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On Being Trusted

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On Being an Object of Trust

Luis Buñuel's film *Los olvidados* [*The Forgotten Ones*] (1950) depicts the life of children living in desperate conditions in the streets of Mexico City. There is a scene in the film which I should like to recall here. It's a good many years since I last saw it, and I shall have to reconstruct the scene from memory, so I may get some of the details wrong, but I hope I remember the spirit of the scene correctly. Pedro, a boy of maybe 10 or 12, who for most of his young life has been a member of a cynical and brutal street gang, is sent to a juvenile rehabilitation program, which seems like a safe haven for him. The principal of the school sends him on an errand, entrusting him with a 50 pesos bill which he is to take somewhere, and tells him how important it is that the money is not lost. There is nothing to prevent Pedro from simply running off with the money. We sense that the principal wishes to convey a sense of self-worth to the boy by showing him trust. We also sense that the boy takes the trust seriously. It is clear to the viewer that this is the first time that a stranger has shown him this kind of trust, indeed treated him as anything but a heap of dirt. As soon as Pedro exits through the gates of the institution, however, a member of his old gang leaps on him. He makes away with the money in spite of Pedro's resistance. Pedro is ashamed and cannot return to the school.

I remember that my reaction to this scene was mortification on Pedro's behalf. The principal's gesture seemed to bring a glimmer of humanity into the boy's life. What interests me here is Pedro's perspective. Most philosophical accounts of trust start from the truster's perspective. They raise the question under what conditions, if any, it is wise to trust some other individual. The suggestion I wish to make is that by limiting our account to the perspective of the truster we miss out on some of the features that are distinctive of certain central cases of what we call trust. To get a clear

view of them, we should start by asking what it means to be *an object of trust*.[1] In this essay, I wish to discuss what is involved in this reversal of perspective, and the reasons that have led philosophers to overlook this aspect. I then try to show how a famous account of trust, that of Annette Baier, misses out on the nature of trust by focusing predominantly on the truster's perspective.

It should be noted that the word "trust" is used in a variety of ways; I do not propose to do justice to that variety, rather I want to draw attention to features characterizing some of the central cases in which the word is used.

It is crucial to Pedro's reaction that he felt he had betrayed the trust the principal had placed in him (or rather that the principal would believe he had). If rather than entrusting him with the money the principal had just inadvertently left it lying on his desk while he was turned away, or if he had dropped it out of his pocket, we might well have expected Pedro simply to pick it up and stow it away. In fact, he might have thought it silly not to, as long as he had a chance to get away with it. Suddenly finding himself an object of trust made all the difference. Why should it?

In fact, if we look at philosophers' accounts of trust, the reason why being an object of trust should make a difference becomes truly incomprehensible. There is one set of views which Karen Jones has called 'risk-assessment views'[2]. According to these views, 'people trust other people whenever they assume that the risk of relying on [them] to act a certain way is low – because it is in [their] self-interest to act that way.' Now why should the mere belief that the principal expected Pedro to take the money to its destination make it *more* important for Pedro to act honestly? Obviously, in the situation there was no such calculation of self-interest involved. At least on a crude, street-smart understanding of self-interest, it would clearly have been in Pedro's interest to take the money and run.

[1] As far as I know, the only thinker who has adopted this reverse perspective is the Danish theologian Knud Løgstrup, who seems to have thought more deeply about the nature of trust than most other philosophers. See Knud Ejler Løgstrup, *The Ethical Demand* (Notre Dame & London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997). My account of trust runs parallel to his to some extent.
[2] Karen Jones, 'Second-Hand Moral Knowledge,' *Journal of Philosophy* 96 (1999): 55-78.

But even supposing such a calculation had been involved: why should *that* matter to Pedro? On the contrary, if he thought that all that was involved on the part of the principal was a game-theoretical calculation of advantages and probabilities, that should, if anything, have lessened his concern not to let him down. Indeed, he might have taken that as an added incentive to make the best of the situation, money-wise: if the principal thinks he is being smart, why should he not try to outsmart him?

