Trust without reliance

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Abstract

A standard view of trust sees trust as intimately related to reliance; on this standard view, trust is reliance plus some other factor. A significant literature has now developed that seeks to explain what factor, in addition to reliance, serves to distinguish cases of trust from cases of mere reliance. I argue that this approach to the analysis of trust is misguided. Although reliance, properly understood, frequently accompanies trust, reliance is not a necessary condition of trust.

1. Introduction

Trust is an obvious topic for philosophical investigation. To be trusted is to be treated with respect, to be treated as a member of the moral community. Trust is also important for epistemic reasons: much of what we claim to know comes from the testimony of others, and trust seems important for the warrant for the beliefs we gain from others. And trust is particularly important for some professions. We often can’t help but trust medical professionals, such as doctors and nurses, when we are vulnerable and in their care.

Most philosophers seeking to explicate the notion of trust see trust as intimately related to reliance. Trust, on these accounts, involves reliance, but it is more than mere reliance. These accounts tend to focus on what features of trust separate trust from mere reliance.
I think this standard view of trust as ‘reliance-plus’ is mistaken. Although trust is frequently (perhaps standardly) accompanied by reliance, reliance is not a constitutive feature of trust. Just as we can rely upon someone without trusting them, we can trust someone without relying on them. This paper is tasked with making the case for this claim.

In section 2 I present a standard view of trust as reliance plus some other factor, and give a brief indication of the role that reliance is supposed to play on this view of trust according to some prominent authors. The analysis of trust has been given far more attention in the philosophical literature than the (purportedly) embedded notion of reliance. In section 3 I address what accounts of reliance there are, and argue that these accounts involve a confusion between the ground and attitude of reliance; the attitude of reliance is not one of regarding a proposition as true. In section 4 I employ the revised notion of reliance from the previous section, and provide counterexamples to establish that reliance is not a necessary condition of trust. Removing reliance from an account of trust risks rendering that account too broad. In section 5 I respond to this concern by pointing to the role that reactive attitudes have in limiting the number of cases in which we actually trust someone. In section 6 I draw contrasts between the revised conception of trust and the ostensibly similar attitude of hope. In section 7 I conclude by drawing out the implications that the absence of reliance in trust has for our ability to trust at will, an important theme in the existing literature on trust.

2. **Trust as reliance-plus**

According to a fairly standard view, trust is a domain-specific relation between two people: A trusts B to do X. We typically don’t exhibit blanket trust towards another person, but trust them to do particular things. For example, we may trust our friend to
look after our child, or to provide financial advice, but we do not trust our friend to drive us to the airport (they are a dangerous driver), and we do not trust our friend to keep a secret (they believe in openness).\(^1\) Trust is a relation that is particular to persons. We sometimes talk of trusting objects, such as trusting a rock to support our weight, but this is an oblique way for talking of relying on those objects. Accounts of trust typically aim to separate out trust from mere reliance.\(^2\) According to the standard formulation:

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\text{A trusts B to do X, if and only if:}
\]

1. A relies on B to do X, and

2. …

The second clause in the standard formulation serves to separate out trust from mere reliance. Trust, unlike reliance, has an inherently normative dimension; trust involves an attitude about what ought to occur, not merely a predictive belief or assumption about what will occur. Furthermore, the objects of trust (as opposed to the objects of mere reliance) have agency, and are able to adjust their behaviour in light of the trust (or anticipated trust) placed in them; they can adjust their behavior in light of what they ought to do. The sturdiness of a tree branch does not change according to whether or not we sit on it. But the fact that we trust our friend to bring a bottle of wine to the dinner party can influence their behavior: if they were not originally intending to bring a bottle, then the act of trust provides a reason to do so; if they were already intending to bring a bottle, then the act of trust provides additional reasons to do so.

\(^1\) For a different view, that two-place trust is primary, see Domenicucci and Holton (2017). For a view that there are many different conceptions of trust, see Simpson (2012).

Much of the debate in the literature on trust focuses on the content of the second clause in the account above. For Richard Holton what separates trust from mere reliance is a Strawsonian participant stance: ‘When you trust someone to do something, you rely on them to do it, and you regard that reliance in a certain way: you have a readiness to feel betrayal should it be disappointed, and gratitude should it be upheld.’ (Holton 1994: 66) For Paul Faulkner what separates trust from mere reliance is an expectation that the reliance will motivate the trusted party to do what they are relied on to do: ‘A trusts S to Φ (in the affective sense) if and only if (1) A knowingly depends on S Φ-ing and (2) A expects S’s knowing that A depends on S Φ-ing to motivate S to Φ.’ (Faulkner 2007: 464) And for Katherine Hawley what separates trust from mere reliance is commitment: ‘To trust someone to do something is to believe that she has a commitment to doing it, and to rely upon her to meet that commitment.’ (Hawley 2014: 10)

I do not want to enter the debate on the second clause in the standard account of trust that separates trust from mere reliance. For the purposes of this paper we can take a hedged position on its content, roughly: A trusts B to do X only if (2) A has a normative expectation that B will do X. This general form of clause (2) seems to cover at least the Holton’s (1994), Faulkner’s (2007), and Hawley’s (2014) characterisations of the clause (among others). Instead I want to focus on the more neglected clause (1): A trusts B to do X only if A relies on B to do X.

