Epistemic Trust in Oneself and Others – An Argument from Analogy?

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Introduction: Religious Belief from Authority – When is it justified?

Religious belief and faith for some may be acquired and sustained in part by individual religious experience. But for many the route to religious belief (or to atheism) may be primarily through accepting the explicit teachings of others around them treated as authoritative, at the same time as acquiescing in, taking on board, the predominant views on metaphysical and religious matters dominant in the community in which they grow up. These beliefs may, as it were, slip in through the side-door without being subjected to conscious rational scrutiny before being incorporated into the individual's framing world-view. Once part of that world-view, they then shape the doxastic response to other particular bits of evidence that come the individual's way – in some cases, working to perpetuate the world-view, and insulate it against what some others might see as counter-evidence to it[1].

This being so, the following issue is central to the epistemology of religious belief: when, if ever, is it epistemically permissible or mandatory for one to take the fact that another holds a certain belief as grounds to adopt it oneself? I will examine an idea that is crucial to this question. One places ***epistemic trust*** in another, when one treats her beliefs as prima facie credible – that is, one takes the fact that she holds a certain belief, say P, as prima facie evidence of the truth of P, and forms belief that P on this basis, in the absence of defeaters[2]. Several authors (Foley 2001) (Lehrer 1997) (Zagzebski 2012) have recently made arguments that such epistemic trust of

[1] If, for instance, one is inducted in childhood into a system of belief which regards certain people, or people in certain positions, as unquestioned authorities, then any evidence against their epistemic good standing will tend to be rejected in light of this previously acquired epistemic and psychological background that shapes the response to fresh evidence.

[2] Conclusive evidence against P, or evidence of the other's incompetence about the topic, will defeat her prima facie credibility regarding P.

others is a mandatory rational outgrowth of epistemic self-trust. They propose a consistency requirement: since I trust my own epistemic faculties reliably to yield me true beliefs, I must on pain of irrationality/inconsistency place no less credence in others' epistemic faculties and resulting beliefs. Richard Foley maintains that: "Most of us have prima facie trust in our own faculties even though we cannot give a non-question-begging defence of their reliability. But if so, might not we be rationally compelled to have prima facie trust in others as well? I argue… yes…" [Foley 2001 p.101] He concludes that "The presumption of trust in others is generated out of self-trust." [Foley 2001 p.108] Linda Zagzebski formulates her thesis explicitly as a consistency requirement on one's attitude of trusting: "Trust in myself means there is a presumption in favour of the output of my faculties; so consistency requires me to have a presumption in favour of the output of the faculties of others who share my faculties; which is to say, virtually all other human beings. The default position is trust, not distrust." [Zagzebski 2012 p.56]

This thought articulated, and argued for, by Foley and Zagzebski, is a tempting one. In this discussion I review briefly what epistemic basis there is for epistemic self-trust; enough to enable me to address my main question: whether a consistency requirement mandating a default stance of epistemic trust of 'others' in general - other human beings, or persons - holds as a rationally required corollary of epistemic self-trust. I argue that it does not. The tempting thought melts away like a jellyfish in the sun, under the glare of close analytic scrutiny. Or so I shall argue. My finding is that yes, an individual in some circumstances will have a sufficient epistemic basis for warranted epistemic trust in specific others around her (and where trust is epistemically warranted, to withhold it is irrational and is not epistemically permissible.) The basis she has may sometimes involve a particular bridging argument from analogy with her epistemic self-trust, but this is incidental. Very often one's basis for trusting others is straightforwardly empirical, and analogy or a forcing argument from the fact of one's self-trust plays no role in the entitlement.

What follows comes in three main parts. I first examine Foley's engaging treatment. In Part II I develop my own analytic accounts of the general notions of reliance, trust-based reliance, and epistemic faith; and of epistemic self-trust and epistemic trust in others. Armed with these clarifications of our topic, in Part III I identify and evaluate two possible forms of forcing argument from epistemic self-trust

to a requirement to place no less epistemic trust in others. My conclusion is that there is no a priori compelling argument that yields a requirement to trust all other humans as such necessarily; and that neither form discussed has empirical application that yields a contingent requirement to do so in worlds broadly like our own. Foley's suggestive but somewhat imprecise treatment is located and evaluated in relation to the analysis and argument of Part III. I return briefly to discuss Zagzebski's treatment in light of my own account. Finally, I review the significance of our findings for the rationality of religious faith, and the conditions for epistemically justified religious belief.