Nor did the principal have any other good reason to expect Pedro to be trustworthy. As far as reasons went, he had, on the contrary, every reason to mistrust him, given Pedro's past record. The principal, evidently, thought that the chance of awakening Pedro's sense of self-worth was worth the risk of losing the money. In a sense we could say that he did not truly trust Pedro, rather he was showing him what has been called therapeutic trust.[3] But what concerns us here is how Pedro must have understood the situation, and for him the trust was genuine (otherwise it could not have been therapeutic for him). He saw clearly that the principal had no *specific* reason to trust him. As we might put it – although Pedro would hardly put the thought into words, at any rate these words – he must have realized that what the principal saw in him was simply a *human being*; he saw someone who understood the situation and realized that he had it in his power to honor the principal's trust or to betray it. All other considerations were, so to speak, *external* to the principal's trust. As I understand the scene, it was *this* fact that made the trust sacred to Pedro. He discovered that he was not simply a point at which certain predictive lines accidentally meet. Rather, he was *a subject* to the other, someone who has it in his power, if he chooses, to act as guardian of the good.

As we might put it, the weaker the external reasons someone has for placing his or her trust in you, the greater will be the obliging force of that trust, and vice versa. If someone uses you for an errand simply because he considers your behavior predictable, that by itself gives you no additional reason not to disappoint him or her.

It might be thought that these are just psychological observations, having nothing to do with a philosophical understanding of trust. Perhaps, it will be said, some

[3] H.J.N.Horsburgh, 'The Ethics of Trust,' *Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1960): 343-354.

individuals respond to being trusted in the way I have outlined, or maybe it is characteristic of life in certain cultures. Why could we not imagine a world in which people were totally indifferent to the fact that others trusted them? But this account of trust is too superficial, I would argue. The obliging character of trust is, on the contrary, *internal* to the grammar of the word. If I recognize that the relation someone has to me is one of trust, that entails that there is something I would count as a betrayal of that trust. And so counting it means that I do not stand indifferently to the other's expectation. I may or may not honor her trust. If I should come to judge that I had actually betrayed her, however, I could hardly do so *except* in a spirit of remorse or at least self-recrimination.[4]

I can, of course, reject the obligation by arguing that our relation was not really one of trust. I may claim, rightly or wrongly, that the other's expectation was based on a misunderstanding, or that the other had no claim on my actions; or that, indeed, we were nothing to one another. (My doing so may, of course, be dishonest; it may be part of an attempt to repress the fact that I had betrayed her.) Of course, if for instance I receive a blackmail note saying, 'We trust you not to contact the police,' I will not feel obliged in any way. The blackmailers' expectation will not as such have a bearing on my actions (if I decide not to contact the police it would be for tactical reasons, not to honor a trust). In this case, we might say that the blackmailers were misusing the word "trust," or were being sarcastic.

If this is correct, that means that a society in which people were indifferent to trust cannot be imagined, for the same kind of reason that a society in which red is not a color cannot be imagined. What we would be imagining, in trying to do so, is a society in which there is no room for the concept of trust, like a society in which there is no concept of red. Whether a society in which there is no room for the concept of trust could be imagined, in turn, is a larger question. I shall say a few words about it later.

[4] Could a betrayal ever be justified? In other words, would we call something betrayal even though we thought it justified? I am not ruling out the possibility that we might. But the circumstances would be exceptional. My point, however, is simply that if we call something a betrayal, we are not indifferent towards it.

This helps us see more clearly why the risk-assessment account of trust is off the mark. An understanding of trust cannot be had by simply focusing on whatever thinking is going on in the mind of the person who trusts. No matter how strong the grounds the other may have for predicting that I will behave in ways beneficial to his projects and desires, no matter how smartly he deliberates, those deliberations by themselves will not change our relation into one of trust. On the contrary, as I have argued, *the more explicitly* those external considerations enter into the relation, *the less* it comes to have a character of trust. This means that the more a relation conforms to the philosophers' conception of rational trust, the less trustlike it becomes. Someone who has realized this is the philosopher Lawrence Becker. He writes:

> … it is natural to think that our trust should always be a cognitive matter in the sense that we should always try to connect it to good estimates of others' trustworthiness. Moreover, even when we cannot estimate this, our trust should be a cognitive matter in the sense that we should monitor its consequences. Thoughts like these rightly make the strategic analysis of trust irresistible.
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> That is certainly part of the attraction of cognitive trust for us all, but it is not the whole story for … it does not adequately reveal a disturbing peculiarity – namely, that cognitive accounts of trust appear to eliminate what they say they describe.[5]

Trust and the Belief-Desire Model of Action

I should like to suggest that it is not by accident that philosophers, especially those in the analytic tradition, have found it difficult to give an account of trust. The character of a trusting relation is hard to reconcile with certain predominant trends in Western philosophy and Western culture more generally: with what might be called its cognitive and individualist bias. On this view, the basic relation of a human being to his or her world is that of the solitary observer who gathers factual information about

[5] Lawrence C.Becker, 'Trust as Noncognitive Security about Motives,' *Ethics* 107 (1996): 43-61. The quotation is from p. 47.

her environment and then applies it in action. When this is the starting point from which human life is regarded, what might be called a cognitive or instrumental view of trust comes to seem inevitable.

