kinds, kinds defined by clusters of significant laws. In regard to such kinds, we may be interested in the question whether their properties and behavior are explainable in terms of their microstructure. And this may fairly naturally give rise to talk of levels, "higher" and "lower" properties, and the like. However, such kinds may not belong to any single level, but rather cut across various levels, in the kind of monolithic overarching system of levels we see in Morgan or Oppenheim and Putnam. One way of making levels talk meaningful and helpful is to localize it and take a top-down approach, as I have suggested: we first pick a nomic kind of interest to us and go from there, rather than start with a comprehensive levels ontology and then try to locate each object, or kind, of interest to us at a particular level in that ontology.

But don't we need a comprehensive ontology of levels to pose and discuss certain philosophical issues, for example, the thesis of universal microphysical reductionism, a topic for Oppenheim and Putnam, and the claims of emergentism as giving a global ontology and history of the world? As for emergentism, it is likely that the emergentist will want a special dedicated hierarchy of levels that can be justified only if the basic doctrines of emergentism are correct and there are genuine emergent properties. No scheme that is neutral to the issue of emergence will likely serve the emergentist's needs. As for the global thesis of microphysical reductionism, I do not believe we need a global levels ontology to make sense of it and to debate its merits. Even in the kind of picture I have tried to present, without a single hierarchy of levels, the question can be raised for each kind that we recognize, or instead for each object, whether its properties can be reduced, or reductively explained, on the basis of its microphysical structure. To argue about this, and, indeed, to make use of some of the considerations marshaled by Oppenheim and Putnam for 'unity of science', we do not need a single monolithic and all-inclusive hierarchy of levels.

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Developing Trust

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Abstract
This paper examines developing trust in two related settings: (1) a rationality overcoming distrust; and (2) developing a mature capacity for trusting/distrusting. In focusing exclusively on the first problem, traditional philosophical discussions fail to address how an evidence-based paradigm of rationality is easily co-opted by (immature) agents in support of rational distrust (or trust) - a manifestation of the second problem. Well-regulated trust requires developing a capacity to tolerate the uncertainties that characterize relationships among fully autonomous self-directed agents. Early relationships lack the uncertainty since caregivers take primary responsibility for determining a child's interests, reducing the scope (if not the intensity) of potential conflict between self and other. Once agents recognize that adulthood demands forgoing the security embedded in such relationships of dependence, they are free to embrace a more appropriate paradigm of rationality for guiding their thought and action in interactions with others.

This paper is about developing trust, a phrase that is multiply ambiguous. I mean to talk about developing trust in a number of different settings: (1) developing trust as a movement from the unconscious, unchosen, innocent trust of infancy to the reflective trust of adulthood; (2) developing trust as a movement from a condition (either dispositional or circumstantial) of distrust and suspicion to one of trust and confidence; and, finally, therefore (3) developing trust as a process that is transformative in nature, both of a person's psychic world and the world of potential action and interaction he or she consequently inhabits. As Trudy Govier remarks:

Those who trust more often than not will see people and situations differently from those whose tendency is to be suspicious of others. They will structure their social world differently, and will for these reasons encounter different opportunities and relationships.1

Her view is supported by the psychoanalyst Isaac Alexander, and Haggard:

By the world,
I think my wife be honest and
thik she is not,
I think that thou art just and
think that thou art not.
I'll have some proof.
- Shakespeare Othello III. iii. 392-402
People see only what they are prepared to see.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

1

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hypothesis. First and most obviously, they are hypothetical in their
relation to the content of the paper. Hypotheses are statements of
relationships that are not necessarily true. They are used to
make predictions that can be tested by experimentation or other
methods. Hypotheses are important because they help to define
the scope of a study and provide a framework for organizing the
results.

Second, and more subtly, they are hypothetical in their
relation to the ideas presented in the paper. The ideas presented
are not necessarily true, but they are useful because they help
us to understand the world. Hypotheses are like tools that we use
to build our understanding of the world. They are not the
world itself, but they are useful for building our models of
the world.

Finally, they are hypothetical in their relation to the
ideas of others. The ideas presented are not necessarily true,
but they are useful because they help us to understand the
ideas of others. Hypotheses are like bridges that we use
to connect our ideas with the ideas of others. They are not
the bridges themselves, but they are useful for connecting
our ideas with the ideas of others.

In conclusion, hypotheses are hypothetical statements
that are useful for making predictions, for organizing the results,
and for connecting our ideas with the ideas of others. They are
not necessarily true, but they are useful because they help us
to understand the world.