Part I. Epistemic Trust in Self and Others – Foley's Account

Epistemic self-trust is**,** as a rough initial characterisation: general reliance on one's own naturally-given belief-generating faculties, and the beliefs which their employment endows one with. In this discussion I investigate the question: What is the epistemic-normative relation between epistemic self-trust, and epistemic trust of others? – where this latter is, roughly: trust in the epistemic faculties, resulting beliefs, and reports of those beliefs, of others[3].

It seems that some extensive degree of epistemic self-trust is inevitable – I shall endorse this view. So a first, salient question about the self/other epistemic trust relation is: Is there a rational epistemic route from our - inescapable or de facto - epistemic self-trust to placing epistemic trust in others? Does our inevitable epistemic self-trust somehow make it either epistemically permissible, or epistemically mandatory, to place trust in the reported beliefs of others, thus indirectly in these others' faculties (or vice versa)? If there is such a route, what exactly is it? Is the linkage an a priori matter, and one which is necessary – which holds in any possible world in which the subject finds herself? Or is it a posteriori, and contingent?

(We can observe at once that any linkage which gives substantial results – requires or permits trust in the beliefs of any s*pecific* identifiable others – must have an a posteriori component, since an answer is needed to the question: *which* are the

[3] Foley and Zagzebski both focus their discussion on when one should take the fact of another's belief that P (however known about) as prima facie grounds to accept P. The contrast between a principle concerning others' beliefs, and concerning their testimony, is discussed in II.3 below.

'others' whom one is permitted or required to trust? And one must have a way of identifying them, which will surely be empirical. Much more about this later on…)

I begin in Part I by exploring Richard Foley's pioneering discussion [Foley 2001]. In Parts II and III I develop an account which is more fine-grained on some key details. Foley's claim that 'the presumption of trust in others is generated out of self-trust' is not rejected, but different ways in which this may occur are distinguished. It is denied that there is any essential general role for a forcing argument from analogy with one's epistemic self-trust in this generative process. The way in which trusting use of one's own faculties pressures one into epistemic trust in others is simply that by using one's own faculties one builds up a theory of one's world, in particular of the nature of the other people around one, which has it that many of them are epistemically trustworthy about a variety of specific topics. A comparison with one's own epistemic reliability is largely irrelevant in how one comes to know these things. We begin with Foley's account of the epistemic basis for self-trust.

I.1.Foley on self-trust

In his *Meditations* Descartes (Descartes 1985) attempts to found the security of 'clear and distinct perception' (rough modern translation: a priori intellectual intuition) on the goodness of God, while simultaneously founding his knowledge of God's existence and goodness in arguments made by means of clear and distinct perception of the intuitions and inferences involved. Since the acknowledgement of epistemic circularity in this infamous 'Cartesian circle' it has been generally recognised that there can be no entirely independent, non-circular/question-begging[4] certification of one's own intellectual faculties as generally reliable (truth-conducive in their normal operation in their normal or current environment.) So Foley reminds us.

This is indisputable: an epistemically non-circular argument establishing the reliability of one's core intellectual faculties is necessarily unavailable. Any

[4] An argument that is question-begging may be only obliquely, and not explicitly, circular. For instance, Descartes' argument for dualism, from the claimed premisses that while body is divisible, mind is indivisible, may be said to be question-begging, since the claim that mind is indivisible covertly draws plausibility from a tacit prior acceptance of the intended dualist conclusion. [Descartes [1985,] Meditation VI]

argument to that conclusion one makes is epistemically circular[5], since it perforce must employ those self-same core intellectual faculties in its propounding. We may take this fact as identifying the core intellectual faculties. It is plausible to conceive them as a general faculty of intellectual intuition - our capacity to intuit obvious a priori necessary truths, and judge the validity or otherwise of inferential steps; plus short-term memory – needed to hold in the mind the steps of a proof. Each person's individual[6] package of epistemic resources comprises the core intellectual faculties, plus longer-term memory, the various modes of perception, and introspection. It is less incontrovertible that no epistemically non-circular demonstration of the reliability of these further faculties is possible: the idea of an a priori proof of the general reliability of perception is not incoherent. Here I accept Foley's plausible position that it is equally true of this full epistemic-faculty package, that none of its components can be given an epistemically non-circular vindication[7] (see also (Alston 1989).

So something one might wish for – an epistemically non-circular vindication of one's epistemic faculties as reliably yielding truth in one's actual environment – is not to be had. Given its unavailability, what can be said in epistemic favour of trusting one's epistemic faculties? What makes such trust epistemically permissible, *warranted*[8]? Foley's main positive idea is this: epistemic responsibility requires extended reflection - policing and cleaning-up - from within one's epistemic perspective. If the best process of reflection, from within one's own epistemic

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[5] I label this epistemic circularity, since the process is not a formally circular argument – one that concludes that P from premises including P itself. It is epistemically circular - that is, one could not progress from an initial situation in which one did not know whether the principles of inference involved were valid or not, to one in which one then did, as a result of making the argument.