What is meant by ‘reliance’ in accounts of trust? According to Holton (1994: 67, 65) ‘…when one relies on something to happen one works the supposition that it will happen into one's plans’, moreover ‘To rely on a person doing something is not just to

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3 For Faulkner, the trusted party is supposed to be motivated to act by the reliance of the trusting party. Philip Nickel (2012) argues that the trusted party, B, is in fact responsive to the obligation B has, not the reliance of A per se.
rely on a certain state of affairs happening: the state of affairs in which they do that thing. Rather, it is to rely on them doing it from a motivation that stems in some way from them.’ Hawley (2014: 4) adopts Holton’s view: ‘… to rely on someone to X is to act on the supposition that she will X’. And Faulkner (2007: 880) states ‘In general, to say that A depends on S \( \Phi \)-ing is to just to say that S’s \( \Phi \)-ing is necessary for A pursuing some good or holding some attitude.’ It is helpful, at this stage, to focus more closely what is involved in reliance, and to clarify what sort of attitude an attitude of reliance is.

3. **What is reliance?**

Persons have at least two different kinds of intentional attitudes: cognitive attitudes and conative attitudes. Cognitive attitudes such as beliefs, credences, assumptions and suppositions, represent or depict how the state of the world is or might be. Conative attitudes including wants, desires, and preferences, depict how the state of the world should be, according to the person holding that attitude, and serve to motivate that person. A person acts to satisfy their conative attitudes, given their cognitive attitudes. For example, suppose I have climbed to the top of a mountain. I now want to get off the mountain, and do so safely. I believe that I have to get down off the mountain before nightfall, believe that I have the climbing skills to do so on my own, and believe that I will need to make use of the rope left attached to the mountainside by a previous climber (since the incline is so steep and I neglected to bring my own rope). Given my

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4 Persons can also have affective attitudes. Trust itself may be a distinctive attitude. Some, such as Alonso (2014, 2016) argue that reliance is a distinctive type of attitude.

preferences, and given my beliefs, I then act to satisfy my preferences by forming and executing a *plan*: I develop then carry out a sequence of actions that I believe is most likely to achieve my goal of getting off the mountain safely. I utilise some of my beliefs in forming my plan. For example, I believe that I need to start climbing down now if I am to get off the mountain before sunset. But I can also form a plan on the basis of assumptions or presuppositions. For example, I may have no idea as to whether or not the rope will hold my weight, but my plan for getting off the mountain depends on the rope holding my weight.

We can say that A relies on Φ if and only if Φ is necessary for the success of A’s plan. In the climbing example, I rely on the fact that I have the climbing skills to get myself off the mountain, and I rely on the rope holding my weight, since if either of these is not the case, my plan to get off the mountain by nightfall will fail. My plan to get off the mountain by nightfall might also include keeping track of the time I have left by regularly checking my watch, but I do not rely on my watch since I also keep track of time by checking the clock on my cellphone.

The discussion above has focused on what Smith (2010) calls ‘external’ reliance, which is a relation between the agent’s plan and the world. But how should we characterise the *attitude* of reliance, that is, reliance qua mental or psychological state? The fact that we rely on something (that that thing is necessary for the success of our plans) does not entail that we have any attitude towards it at all, since we are often unaware of all the factors that are necessary for the success of our plans.

Smith (2010) argues that the attitude of reliance is a hybrid cognitive-conative attitude that involves both regarding a proposition as true and having a pro-attitude towards that same proposition. We identify instances of internal reliance by performing ‘The Remainder Operation’, by asking the question: ‘Given my plan, given my beliefs about
the world, given my intentions, and given all my other commitments, what are the remaining conditions that are out of my control but are nonetheless necessary for the successful realization of this plan? (Smith 2010: 146). So given that I rely on \( \Phi \) – conditional on the fact that \( \Phi \) is necessary for the success of my plans – I both regard it as true that \( \Phi \) and want it to be the case that \( \Phi \).