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for 'safe acts' are perpetually impossible normally satisfied. This is reminiscent of the Sisyphus tale epidemiologists take on when they try to give a 'straight' answer to certain forms of scepticism - i.e., an answer that would satisfy the sceptic on his own terms. Often, there is no such answer to give. Instead of bowing to the sceptic's (methodological) paranoia, the correct response is, first, to diagnose what drives him to seek a kind of certainty that is structurally unattainable and then to propose a new way of responding to him, both personally and philosophically.

Analogously, in responding to the unyielding diaster, we need to diagnose what drives him to seek structurally unattainable reassurance about a persistently doubted other. Taking a developmental perspective helps by subverting our servient pre-Kantian urge to view external conditions as objective- ly determinable by the agent in question and so wholly responsible for his attitude of distrust. In a moral-psychological version of Kant's Copernican revolution, it forces us to consider how the agent's attitudes towards others are always the result of a complex interplay of inner and outer conditions.

Thus, as a first step, I will be arguing that the unyielding diaster, like the sceptic, must be urged to turn his critical gaze inwards in a new way even as he turns his gaze outwards to the external world. For while it is comforting to suppose that a person need only be encouraged to adopt the disinterested stance of an ideally rational agent in order to overcome persistent suspicions, it is far from clear that such a strategy could ever be successful. There are familiar reasons for this, which I will canvass below, having to do with the ready assimilation of evidence to cognitively pre-activated schema. But the objection I want to press cuts even deeper, since it questions the psychological use such agents can make of principles of conduct that are purportedly purely epistemic. My claim will be that if the psychological cause of an agent's distrust has to do with immature and, therefore, unrealistic expectations about what an adult relationship of trust could involve, no amount of 'proof' of the other's trustworthiness will lay his fears to rest. He will always be disappointed by (and disappointing to the) (never quite) trusted other. He is seeking something that cannot be found in adulthood - a situation in which the trusted other takes on all the responsibility for maintaining the relationship between them. In this kind of person, the quest for proof becomes diagnostically, a strategy for avoiding the burdens of adult agency. Instead of facing the challenges of adult trust, the persistently distrust uses the epistemic ideal of rational neutrality to block his understanding of what building and maintaining such relationships require of him, and so shirk's the responsibilities that go along with adult trust. From his perspective, he searches for evidence to let himself off the hook - evidence that unsurprisingly he soon discovers of the other's often 'willful' inadequacies. Thus, the traditional ideal of rational agency is co-opted into a psychological structure that supports a particularly insidious form of self-deception. The agent who sits in 'distrust of judgement' of the other sees himself acting rationally and responsibly according to well-grounded and widely endorsed principles of inquiry and proof; yet, in fact, he does not reflect at all on what genuinely rational activity in the context of these relationships demands. Further, he believes his relationships fail for reasons wholly external to himself when in fact his own misplaced expectations prevent him from acting in good faith towards the other.

The deeper lesson I want to draw from this pertains more directly to the tradition of sceptical inquiry such an agent appropriates. If I am right, it is useless simply to admonish him for irrational and even immoral behaviour, since, in his case, he precisely uses this well-received paradigm of rationality to block the kind of reflection that could lead him to revise the tenor of his conduct towards others. This suggests that, as philosophers, we need to rethink what we mean by rational behaviour and judgement. For what this agent needs is something like a paradigm shift - a shift that philosophers can only begin to understand through a deeper exploration of the psychological mechanisms that drive such an agent to search outside his relationship with another for independent proof of the other's trustworthiness. We could call this exploration 'philosophical therapy', since it attends to how psychological and philosophical dimensions of a problem necessarily intertwine in the sphere of interpersonal behaviour. Its aim is to deepen both the theoretical and practical understanding of our epidemiological and moral capacities by calling attention to the kinds of psychological barriers that stand in the way of our continuing cognitive and affective development through mature interactions and relationships. In what follows, I will attempt to identify these barriers and argue, in agreement with Baier, that our philosophical tradition itself reflects and reinforces a conception of interpersonal behaviour that is developmentally retarded. But while Baier describes this conception as attractive to those who share a 'healthy and understandable', albeit adolescent drive towards autonomous self-assertion, I will claim the reverse. An agent's quest for objectivity in dealing with others by means of affective dismantling may well be adolescent, as is the philosophical tradition that supports it. However, so far from serving a maturating desire for autonomy in any straightforward sense, it demonstrates at least as much resistance to such autonomy. For autonomy in the context of mature relationships requires that an agent engage with trusted others, no longer as a child, but as a self-standing adult whose expectations are shaped by recognizing that others within these relationships are autonomous agents as well. In particular, this means coping with the kinds of differences that inevitably arise among adults and which need to be continuously negotiated if trust is to grow and endure. A capacity for persistent dynamic involvement with others demands from the agent a quality of reflective responsiveness that is unique to adult interpersonal relationships. It is thus to the task of fashioning on a different model of what it is to be rational in responding well to others, a model that can only make sense for him once his psychological need to hold onto the less demanding and more secure dependencies of childhood begins to disappear.