[6] 'Individual', i.e. excluding other people's testimony as a source of beliefs.

[7] Argument from the extended coherence of the world-view we arrive at deploying our epistemic-faculty package, to its broad general truth, as the best explanation of this, is possible – another topic, for another day. Foley's reflective stability condition discussed below involves this. But this is not epistemically non-circular, nor does it *entail* truth of the argument's conclusion: a clever demon might arrange his deception so that the deceived is in a position to make such an argument.

[8] I here follow one common usage, and employ 'warranted' as a general term to indicate belief that is permissible, from the epistemically normative standpoint. What warrants belief – whether this involves grounds, or some kind of internally-available justifying item, is a further matter; and it may be that some belief is warranted without the subject having grounds for it. (The epistemologist's explanation of why it is warranted, what warrants it in that sense, is another matter – ordinary people do not need to be epistemologists in order to enjoy warranted beliefs.)

perspective, endorses one's belief-forming equipment as reliable, and the world-view it has generated is coherent and so on one's best bet largely true, then one has thereby reached equilibrium, an epistemic resting place. This is the best one can achieve epistemically and, Foley suggests, as such it is enough to make our beliefs epistemically responsible and so in one key sense rational and, we may add, thereby warranted. . "…what makes a belief epistemically rational is…that it would be immune to criticism on reflection, insofar as one's goal is to have accurate and comprehensive beliefs." [Foley 2001 p.34] He is generally optimistic that reflection will lead each one of us to such a self-certifying coherentist epistemic equilibrium

For the endpoint of this reflective journey to be a warranted resting place it must however have been arrived at by an epistemically permissible process. So the use of one's epistemic faculties must have a default initial warrant, holding even before their coherentist certification is attained. How may this idea be grounded? Foley is less explicit about this. We may postulate: epistemic-ought (ought-E) implies can. So if one cannot avoid employing one's epistemic faculties if one is to obtain any beliefs at all, then (by modus tollens) it is not the case that this is epistemically impermissible, something one oughtE to refrain from doing. From this we may uncontroversially conclude that it is epistemically permissible to employ one's epistemic faculties.[9] This argument is implicit in Foley's discussion, and he makes no stronger positive claims on behalf of initial epistemic self-trust.

So: for each one of us, if she is to acquire any beliefs at all, she has no alternative but to employ her naturally-given epistemic faculties to do so. If, by their conscientious and reflective use she arrives at a picture of the world, and her place in it and means of access to it which portrays itself as largely true and reliably arrived at, this is the best that can be achieved epistemically, and as such it is good enough to yield epistemically responsible, and hence warranted, belief. This is Foley's vindicating epistemology of self-trust. But – here's the rub – it does involve, as he emphasises, an ineliminable element of self-*trust* in this sense: there is an element of ***epistemic faith*** (see II.1 below) in one's trusting reliance on one's epistemic faculties, since there is – as seen above – no non-circular proof of their general reliability;

[9] This argument establishes that employing one's faculties is epistemically permissible in a weak sense subject to the rule: if it is not the case that phi-ing is epistemically impermissible, then it is epistemically permissible. Note that this sense falls short of a stronger positive grounding of, and warrant for, employing one's faculties.

hence no guarantee that the coherent extended world-view so arrived at is indeed largely correct. – A brain in a vat might have such epistemically responsible, warranted, but in this epistemically bad case massively erroneous beliefs [Foley 2001, p.37]

Foley does not worry enough about the possibility that reflection on one's belief-forming methods may not have the happy outcome of vindicating them, but instead throw doubt on them. He discusses some studies showing that people are prone to certain fallacies in inference; but concludes that the worst is that we must and can learn to do better, in light of these results [Foley 2001, Ch.3] And his discussion of why our epistemic faculties have their initial default-warranted status is thin. This topic deserves a full exploration in its own right; but that is for another paper. For present purposes I endorse his view that the best that can be said to epistemically vindicate our initial use of our epistemic faculties is – as suggested above - that this is ***pragmatically inescapable,*** and so is epistemically permissible[10]. (Zagebski draws a similar conclusion when she writes: "Either self-trust is in the category of reasons [factors that warrant belief], or there are no reasons. This is why it is rational to have self-trust. Self-trust is the foundation of what we take rationality to be." [Zagzebski 2012, p.45.)[11]

This thumbnail sketch does not convey the full richness of Foley's extensive discussion of the reflective-stability condition he places centre stage in his epistemology of self-trust. But we have enough to prepare for our main topic: whether and if so precisely how epistemic self-trust mandates epistemic trust in others as a rationally-required corollary.

