12
TRUST AND EMOTION

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"Trust" is an umbrella term (Simpson 2012:551). It refers to different phenomena in different contexts. Sometimes it simply designates an act, sometimes a reason for such an act (e.g. a belief), and sometimes a specific state of mind that is regularly associated with such acts or reasons to act. In some contexts it is used as a three place relation – "A trusts B to Φ" – in others a two place relation. For some meanings of the term, "trust" is necessarily directed at a person, whilst for others groups, institutions or even inanimate objects may be the objects of trust.

However, I am not interested in language issues here. In this chapter I will concentrate on a specific phenomenon that we refer to as trust and sometimes mark as "real" or "genuine" to emphasize its contrast to mere reliance (see Goldberg, this volume). This form of trust is – in some specifiable sense – emotional in character. I will refer to it as "genuine trust" or "trust as an emotional attitude." My reason for concentrating on this specific form of interpersonal trust is that it plays an important role in social interaction, a role which is frequently neglected (see Potter, this volume).

My argument will start with a short presentation of the opposing idea that somebody who is interested in understanding social cooperation will concentrate on a notion of trust as essentially a cognitive belief (section 12.1). From this point of view there is no significant difference between trust and mere reliance. Based on a critical discussion of this claim (section 12.2), I will then introduce a notion of *genuine trust* that clearly marks the difference (section 12.3) and specify its emotional character (section 12.4). Finally, I will argue that genuine trust in this sense is in fact crucial for our understanding of social cooperation (section 12.5).

12.1 Trust as Belief

A number of prominent scholars from all quarters of the social sciences and philosophy met at King's College, Cambridge, in the 1980s to discuss the notion of trust; the debate was shaped and motivated by the insight that social cooperation is often precarious even though individuals are well aware of its advantages (see Dimock, this volume). Thus, in the foreword to the seminal collection of essays stemming from these seminars, Diego Gambetta identifies the exploration of "… the causality of cooperation from the perspective of the belief, on which cooperation is predicated, namely

trust" (Gambetta 1988a:ix) as a central and unifying target of the common project. Trust appears here as essentially cognitive. It is a belief that may motivate a cooperative move in a situation where this move is somehow problematic.

Contemporary studies into the problem of cooperation were strongly influenced by the analysis of dilemma games which typify situations in which individually rational decision-making mismatches with individual advantage and collective welfare (see, e.g. prominently Axelrod 1984). So it is not by coincidence that scholars with a game-theoretical background (as represented in the Gambetta Collection by Partha Dasgupta) gave a particularly sharp and clear account of trust as belief (see Tutić and Voss, this volume).

A dilemma game displays typical features of a situation in which trust may matter: At least one of the actors faces a choice that bears some risk. One of his options – the "*trusting act*" – offers some (mutually) positive prospect if others respond suitably ("cooperate") but may also result in a particular loss if they do not. However, there is another option that reduces the potential loss by foregoing some of the potential gains. Let us call a situation that displays such a characteristic a "*trust problem*." By choosing the trusting act in a trust problem an agent makes himself vulnerable to the actions of others. He may do so *because* he trusts those others.[1]

The key assumption of rational choice theory upon which game theory is grounded is: every human action is guided by specifiable aims; the human agent will choose his actions rationally in the light of these aims. In any particular choice situation, an actor may be characterized by his beliefs about the potential consequences of action and his subjective evaluation of these consequences. His choices, then, are to be understood as an attempt to maximize the expected utility representing his subjective evaluation in the light of his beliefs.

From a rational choice point of view the problem of trusting another person, thus, reduces to the problem of assessing the probability that the other will act in desired ways. This assessment may even be identified with trust. This central idea is neatly captured in the definition of trust that Gambetta formulates at the end of his volume as a purported summary of the volume's accounts (1988b:217):[2]

> [Trust] is a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action both *before* he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) *and* in a context in which it affects *his own* action.