11 On this thrite, see Cavell (1972).

2 Let me begin my argument for the need to become more psychologically sophisticated in our theoretical attempts to understand the rationality of trust by returning to more familiar philosophical territory. If we acknowledge, as I claim we must, that we do not begin our epidemiological and moral lives as fully-developed human individuals, then the question arises: what makes us become human? The answer, I argue, lies in the way we interact with others.
oped, independent, and affectively neutral agents, it is crucial to ask what are the kinds of epistemological difficulties we face in dealing with others given our history of affective engagement and dependency? Earlier I said that the trusting and disturbing inhabit incommensurable worlds. Though many philosophers regard the notion of incommensurability with suspicion, I see it here to emphasize how our attitudes of trust and distrust shape our understanding of various events, leading us to experience the world in ways that tend to reinforce the attitudes we already hold. This phenomenon has already been interestingly discussed. 12

Judith Baker, for instance, in her article entitled “Rationality and Trust” describes an important kind of trust, “friendship trust”, which is “robustly resistant” to evidence that speaks against a friend’s presumed character and/or potential deeds. Suppose, Baker suggests, we have a friend, trusted as such, who is accused of some crime on substantial evidence. Do we credit the evidence? Do we cease to trust our friend on that basis? Baker writes:

...what others regard as evidence against...[my friend] isn’t considered by me as evidence at all. It is not that I close my ears to what people say, or refuse to look at, or repress, the facts. I believe that there is an explanation for the alleged evidence for the accusation which will clear it all up.

In advance of hearing the case, I am prepared to believe that there is such an explanation. I am biased in favour of my friend...I am committed to her being innocent. Moreover as the case grew, as evidence mounted, I do not have corresponding mounting doubts. Although there may be a time when I cease to believe in my friend, there are no limits which can be set in advance, on epistemic grounds, which would determine the point at which it is irrational to continue to trust her. 13

What goes for trust seems to go for distrust. As a chillingly unhappy counterpoint to Baker’s description of friendship trust, Trudy Govier notes:

12 Perhaps I would rephrase this as I do not mean to suggest that our attitudes towards others must be either one of trust or distrust. Certainly, when we encounter strangers a kind of trepidation is possible. Of course, if encounters with others are expanded and multifaceted, such neutral- ity may well outlast. In addition, it must be acknowledged that, while our attitudes of trust and distrust become more differentiated, more selective, more directed at particular others as we mature, so may be (often seems) predisposed to quick and emotionally selective judgments based on past experiences, pre-existing social structures, dependency relationships and a host of other factors that affect our judgements both consciously and unconsciously. Thus, the ‘neutrality’ we had towards strangers must not be equated with the absence and (so my friend) mythical neutral- ity presupposed in much philosophical work.

13 Not discussed in my text is the suggestive work of Karen Jones. In Jones (1996) the writer says: “While affective attitudes can be willfully adopted in the teeth of evidence, once adopted they serve as a litmus for how future evidence will be interpreted.” (p. 180). Further, trust and distrust can be “unlocked” in her view, by “controlling our patterns of attention, our lines of inquiry, and our interpretations” (p. 222). Given these reflections, she raises two questions that are germane to my work: Is this paper (i.e what are the consequences of trusting and distrusting given the kinds of psychological mechanisms that control our affective patterns of attention, and so forth?) (ii) how are agents to evaluate their own capacity for entractically cultivating trust or distrust given “self-confirming” nature of these attitudes? (p. 187).


Since our attitudes of trust and distrust govern how we experience the world, how we interpret the actions of others and the beliefs we thereby form, it is irre- sponsible to regard these attitudes as purely responsive to evidence even if we think them so. It is irresponsible and occasionally even tragic, as Shakespeare has movingly instructed us.