Alonso (2014, 2016) argues that the attitude of reliance is a distinct kind of cognitive attitude, different from belief, but much the same as acceptance, acceptance in context, assumption, committing to the truth of a proposition, presumption, and supposition. The constitutive aim of reliance is to guide our thoughts and actions in a way sensible from the standpoint of our ends. Reliance is sensible just in case it is a productive means (efficient cause of)\(^6\) that end or a constitutive means to (necessary element of)\(^7\) that end. We can form an attitude of reliance that \( \Phi \) even though the evidence as to whether \( \Phi \) is neutral. Alonso goes further and claims that we can have an attitude of reliance towards \( \Phi \) even when we believe that \( \Phi \) is false; I pick this issue up again in the final section of this paper.

So both Smith and Alonso agree that the attitude of reliance involves a cognitive attitude – that is, a psychological or mental state – of regarding a proposition as true, given certain ends or goals. In what follows I argue that this cannot be the correct

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\(^6\) For example, relying on a rope is sensible, given my end of getting off the mountain.

\(^7\) For example, waiting at a restaurant for my friend, is sensible, given my goal of being a good friend.

account of the attitude of reliance, and that this in fact involves a confusion between the attitude and ground of reliance. 8

Consider, again, the example where I am climbing down a mountain and rely on a rope to get down safely. I have no idea as to whether the rope will hold my weight or not; I do not believe that the rope will hold my weight, but I do not believe that the rope will not hold my weight either. How, then, do I come to rely on the rope? The line of reasoning might be something like the following: either I rely on the rope to get down or I do not. If I do not rely on the rope, I have no other way of getting down and will die up here from hypothermia. If I do rely on the rope, then either the rope will hold my weight or it will not. Suppose the rope will not hold my weight: in this case I will fall to my death, but then I am no worse-off than if I do not rely on the rope and die up here from hypothermia. Suppose the rope will hold my weight: in this case I will climb down safely and live. All things considered, it is clearly in my best interests to rely on the rope. I then form a decision: I develop a plan to get off the mountain in which the rope holding my weight is a necessary component of its success. 9 Having formed my plan, I then proceed to act by executing my plan, which involves, inter alia, placing my weight on the rope.

Note that the reasoning that leads to the conclusion that it is in my best interests to rely on the rope does not require that I believe that the rope will hold my weight. Instead I can reason on the basis of a supposition or assumption that the rope will hold my weight.

8 The use of the distinction between the ground and attitude of reliance is inspired by Nickel (2007), where the author uses the distinction between the ground and attitude of trust to argue for the possibility of amoral trust.

9 And given that the rope holding my weight is a necessary condition for the success of my plan, I also have a desire that the rope hold my weight.
Supposition involves regarding a proposition as true, and it is equivalent to reasoning as if I believed the proposition was true. During the process of reasoning I bracket out my suspended judgment and replace it with a different cognitive attitude of supposition. But what happens once I form and then execute my plan of climbing down the mountain by relying on the rope? More specifically, what cognitive attitude (if any) do I hold? I don't believe that the rope will hold my weight: I have received no new evidence to warrant the formation of the belief that the rope will hold my weight, since the fact that I am now relying on the rope doesn't count as evidence. Do I retain the cognitive attitude of assumption or supposition, employed during my deliberative process, that the rope will hold my weight? I certainly act as if I am assuming that the rope will hold my weight. But then I also act as if I believe the rope will hold my weight, and I do not have this belief. Assumptions *qua attitudes* – such as a supposition that the rope will hold my weight – are justified so long as they serve their purpose, which is to aid in our deliberation or reasoning. Once our assumptions *qua attitudes* have served their purpose they must be discharged, since they lack the appropriate justification. It seems that once we have determined the expected outcome from relying on the rope, there is no purpose in retaining the cognitive attitude (the assumption) that the rope will hold my weight. Instead we revert to the cognitive attitude that is warranted given our (lack of) evidence, namely suspended judgment as to whether the rope will hold my weight. And the discharging of the assumption occurs *before* I form and act on my plan which involves the rope holding my weight.

What is retained of the supposition that the rope will hold my weight is supposition *qua grounding*. The contents of my plan, and the actions I undertake in executing that plan, are justified on the basis of the supposition that the rope will hold my weight; this supposition or assumption forms part of the set of reasons I have for following my plan,
and could be used to defend the plan if it were to be called into question. I may act _as if_ I have a cognitive attitude that the rope will hold my weight, but I do not in fact have this attitude.