If we keep in mind that – within rational choice theory – beliefs are generally conceptualized as probability distributions of consequences of actions or potential states of the world, this amounts to the more general thesis:

> (C) Trust is (or may be totally understood in terms of) the trustor's belief that the trusted person will respond positively to the choice of a trusting act in a trust problem.

The trouble with such an account of trust is that it seems to neglect a very familiar difference, easily recognized in common parlance, namely the difference between trust and mere reliance (see Goldberg, this volume). To rely on somebody is generally understood as acting on the expectation that the other will act in some preferred ways. If (C) is correct, trust simply coincides with reliance. But there are cases in

which this does not seem to be true. A may rely on B doing Φ after threatening to hurt B severely if B fails to Φ. Burglar F may rely on policeman E not to prevent F from robbing the local bank at time t after calculating as sufficiently low the risk that E, who is the only policeman in town, will be around and ready to intervene. Both cases are clear cases of reliance and, thus, of trust in the sense of (C). But, in both cases, most people would hesitate to affirm genuine trust. Of course, the word "trust" is occasionally used in a very wide sense which hardly expresses anything more than reliance. Thus we sometimes use the word to express reliance on things: we trust a pullover to keep us warm or our car to bring us home safely. In this sense of the word, one may also say that A trusts B to Φ and that F trusts E not to interfere with his plans. However, most people would add that, despite this use of the word, these are not cases of "real" or "genuine" trust.

Standard examples may suggest that the difference is due to the demand that trusting expectations in the sense of genuine trust must be grounded in a belief that the trusted person is (in some sense) trustworthy.[3] But what does "trustworthy" mean in this context? If it simply means that the trusted person is disposed to act in a desired way, the difference vanishes again. Annette Baier argues that the motivation ascribed to the trusted person is decisive (1986:234):

> … trusting others … seems to be reliance on their good will toward one, as distinct from their dependable habits, or only on their dependably exhibited fear, anger, or other motives compatible with ill will toward one, or on other motives not directed at one at all.

The rational choice theorist may respond that this does not *really* make a difference. Thus Russell Hardin (1991:193f.) argues:

> Is there really a difference here? I rely on *you*, not just on anyone, because the experience that justifies reliance is my experience of you, not of everyone … Trust does not depend on any particular reason for the trusted's intentions, merely on credible reasons.

The general reaction is: if it is possible at all to define the difference between mere reliance and genuine trust clearly, this difference will turn out to be irrelevant. Accordingly, Phillip Nickel (2017) recently argued that discrimination between mere reliance and genuine trust is of no explanatory value. Knowing that people cooperate on genuine trust does not add anything important to our understanding of the respective cooperative endeavors. The distinction is simply irrelevant, if we are out to "explain the emergence and sustenance of cooperative practices and social institutions" (Nickel 2017:197).

I think Nickel and Hardin are mistaken. But before I argue that it does make a difference whether cooperation is based on genuine trust or mere reliance, I will first make an attempt to substantiate the alleged difference in sufficiently clear terms.

12.2 Trust and Reliance

Baier (1986:235) remarks that her definition of trust cited above is to be understood merely as a "first approximation." There are, in fact, good reasons to be cautious here. Standard cases of reliance on goodwill towards the relying person certainly

exemplify genuine trust. But, as Richard Holton (1994:65) argues, reliance on goodwill towards one is neither necessary nor sufficient for trust. It is not necessary as there are clear cases of genuine trust without the trustor believing that the trusted person is motivated by goodwill towards him. A mother may entrust her baby to the neighbor for an afternoon without expecting any goodwill for the mother yet knowing that the neighbor loves her baby. Neither is it sufficient: a marriage trickster may rely on the goodwill of his victim towards him when telling her that he is temporarily in financial distress. He is relying on her naivety but one would certainly hesitate to speak of trust in this case.