Once the seed of doubt was sown in Othello’s mind, he was able to assemble ‘solid proofs’ of Desdemona’s imagined infidelity out of the most tenuously ambiguous occurrences. We watch in despair as he is led from professing his unspeakable belief in Desdemona (“My life upon her faith!”) to his utter conviction of her betrayal with the ever-loyal Cassio (“She’s like a liar gone to burning hell?”) (Othello I.iii, 297, VII.1.122). And by what evidence? Desdemona’s gentle plea on Cassio’s behalf, a partially overheard (and, hence, misinterpreted) conver- sation, a hurried leave-taking between the putative ‘lovers’, and, of course, a stolen handkerchief – the only evidence the villainous lago finds necessary to fab- ricate. lago’s brilliance thus lies not in any能把candously devised and executed plot, but in his recognition of the psychological power of the nearly distrustful mind to weave a coherent fantasy around a few mainly chance events, here made salient to Othello in large part by Othello’s own conviction of his capacity for objective interpretation. (What he perceives thus becomes ‘proof’ of Desde- mona’s infidelity). Othello is duped, then, not so much by lago, as by the work- ings of his own mind and by his inability to understand how his attitudes of trust and distrust structure his world.

It’s important for philosophers not so much to make the same mistake. As Baker rightly cautions, it’s criminals, not moral theorists, who by and large have been adept at understanding our cognitive vulnerability to interpreting the character and deeds of those to whom we relate through shifting planes of trust and distrust. But now, if our attitudes of trust and distrust do not arise straightforwardly from the evidence, how can they be rationally determined and/or assessed? For I con- cur with Judith Baker that the trust she characterises as going beyond, or even against, the evidence – friendship trust – can be rational. And I take it we would like to say in consequence, and a propos this exemplary case, that Othello’s shift
in attitude towards Desdemona from trust to distrust was tragically irrational, as indeed was his continuing trust (against Desdemona) in his so-called "honest lago". What can be the basis for these assessments?

If we focus on Othello, it is natural and in a sense reasonable to conclude that there was something wrong with him, with the way he was determined to put together the elements that fuelled his unhappy fantasy: if only he had been genuinely responsible about exercising his rational faculties, this would never have happened. But how precisely do we understand Othello to have failed in this responsibility? Our philosophical training makes it tempting to suppose he simply let his emotions get in the way. If only he had avowed more self-consciously for the disinterested objectivity beloved of traditional epistemological and moral theory, everything would have been all right. He would have recognized that lago was just as open to question and doubt as Desdemona herself and consequently done a better job of assessing the evidence against her in an unbiased way. Admittedly, his would have produced less exciting theatre, but at least Othello's behaviour would have been morally and epistemically irreproachable.

Or would it have been? From a moral point of view, even this 'ideal' scenario falls short in its description of the kind of behaviour we expect from others with whom we have a particular kind of trusting relationship. As Baker has noted of 'friendship trust', the kind of trust that exists paradigmatically between committed lovers, we rely on trusted others to believe in us despite what a so-called 'neutral examination of the evidence' might show. We expect them to react to events in a way that demonstrates (in a sense to be explored) their trust towards us. This is what it means to be a friend. Othello thus betrays Desdemona in the first instance by not understanding and respecting the quality of their relationship. As Baker argues, '... to think of someone as a friend is to expect her to have one's interests at heart, to act on one's behalf, to take one's part, and to take one at one's word. To be a friend is, reciprocally, to be trustworthy oneself.' And what does such trustworthiness involve? The capacity to understand and follow through with the kind of commitment one has made to the other in putting oneself forward (explicitly, in marriage vows) as his or her friend — i.e. as a person who stands by and believes in the trusted other despite challenges that might cause more neutral individuals (see note 13) to be wary.

But does this mean that, from an epistemic point of view, individuals within various trusting relationships are morally committed to thinking and acting irrationally — for instance, by ignoring or reconstructing evidence that points to the other's bad character or behaviour? Is it not right to think that there comes a point where continuing trust in others, even intimate others, shades into culpable gullibility? Some might resist this characterization, arguing that it begs an important question about who really is at fault when someone has been gowled in such a relationship. Lars Herbsteg, for instance, would like to shift the onus of blame entirely onto the guller:

When someone's trust has been misplaced,... it is always, I want to say, a misunderstanding to regard that as a shortcoming on his part. The responsibility rests with the person who failed the trust. For reasons for this is that, unlike reliance, the grammar of trust involves a perspective of justice: trust can only concern that which one person can rightly demand of another.17

There is something attractive about this idea. Certainly someone who betrays a friend's trust has a lot to answer for. Yet, it seems overly-romantic to presume the trustee is without any responsibility for taking care of himself within a trusting relationship and, hence, for taking care of the relationship itself. After all, the trustee we have in mind here is an adult with capacities for observation and judgement, not to mention interpersonal communication. And we expect him to go on using these throughout his relationship with another. Thus, if the gullible adult is not morally at fault (and I am not directly suggesting that he is), then at least he may be faulted on cognitive grounds. By putting (or continuing) his trust in another uncritically, he becomes something like an infant who cannot do otherwise. Of course, since the gullible adult can do otherwise, he fails to live up to his cognitive responsibilities as a mature person. Consequently, we are right to say he trusts irrationally.