Note that discharging an assumption does not rule out reintroducing that same assumption (or indeed a different assumption) if the need arises.\(^\text{10}\) We often switch between modes, between a practical mode of executing our plan (where we return to our cognitive attitude of belief/ disbelief/ suspended judgment), and a theoretical mode of revising our plan (where we can bracket out our belief/ disbelief/ suspended judgment and introduce a different cognitive attitude of assumption). But we need to have the cognitive attitude appropriate for each mode. If I am engaged in a theoretical exercise of reasoning about what will occur if the rope _does_ hold my weight, then retaining the cognitive attitude of suspended judgment as to whether the rope will hold my weight would interfere with the reasoning.\(^\text{11}\) Similarly, if I am engaged in a practical exercise of executing my plan, of engaging with the real world, then there seems little point in retaining an assumption we know lacks evidence; in fact retaining a cognitive attitude not supported by evidence could be quite dangerous. For example, if you have suspended judgment as to whether the rope will hold your weight, then you sensibly gradually increase the strain placed on the rope and give yourself a chance to grab onto a rock if the rope breaks; if you act as if you believe that the rope will hold your weight then you confidently put all of your weight on the rope at once.

If it is not the case that I have a cognitive attitude of _regarding as true_ towards my instances of external reliance, then what is the attitude of reliance? Suppose that \(\Phi\) is a

\(^{10}\) I thank an anonymous referee for pressing this point, what they termed a ‘frame shift’.

\(^{11}\) This line of reasoning would also seem to rule out the assumption being retained as a latent rather than occurrent cognitive attitude, and the associated cognitive dissonance this would entail.
necessary condition for the success of my plans. The propositional object of my
cognitive attitude of reliance is not $\Phi$ itself but rather \textit{that I rely on $\Phi$}. Given that we
have special access and control over the content of our plans we typically \textit{believe} that
we rely on $\Phi$, and not merely regard as true that we rely on $\Phi$. But note that I can
sometimes be unsure what the necessary conditions for the success of my plan are – I
am unsure as to what in fact I am relying on – so I can sometimes suspend judgment as
to whether I rely on $\Phi$.

We can also have a conative attitude of reliance. The fact that $\Phi$ is necessary for the
success of my plan does not entail that I \textit{want} this to be the case. For example, I may in
fact rely on an old rope to hold my weight when we are climbing, but I do not \textit{want} this
to be part of my plan, as evidenced by the fact that I cease to rely on the rope if provided
with a safer option (such as a brand new rope). However, conditional on the fact that $\Phi$
is a necessary condition for the success of my plans, I desire that $\Phi$. Note that the
propositional content of our cognitive and conative attitudes of reliance are different: I
believe that \textit{I am relying on $\Phi$} but I want it to be the case that $\Phi$.

4. \textbf{Trust without reliance}

To recap, $A$ relies on $\Phi$ if and only if $\Phi$ is necessary for the success of $A$’s plan. $A$ has
a cognitive attitude of reliance if and only if $A$ believes that $\Phi$ is necessary for the
success of $A$’s plan. And given that $A$ believes that $\Phi$ is necessary for the success of
$A$’s plan, $A$ has a conative attitude of reliance if and only if $A$ wants it to be the case
that $\Phi$. The thing relied upon - $\Phi$ - can be an artifact, such as the rope employed in our
plan to get off the mountain. The thing relied upon can also be a person, such as when
we rely on a climbing partner to hold a rope as we descend off a mountain; here relying
on $\Phi$ is relying on $B$ to do $X$. 
If it is that case that my plan will succeed whether or not it is the case that $\Phi$, then $\Phi$ is not necessary for the success of my plans and I do not rely on $\Phi$. And if I am aware of this, then I will not have either a cognitive or conative attitude of reliance towards $\Phi$. The most straightforward way of establishing that reliance is not a necessary condition of trust – contrary to the standard view – is to give an example where A has an attitude of trust towards B doing X, but where B doing X or not-X has no impact on A’s plans. The most obvious such examples are where A trusts B to do X, but where X is over-determined.

But first, consider a mundane, but hopefully uncontroversial instance of trust:

PARTY 1
Ann is hosting a small dinner party, and having wine at this party is necessary for Ann’s guests enjoying themselves. Fortunately, Ann has a well-stocked wine cellar. Bob promises Ann that he will bring a bottle of red wine to the party, and Ann trusts Bob to bring the wine. Ann incorporates Bob’s actions into her party plan; she leaves the decanter on the table empty, ready for Bob’s wine.

In the PARTY 1 example, the actions of Bob are necessary for the success of Ann’s plans. Nothing terrible will happen if Bob fails to bring a bottle of red wine to the party, Ann will simply need to revise her plans slightly and decant a bottle of her own wine for the first course. Nevertheless it is plausible for Ann to feel a little resentful if Bob arrives at the party without a bottle of wine and doesn’t remark on the fact, and

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12 We often trust people to perform trivial actions; trust needn’t be limited to cases where something significant is at stake. Moreover, the stress of hosting a dinner party is precisely the sort of occasion that might elicit strong emotions.
reasonable for Ann to ascribe her resentment as arising from Bob’s failure to do what she trusted him to do.