I.2 Foley's 'Epistemic Universalism' re Others-Trust

Given the *fact* of our self-trust (proper or no), does this fact require or permit us, perhaps in virtue of some consistency requirement, also to place a similar level of trust in the faculties and beliefs of others? In Part II I develop a more refined

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[10] Pragmatic inescapability of believing that P is not a reason for forming belief that P (see discussion at end of III.2). Rather, it may be cited by the epistemologist in a meta-level account of why the subject's belief in P, that she ex hypothesi has anyway, is epistemically warranted.

[11] Zagzebski's rich discussion of the nature of and epistemic basis for self-trust deserves fuller discussion, which I hope to give it elsewhere.

characterisation of epistemic self-trust, and then in Part III I consider what, if anything, follows regarding a requirement to place epistemic trust in others. In this section I describe Foley's account of how "…[t]he presumption of trust in others is generated out of self-trust." [Foley 2001, p.108]

The default presumption of trust in one's own epistemic faculties may be defeated on a particular occasion. A kind of defeater of especial significance for our present topic is: disagreement – the expression of a contrary belief to one's own, by another person. Any plausible epistemology of other-trust is likely to advocate ***weak deference*** on some occasions: accepting what another tells us, when one beforehand had no strong opinion oneself on the topic. And I have argued that ***strong deference*** – abandoning one's previous firm opinion and adopting the other's view – is sometimes rationally mandatory. In this discussion I do not put in question the commonsense fact that it is sometimes right to take another's opinion as authoritative, rather I examine precisely when and *why* this is so. In (Fricker 2006) I argued that one should weakly defer to another's expressed opinion just when one has empirical grounds to believe her expert about her topic; and that one should strongly defer when one has positive empirical grounds to believe her more expert than oneself. The upshot of the present investigation is to endorse that view, and to reject the idea that a consistency requirement from self-trust to other-trust plays any significant general role in one's epistemic basis for treating others' beliefs and hence their word as authoritative.

On the matter of when we should treat others as 'authoritative' - accept and form belief in their reports or otherwise-manifested beliefs[12], Foley distinguishes three positions, which he labels: Egotism, Egoism, and Universalism [Foley 2001 Ch.4]. The ***epistemic egotist*** will not take anyone else's word for anything, in any circumstances.[13] The ***epistemic egoist*** will do so only when she has empirical evidence of that person's special expertise, on the matter in question. Whereas the ***epistemic universalist*** takes the established fact of another's belief that P as grounds to accept P, even in the absence of any special evidence about her – just so long as there are no defeaters. "Universalists regard the opinions of other people as prima facie credible. They universally grant authority to others, even those about whom they

[12] Accept them, that is, in the absence of defeaters.

[13] Fricker [2006] demonstrates the near-incoherence of pure Egotism. The egotist cannot admit that anyone else has any knowledge, since 'A knows P' has P as an obvious consequence.

know little or nothing. Both egoists and egotists refuse to grant universal authority." [Foley 2001, p.88] Throughout this discussion I take ***epistemic universalism*** to be this thesis: that the fact that another believes that P is, in the absence of defeaters, sufficient to warrant outright acceptance of P, formation of full belief; and that formation of belief in this manner can yield knowledge. (Defeaters here will be: strong evidence already in one's possession against P; or evidence of the other's unreliability regarding matters such as P.) This interpretation fits with all of Foley's statements; though some are also consistent with a weaker principle – that the fact of another's belief that P is some evidence in favour of P, but falls short of being sufficient to warrant forming full belief in P, even when undefeated.

Foley advocates epistemic universalism, declaring: "Most of us have prima facie trust in our own faculties even though we cannot give a non-question-begging defence of their reliability. But if so, might not we be rationally compelled to have prima facie trust in others as well? I argue… "yes", and, thus, I will be defending a version of epistemic universalism." [Foley 2001, p.101] A salient feature of the argument that Foley offers for universalism is that it is entirely a posteriori. It works by appealing to contingent features of our actual human social and biological circumstances, as Foley acknowledges. Foley observes, and rests his argument on, two contingent features of how each of us comes to have the beliefs that she does. First, ***shared aetiology****:* each of us has grown up through a process of socialisation, whereby we acquire our conceptual framework and many structuring beliefs through adopting that which is socially prevalent: "Our belief systems are saturated with the opinions of others. In our childhoods, we acquire beliefs from parents, sibling and teachers without much thought. These constitute the backdrop against which we form yet other beliefs, and often enough, these…are also the products of other people's beliefs." [Foley 2001, p.102] There seem to be two related key points here: each of us acquires her beliefs through the *same influences* that produce beliefs in the others around her, her social peers; and each of us in this process is acquiring *many of the very same beliefs* (belief in the same propositions) that her peers acquire. Second, ***similar cognitive equipment***: we know there are "…broad commonalities in the intellectual equipment… of peoples across times and cultures" [Foley 2001, p.105] Foley's conclusion, and his message, is that "…these commonalities pressure us, on threat of inconsistency, to trust one another." [Foley 2001, p.105], and hence that "The prima