This, of course, was not Othello's problem, at least with respect to Desdemona. Indeed, one might argue that he was doing his best to avoid such gullibility by facing the possibility of her infidelity and seeking evidence that would establish it. However, before we congradulate Othello for trying to heed the voice of reason at least in this regard, we must not forget that his over-ready distrust of Desdemona — his apparent unwillingness to being gullled — was matched by a radically uncritical trust in Iago. This accounts for the sobering realism of Othello's character. Inconvenient trust is often accompanied by inconvenient distrust, whether these attitudes are directed towards different people at the same time or towards the same person at different times (recall Othello's earlier passionate professions of trust in Desdemona). This points to a relationship between such attitudes. In fact, I suggest, they spring from a common source: namely, an immature psyche that persists in many adults and which is manifested in part by their embracing an unthinking myth about the kind of disengaged neutrality that mature thought and action towards others involves. Let me now look at this myth more closely. Like many myths, it has some elements of truth which may partly explain its intellectual and emotional appeal: for instance, that as adults we have — and ought to exercise — both allocentric control and the capacity for evidence-based reflective judgement in difficult circum-

17 Herbsteg (1989), p. 319. The difference between trust and reliance, according to Herbsteg, is that reliance is an attitude we adopt towards others because we have judged them to be trustworthy in some respect. Trust, on the other hand, is an all-out attitude we take towards others when we are not usually in a position to judge. 'We trust what they do by way because we trust in them. Once again, I agree with Herbsteg's idea that full-blown trust goes beyond (sometimes against) the evidence (see my comments on Baker above), but I disagree that adult trust has faith (no in the passive sense) we have in it described. 'I rely on someone for us I am look down at him from above. I exercise my command of the world. I remain the judge of his actions. In trusting someone I look up from below. I learn from the other when the world is about. I let him be the judge of my actions.' (p. 310). On my account. adult trust is neither Herbsteg's reliance nor his trust. To extend his metaphor, I neither look down on the other nor up at her; ideally, I try to look her in the face.
stances. Yet living up to our cognitive and affective responsibilities cannot entail becoming a rational agent in the traditional sense. For, as we have seen, such rationality presupposes a kind of abstract neutrality with respect to others that is simply not possible for beings that develop as we do. Like it or not, we are in one way or another dependent on others from the day we are born and develop. Our cognitive and moral capacities are not detached from the affective engagements with others. Of course, the dependencies shape us change over time in keeping with our maturing needs and interests. But they do not go away. They continue to condition our affective lives and, so, modulate how we experience the world. This is not to say we do not also mature in our cognitive capacities for observation, planning, judgment, self-direction, and so forth. But it is to say that such capacities mature and, can only mature, in large part through a maturing capacity to understand and handle the way our affective engagements contribute to our lives. Thus, we need not completely repudiate that aspect of our intellectual tradition which insists that we need to be independent and self-sufficient if we are to realise our potential as rational creatures. But once we acknowledge our human situation to be one that is unavoidably entangled with others throughout the various stages of our lives, we need to revise our understanding of what such qualities amount to and how they are best developed. Coming into our own as "independent" or "autonomous" agents requires that we learn to handle our dependencies maturely: it does not require us — per impossibile — to ignore or do without them. Moreover, the philosophical importance of understanding "independence" or "autonomy" in this way cannot be underestimated: for only then can we begin to see how narrower questions, like how we ought to judge others on the basis of evidence, are properly subsumed under the much more important and general question of how we ought to use reason-directed affectively in responding well to them. What, then, does it mean to become a maturely dependent creature, and how did Orbello fail in this regard? More precisely, how can his failure of rationality within his trusting relationships be understood more completely as a failure of maturity? To answer these questions, it will help to examine the nature of the dependencies that exist within the two kinds of trusting relationships, infant and adult.

Infant trust is often characterised in terms of utter dependency. The relationship between infant and adult is dramatically asymmetrical. As Hertzberg says: "the human infant is not ... an independently intelligible living unit, and not simply because of the physical cares which he must receive from others, but because the sense of his activity depends on the way in which it is interwoven with the activity of others." 18 The developmental psychologist, Jerome Bruner, has called this sense-making structuring of activity, 'parental scaffolding.' The idea behind it is that the child comes into the world without much capacity for self-maintenance, still less with the capacity for self-directed thought and action and, hence self-determination. Nevertheless, he has impressive capacities for imitation and, in particular, for imitative mirroring, that of the facial movements of his caretakers, and of their body movements, and finally of their actions with objects.