Consider now a slightly modified example:

PARTY 2
Ann is hosting a small dinner party, and having wine at this party is necessary for Ann’s guests enjoying themselves. Fortunately, Ann has a well-stocked wine cellar. Bob promises Ann that he will bring a bottle of red wine to the party, and Ann trusts Bob to bring the wine. But Ann does not rely on Bob bringing wine to the party, since Bob bringing a bottle of wine forms no part of her plans (she has no decanter).

In the PARTY 2 example, the actions of Bob are not necessary for the success of Ann’s party. Nevertheless, as with the previous example, Ann does trust Bob to bring wine to the party. It is plausible for Ann to feel a little resentful if Bob arrives at the party without a bottle of wine and doesn’t remark on the fact, and reasonable for Ann to ascribe her resentment as arising from Bob’s failure to do what she trusted him to do.

In the PARTY 2 example, Ann trusts Bob to bring wine to the party, even though she does not rely on him to do so.

Note that in this example, Ann does not care about the moral development of Bob, and nor does she care about the more general keeping of promises; Ann’s goals and plans are limited to her guests enjoying themselves at her party. Note also that we can stipulate that Ann is not relying on Bob to bring wine in the event that her own supply of wine runs out; Ann has formed no plans for such a contingency, given that she is certain she has enough wine already.

In the PARTY 2 example, there is a relationship between the person placing trust (Ann) and the person in receipt of trust (Bob), and the person placing trust has a pro-attitude
towards what the trusted party is trusted to do. But we can also have an attitude of trust in circumstances where there is no direct relationship between the trusting and trusted party,\(^{13}\) and where the trusting party is indifferent to the actions of the trusted party. For example suppose that I am a British citizen, and unsure as to whether marijuana should be legalised. I watch the 2015 Canadian elections from afar and see that Justin Trudeau commits to legalising marijuana.\(^{14}\) Intuitions can reasonably differ about such examples, but it seems to me that I can form an attitude of trust towards Trudeau legalising marijuana. If someone were to ask me whether I trust Trudeau to legalise marijuana, it seems to me that I could answer ‘yes’ to this question, and for this affirmation to not be mistaken. Moreover I might feel a sense of umbrage towards Trudeau should he fail to follow through on his manifesto commitment. Note that I can have this attitude of trust without Trudeau legalising marijuana having any relevance at all for my ends or goals.

5. **What is trust?**

The main claim of this paper is a negative one, that contrary to a standard view, trust need not involve reliance. Sections 3 and 4 of this paper have been dedicated to presenting arguments for this claim. I noted in section 2 that I do not want to enter the debate on the second clause of the standard account of trust that separates trust from mere reliance. For the purposes of this paper we can take a hedged position on its

\(^{13}\) See also Nickel (2012).

content, roughly: A trusts B to do X only if (2) A has a normative expectation that B will do X.\textsuperscript{15}

But removing reliance from the account of trust may leave the concept of trust on unstable foundations. In particular, it seems that it renders the account of trust too broad. We have lots of normative expectations of lots of different people, but surely our attitude of trust is much more limited. Moreover, we don’t always trust someone even when we have a normative expectation of them, since we believe that some people will fail to fulfill their normative expectations.

The inclusion of a condition of reliance in the standard account of trust served to limit the number of cases in which we trust: we trust another only in those cases in which we both have a normative expectation that the other will do something and them doing that thing is necessary for fulfilling our plans. And if we choose to rely on someone to fulfill their normative expectation, then this rules out trust in those cases where we believe that someone will fail to fulfill their normative expectations, since we cannot plan and act on the basis of someone fulfilling their obligations if we believe they will not. What, then, can explain the fact that instances of trust are limited, and that we don't trust all those we have normative expectations of, if reliance is removed from the analysis of trust?

A rival explanation for the role of reliance in trust is one of salience. We trust lots of people to do lots of different things, even when we do not rely on them. But we tend to focus on those cases where the actions of the other are necessary for the success of our

\textsuperscript{15} On Nickel’s (2007) ‘Obligation-Ascription’ account of trust, when A trusts B to do X, A ascribes an obligation to B to do X. The Obligation-Ascription account of trust is compatible with the possibility of amoral trust. The claim in this paper that trust involves a normative expectation that B do X is intended to be consistent with Nickel (2007), and the possibility of amoral trust.
plans; we tend to focus on instances of trust in which we also rely on the other. Our emotions also have a role in making certain situations salient.\(^{16}\) An alternative way of restricting the number of cases that count as trust is to appeal to the role of emotional engagement, and in particular to a susceptibility to Strawsonian reactive attitudes.\(^{17}\) Even if we believe that someone will fulfill their obligation to do something, we may not care enough about this to form an attitude of trust.

