor does the fact that he has been offered money seem to bear on the rationality of intending to wear clothes. "Similarly, though lacking an intention about whether to wear clothes to the talk would be an advantageous state of mind for me to be in, I still think that . . . the only rational state, *qua* intention, for me to be in, is to intend to wear clothes" (469). On the basis of these considerations, Schroeder concludes that the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons does apply to stage 1 reasoning and, thus, that the two-stage theory cannot save the standard account. For if both the right and the wrong kinds of stage 1 reasons are state-given reasons, then the object-given/state-given distinction cannot explain the right-kind/wrong-kind distinction, at least when it comes to stage 1 reasons.

We agree that the fact that Schroeder has been offered money to refrain from making up his mind does not bear on the question of whether the intention to wear clothes is correct. And it therefore looks like the wrong kind of reason with respect to stage 2 deliberation. But that does not distinguish this case from the earlier cases. As we argued above, the fact that pertinent information is forthcoming is also the wrong kind of reason with respect to stage 2 deliberation. If I have entered stage 2 deliberation—if, for instance, I am trying to decide whether to believe that *p*—then the only considerations that are relevant to my deliberation are considerations that count for or against the truth of *p*. The fact that more information is forthcoming is not such a consideration, and so it is the wrong kind of reason. Of course, it may be a reason to break off my stage 2 deliberation, but—as we argued above—that does not entail that it is a stage 2 reason. So, the fact that Schroeder's being offered money does not bear on the rationality of his intending to wear clothes does not distinguish this case from the earlier cases.

Yet what about Schroeder's claim that whereas we cannot easily forbear intending on the basis of the offered money, we can easily forbear intending on the basis of forthcoming evidence? If this were true, then it would suggest that the former is a reason of the wrong kind and the latter a reason of the right kind. It is not true, though. Schroeder's claim seems plausible only because his examples blur the differences between the two stages of reasoning. In the case involving the Oxford moral philosophy colloquium, it would indeed be difficult to forbear intending on the basis of the offered money. However, Schroeder misdiagnoses the source of this difficulty. He contends that the fact that it would be difficult to forbear on the basis of the offered money is explained by the fact that this is the wrong kind of reason. But there are better explanations of the difficulty. One obvious reason it might be difficult for the fictional

Schroeder to forbear intending is that it is too late for him to forbear: he already intends to wear clothes to the seminar. Presumably the fictional Schroeder has a standing intention to wear appropriate clothing to professional gatherings. And one cannot forbear intending when one already intends. One can, of course, revise one's intentions, but only on the basis of stage 2 deliberation. And we are looking here for stage 1 reasons of the wrong kind. Another reason it might be difficult to forbear intending is that the reasons in favor of wearing clothes so clearly and dramatically outweigh the reasons in favor of attending in the nude. The moment someone offers the fictional Schroeder money not to make up his mind about whether to wear clothes to his talk, the question of whether to wear clothes will pop into his head. And the considerations in favor of wearing clothes are so obviously overwhelming that he is likely to settle the question as soon as he entertains it. In other words, the mere offer of money to forbear intending is likely to trigger deliberation that will issue almost immediately in the intention to wear clothes. When the reasons are so clear and so lopsided, it is difficult to raise the question of *whether* to intend without raising (and then quickly settling) the question of *what* to intend.

Now imagine a case in which the reasons are less lopsided. Suppose that Schroeder is offered one thousand dollars not to make up his mind about whether to wear blue to the talk he is giving tomorrow until thirty minutes before he is scheduled to begin. Any obstacles that might have prevented the fictional Schroeder from forbearing on the basis of the offered money in the previous example seem to be absent here. It is not difficult to imagine Schroeder deciding to put off the question of what color to wear until thirty minutes before his talk is scheduled to begin. Nor is it difficult to imagine him doing so *on the basis of the offered money*. What explains the difference? Notice that the explanation of the difference cannot be that what was the wrong kind of reason in the original case somehow becomes the right kind of reason in the new one, for in each case the fact that he has been offered money counts against forming an intention in precisely the same way. A better explanation of the difference between the two cases is that whereas the fictional Schroeder almost certainly has a standing intention to wear clothes to professional gatherings, he probably does not have a standing intention with respect to what color to wear to such gatherings. What is more, even if the offer of money causes the question of what color to wear to pop into his head, it will be relatively easy for him to dismiss that question and to put off thoughts of what to wear until tomorrow. Of course there may be good reasons for him wear blue rather than white, but those reasons are neither weighty nor obvious enough to make deferring his deliberation about what to wear especially difficult.