The dependency the child experiences in the hands of the adult is thus the dependency of "self" construction. The parent literally makes it possible for the child to define and understand itself in social space, which is a space at the same time created by the parent. The child's capacity for self-determination is thus, at this stage, taken on by the parent — eventually, of course, in order that the child can develop an independent capacity for self-determination. Paradoxically, then, self-determination must begin with other determination: the child becomes an agent by having its agency enacted by another. Now, is the bond in this relationship a bond of trust?

There are good reasons to call it trust, but reasons not so well trust. Trust is not mere reliance, but reliance that is marked essentially by a recognition of the other's personhood. As Richard Holton claims, "Trusting someone does not involve relying on them and having some belief about them: a belief, perhaps, that they are trustworthy. What it involves is relying on them... and investing that reliance with a certain attitude... we normally take only towards people... when the car breaks down we might be angry, but when a friend lets us down we feel betrayed." 20 Holton never really clarifies what we adopt such different attitudes towards the things we rely on as opposed to the people we trust, but it seems clear that it must have to do with our expectations that others' behaviour towards us will be governed by their acknowledgement of our personhood. Objects don't do that. Trust, thus, involves recognising the other's acknowledgement of oneself as a source of self-determined action, hence as a reflectively self-conscious person with reactive attitudes towards other people and the world. Without these attitudes, and their mutual recognition and acknowledgement, we would be incapable of moral interactions. 21

21 In the same way that H. Price has said we would be incapable of genuinely linguistic interactions. On reactive attitudes, see Thompson (1982).

21 In the same way that H. Price has said we would be incapable of genuinely linguistic interactions. On reactive attitudes, see Thompson (1982).
acknowledgement of his personhood. But the infant is not yet a person, in the sense that he is likewise capable of recognising either the parent or himself as a person each in his or her own right. At best, the infant is capable of what Meltzoff and Gopnik describe as a kind of functional recognition: here is something like me, i.e., something that can be imitated and imitates me in return.22 So the infant is not yet in a position to trust the parent. But it is trust-making, and made only because the parent behaves as if the child trusts the parent – i.e., the parent acknowledges and acts towards the child as a person whose attitudes and actions towards the parent are not only self-determined, but also conditioned by the child’s recognition of the parent’s own personhood. In this way, the child comes to be the kind of being that could trust the parent, i.e., a being that is capable of full-blown adult trust.23

Adult trust involves a dependency that is different in kind from ‘infant trust’ since the trusting adult relies upon the other, he is vulnerable, like the infant, to actions and attitudes outside of his control. Nevertheless, the adult relationship between trustee and trusted is importantly symmetrical. The trustee does not depend on the other either for self-determination or for maintaining the relationship between them as a relationship between persons. He is a person in his own right. The trust he gives is, therefore, ‘chosen in his own capacity for recognising the relationship between him and the one he trusts as a relationship conditioned by mutual acknowledgement. And since such acknowledgement does not depend on the adult case on the other’s presence that he is a person with fully self-directed thoughts and intentions, the thoughts and intentions he actually has require acknowledgement by the trusted other if the other is to treat him as a person.

The adult thus requires from the trusted other something much more than the infant requires and also something much less. He requires that his vulnerability to the trusted other be recognised as the vulnerability of one self-determined person to another. It is thus a vulnerability based on interests, needs, and desires which are importantly the trustee’s own and to which he trusts the other can and will be sensitive, guiding his actions accordingly. But, of course, since he requires this kind of full acknowledgement from the other (rather than parental self-enactment), he must be prepared for disappointment. The trusted other is a person, a person in his own right as well – with needs, desires, and importantly his own. So, even with all the good will in the world the trusted other may not be able to live up to the trustee’s hopes and expectations, especially because she has misunderstood the trustee’s needs and desires or because her own needs and desires cannot be easily reconciled with the trustee’s own and cannot be given up without serious compromise. Since the trusted other does not take on the role of determining the trustee’s needs and desires herself, the trusted other can betray the trusting adult in a way that she cannot betray the so-called trusting child. This is not to minimise what can happen to the child. On the contrary. The child can certainly be profoundly and invisibly damaged by the parent on whom he

23 This position is developed more fully in McGee and Petris (forthcoming). For a similar point, see Hervey (1989): p. 116.

must rely. But because the parent takes on the role of determining the child’s understanding of his own needs and desires, the child cannot experience, at least initially, the gap between self and other as a gap of potentially conflicting interest. So what happened to Othello? Why do I claim he was immature in his understanding of trust and trusting relationships? Othello was caught somewhere between infancy and adulthood, wanting the security of infancy within an adult relationship. He aimed for this security by making his trust in others contingent upon their needs and desires being unconditionally from his own, i.e., in his project of manipulation and aided by his (benevolent) position of servitude, pandemic to this need by seeming to subordinate his own agency to Othello’s.