Here we can make (illustrative) use of an account provided by R Jay Wallace (2011). Wallace argues that there is a difference between judging something valuable or worthy of care, and actually valuing it or caring for it. To use his own examples, there is a difference between acknowledging that an artistic or intellectual pursuit such as opera or philosophy is valuable, and actually valuing these pursuits. Acknowledging that these pursuits are valuable involves acknowledging that there are reasons to support the pursuit of these activities; but one can see the reasons that opera or philosophy are valuable without quite seeing the point of the activities oneself. And the difference between acknowledging the activities as valuable and valuing them is emotional engagement. To care about the activities is to be excited by opportunities to engage in the activities, and upset about a lack of such opportunities.

So A trusts B to do X where A has a normative expectation that B will do X, and A is emotionally engaged in B doing X.\(^{18}\) These two conjuncts may be collapsed, which is

\(^{16}\) See Brady (2013).

\(^{17}\) Holton (1994) is the first to link trust to Strawsonian reactive attitudes, and uses these attitudes to distinguish between trust and mere reliance. Reactive attitudes also play a constitutive role in trust in Faulkner’s (2007) account.

\(^{18}\) Note that I do not want to assert that a normative expectation and emotional engagement are jointly sufficient for trust, for two reasons. For one, the clause that A must have a normative expectation that B
the approach that Faulkner (2007: 881-883) takes when he argues that normative expectation ought to be understood in terms of a susceptibility to certain reactive attitudes, such as resentment, should the trusted party fail to fulfill the trust placed in them.

If reactive attitudes are in part constitutive of the attitude of trust, then this provides a defense against an accusation that a purported attitude of trust without actual reliance is merely a judgment that the other is trustworthy, that the person professing an attitude of trust is merely stating that they would trust the other party in counterfactual circumstances in which they had cause to actually rely on the other person. Judging that something is valuable is not the same thing as actually valuing that thing; what makes the difference is emotional engagement. Similarly, what makes the difference between judging someone to be trustworthy and actually trusting them is emotional engagement: feeling grateful if they do what you trust them to do; feeling betrayed (or resentful) if they do not do what you trust them to do.19

The inclusion of emotional engagement into the account of trust serves to limit the number of cases in which we trust from the set of cases in which we have a normative expectation that the other will do something, to a subset of those cases. But we still need to account for cases in which A has a normative expectation that B will do X, and A is emotionally engaged in B doing X, but A does not trust B to do X since A believes that B will not do X.

Strawson’s account of reactive attitudes provides some insight into this issue. Strawson (1962) argues that there are two types of special considerations, which might modify the ability to do X may require further refinement. For another, there may be some defeating conditions on a normative expectation combined with emotional engagement always entailing an attitude of trust.

19 Or at least having a susceptibility to these emotions.
our reactive attitudes, or remove them altogether. One type of special consideration, which might eliminate our reactive attitudes altogether, is where we do not take a participant attitude towards the other agent at all; instead we take a wholly objective attitude. We take an objective attitude where the agent is psychologically abnormal, or morally undeveloped (such as a young child). Taking an objective attitude towards another agent means that we have a certain amount of emotional disengagement from them. We don't trust the agent to fulfill their normative expectations, and instead attempt to predict, manage, and control our interactions with them.

A second type of special consideration is where there are mitigating circumstances in another’s intentions or actions. For example, suppose I have a normative expectation that my friend meet me for lunch at midday (as we had agreed). I remain emotionally committed to our ongoing friendship, but I don’t trust my friend to show up, since I know he has been under extreme pressure at work, and there is a strong likelihood that he will have to work through lunch. In this example, the details of the case provide an excuse for my friend failing to fulfill the normative expectation, and I do not feel the resentment towards my friend that is otherwise characteristic of a betrayal of trust.

So A can have a normative expectation that B do X, but believe that B will not do X. If A remains emotionally engaged in B doing X, then A’s lack of trust in B doing X can be reflected in the modification of A’s reactive attitudes towards B. Can be, but need not. As I argue in section 7 below, it may be possible for A to choose to trust B to do X, and exhibit the appropriate emotional responses, even when A believes that B will not do X.