This seems to be true in particular of philosophers who approach the subject from within what is sometimes called the *belief-desire model* of human agency. This model is important, partly because it is quite influential within contemporary analytic philosophy of mind (even though it has come under fire from various angles), but mainly because I believe it answers to certain deep-seated ideas or pictures that we all of us tend to share of what it means to think about the world and to act in it. This model, I would argue, stands in the way of an understanding of what it means to have a relation of trust.

According to the belief-desire model, human intentional action is guided by, and is to be assessed in terms of, two components: beliefs and desires. Desires set the goals of our actions, beliefs are concerned with the means. Beliefs may accord or fail to accord with the facts. For agents with the normal capacities for observation and reasoning, beliefs, in the absence of countervailing factors, will tend to adjust themselves to the facts. Thus, in the long run, our beliefs will converge on the way things are, but there is no corresponding corrective for desires. Beliefs, accordingly, may be rational or irrational, desires are non-rational; they are purely expressive of the agent; there is no question of a person's desires corresponding or failing to respond to some kind of reality. Desires determine what it means for things to matter to us. Reality is only instrumentally important, in impacting our ability to fulfil our desires.

Since desires originate in the individual and beliefs tend to adapt themselves to the facts, there is no room for *meaningful* interaction between beliefs and desires; or rather: the only form such interaction can take has to be either irrational or non-rational.

This view of things sets the stage for an analysis of human relations. It is hard to accommodate the interpersonal character of trust on the belief-desire model. In fact, it is one of a number of relations or attitudes which, in many of their forms, have a similarly interpersonal character. These include love, respect, gratitude, admiration, as

well as hatred, resentment, blame, etc.[6] On the belief-desire model, *the other is always just an object to me.* His or her importance to me is dependent on how she stands in relation to the desires I happen to have. Thus, a human being may have a bearing on my ability to fulfil my desires, say, by aiding my efforts or hindering them. Again, through sympathy or affection I may come to mirror my desires on those of another, in the sense that her being happy or sad makes me happy or sad, but this then is only a contingent fact: it might as well be the other way round.

On this account, the question whether I should expect someone to honor my trust or betray it is an empirical matter: it is a question of the desires he happens to have, or the desires I am capable of evoking in him.

A core assumption on the belief-desire model, in other words, is that human motivation is symmetrical with regard to good and evil. The normal person, other things being equal, is just as likely to wish to wrong me as to treat me decently. It follows from this that the normal, default, attitude to take up towards our fellow human beings is one of suspicion, i.e. of being equally prepared for the good and the bad.

Against this, I would argue that human motives are are not symmetrically related to good and evil. I intend this, not as a statistical but as a logical claim: there is an explanatory asymmetry between good and evil motives. If I ask a stranger for directions and he gives a truthful reply, there is nothing remarkable about this; if he lies, that calls for an explanation: maybe he wishes to keep strangers off his land, or hates tourists, or is ashamed to let on that he does not know the answer. I obviously need special reasons to treat someone with suspicion, but I do not need special reasons to expect an honest or decent response. In fact, if we did not have this expectation, we would never ask strangers for directions. This asymmetry is intrinsic to the intelligibility that human beings have to one another, just as it is instrinsic to their intelligibility that we expect their grasp of the situation to converge on the

[6] For a classical discussion of some of these relations – of what he calls reactive attitudes (blame, resentment, gratitude, etc) – see P. F. Strawson, 'Freedom and Resentment,' in his collection of essays *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* (London: Methuen, 1974).

factual. People are not just conglomerations of beliefs and desires, folk psychological constructs, to one another.

Or, considering the matter from the first person point of view: if I discover that someone has placed her trust in me (and provided I concede that her trust is genuine), this becomes part of the reality which forms the arena of my actions, no less than do such facts as that the streets are slippery, or that this gun is loaded, or that the soup is getting cold.