Writers, you ever-hungry lights above,
You elements that clip us round about,
Writers that here your lago dish give up
The execution of his wit, hands, heart
To wronged Othello’s service? (IV, ii, 460–464)

Desdemona, in the context of her real adult love, made no such pretense. She continued to enact her own agency by articulating desires and goals of her own. In the face of their potentially diverging interests, Othello’s trust in her depended on his acknowledging this feature of their relationship, including all the trials and tribulations that portends – always working to understand and be understood by the other, and with no guarantee for continuing success. He took refuge instead in a ‘nostalgic fantasy-memory’ (Bieri’s term) of the parent-child relationship in which the ground of its security and stability, self-determination by the other, had been completely effaced.24 By imagining such relationships to be possible in adulthood, Othello transformed his own need for such security into the oppressive and ultimately destructive ideal of trust beyond doubt. Thus, he demanded absolute proof of Desdemona’s fidelity, proof that (by nature of the psychological roots of this demand) could not be forthcoming. By failing to recognize his own contribution to this dynamic, Othello broke faith with Desdemona and with himself. With Desdemona, by failing to acknowledge her as a self-determining person in her own right (finally to the point of killing her), and with himself, by abrogating responsibility for directing his own life, not to Desdemona, of course, whose distance by dissection is one of our most dehumanising forms of denial. By which I mean that Othello’s relationship to Desdemona is no less 24 Bieri (1989) uses this expression to explain ‘...the persistent human adult tendency to profess trust in a creature God’. (P. 242). As noted before, Bieri argues that it is a form of the kind of trust in an all-powerful being, hence, a rejection of infant trust that may partly explain why discussions of trust are so limited in modern moral philosophy. ‘If trust is seen as a variant of the supected value of faith in the correspondence of the powers that be, then readiness to trust will be seen not just as a virtue of the weak but itself as a moral weakness, better replaced by vigilance and self-assurance, by self reliance or by cautious, minimal, and carefully monitored trust. The psychology of adolescence, not infancy, then gets glorified as the moral ideal.’ (Bieri) And it is ironic that the psychology adolescent. But, as I have argued, I believe it persists to many adults (even philosophers) because of a continued longing for, rather than rejection of, a state of infant trust. Hence, religious faith of the sort Bieri describes and his ‘caution, minimal, and carefully monitored trust’ are not terminal manifestations of the same underlying psychological condition.

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drama" which Othello insinuated would tell him authoritatively whether to trust her or not. But the answer was foreordained. To turn away from Desdemona, to seek elsewhere for the security she could not give him, was already to interpret her otherness as a form of betrayal. The 'evidence' thus became for Othello, not only a reassuring source of certainty, but also a certain (i.e., inevitable) source of Assurance: ex post facto confirmation that he was right to withdraw from her as he did.

Finally, a word about paradigms of rationality. The foregoing reading of Othello has been a philosopher's reading, aimed at revealing certain features of the complicated epistemology of trust that I claim have escaped more traditional analyses. As with any reading, it could be enhanced in a number of ways: I do not mention the social and political aspects of the play. I do not focus (directly) on issues of gender. And these are far from irrelevant to the philosophical examination of questions of trust and distrust. Indeed, I hope this paper makes obvious why such issues cannot be irrelevant and invites more work along these lines. Still, my explicit purpose has been more modest. It has been to insist that, even if we begin with narrower epistemological concerns, philosophers cannot go far without taking into account what it means for us to be in the world as developed and developing beings. In particular, I have tried to explain why the project of searching for objective proof for or against another's goodwill, though standardly encouraged, will not inevitably lead to rational attitudes of trust and distrust. On the contrary. One sees what one is prepared to see. This motto can be taken as a banal reminder to the agent to be scrupulous in his search for and assessment of evidence; or it can be taken in a psychologically and philosophically more suggestive way, as an observation that the agent cannot be expected to break out of the circle of self-confirming trust or distrust without letting go of a certain model of what it is to be rational in his relationships with others. It is not just that this model advocates affective neutrality in situations of interpersonal dependency, where such neutrality is neither desirable nor possible; this model operates psychologically to relieve the agent of the need to act as a genuinely responsible agent in the emotionally and cognitively challenging conditions of adult trust. To accept such a role may well be one of the hardest developmental tasks human beings can be motivated to accomplish – which may explain why we are also sometimes driven to avoid it. It means accepting, among other things, that relationships among consenting adults will always be constituted by the kind of difference that self-directed, yet affectively engaged individuals bring to one another – a source of structural uncertainty in the interpersonal dynamics of any given adult relationship. In the face of this uncertainty, we can either run from it, using an inappropriate paradigm of rationality to justify narrowly self-protective but, ultimately, self-infantilising and often harmful behaviour; or we can risk making ourselves vulnerable to others, actively acknowledging the fact that we might fail in our relationships with them or be betrayed by them, but recognising that such moments of trust are necessary to move forward in life, to create things we cannot yet imagine and to transform ourselves (and others) in ways we cannot yet anticipate.

