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Trust as an Affective Attitude, 1996

Basic claim:

Trust is:

(i) an attitude of optimism that the goodwill and competence of another will extend to cover the domain of our interaction with her;

together with:

(ii) the expectation that the one trusted will be directly and favourably moved by the thought that we are counting on her.

Expanding (i): the attitude of optimism is not a straightforward belief; it is rather an 'affective or emotional' attitude that 'leads us to anticipate a favourable outcome'. Typically not global, but restricted to a domain. (Does this make it 3-place? Not obviously.) It is constituted by 'patterns of salience and tendencies of interpretation', resulting in 'a distinctive way of seeing another'. It functions 'analogously to blinkered vision'.

So even if the attitude of optimism is not itself a belief, it is centrally tied up with belief: it involves a systematic bias in our belief forming. Why shouldn't we think that that is a belief of a kind? And why think of it as an emotion? What has happened to the affective side?

Since it involves some kind of expectation of goodwill, machines and the like are ruled out as the focus of trust.

Expanding (ii): this distinguishes trust from reliance. Is it over narrow? Response: the physician needs to be *responsive* to her patients. But need this involve this kind of responsiveness?

Three advantages:

- (a) trust and distrust are contraries but not contradictories
- (b) trust cannot be willed
- (c) trust can give rise to beliefs that are resistant to evidence.

On (a): these are distinct attitudes; though not much is said about what distrust is.

On (b): affective attitudes 'look toward features of the world that would make them justified and can no more be sincerely adopted in the face of a known and acknowledged absence of such grounds than a belief can be adopted in the face of a known and acknowledged lack of evidence.

On (c): 'While affective attitudes can't be willfully adopted in the teeth of evidence, once adopted they serve as a filter for how future evidence will be interpreted.' Note the asymmetry between what it takes to trust, and what trust then entails.

Response to Baier takes very seriously the idea that entrusting with an object is the central attitude. Is that fair?

Section on reasons for trust looks like a preliminary version of an inquiry into trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness, 2012

Focus on trustworthiness rather than trust. Why are these separate undertakings: presumably because, notoriously, they can come apart. But clearly we should expect them to be complementary.

Central claim: 'B is trustworthy with respect to A in domain of interaction D, if and only if she is competent with respect to that domain, and she would take the fact that A is counting on her, were A to do so in this domain, to be a compelling reason for acting as counted on'

Differences from 1996:

(i) Explicit 3-place formulation

(ii) Rejection of the idea that goodwill is central. 'If we weaken the notion of "goodwill" so that it encompasses benevolence, honesty, conscientiousness, integrity, and the like, we turn it into a meaningless catchall that merely reports the presence of some positive motive, and one that may or may not even be directed toward the truster.'

Nevertheless: 'There is, though, a kind of unity to this otherwise grab bag list of motives. If I have robust goodwill toward someone, of the kind found in friendship or good collegial relations, I will take the fact that they are counting on me to be a reason to act as I am being counted on in my motivationally efficacious deliberation.' Is that really the underlying unity? Is my reason for being honest that others are counting on me?

And is 'counting on' just relying? What has happened to the attempt to exclude machines from trust?

Focus on three 'fundamental facts of human existence': we are social, finite and reflective.

Social: 'together we can do what neither of us can do alone' Two readings of this, one instrumentally or contingently social (together we can move a piano), another intrinsically or essentially social (together we can be friends).

Finite: not so much a concern with mortality as a recognition of limited abilities.

Reflective: is this what limits trust to people?