6. Trust, not mere hope
The attitude of hope seems to share many attributes with the attitude of trust, and hope and trust could be appropriate attitudes to take in very similar circumstances. One response to my claim that reliance is not a necessary condition of trust is to suggest that purported cases of ‘trust’ without reliance are in fact better characterised as instances of hope.\textsuperscript{20}

Standard conceptions of hope agree that there are two necessary conditions for hope, namely a desire for an event occurring and a non-extreme credence towards that same event occurring.\textsuperscript{21} More specifically, A hopes that \( \Phi \) only if:

1. A desires that \( \Phi \) occur, and
2. A believes that \( \Phi \) is possible (not impossible, and not certain)

…where \( \Phi \) could be some physical event, such as it snowing tomorrow, or \( \Phi \) could be some agent B performing an action X, such as A’s neighbour sweeping the snow from her driveway. A desire that \( \Phi \) occur is a necessary condition of hope since it makes no sense to say that one hopes for something that one does not want to occur. A belief that \( \Phi \) is possible but not certain is also a necessary condition for trust since we cannot hope for an event we know will simply not occur, and there is no point hoping for an event that is certain to occur anyway (we instead look forward to the event).

Though the attitudes of hope and trust are not mutually exclusive, there are several important differences between hope and trust. First, trust is always directed towards persons, whereas I can both hope that physical events occur and hope that some person performs an action. In this respect, hope is closer to reliance than to trust; I can both rely on an event occurring and rely on a person performing an action. Second, and

\textsuperscript{20} I thank an anonymous referee for posing this challenge.

\textsuperscript{21} See Bovens (1999), Pettit (2004), and Meirav (2009).
relatedly, trust involves a normative expectation (so I and others argue), whereas in those cases where my hope is directed towards a person performing an action I need have no normative expectation. I trust my teenager to cook dinner because they promised they would, whereas I hope that my teenager will cook dinner where their doing so would be a supererogatory act.

Third, hope involves a desire that an event occur, whereas trust need not. It often seems that whenever A trusts B to do X, that A desires or wants that B do X. However, I suggest that this pro-attitude is inherited from the reliance that I argue in this paper typically accompanies trust, but is not necessary for trust. As argued above, A relies on Φ if and only if Φ is necessary for the success of A’s plan. As Smith (2010) notes, we inherit a robust pro-attitude towards what we rely on from the plans in which they are embedded. I have a telic or intrinsic desire for some end or goal. Φ is necessary for successfully implementing my plan for achieving my end or goal. Therefore I have an instrumental desire for Φ.

But as the PARTY 2 example is intended to show, there can be instances of an attitude of trust without reliance; A can trust B to do X even when B doing X is not necessary for the success of A’s plans. And because trust need not involve reliance, it is possible to trust someone to do something you do not want them to do, i.e. trust and hope can pull in opposite directions.

For example, suppose that you are prominent member of the legal community, and that your 18 year old son, in an act of rebellion, has committed an act of vandalism. He has been found guilty, and is about to be sentenced. You know that the sentencing guidelines recommend a custodial sentence of two years. You trust the judge to impose the sentence of two years imprisonment. Nevertheless, you don't want or have a desire that the judge sentence your son to two years imprisonment. In fact you hope that the
judge shows some leniency and instead sentences your son to community service. Your emotional responses, which will vary according to the outcome, bear this out. Should the judge follow the sentencing guidelines and sentence your son to prison, you might feel a mixture of despair (that what you hoped for did not occur), and esteem towards the judge for fulfilling his professional duty. Should the judge instead ignore the sentencing guidelines, and sentence your son to community service you might feel a combination of relief that what you had hoped for has come to pass, and animus or contempt towards the judge for failing to do his professional duty.

A fourth important difference between trust and hope concerns the doxastic states in which the respective attitudes are possible. Again, A can have an attitude of hope that \( \Phi \) occur only when A believes that \( \Phi \) is possible; importantly, A cannot hope that \( \Phi \) occur when A believes that \( \Phi \) will occur. By contrast, the most common, uncontroversial version of trust occurs when A believes that \( \Phi \) (that B will do X).

Consider again the example of PARTY 2: is the attitude that Ann has towards Bob one of trust or one of hope? There are two features of the case that point to it being an instance of trust rather than hope. First (and less significantly), Ann has a normative expectation that Bob bring a bottle of wine to the party, in virtue of Bob’s promise to do so. We tend to trust people to perform obligatory acts and hope that people perform supererogitory acts. Second, and most importantly, the original formulation of the example does not specify Ann’s belief state towards the proposition that Bob will fulfill his promise to bring wine to the party. We can stipulate that when Bob promised to bring wine to the party, Ann believed him. Adding in details of Ann’s belief state to the example in no way begs the question in favour of her attitude towards Bob being one of trust, since a belief that B will do X is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for A trusting B to do X. But specifying that Ann believes that Bob will bring wine to
the party does rule out this particular example as being one of mere hope that Bob will bring wine. Again, we do not form attitudes of hope towards events that we are certain will occur. If Ann believes that Bob will bring a bottle of wine to the party she can look forward to him bringing a bottle, and she can trust him to bring a bottle, but she cannot hope that he will bring a bottle.

