

IV. Trust: Hinchman

IV. Trust and Diachronic Agency

Self-trust: constantly checking that the door is locked; constantly reconsidering what one means to buy.

Two takes on self-trust:

- (i) It is constitutive of agency; the agent gives itself a reason, providing a theoretical basis (Velleman)
- (ii) It is necessary to get things done; the agent needs to have tendencies to form (Gauthier)

Do our intentions provide reasons for actions? On the one hand it seems to involve a form of bootstrapping to think that forming an intention could give one a reason to follow through on that intention: that seems to have conjured the reason out of thin air. But on the other, once one has formed an intention, it is surely pathological to keep opening the question up again: that would be rather like keeping on checking that one had really locked the door.

Hinchman's response follows from his conception of intention. Working within a broadly Gricean structure in which recognition of one's purpose is part of what enables one to achieve that purpose, Hinchman suggests that in forming an intention to perform some act one expects and desires that one's future self will have a reason to perform that act as a result of one's later memory of that earlier desire (that's my take on the definition given on p. 31). In turn this desire is satisfied because one trusts one's earlier self. Where this trust is absent—where, for instance one thinks that one's earlier self was misinformed, or where one's desires have changed—there is no longer a reason.

So coming back to the Velleman/Gauthier distinction: the view seems to be that one has a theoretical reason to self-trust unless certain defeating conditional are met, which is a practical consideration. (I'm not sure I get this.)

2. Telling as Inviting to Trust

Again the structure here is broadly Gricean. Hinchman makes a three-fold distinction: between advising, telling, and merely asserting. One moves from asserting to telling when one's listener recognizes that one is providing a reason to *believe* in virtue of that very recognition; and one move from telling to advising when one's listener recognizes that one is providing a reason to *act* in virtue of that very recognition. And again the background here is a certain conception of trust: inviting the recognition involves inviting trust.

Compare: does one really lie in cases of 'bare-faced lying'? If not, perhaps the reason is that one isn't actually telling anyone anything. Note too that 'tell+wh' (I told him where the key was hidden is factive (unlike 'tell + that'), and so is well suited to the transmission of *knowledge* (at least knowledge+wh). Perhaps to tell someone something the person told must be in a position to learn (c.f. Garcia-Carpentero).

3. On the Risks of Resting Assured

Basic idea: we should distinguish trust being betrayed from it being disappointed. It can be disappointed but not betrayed through incompetence. It can be betrayed but not disappointed if the agent performs the action without the right attitude.

4. Disappointed Yet Unbetrayed

Abstract: “This paper engages two debates about trust, deriving from two distinct questions about the nature of trust. The first asks how to define trust. Does trusting B to ϕ involve anything more than relying on B to ϕ ? The second asks about the normative structure of trust. Does trust most fundamentally embody a two-place or a three-place relation? I’ll defend a new position in the second debate that yields an equally new position in the first. The standard three-place model highlights ‘A trusts B to ϕ .’ The two-place model prefers ‘A trusts B.’ On my new three-place model, both are less fundamental than ‘A ϕ s through trust in B.’ We do, of course, trust people to do things. But the most fundamental form of trust lies in doing something through trust in a person. I call this the Assurance View of trust because I’ll argue that trusting involves accepting another’s invitation to trust – an assurance, in effect, that the other is relevantly trustworthy. Trust thereby differs from mere reliance by how it makes available a reason to rely on the trusted. In mere reliance, your reason to rely on B is exogenous to the reliance relation, emerging, for example, from B’s track record of relevant reliability. When you trust B, by contrast, you take yourself to have a reason to rely on B that is endogenous to your trust, a reason grounded not merely in B’s reliability, exogenously considered, but in B’s ongoing responsiveness to your relevant needs. The Assurance View’s key insight emerges, I’ll argue, from cases wherein trust is disappointed – the trusted does not do what you trusted her to do – yet not thereby betrayed.”

The orthodoxy in analytic philosophy discussions is to see the paradigm state as a 3-place: A trusts B to F. Recently there have been some attempts (!) to refocus things on a 2-place paradigm: A trusts B. That has the nice effect of making trust seem less transactional, but there are difficulties with explaining how one can trust a person in some areas and not in others. Hinchman here proposes a third paradigm: A Fs through trust in B. There is still action there, but now it is the truster’s action, not the trustee’s, that is to the fore, and that provides a way of bringing greater stress onto the relationship, tying this back into Hinchman’s earlier work on assurance.