facie intellectual trust I have in myself pressures me also to have prima facie intellectual trust in others." [Foley 2001, p.106]

Foley's thesis is that shared aetiology and similar cognitive equipment mean that we live in a social and biological world which is such that "[t]here are broad features of our intellectual situation that threaten us with inconsistency if we do not generally trust the opinions of others." [Foley p.107] However, it is not the facts of shared aetiology and similar cognitive equipment which engender this pressure, but one's knowledge of them. Foley's epistemology is thoroughly internalist, and he is not postulating an externalist consistency requirement. The way that Foleyian 'pressure' from self-trust towards other-trust builds up is thus: by trusting our own epistemic faculties, acquiring beliefs progressively through their use, we thereby develop a theory of our world - of the nature of our environment, and our own place in it and epistemic access to it. And this theory has it that our beliefs have a shared aetiology with those of others round us; and that we have similar cognitive equipment to others around us – other members of our species, whether near at hand or in remote cultures. So, in the contingency of the world one in actuality finds oneself in, one's basic theory of one's world requires one to acknowledge others as having formed beliefs similarly, and as having similar capacities for forming beliefs. Hence, Foley insists, one is 'pressured' on pain of inconsistency to regard others in general as no less reliable a source of beliefs than oneself; hence, since one trusts one's own epistemic faculties, to give no less trust to the beliefs formed by others. "Given that it is reasonable for me to think that my opinions have been thoroughly influenced by others and that my intellectual faculties and my intellectual environment have broad commonalities with theirs, I risk inconsistency if I have intellectual trust in myself and …not… in others." [Foley 2001, p.106] In Part III we find that there are two different ways to interpret Foley's thesis, as to precisely how this inconsistency arises.

Foley's story about how epistemic self-trust exerts pressure towards epistemic others-trust turns on contingent features of one's theory of one's world, in particular one's theory about the aetiology of one's beliefs, and one's cognitive similarities with other believers. He does not claim that the fact of epistemic self-trust generates an a priori necessary requirement, holding in all possible worlds in which the subject may find herself, to trust any other thinker-agents she comes across. So his thesis is in this respect a 'modest' universalism, as he notes: it is a contingent a posteriori

requirement to trust those others one has discovered to have similar cognitive equipment to one's own, and/or shared aetiology of their beliefs with one's own . It is modest also in another way, one that he does not so clearly acknowledge: 'universalism' suggests that the beliefs of any other thinker be given prima facie authority. But the arguments Foley gives, from similar cognitive equipment and shared aetiology, apply not to all other thinkers, but only to other normal members of one's own species; or, more narrowly still, other members of one's relevant social or epistemic community. On one interpretation these considerations provide a basis not for trusting just anyone else; but for trusting, as it were, those one went to school with – other members of one's socio-epistemic group. This version yields an account of a very different flavour of when to afford prima facie credibility to others.

We have seen how Foley develops a contingent case, depending on the social and biological circumstances that, he posits, we actually find ourselves in, for a 'modest universalism'. Foley acknowledges that this universal granting of authority to others' beliefs, in the absence of specific information about their epistemic placing and powers, is prima facie only, being defeated by specific information about lack of reliability. (He has a well-judged discussion of how one should respond to the defeat that disagreement presents one with. [Foley 2001, pp.108-117]) His headline statement is that '[t]he presumption of trust in others is generated out of self-trust.' [Foley 2001, p.108] This is itself a vague statement. Our analysis in Part III will show how it admits of more than one interpretation. It is only on one version that an argument from analogy or consistency-requirement between epistemic self-trust and other-trust is involved. And, I will argue, this version is not sustainable. In what follows I examine whether there is any principle that is a priori compelling and yields substantive results necessarily, imposing a consistency requirement from the fact of epistemic self-trust, to a mandate to treat others' beliefs as prima facie credible. My conclusions are negative. I will also question whether Foley's a posteriori argument described above is convincing vis-a-vis the actual world.

II.1. Reliance: Simple and Reciprocal-Trust-Based

Whether there exists a rational route from the fact of one's epistemic self-trust, to permissible or mandatory other-trust, depends on what exactly this self-trust involves.