This requires accepting a different paradigm of rationality – an alternative vision of how reason can serve the self-confident adult who is willing to stake his own capacities for survival under duress against the potential rewards of building successful relationships with others. In this context, it is not that questions of warranted trust disappear, but they do not have the same a priori urgency that drives the immature agent to seek guarantees against disappointment and pain. The mature agent understands that such guarantees cannot be had; he uses reason to respond well to particular others, conducting himself towards them in ways that invite them into a trusting relationship. He shows his awareness that their responsiveness is partly, thought not entirely, contingent upon his ability to understand and respect their interests and desires as features of their agency, rather than merely as potential blocks to his own. And he looks for signs in their responses that they are willing to do the same towards him. Only in such concrete exchanges can an agent determine how far his trust is warranted, for these will show him to what extent he can use reason constructively, not just to negotiate the difficulties that inevitably arise within mature relationships, but also to expand his self-understanding as he strives to understand and move forward with particular others. Reason, on this model, is not used to dominate the other or to protect the self; it is used to continuously discover the other and the self, as each party evolves through the dynamics of interaction. This means trusting in reason itself, not to offer guarantees against disappointment, but to provide the means for working through and moving beyond disappointment when such moments arise. For just as reason cannot deliver the sceptic from his self-imposed doubt, it cannot protect the agent from the difficulties attendant on adult trust. But this is hardly cause for despair – or, rather, with such 'dispair' comes the chance to develop a new understanding of what it means to be an agent reasoning with others in the world. For the moment he abandons the project of using reason 'objectively' from the perspective of an ideal (disengaged) observer is the moment he can begin to embrace a new project of exploring the unlimited potential of concrete, work-a-day reason used continuously and constructively to respond well to others in the context of his evolving relationships with them.

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Semantic Responsibility

Josefa Toribio

Abstract

In this paper I attempt to develop a notion of responsibility (semantic responsibility) that is to the notion of belief what epistemic responsibility is to the notion of justification being semantically responsible is shown to evoke the fulfillment of cognitive duties which allow the agent to engage in the realm of reason-laden discourses which render her beliefs appropriately sensitive to correction. The concept of semantic responsibility suggests that the notion of belief found in contemporary philosophical debates about content implicitly encompasses radically different classes of beliefs. In what follows I make those different types explicit, and sketch some implications for naturalization projects in semantics and for accounts of the (putative) non-conceptual content of perceptual experiences.

1. Introduction

In this paper I attempt to develop a notion of responsibility that is to the notion of belief what epistemic responsibility is to the notion of justification. I propose to call this semantic responsibility. The concept of semantic responsibility highlights the fulfillment of certain personal level cognitive duties regarding the holding or withholding of a belief. To fulfill these duties is for a subject to be capable of what I call forward-looking vulnerability by reason, i.e. to engage in inferential practices in which the subject can be prompted to corrections by reasons. Evidently, not all beliefs require for their entertainment the subject's capacity to engage in these kinds of inferential practice. Most (but by no means all) perceptual beliefs, for example, involve no such personal level cognitive duties. The concept of semantic responsibility thus suggests that the notion of belief found in contemporary philosophical debates about content implicitly encompasses radically different classes of beliefs. It will be part of my task here to make those different types explicit.

The thesis I want to defend is that the cognitive role of the beliefs which exhibit self-critical openness is so importantly different from the cognitive role of beliefs not thus critically open that it becomes fruitful to regard the two as exemplars of different cognitive limbs. We are semantically responsible only towards those of our beliefs thus open to reason-based correction. I shall use a deontological conception of epistemic justification as the anchor point from which to develop this notion of semantic responsibility. An adequate characterization of this notion will also require some discussion of the issue of voluntary control, since the plausibility of deontological conceptions of epistemic justification is often presented as requiring that our beliefs be under voluntary control (see e.g. Alston,