The difference here is not that what was the wrong kind of reason in the first case somehow becomes a reason of the right kind in the sec-

ond. In both cases, the fact that Schroeder has been offered money is a reason for him to forbear engaging in deliberation about whether to intend, and in neither case is it a reason of the wrong kind. Rather, the difference between the two cases is that in the first but not the second, the kind of deliberation with respect to which this fact is a reason is preempted. In the first case, Schroeder never genuinely entertains the question of whether to form an intention because the option of not forming one is not really available to him: either he already has one or he cannot help forming one as soon as the matter is raised.

Schroeder's depiction of the wrong kind of reason to forbear forming a belief is similarly problematic. "Suppose that I am offered one thousand dollars to not make up my mind about some question for which all of the relevant evidence has already come in" (472). Again, Schroeder maintains that it would be difficult to forbear believing on the basis of the offered money. "Though it's easy to not make up my mind on the grounds that further evidence is forthcoming, it's hard to not make up my mind directly on the grounds that I'll get money for having not made up my mind—though of course, there are always indirect strategies, like paying close attention to some evidence and trying to ignore the counterevidence" (472).

As before, the fact that he has been offered money looks like the wrong kind of reason here only because the differences between the two stages of reasoning have been blurred. Here the crucial feature of the example is that "all of the relevant evidence has already come in." If the fictional Schroeder is already aware of all of the relevant evidence, and if that evidence counts strongly in favor of p , then it looks like he has already made up his mind about whether p . And if he already believes that p , then it is too late for him to forbear believing. Moreover, even if he does not yet believe that p —even if, in other words, he has yet to draw the conclusion that clearly follows from evidence of which he is aware—the fact that he is aware of this evidence will make it difficult for him to defer deliberation about whether p . For as soon as he is offered money not to make up his mind, the question of whether p will pop into his head. And since he is already in possession of evidence that strongly favors p , he will almost immediately settle that question by believing that p .

Now imagine a case in which the relevant evidence has come in but does not count strongly or obviously in favor of a particular conclusion. Suppose that Schroeder is a judge overseeing a long and complicated murder trial. Once closing arguments are offered, all of the available evidence is in. Yet the picture this evidence paints is not at all clear: there is damning evidence of guilt but also an airtight alibi. Before retiring to his chambers to deliberate, Schroeder is offered money not to make up his mind about the guilt or innocence of the accused until tomorrow morning. As before, any obstacles that might have prevented the fictional Schroeder

from forbearing on the basis of the offered money in the previous example seem to be absent here. Given the muddled nature of the evidence, it is not difficult to imagine Schroeder deciding to put off the question of the accused's guilt until tomorrow morning. Nor is it difficult to imagine him doing so *on the basis of the offered money*. What explains the difference? Again, the explanation cannot be that what was the wrong kind of reason in the first case somehow becomes the right kind of reason in the new one, for in each case the fact that he has been offered money counts against forming a belief in precisely the same way. A better explanation of the difference between the two cases is that it is relatively easy to put off doxastic deliberation when that deliberation promises to be lengthy and taxing. And so even if the offer of money causes the question of the accused's guilt to pop into Schroeder's head, it will be relatively easy for him to dismiss that question and to put off thoughts of guilt or innocence until tomorrow. Of course the evidence of guilt may ultimately be stronger than the evidence of innocence, but that evidence is not clear enough to make deferring his deliberation especially difficult.

As before, the difference between these cases is not that what was the wrong kind of reason in one becomes a reason of the right kind in the other. In both cases, the fact that Schroeder has been offered money is a reason to forbear engaging in deliberation about whether to believe something, and in neither case is it a reason of the wrong kind. As before, the difference between the two cases is that in the first the question with respect to which this fact is a reason is moot. In that case Schroeder never genuinely entertains the question of whether to form a belief because the option of not forming one is not really available to him: either he has already formed one or he cannot help forming one as soon as the money is offered.

We believe that there is a straightforward explanation for Schroeder's failure to identify a reason of the wrong kind here: there are no reasons of the wrong kind in stage 1 deliberation. Why not? Put simply, because the reasons one weighs in stage 1 deliberation are *reasons for action*, and the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons does not apply to reasons for action. In the cases Schroeder envisions, engaging (or refraining from engaging) in deliberation is something one *does*; it is action performed for a reason. In deciding whether to form an intention with respect to whether to drive to LA tomorrow, Schroeder is deciding whether to perform the action of undertaking a course of practical deliberation. Similarly, in deciding whether to form a belief with respect to whether his spot is benign, Schroeder is deciding whether to perform the action of undertaking a course of doxastic deliberation. There are, of course, different kinds of reasons for action—moral reasons and prudential reasons, for instance. But none of these kinds bears the marks associated with the wrong kind of reasons: we can act without difficulty for any

reason we take to bear on an action that is available to us, and any such reason is relevant to assessments of our actions as rational or correct.⁵ So, once we see that our decisions at stage 1 concern actions that we might or might not undertake, we should expect the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons with respect to those decisions to disappear.