7. Choosing to trust

Finally, if I am correct in my claim that trust need not involve reliance then this has interesting implications for our ability to trust at will. Holton (1994) argues that an attitude of trust is consistent with belief or suspended judgment that the trusted party will do what they are trusted to do, but not disbelief. In circumstances in which A is not sure whether or not B will do X, A can choose to trust B to do X. But why is an attitude of trust inconsistent with disbelief? It is a requirement of rationality that my reliance be consistent with my beliefs: ‘When I rely on someone to do something, I work this reliance into my plans: I plan on the supposition that they will do it. But if I believe that they won't do it, then that too is something I should work into my plans. So if I rely on you to do something but believe that you won't, I am led to incoherence: I have to work into my plans both the supposition that you will do it, and the supposition that you will not.’ (Holton, 1994:72)

Alonso (2016) argues, contrary to Holton, that it is possible to rely on something you believe to be false. Consider his Project example. Anne believes her staff member Bill will not finish his project on time. Anne also believes that if she relies on Bill finishing his project on time (and he knows about this), then this will boost Bill’s confidence and

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22 Smith (2010: 140) makes much the same argument about the attitude of acceptance. Berislav Marušić (2015: 186) also addresses the question of whether it is possible to trust against the evidence.
allow him to meet more important deadlines in the future. Anne then decides to rely on Bill finishing his project on time (she plans and undertakes some activities based on Bill finishing his project on time). Alonso acknowledges Anne cannot coherently form the intention to act on the basis of Bill finishing his project on time while she retains the belief that Bill will not finish his project on time. Instead, argues Alonso, Anne can ‘bracket out’ her belief (prevent the belief from cognitively guiding her deliberation) that Bill will fail to meet his deadline and instead plan just on the supposition that (rely on) Bill meeting his deadline. And this reliance is justified, given Anne’s goal of boosting Bill’s confidence.

I am sympathetic with Alonso’s suggestion that it is possible to trust someone when you believe they will not do what you trust them to do, but I think he slightly misconstrues why this might be the case. As argued in section 3, once the process of deliberation is completed, and the agent commences carrying out their plan, they must discharge any assumptions introduced and return to the cognitive attitude warranted by the evidence. In Anne’s case, this is a belief that Bill will not finish his project on time. Holton (1994), Smith (2010), and Alonso (2016) all acknowledge that one cannot rely on $\Phi$ when one believes that not-$\Phi$; to do otherwise leads to practical inconsistency. For Holton, this entails that in a conflict between belief and reliance, one retains one’s belief and cannot rely. Alonso argues that in a conflict between belief and reliance, one can bracket out belief and choose to rely. I argue – tentatively – that when it comes to trust, there is a third option. While reliance is a frequent concomitant of trust, it is not a necessary feature of trust. So in some cases of trust without reliance, it might be possible for A to trust B to do X, even when A believes that B will not do X. And this
possibility arises precisely because there is no conflict between A’s plans and A’s belief; A’s belief that B will not do X has no impact on A’s plans.23

Consider again the PARTY 2 example, where Ann trusts Bob to bring wine to the party. In this example, Ann’s goal of having enough wine at the party is over-determined, and she does not rely on Bob for achieving this goal; Bob bringing wine to the party is not necessary for there being enough wine at the party. In the original exposition of the example outlined above, Ann’s belief state is not specified, but Ann’s trust that Bob will bring wine to the party is both consistent with Ann believing Bob will bring wine to the party, and (pace Holton) consistent with Ann suspending judgment as to whether Bob will bring wine to the party. But is Ann’s trust that Bob will bring wine to the party consistent with Ann believing Bob will not bring wine to the party? I see no reason why this would not be psychologically possible. Certainly there is no objection from the point of view of practical coherence, since Ann’s trust that Bob will bring wine to the party does not clash with her belief that he will not.24

References


23 This would seem to rule out A trusting B to do X, when A believes that B will not do X and factors this belief into her plans accordingly. For example, Ann cannot trust Bob to bring red wine to the party if she in fact believes that he will not bring red wine, and so plans on serving fish (which, for the sake of argument, does not go well with red wine). I thank Kasper Lippert-Rasmussen for making this point.

24 This leaves open several interesting questions requiring further work. For example, many attitudes (paradigmatically – as noted by Holton (1994) – belief) are beyond our direct control. What features of trust might make it within our voluntary control? Are there some defeating conditions (in addition to relying on B to not-X) that prevent a person from choosing to trust B to do X?