Confronted with such counterexamples, one may still stick to the general idea that the difference between genuine trust and mere reliance is essentially grounded in the specific kind of motive that a trustor ascribes to the trusted person. One may simply try to adjust the relevant kind. The babysitter example suggests, for instance, that it is not goodwill towards the trustor but goodwill to any person or any person whose welfare is of some value to the trustor which is the crucial kind of motive. But there are cases of genuine trust where no goodwill or belief in goodwill is involved. I may trust in your promise because I think that you are an honest person who keeps his word. This is genuine trust even if I know that my welfare does not touch you at all.

Following an idea of Karen Jones (1996), Paul Faulkner (2007a:313) suggests that genuine (or what he calls "affective") trust is defined by the trustor's expectation that the trusted person will be motivated by the fact that the trustor is relying on him. But again this seems to be unduly restrictive. It excludes particularly all cases in which the trusted person is obviously not aware of being trusted. Assume that my 15-year-old daughter asks me to let her attend a party at night. I know it is going to be fairly wild, but I also know that her friend is a decent person who loves my daughter. He will thoroughly look after her. So I let her go. This is a simple and clear case of trust in the daughter's friend. This also remains true, if I know that my daughter will tell the friend that she secretly left home without asking for permission, or if I simply know that the friend is solely motivated by his love and care for my daughter, whether I rely on him or not.

There is a more promising candidate for the class of motives that can be the object of genuine trust. A minimal unifying element in all examples and counterexamples seems to be: the trustor expects the trusted person to act on motives that the trustor in some way or other confirms as valuable and binding. Such motives may stem from common interests or goals (e.g. in business cooperation), from shared values (as in the babysitter case) or from norms, which are understood as commonly binding (as in the case of promises). The attribution of such motives seems to be present in all cases of genuine trust, whereas one can rely on another person whatever motive one hypothesizes regarding the expected behavior.

So we seem to have a class of motives here, at least one of which is necessarily ascribed to the trusted person in every case of genuine trust while mere reliance does not require such an ascription. However, it is doubtful whether this could also serve as a sufficient condition for genuine trust. We can produce a counterexample in much the same way as in the marriage trickster example.

Assume a scientist holds the belief that people will under certain circumstances cooperate on some specific honest motive. Further assume that he considers it to be the only adequate motive under these circumstances and that a decent person should be motivated in this way. The scientist now tests his hypothesis that people will actually behave in this way on the specific motive by designing a suitable experiment. In conducting the

experiment, he is relying on people acting as expected on the assumed motive; if they do not, he cannot reject his null hypothesis and his investment in the experiment will be void. It seems odd to say in such a case that he trusts in his subjects.

It is very plausible that counterexamples of the same kind can be constructed for all attempts to establish the ascription of a motive of some specific kind as a sufficient condition for genuine trust. These examples may appear as somewhat artificial. Still, they convey an important general lesson on the difference between trust and mere reliance. What goes wrong in these examples? Obviously, the problem is not grounded in the specific kind of motive ascribed. It could be any kind proposed as characteristic for genuine trust. The problem arises from how the person relied on is being treated. The marriage trickster uses his victim as a means of achieving his (wicked) aims. The scientist looks at his subject from an objective point of view just as a physicist would look at the particles in his atom smasher. Both do not really interact with their counterpart and both do not really treat them as persons in their respective specific situations. The way of treating another person observed in these examples is simply incompatible with genuine trust. If this is the core of the problem, then it is impossible to give a general characterization of genuine trust by sole reference to the beliefs of trustor and trusted. Any comprehensive and general attempt to define genuine trust as a special sort of reliance must at least in part refer to the way people treat each other when trusting, how they relate to each other, how they perceive each other when choosing how to act.

A further argument points in the same direction. Assume a good friend is suspected of having committed some crime. There is, for instance, substantial evidence that he embezzled a considerable amount of money. You know all the evidence against your friend just as well as everybody else does. The friend affirms his innocence to you. Of course, the others know that he denies the offense, too. But, in contrast to them, you trust him. Why?