Trust vs. Reliance

As I suggested, for someone who adopts the belief-desire model of human action there seems to be no alternative to regarding trust as a matter of risk-assessment. Inevitably, he will consider my suggestion that a relation is the less trust-like the more external reasons enter into it paradoxical. A consequence of this is that it becomes impossible to uphold the distinction, noted by several philosophers, between trust and reliance. Let me say a few words about this distinction. It concerns the difference between two attitudes or relations differing in their grammar. The distinction may not always be explicitly marked in our choice of words. I should like to characterize it in the following terms, drawing in part on formulations I used in an earlier article.[7]

To rely on someone is to exercise one's judgment about her. It is based on one's past experience with the other, on things one knows or has learned about her. Because of this, one has come to believe what she says, or one depends on her to get certain things done or not to do certain other things. It is also on the basis of this knowledge that one's reliance is to be assessed: was it really sensible for me to rely on her to the extent that I did, in light of past evidence? Reliance has a more or less specific content: one relies on a person *for particular purposes*. There is a more or less definite range of things concerning which I am prepared to take her word, or a more or less definite range of things I expect her to do or not to do.

[7] 'On the Attitude of Trust,' in Lars Hertzberg, *The Limits of Experience* (Helsinki: Acta Philosophica Fennica, 1994).

Reliance is like factual belief in the sense that my relying on someone is conceptually independent of whatever attitude I take to her in other respects. I may think she has a weak character, or is naïve or selfish, etc., and yet rely on her for some particular thing or other. In this sense, reliance seems not to be, essentially, an attitude towards a person. The way one may rely on people seems to be analogous in some respects with the ways one may rely on a tool, a measuring instrument, etc. On the other hand, I can only trust a *human being*, for only a human being can betray my trust.

Reliance, in an important sense, is self-contained: the decision whether or not to rely on someone is ultimately an affair between me and myself. It is not dependent on whether the person being relied on is aware of my reliance or not, or of what she may think about this. Whether or not someone can be blamed for failing to do what he was relied upon to do depends on the circumstances of the case.

What is basic to a situation involving trust, on the other hand, I want to say, is that the trustful person and the person he trusts stand in a mutual relation. What primarily comes to mind are the relations between children and parents, between spouses, between lovers or between friends, between students and teachers. These are cases in which the parties know each other more or less intimately; they are aware of the nature of their relation and of each others' needs. Trust is an instrinsic part of our understanding of these relations. This does not mean, of course, that the parties will always trust one another, but a failure of trust will mean that the relationship is flawed in some way: something has gone wrong with it at some stage. The bond of trust may be broken through one party's betrayal, or through the other party's inability to be trustful, or both. Trust is not limited to these kinds of relations, however; an *element* of trust enters into various situations: for instance, every time two persons speak to one another[8], or when people encounter one another in a public space. Here too, both parties are aware of one being dependent on the other, or their being mutually dependent, and the trust of one party is aimed at the other as an individual. Of course, in this type of relation their knowledge of each other is limited, but so is the scope of the trust: I trust the other to receive what I am saying in a spirit of openness, to give me the correct directions or the correct time of day, not to bump into me on purpose,

[8] This aspect is emphasized by Løgstrup, op. cit., pp. 17 f.

etc. I normally have this kind of trust in the absence of any specific information about the trustworthiness of the other. (The degree of trust is of course subject to cultural variation. We may be warned, for instance, of going into certain neighborhoods alone after dark.) A different case, again, is public trust, the trust of the electorate in those who govern them and represent them. Here, the personal relation is one-way: a newly elected president, say, is not personally acquainted with all those who voted for her, but she is aware of their claims; while they, on the other hand, place their trust in her as an individual.

In all these cases, the obligation of trust is internal to the relation in question; it is not something that can be added or subtracted at will. As Løgstrup points out, we can no more invent an obligation of trust where it is not inherent in the relation than we can explain it away in the cases in which is. 'Trust is not of our making, it is given,' he writes.[9] In the absence of this element of trust, these types of relations would not be intelligible as the kinds of relations they are. Moving among strangers in a public space would then be as foolhardy as swimming among sharks.

By characterizing a relation as one of trust, I commit myself to the view that certain ways of acting or failing to act will open up the person who is an object of trust to a charge of betrayal. Where nothing will count as a betrayal, nothing will count as trust. Trust may embody certain specific expectations: since I trust her I expect her to tell the truth or to obey my wishes; yet her failure to do so may not be a betrayal if she had good reasons for acting differently. Thus, if she had just reasons for not doing what I expect her to do, I cannot *rightly* accuse her of having betrayed my trust (of course I may accuse her all the same). Trust can only exist within a sphere of justice.