We therefore agree with Schroeder that “the object-given/state-given theory cannot successfully distinguish between right-kind and wrong-kind reasons not to make up one’s mind” (479). Yet this does not count against the object-given/state-given theory since, as we have argued, there are no right-kind and wrong-kind reasons not to make up one’s mind.

IV

So much, then, for Schroeder’s second argument against the two-stage solution. Let us turn now to the first argument.

I suspect that it is impossible to cleanly separate [reasoning] into two ‘stages’. This is because among the factors which affect whether it is rational to make up one’s mind about p are the evidence in favor of and against p —the very considerations which according to the two-stage theory are supposed to play a role at the second stage. If the evidence is too evenly balanced or merely probabilistic in nature, then that can make it irrational to make up one’s mind, and if the evidence is preponderant and conclusively one-sided, that can make it rationally permissible to make up one’s mind no matter what reasons there might be not to. (478)

Here Schroeder suggests that stage 2 considerations—such as the fact that the evidence with respect to p is evenly balanced—bear on the stage 1 question of whether to form a belief with respect to p . If the evidence is evenly balanced, then surely it is rational neither to believe that p nor to believe that $\sim p$. Surely the rational thing to do is to forbear believing with respect to p . And this seems to entail that the two stages of reasoning cannot be cleanly separated in the way that the two-stage theory requires.

We do not deny that stage 2 considerations frequently bear on the question of whether to form a belief or intention at all, but we do not think that this undermines or blurs the distinction between the two

5. The standard account easily explains why the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons does not apply to reasons for action. The object/state distinction applies only to states—such as attitudes—with (propositional) objects. Obviously, actions are not states; they are events. Of course, actions may have ends, but ends are not objects in the sense intended by the standard view. And so there can be neither object-given nor state-given reasons for action.

stages of reasoning. Schroeder thinks that it does only because he is insufficiently attentive to the different ways in which deliberation can conclude with our not believing or our not intending. 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 2 deliberation. It is a purely doxastic or theoretical reason. Put another way, when one forbears to believe because the evidence is evenly balanced, one's forbearance is a doxastic commitment or move. In such cases, one's doxastic deliberation issues in neither belief nor disbelief but rather suspension of judgment. Contrast these cases with cases of the sort that Schroeder discusses in his article and that we considered in the previous sections—cases in which practical or pragmatic considerations militate against one's forming a belief. The fact that one has been offered money not to make up one's mind with respect to p is also a reason to forbear forming a belief with respect to p , but it is a reason that operates exclusively at the level of stage 1 deliberation.

Schroeder loses track of the difference between stage 1 and stage 2 reasoning because he misunderstands the nature of the former. He thinks of stage 1 deliberation as deliberation about whether to form a belief or intention. And so he thinks of the reasons that bear on that deliberation as considerations which count for or against having a belief or intention. For instance, he describes the fact that pertinent information is forthcoming as a reason against his forming or having a belief with respect to whether the spot on his skin is benign. This way of conceiving of stage 1 deliberation gives rise to the impression that there is a single question which both stage 1 and stage 2 reasoning take up: whether to have or to form a belief or intention. So far we have been content largely to go along with this way of describing stage 1 deliberation, but now we must point out just how misleading it is. For what one is really contemplating in stage 1 deliberation is whether to engage in stage 2 deliberation—that is, whether to engage in doxastic or practical reasoning. And when one decides to engage in doxastic deliberation, one is not thereby deciding to form a belief since sometimes doxastic deliberation does not issue in a belief. As Schroeder observes, sometimes the evidence is too evenly balanced or otherwise inconclusive. And so the most one has decided to do when one undertakes a course of doxastic deliberation is to form a belief *if there is sufficient evidence*. Strictly speaking, then, the reasons Schroeder discusses in his article are not reasons to forbear forming or having a belief or intention. They are reasons to forbear engaging in doxastic or practical deliberation.

Once the differences between stage 1 and stage 2 reasoning are clearly in view, Schroeder's examples of apparently state-given reasons of the right kind against intention and belief can be seen for what they really are, namely, examples of reasons against engaging in the activity of

practical or doxastic deliberation. Since the distinction between the right and the wrong kinds of reasons does not apply to reasons for action, Schroeder's examples do not threaten the standard account of that distinction, for they are not examples of the right kind of reasons for or against anything at all.