First, you know him better than all the others do. So you may have specific information not available to others which absolves your friend. As far as this is the case, your trust is due to your specific cognitive state. But assume further that the evidence against your friend is truly overwhelming. What will you do? Most likely you will ask yourself how this strong evidence against your friend came about. You will try somehow to overcome the dissonances between the character of your friend as you know him and the picture that the evidence seems to suggest. You will be looking for explanations of the evidence that are consistent with your friend's innocence. You do not just evaluate the given evidence in some objective and indifferent way. The special relationship that connects you and your friend will rather motivate you to see the given information in a certain light and question it critically. This particular form of genuine trust cannot be understood as the result of a purely cognitive process. It is not based on an uninvolved evaluation of information by calculating what will most probably happen or actually did most probably happen. It is rather a particular way of asking questions as well as thinking about and evaluating information (Govier 1993; 1994). Your expectations are a consequence of your trust rather than vice versa.[4] Trust presents itself as something deeper than belief. It appears as a mechanism that transforms information into belief.

12.3 Trust as an Attitude

If the argument in the last section is sound, genuine trust is best understood as a complex attitude rather than a certain belief about the trusted person. Discussion in the previous section also indicates what the essential elements of this attitude are.

The first essential element of genuine trust is that we treat the trustee as a person. The marriage trickster and the scientist above are not said to trust genuinely because this condition is violated. Referring to a distinction by Peter Strawson (1974),[5] Richard Holton (1994:66f.) specifies this condition by pointing to the particular emotional dispositions that a trusting person exhibits:

> In cases where we trust and are let down, we do not just feel disappointed, as we would if a machine let us down … We feel betrayed … betrayal is one of those attitudes that Strawson calls reactive attitudes … I think that the difference between trust and reliance is that trust involves something like a participant stance towards the person you are trusting.

In adopting a participant attitude or, as Holton calls it, a "participant stance" towards another person we perceive ourselves and the other as mutually involved in *inter*action. Individual acts are perceived as essentially interrelated. A participant attitude is characterized by the disposition to react to the actions of another person with "reactive attitudes," emotions that are directed at the other person, such as hate, resentment or gratitude. In having such emotional dispositions the other is treated as the author of his acts, as somebody who is responsible and can, therefore, be held responsible. This points to another peculiarity of genuine trust. Trusting expectations based on genuine trust are as a rule normative; we do not just expect the trusted person to behave in a certain favored way; we also feel that he *should* act in this particular way.[6]

In contrast, adopting an "objective attitude" in the sense of Strawson means perceiving another person from a more distanced point of view, as an observer rather than as directly involved, just as we perceive a mechanism governed by natural laws. Nevertheless, guided by an objective attitude, we may make predictions about the behavior of others. It seems inappropriate, however, to make normative demands.

Normative expectations require a normative base. Discussion in the last section suggests that common interests, shared aims, values or norms form such a normative base. This is the second essential element of an attitude of genuine trust, which I will refer to as '*connectedness*': when trusting, the trustor perceives the trusted person as somebody whose actions in the given context are guided by common interests, by shared aims or by values and norms which the trustor himself takes to be authoritative.

This definition of the potential normative ground of trust covers cases of trust in close relationships. But it is wide enough also to cover cases of trust between people that are not connected by personal bonds as, for instance, in business when one partner trusts the word of another because there is a shared understanding that contracts should be kept. In any case, connectedness adds an element of person-specificity[7] to trust. A participant stance implies relating to the other as a person. Connectedness adds that the trusted person is perceived as someone specifically related to oneself by a common normative ground of action.

Because of examples such as that with the scientist above (Section 12.2: 150f), I take it that connectedness is best construed as an attitude toward – a way to perceive – the trusted person, and not as a mere cognitive belief about the person's motivation. However, as I will discuss in more detail below, connectedness and trusting beliefs are causally related. My perception of another person will be affected

by my beliefs about that person and, conversely, my beliefs about a person will, at least in part, be formed by my perception of that person. Because the normative base is perceived as a common ground of interaction, it motivates typical normative expectations and rationalizes reactive attitudes connected with trust.