Will-Based Accounts of Trust

Some philosophers have recognized the limitations of risk-assessment accounts of trust. Karen Jones makes a contrast between these and another type of account which she calls "will-based." According to her definition, these accounts 'find trust only where there is reliance on the good-will of another.' She adds, 'sometimes those we

[9] Løgstrup, op. cit., p.

trust have the relevant goodwill just in virtue of being morally decent, or honest, or caring about fulfilling their duty.'[10]

The most influential example of this type of account is that offered by Annette Baier. She was, as far as I know, the first contemporary philosopher to give serious attention to the topic of trust. Although her first work on trust appeared over 20 years ago it remains influential, and is still worth discussing. I shall here focus on her essay 'Trust and Antitrust,' from 1986.[11]

Baier is concerned to mark trust clearly off from reliance, yet to my mind she constantly tends to slide back towards an assimilation of the two: having noted the distinction between reliance and trust, she does her best to minimize it. In the end she seems unable to overcome what I called the paradox of trust, i.e. she considers a relation of trust the more solid the more it is propped up by external considerations. It is true that Baier emphasises the role of the concept of betrayal in connection with trust, but, as I read her, the truster is the ultimate judge of what constitutes betrayal. Trust, for Baier, is a relation to whatever will be good for me, whereas I would characterize trust as a *good relation*, or perhaps we might say "a relation in goodness."

The following passage seems to sum up Baier's view of trust fairly well:

> … intentional trusting does require awareness of one's confidence that the trusted will not harm one, although they could[12] harm one. … [This analysis is dictated by] the natural order of consciousness and self-consciousness of trust, which progresses from initially self-unconscious trust to awareness of risk along with confidence that it is a good risk, on to some realization of why we are taking this particular risk, and eventually to some evaluation of what we

[10] 'Second-Hand Moral Knowledge,' *Journal of Philosophy* 96 (1999): 68.
[11] Annette Baier, 'Trust and Antitrust,' in Annette Baier, *Moral Prejudices* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).
[12] For a discussion of the way considerations of possibility enter into relations of trust, see Olli Lagerspetz and Lars Hertzberg, 'Trust in Wittgenstein,' forthcoming in Pekka Mäkelä, Floora Ruokonen and Cynthia Townley (eds.), *Trust and Responsibility*. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi Press.)

> may generally gain and what we may lose from the willingness to take such risks. (Ibid., p. 100)

Obviously, for Baier, it is crucial that trust, to be reasonable, is based on reasons, that it is what Becker calls cognitive. If I trust someone without having empirical evidence in support of my expectations, I have myself to blame if I am disappointed:

> Only if we had reason to believe that most familiar types of trust were morally sound would breaking trust be any more prima facie wrong than breaking silence. (Ibid, p. 120.)

According to Baier, the obligating character of trust, in as far as it has one, is directly dependent on the truster's having grounds for his trust. But it is hard to see why the quality of the truster's grounds should matter to the person trusted – except when those grounds have intentionally been provided by the trusted person herself through words or actions. (Baier does not seem to lay store by the distinction between grounds given by the person trusted and other kinds of grounds.)

In a morally decent trust relation, she argues, the trust can survive the revelation of each party's reasons for trusting the other. If it cannot, the trust, as she says, is not 'morally decent.' Her view here is the opposite of the one I sketched before, when I argued that the greater the role of external reasons for one's expectations concerning the other, the less the relation will have a character of trust.

However, Baier is not consistent in her account. She writes:

> Reasonable trust will require good grounds for such confidence in another's goodwill, *or at least the absence of good grounds for expecting another's ill will or indifference*. (Ibid., p. 99; italics by LH.)

She seems to treat these two conditions as more or less equivalent, but I would argue that they are distinct in important ways. According to the first condition reasonable trust requires a positive ground for attributing goodwill to the other, whereas what the second condition requires is simply that one should have no grounds for suspicion.

Accepting the latter requirement would mean that trust is regarded as a default condition, which would be more in line with what I was arguing in speaking about the asymmetry of good and evil motives. Indeed, I believe this would be in line with the way most of us think about trust: given the kinds of relations in which trust has a place, suspicion in the absence of positive grounds would strike us as pathological. However, Baier does not pursue this line of thought, but rather insists that trust in the absence of positive grounds is unreasonable and morally unsound.