(And, as we will see later, who precisely are the 'others' in question.) I start with some clarifications. What exactly is trust? There is an extended literature on trust.[14] I think the following definitions are perspicuous and capture the notions needed for theorising about the role of trust in our present topic.

> ***Reliance***: One ***relies on the fact that A is M*** if and only if one accepts that A is M, and makes plans and/or acts in a way that will or is likely to have a good outcome if and only if A is M; where to accept that A is M is to take this as true, for purposes of planning etc. One accepts that A is M if one believes it; but a fact that is not the object of explicit belief may be accepted by one – if, for instance, it is a default background assumption of one's reasoning. One may rely on a believed fact that does not obtain.

Thus, for instance, I rely on the fact that my car has petrol to go for another 100 miles, when I do not stop at what I know to be the last petrol station, on my route. Or: I rely on the fact that you will water the garden while I am away, when I make no other arrangements to ensure that the plants will be watered, though this is important to me, since I am a keen gardener and they will otherwise die. Reliance may be on another agent to exhibit a property, for instance to do a certain action. But this is incidental to what reliance is.

Reliance is consistent with the relier lacking any epistemic basis for belief in the obtaining of the fact that she, in relying on it, accepts as true. But relying on a fact is generally not a good idea unless one has good evidence of that fact's obtaining (some exceptions are discussed below). I should not drive on past the petrol station unless I know I have enough petrol to complete my journey. I am unwise to rely on you watering the garden in my absence, unless I have good empirical grounds to expect you to do this. My basis for believing this about you may be straightforwardly inductive: you always have done so in the past, and there is ground in your habits and underlying psychology to project this regularity. When the epistemic basis for reliance is thus straightforwardly empirical, call this ***simple reliance.*** One may place simple reliance in some fact about an agent, another person; or some fact about the world that does not involve any agent.

But when the fact relied upon is that another person will do a certain action, there is the possibility instead of ***reciprocal-trust-based reliance.*** Suppose that usually I water the garden, and you don't much care about whether the plants die. But before

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[14] Some landmarks are Holton [1994], Jones [1996], Baier [2004]. See also the survey in Mcleod [2001].

my departure I say to you: 'Please can you be sure to water the garden daily while I'm away; the plants will die otherwise.' You give me your word that you will do this. In this situation I may take myself to have, and indeed have an adequate basis to rely on you to water the garden out of ***reciprocal trust***: you know that you undertook to do so, and that I am confidently expecting – *trusting* - you to honour the undertaking we both know you to have made, and consequently am relying on the plants getting watered by your doing so. In this situation, it can be that both (a) you are motivated by your knowledge of your undertaking, and my trust in you to honour it, to water the garden, though you have no non-trust-related motive for doing so, and (b) I rely on you to water the garden because I believe that you will be motivated by your knowledge of your undertaking, and my trust in you, to do so, though you have no non-trust-related motive for doing so. This reciprocal-trust-based reliance is only possible with respect to another agent, and it involves reciprocal attitudes – I rely on you; you know that I am relying on you and are motivated by this fact; I rely on you because I believe you will be so motivated.

The contrast between simple reliance and reciprocal-trust based reliance is highlighted in this possible scenario: I tell you something purportedly in confidence, getting your assurance that you will not pass it on to anyone else; relying on the inductively established fact about you that, per contra, you can be relied on immediately to break the confidence, and spread the news all around town - my desired and intended outcome. In this scenario I rely on you to fail to be trustworthy.

As with simple reliance, a relier's reciprocal-trust based reliance may or may not be based on adequate evidence that the trustee will be motivated in the manner described above, upon which fact she bases her reliance - that she is trustworthy. There is no reason why I cannot have excellent evidence to believe that you are trustworthy – i.e. will honour undertakings you know yourself to have made and which you know I am relying on you to honour, being motivated to do so in virtue of this knowledge. I may know of your proven track record of trustworthiness, rooted in virtuous character traits that are well-confirmed. Or you may have an institutional role or standing that evidences trustworthiness. And, as with simple reliance, it is generally not a good idea to repose reciprocal-trust-based reliance in someone, unless one has such evidence. 'Trust' is still an appropriate term here, since it remains true that I rely on your acting out of a virtuous character trait, in honouring your

undertaking; you are not otherwise constrained to do so. Thus it is not the case that 'trust' is only applicable in cases where epistemic faith (see below) is required; these two notions need to be separated, and their distinctness kept firmly in mind. Trust can be and generally should be empirically grounded – it is unwise to trust people unless one has evidence of their trustworthiness.