To conclude, I think that genuine trust can be characterized as follows:

> Genuine trust toward a person includes a participant attitude and a feeling of connectedness to him or her grounded in shared aims, values or norms. This attitude typically generates normative expectations. It allows the trusting person to incur risks concerning the actions of the trusted person, because this person is perceived as being guided by the shared goals, values or norms which are assumed to connect the two.

12.4 The Emotional Character of Trust

Considerable disagreement exists among scholars about what an emotion actually is.[8] It seems wise, therefore, to be cautious about the general claim that trust *is* an emotion. My modest aim here is to argue that genuine trust is essentially identified by features that we generally find characteristic of emotions. These characteristic properties of genuine trust form the "emotional character of trust"; combined they justify calling trust an "emotional attitude."

The structure of my argument owes much to Karen Jones' account of "Trust as an Affective Attitude" (1996). Although I disagree with Jones about the substantial question of what the characteristic features of trust are, I think she is perfectly right in the way she determines their emotional (or, as she says, "affective") character. Referring to an account of emotion she ascribes to Amélie Rorty, Cheshire Calhoun and Ronald de Sousa, Jones argues (1996:11):

> … emotions are partly constituted by patterns of salience and tendencies of interpretation. An emotion suggests a particular line of inquiry and makes some beliefs seem compelling and others not, on account of the way the emotion gets us to focus on a partial field of evidence. Emotions are thus not primarily beliefs, although they do tend to give rise to beliefs; instead they are distinctive ways of seeing a situation.

The idea that a characteristic feature of emotions is that they determine how we perceive the world or some part of it has a prominent history. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle defines emotions in the following way (Rhetoric 1378a):

> Emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgments and that are also attended by pain and pleasure.

According to this definition emotions are not characterized as a specific kind of mental state or episode. Their crucial characteristic is rather their specific function in organizing and structuring conscious life. Lovers, it is said, see the world through rose-tinted glasses. This illustrates the point quite well: Emotions are like glasses through which we perceive the world. Three different ways in which an emotional state of mind may shape our thought may be discriminated (see Lahno 2001:175):

1 Emotions determine how we perceive the world in a direct manner. They do so by giving us a certain perspective on the world. They guide our attention by making some things appear more salient than others.
2 Emotions determine how we think and what judgments we make on matters of fact. That is not to say that an emotion necessarily annuls reason. Instead, it directs reason by stimulating certain associations and suggesting certain patterns of interpretation.
3 Emotions help us to evaluate some aspects of the world and motivate our actions.

Obviously connectedness, as defined above, together with a participant attitude determine how we perceive a trusted person, the interaction with this person, and most of those aspects of the world which form the significant determinants of this interaction. Thus, genuine trust guides our thought just like emotions characteristically do. This is the core of the emotional character of trust and justifies its being called an "emotional attitude."

That genuine trust is an emotional attitude in this sense, determines its relation to belief and judgment. On the one hand, the way we perceive the world is to some extent a consequence of our cognitive state: our antecedent beliefs, judgments and prejudices which make us ask certain questions will, just as the general framework of our understanding, inevitably pre-structure our perceptions. On the other hand, we find that the picture of the world which we immediately perceive is a major source of our beliefs. Because of this causal interdependence between emotional attitude and cognitive state, genuine trust is regularly associated with certain beliefs. But trust should not be identified with these beliefs. Compared with belief and judgment genuine trust appears as relatively independent of reflection and rational argument. A perception delivers some content of thought quite directly and unmediated by reflection. In as far as trust immediately determines how the world is represented in thought and in as far as it invokes certain thought patterns, it takes precedence over thought. It forms a frame for rational considerations and is a base of reasoning rather than its result.