In fact, Baier's account of reasonable trust seems like an inevitable conclusion, given that she looks at trust in isolation from the relations in which it has a place. She does not recognize the way in which trust is inherent in a relation. For her, trust, in short, is what I called above a self-contained relation. The person trusted is an outsider, an object, not a participant in the relation. The personal, in a real sense, does not enter. Thus, she writes

> there is such a thing … as forced receipt of trust, and as trust which the trusted is unaware of. (Ibid., p. 99.)

On Baier's view, I may decide to trust or not to trust someone, to take note of the other's trust or ignore it at my own discretion. Rather than trust being embedded in relations that are already in place, the individual seeks out objects of trust by trying to identify properties on which to base the expectation that the person in question will be disposed to act, or can be made to act, in accordance with her wishes. Baier's approach becomes particularly problematic in her discussion of the child-parent relation. She writes,

> The goods which a trustworthy parent takes care of … are such things as nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, education, privacy, and loving attachment to others.

And then she goes on to ask,

> Why, once the child becomes at all self-conscious about trusting parents to look after such goods for her, should she have confidence that parents are

> dependable custodians of such goods? Presumably because many of them are also goods to the parents, through their being goods to the child, especially if the parent loves the child. They will be common goods, so that for the trusted to harm them would be self-harm as well as harm to the child. (Ibid., p. 108.)

I suppose our natural reaction to the question why a child goes on trusting her parents would be that *they are her parents*. Unless they have treated her egregiously, she will simply go on depending on them, as she has from the start. What Baier seems to be describing is a child who for some reason has lost her trust in her parents, but is still trying to decide whether it it is wise for her to reckon with them in the future. On her account, the relations between this child and these parents has become an empty shell. In fact, one is tempted to parody her account by imagining a child who relies on emotional blackmail to get her way ('If you really love me you'll let me go to Italy this summer'), or who muses by herself: 'My parents probably won't burn down the house, since they live here too.' And remember: if the child trusted her parents without having these kinds of grounds, her trust, according to Baier, would be morally unsound and her parents would have no obligation to honor it.

In short, trust, for Baier, is the conviction that someone may be useful for me, whereas I would suggest that trust is the conviction that my relation to someone is undamaged. The interest of her account, however, lies in the fact that it very clearly and honestly brings out the consequences of adopting a certain view of human action, the belief-desire model, for our understanding of trust. What she has done, it appears, is the best one can do given those presuppositions.

Learning to Reason

Baier's account of the child-parent relation is deficient in another, important way. As we saw, the object of the child's trust, for her, is the goods her parents are capable of delivering: food, shelter, but also education, affection, etc. However, the child-parent relation, or more widely, a child's relation to the adults around her, has another element which is quite as important. It is from the people around her that the child will acquire an understanding of the world in which she lives. It is from them that she will, for instance, come to learn what it means to have a reason for a way of acting. We may overlook this point if we assume that having a reason for acting in a certain

way is just having a desire for something and a belief about the way to get it. But this is too simple. Here again, I shall draw on my earlier essay.

I may of course explain why I am acting as I do by saying that there is something I desire and that I expect to get through my action. So a desire may, at least in a sense, be given as a reason. But in such a case I am not simply *reporting* that I feel a certain desire; rather I express my attitude towards the desire: what I am saying is that, in these circumstances, I regard it as acceptable or meaningful to act on it. This is, of course, different from simply having learned to give expression to my desires. So the idea of having a reason for acting is conveyed to me in some other way than through my simply feeling various desires. Analogously, understanding what it is to have a reason for believing something is different from simply being inclined to have the belief.

Obviously, an understanding of reasons for action or belief will be conveyed to the child by her elders. This will be a crucial aspect of their importance for her. It is part of what it means to be a normal child in a normal relationship that she will go along with what the adults around her intimate to her. What others suggest will matter to the child simply *because* they suggest it, or rather: because it is *they* who suggest it. It seems, then, that the idea of something speaking in favor of an action or a belief can only acquire meaning for a child through the fact that *some person* speaks in its favor. In this way, coming to have an understanding of good and bad, of true or false, of things making a difference, presupposes a fundamental dependence on other people. Indeed, unless she has developed such an understanding by depending on others, the child will never acquire an ability to *mistrust* others when this is called for by the circumstances. On the belief-desire model, however, there seems to be no room for trust or mistrust to develop.

To sum up: the child does not judge her elders in terms of their goodwill towards her, understood as their ability to fulfil her wishes, rather it is from them that she will learn what it means to judge, if she is ever to learn it.

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