Reciprocal-Trust-Based Reliance thus contrasts with a further notion, ***epistemic faith*****.** It is unwise, as a general rule, to place reciprocal trust in others when one lacks any evidence of their trustworthiness. This is an instance of the fact that it is unwise, as a general rule, to rely on a fact, unless one knows it to be true. But one may on occasion place reliance, either simple or reciprocal-trust based, though one lacks adequate evidence of obtaining of the relied-upon fact. When there is such reliance in the absence of evidence of the relied-upon fact, this involves a ***leap of epistemic faith*** on the part of the relier[15]**.**

Reliance based not in adequate evidence but in epistemic faith may be normatively apt either when it is genuinely inescapable (as with epistemic self-trust), or when there is no better practical alternative. Suppose I am fleeing from a killer-predator, and the only way over a ravine is a rickety-looking bridge. Given that my options are confined to: remain on this side, and expect certain death through being devoured; or try my chances on the bridge, it is better to take a leap of epistemic faith, and rely on the bridge holding my weight, though I have no evidence that it will do so[16]. Or suppose this scenario: a soldier from the enemy's side meets me in a lonely spot. He tells me I can reach safety by taking the right fork in the road ahead. I have no reason to trust his word, and reason not to do so – he is an enemy soldier. But this is my only chance. In this situation, there might be such a dialogue: "Why should I believe you?" "- You will just have to trust me". In this situation, trusting the word of

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[15] Epistemic faith is involved when I rely on a fact without evidence of its obtaining. One might extend the notion to include all cases of believing without adequate evidence; I take no stand on this terminological issue here.

[16] It has been objected to me, by both Rachel Fraser and Stephen Schiffer, that in this scenario one relies only on there being some positive probability that the bridge will hold my weight; given the situation, this makes for an expected utility calculation that risking the bridge is my best action. No: one relies on the fact that the bridge will hold one's weight; this and nothing less will produce a good outcome. What is true is that this is a case in which it makes sense to rely on a fact, though one does not *know* it to obtain, only knowing there is some small positive probability of its doing so. I think this contrasts with betting , where one's activity of betting relies only on there being some chance of winning the bet, e.g. one's ticket in the lottery winning. But I cannot argue for this contrast conclusively here.

another clearly involves epistemic faith[17]. It is pragmatically justified, because it is the least bad alternative open to me.

II.2 Two kinds of Epistemic Self-trust

We saw in I.1 that one cannot attain epistemically non-circular confirmation of the reliability of one's epistemic faculties. This being so, one's reliance on one's epistemic faculties perforce involves an element of epistemic faith. Given this element of epistemic faith, 'epistemic self-trust'[18] is not a misnomer for this reliance - though there is no reciprocal trust involved.

Zagzebski [Zagzebski 2012, pp.37-8] characterizes trust in general, and epistemic self-trust in particular, as involving reliance, plus an absence of feelings of doubt and insecurity, and the presence of a positive affect of confidence. We can concur with this; however the core epistemic fact of reliance is our concern in this investigation, rather than its further psychological accompaniments.

The core relation constituting one's epistemic self-trust is one's reliance on one's epistemic faculties - that is to say, one's employment of them to form beliefs, in a way which is generally apt, that is truth-conducive[19], only if they are in fact reliable.

In what follows I assume first, that one relies on the full package of intellectual intuition, plus memory, plus perception,[20] and that this reliance is pragmatically inescapable – it is simply not a realistic option for everyday life to refrain from it; and second, that – as suggested in I.1 - this pragmatic inescapability is a key necessary component in the epistemological story about why epistemic self-trust is

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[17] I have defined and distinguished between reciprocal-trust-based reliance and epistemic faith. Ordinary talk involving 'trust' I think is confused, and slips between these two ideas. One may trust in the absence of evidence of trustworthiness, and one may sometimes have no choice but to do so. But very often one has a strong empirical basis for one's trust – for instance, in an old friend whom one knows, and knows their virtues, very well. It would be confused, as well as insulting, to suggest that one does not *trust* them, since one's trust is solidly epistemically grounded.

[18] In this case 'trust' signals the lack of evidence on which one's reliance is based, rather than reliance on someone's virtuous character.

[19] It would be too long a digression to expand on why truth is the proper aim of belief; we can assume that it would not be advantageous for one to form beliefs by means of generally unreliable (non-truth-yielding) faculties, and thus that in having a general trait of employing one's faculties to arrive at beliefs, one relies on their being reliably truth-conducive.

[20] In addition introspection yields mental self-knowledge; this is not important to our current enquiry.

warranted. (As we saw in I.1, the full story, Foley-style, which we may endorse, adds to this his reflective equilibrium condition.)