The sense perception analogy is instructive here. Most processes of perception are, in fact, closely associated with judgments. We see an object usually "as real" without becoming consciously aware of it; a sense perception is usually tied to a spontaneous judgment that there actually is such a thing as the object perceived. But the act of assent which is crucial to the judgment can – at least conceptually – be held apart from the mere "passive" perception. Something similar applies to trust according to the argument above. Trust makes the trusted person and a potential interaction with this person appear in a certain light. This happens to the trustor, it is not something he intentionally provokes. The picture presented to the trustor demands and actually elicits assent to corresponding claims about the world under normal circumstances. But it does not already contain the assent. There is certainly a logical relation between the picture presented by trust and the trusting beliefs usually associated with trust: The picture is to be such that it evokes the corresponding beliefs *under normal circumstances*.

If this argument is sound, then it is at least in principle possible that a trustor may perceive the trusted person as connected to himself by the relevant normative ground for the situation at hand while not actually believing that the other will be guided to act in the appropriate way. One may perceive a spider as threatening while knowing very well that it is not dangerous at all. Just like irrational fear, trust is conceivable without the typical cognitive trusting expectations. I do in fact think that this is not just a logical possibility. But I will not argue for this further-going claim here.[9]

12.5 Does It Matter?

Proponents of a cognitive account of trust as represented by Nickel and Hardin do not claim that trust is never associated with typical emotions. The claim is that emotional aspects of trust – if they exist – are inessential for our understanding of trustful cooperation. All we need to know to understand why person A is willing to make himself vulnerable to the actions of person B, is what A thinks about the relevant options and motives of B. The example of the accused friend above indicates what is wrong with this argument. The argument presupposes that the relevant beliefs of the trustor can be determined independently of his emotional states. But the friend example shows that this is not true. What the trustor believes is crucially dependent on how he perceives the trusted person and the situation at hand: it is to do with how he filters, structures and processes the information given to him. To understand why the trustor considers the trusted person trustworthy, we have to know what the world looks like through the eyes of the trustor, i.e. we have to know his emotional attitude.

That trustful interaction depends on the emotional makeup and states of the interacting individuals is well reflected in the social and behavioral sciences literature on trust (see Cook and Santana as well as Clément, both this volume). There is, for instance, an extensive body of studies showing how emotional states crucially influence trusting decisions.[10] Empirical research in management and organizational science proves that the extent and quality of cooperative relations within and between organizations depend on the existence of a suitable normative basis.[11] I cannot adequately discuss even a small representative part of all relevant research here. Instead I will point to some very common phenomena that illustrate the relevance of genuine trust for our understanding of social cooperation.

Consider market exchange (see Cohen, this volume). Many things that we buy are complex products, the technical details of which are hardly comprehensible for the ordinary consumer. They are produced in extremely complex processes comprising contributions from numerous firms many of which remain unknown to us. The amount of substantial information that we possess on the products we buy and the people who sell these products is often extremely small as compared with the information that the sellers possess. Our information will, in particular, not suffice to substantiate a rational assessment of risks involved in buying the product. A complex world inevitably produces such serious information asymmetries. In contrast to what Hardin and Nickel may suggest, there is no unique, simple and straight route along which to proceed to a person's beliefs following from the information he is given. Thus, it becomes crucial to know how people actually proceed if confronted with certain risks. Knowledge on trust as an emotional attitude is of this kind and successful actors in the market obviously have such knowledge.

Professional product promotion indicates this convincingly. Commercial advertising aims at creating an image that motivates consumers to identify with the product and/or producer. If banks or insurance companies seek trust, they do not extensively inform on their successes or virtues. They may instead – accentuated by calm and relaxing music – show a man standing on a rock in the stormy sea serenely facing the strong swell. Or they show friendly advisers who care for all the concerns of their customers, including private ones, and who are likable people like you and me. Cars are seldom promoted by announcing bare technical information. As a rule, a particular attitude to life is conveyed, often picking up the childlike (or even childish) dreams of a standard male customer. Such advertising hardly conveys substantial information on the product

or producer that may help in the estimation of risks; it is rather an attempt to take up the interests and values of the potential customer within an invitation to see product and producer in a certain light.

Similar considerations apply to politics in representative democracies – another complex context in which the information available is for most of us utterly insufficient to assess the risks involved (Becker 1996).[12] The consequences are as familiar as they might seem questionable. Politicians present themselves as caring parents and good spouses. We learn on television how they approach their fellow citizens with a friendly smile on their face, how they rock innocent babies in their arms with loving care, or how they become enthusiastic about their soccer team. All this is carefully arranged for us. The message is clear: here is a person who can be trusted, someone like you, leading a good life based on principles that are worthy to be shared.

Many aspects of trusting interaction are very familiar to us but would seem pretty strange if trust was just the trustor's cognitive state. One such aspect is that often neither a thought about risk nor any explicit thought about trust comes to the mind of the trustor. If I put my money on the counter of the bakery, I am hardly aware of any risk, although my payment is often provided in advance and there is no guarantee that my performance be responded in the way I desire. Will I actually receive the baked goods? Will all the rolls that I paid for be in the paper bag? Will they be of high quality as promised? Will the change be correct? Is the price of the rolls fair? No customer will actually consider such questions. Of course, in the background, it is in the well-considered self-interest of a prudent baker to be fair and honest with his customers. But the customer will not consciously consider this either. In fact, the smoothness of the transaction indicates its emotional basis. The emotional character of this transaction appears not in some more or less intense feeling of the individuals involved, but in their view of the situation being structured by certain normative patterns. If these patterns are sufficiently strong and attuned to one another, a smooth course of interaction is ensured. Perception of the situation, then, is already sufficient and there is no need for further cognitive processing to respond adequately.

Another well-known peculiarity of trust is its characteristic tendency to resist conflicting evidence (Baker 1987; Jones 1996; Faulkner 2007b), resulting in its relative stability. The theory of trust as an emotional attitude easily explains this quality that obviously conflicts with the idea that trust is nothing but belief based on the information given to the trustor. As the example of the indicted friend again illustrates, trust is a biased mechanism for the transformation of information into belief: it works as a filter which hides certain information from the attention of a trustor, it suggests certain favorable interpretation strategies and it guides the mind in integrating new pieces of information into a consistent positive outlook onto the interaction with the trusted partner. The same considerations show why trust, once destroyed, is so hard to recover. Disrupting the mechanism of information processing characteristic for trust will inevitably result in the search for new ways of orientation. The former trustor will see the world through a different pair of glasses; he will sort, structure and process information in a different way. What was perceived as consistent with or evidence of a positive outlook onto the potential interaction may now appear as pointing to the opposite. Moreover, the general fabric of our emotional constitution and the character of the reactive attitudes associated with trust suggest that in many cases the new pair of glasses will be one of mistrust (see D'Cruz, this volume). This pair of glasses will produce the same kind of relative stability and resistance against conflicting evidence that the trust glasses produce for the same kind of reasons.

The notion of genuine trust as an emotional attitude is not just important for our theoretical understanding of trust. It is of direct practical relevance for personal life as well as for the design of our social institutions (see Alfano and Huijts, this volume). Consider institutional design. If we want to encourage social cooperation based on trust, we should take care that those who take the risk are neither too often nor too severely hurt. Some amount of control will almost always be necessary. Suitable sanctioning mechanisms may directly shape the incentives to act in trustworthy ways. Moreover, if the relevant information about others is made available this will encourage appropriate trusting decisions and simultaneously indirectly produce incentives for trustworthy behavior by enhancing the value of a good reputation (see Origgi, this volume).

Note that such measures of control by positive or negative sanctions and by making information on others' conduct accessible are perfectly consistent with understanding trust as a rational belief. Their target is essentially the objective reduction of risk. But the ability to reduce or even eliminate risk is often substantially limited. Genuine trust is a mechanism for coping with uncertainty in those cases where a pure cognitive management of uncertainty is impossible or exceedingly costly. As I argued, an essential precondition for such genuine trust is that individuals share a normative understanding of the demands they face in their cooperative endeavors. Social institutions that build on trust should, therefore, be designed to foster the experience of a common normative ground and the emergence of connectedness.

In the ideal case measures of control and measures that promote a common normative ground of trustful cooperation will complement each other. But it is important to see, that they may also conflict. An inappropriately designed sanctioning mechanism may well tend to destroy the normative basis of trust. Consider a working team which is collectively devoted to optimally accomplishing the team's goal. Every team member is doing her best and she is doing so in part, because she trusts that others will proceed in the same way. Imagine, now, that the management – for reasons that the team members do not know – announces henceforth to control the compliance of each team member meticulously and to sanction severely all behavior which they find defective. It is easy to imagine how the management's initiative may thwart their very intention. There is, in fact, a rich body of empirical evidence that inadequate control may well "crowd out" desired behavior.[13]

The theory of trust as an emotional attitude explains how and when control may crowd out trust. Control may signal that individuals cannot without reserve count on intrinsically motivated trustworthiness. And so it may tend to destroy the idea that cooperation is motivated by a shared normative basis.

Not all social cooperation is desirable. The world would, for instance, be better without cooperation between officials in charge of awarding public contracts and those who apply for these contracts. But, after all, human society is a cooperative endeavor that cannot exist without some genuine trust among its members. Whoever wants to encourage genuine trust is facing a difficult task. On the one side he must give room for the emergence and maintenance of individual virtue, whilst on the other he must set constraints against human action to protect virtue from exploitation. But the latter measure may cast doubt on the effectiveness of virtue. There are obviously no simple general rules to solve this problem. But a solid understanding of genuine trust's role in social cooperation seems indispensable to approach a solution in the individual case.

Related Topics

In this volume:

Trust and Belief
Trust and Cooperation
Trust and Distrust in Institutions and Governance
Trust and Game Theory
Trust and Leap of Faith
Trust and Mistrust
Trust and Reliance
Trust and Trustworthiness
Trust in Economy
Trustworthiness, Accountability and Intelligent Trust

Notes

1 Note that "trusting act" was introduced here as a technical term representing any option with the defining risk characteristic. It is perfectly consistent with the definition, that a trusting act is chosen on other grounds than trust or without any trust at all. Thus, a trust problem may, in principle, be "solved" without any trust being involved.
2 It is doubtful that all authors of the collection would in fact support such a radical cognitive account.
3 See also Naomi Scheman, this volume, and Onora O'Neill, this volume.
4 See Hertzberg (1988:313ff.) for a radical version of this insight.
5 Strawson introduced the distinction in a different context. He was trying to make sense of the concept of free will.
6 This is obviously the motive behind the "obligation-ascription" account of trust in Nickel (2007).
7 Paul Faulkner drew my attention to the fact that interpersonal trust is essentially person specific.
8 See de Sousa (2014) for a recent overview.
9 See Lahno (2002:214) for an example.
10 A seminal paper in this field is Dunn and Schweitzer (2005); a recent publication that also gives a short overview on the debate is Myers and Tingley (2016).
11 Some references can be found in Lahno (2002:186).
12 In some cases it is not only difficult or contingently impossible (given the cognitive limitations of human actors) but impossible to assess a risk of being let down on the basis of the available information. A common characteristic of such cases is that there is some demand for mutual trust as, e.g. when I must trust you to trust me and vice versa in a common enterprise. The risk of trust being betrayed then depends on the extent to which actors trust each other. As a consequence there may be no information independent of trust to rationalize trust. Paradigmatic cases are simple coordination problems. For a simple example and a deeper theoretical analysis see Lahno (2004:41f.)
13 See Frey and Jegen (2001) for a general overview.

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Lahno, B. (2017) "Trust and Collective Agency," in F. Faulkner and T. Simpson (eds.), *The Philosophy of Trust*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (An application of the theory of trust as an emotional attitude to joint action. Includes an analysis of coordination problems, in which no information to assess the risk of being left alone is in principle accessible; see FN10.)