A first observation we must make is that this pragmatically and psychologically inescapable epistemic self-trust, first-order reliance on one's several epistemic faculties, does not ipso facto involve or entail one's possession of any general meta-beliefs about their reliability. This is so since first, one may lack any second-order doxastic attitude about one's faculties. Alternatively second, one may have the trait of first-order reliance, but do so with cognitive dissonance: one has a doxastic attitude to the proposition 'my faculties are reliable'; but this attitude is disbelief, or suspension of belief.

In considering in III whether there is a rational link from epistemic self-trust to mandated epistemic trust in others, I will consider first whether there is such a link if one *does* have the meta-belief 'My faculties are generally reliable', a link that starts from this fact; second, whether there is a link that holds just in virtue of one's first-order reliance on one's own faculties, independently of whether one has any meta-beliefs about their reliability.

II.3 A Careful Characterisation of 'Others-Trust'

When considering epistemic trust in others, the possible objects of epistemic appraisal and 'trust' are: others' epistemic faculties; their resulting beliefs; and their reports - their assertoric speech acts of telling[21]. If we are appraising them, this will be a matter of certifying them as reliably truth-producing (for faculties), and reliably true (for beliefs and assertions)[22]. Placing epistemic trust in others as such is not however appraising them, but is rather a matter, as Foley puts it, of treating them as 'authoritative' – treating their expressed beliefs as prima facie credible. As with epistemic self-trust, one might be disposed, set-up, to respond to others in this way, while lacking any general beliefs about their reliability or otherwise[23].

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[21] See Fricker [2006] for an account of telling, and how knowledge can be gained from others' tellings.

[22] Reliable truth is not the only epistemically valuable feature of faculties, and beliefs; but it is the fundamental one, and it is on this that the epistemic value of trusting them turns.

[23] Thomas Reid's account of testimony in terms of two complementary 'natural' dispositions – of truthfulness, and trustfulness – posits this [Reid 1970].

There is a significant gap between reliability of another's beliefs, and of her assertions, due to three factors. First, in a speech act of assertion the speaker presents the asserted content as true, and takes responsibility for its truth to her intended audience, offering (apparently) the right to believe what is asserted on her say-so. But such acts may be deceptive in intent, the speaker may be lying. This opens up the possibility of falsehood not due to falsity in the speaker's own beliefs. Moreover, one only bothers to talk about what is relatively surprising and of interest. These high information-value beliefs are more liable to falsity than the vast swathes of utterly dull low-information-value beliefs that form any person's cognitive background. These first two factors mean that even if one holds that any thinking subject-agent necessarily has mainly true beliefs, or a subset of beliefs of a certain kind that are largely true, this result does not carry over to hold of her assertions. On the other hand, norms governing the social speech act of assertion, in particular the knowledge-norm that governs assertion, mean that a speaker is likely to be careful about what she asserts – perhaps more careful than in her formation of her own beliefs for, as it were, purely private purposes. In this discussion I shall focus on whether there exists any principle linking epistemic self-trust to a requirement of trust in others' beliefs, rather than one directly to trust in their speech acts of assertion. This follows Foley and Zagzebski, and it seems unlikely one would have a general requirement from epistemic self-trust to trust in others' speech acts of assertion that was not via a requirement to treat their beliefs as prima facie credible[24].

One's epistemic trust in others could be a matter of in the first place a general belief that others' faculties and resulting beliefs are reliably true, and flowing from this a disposition to treat their beliefs as prima facie credible. Alternatively, as with self-trust, one might just have a general disposition to react to others' assertions or otherwise-manifested beliefs by treating them as prima facie credible (i.e accepting them as true, in the absence of defeaters), without this being mandated by a general belief that their epistemic faculties are reliable. In what follows I will consider each of these two possibilities: first, in III.1, that there is a rational link from belief in one's

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[24] The thesis in the epistemology of testimony paralleling Foley's epistemic universalism is *fundamentalism* – the thesis that others' testimony is prima facie credible, to be accepted as true unless there are specific defeaters of its reliability. Two landmarks in the recent pro-fundamentalist literature are Coady [1992], Burge [1993]. See also Graham [2006]. See Lackey [2008] Ch.2 for some imagined cases of reliable testifiers who are not such in virtue of being reliable believers.

own epistemic reliability, to belief in others' reliability, and thence to a requirement to treat their beliefs as prima facie credible; second, in III.2, that there is a link directly from the fact of one's first-order disposition to rely on one's own epistemic faculties, to a rational requirement also to treat others' faculties as no less reliable, hence to accept their manifested beliefs as prima facie credible.

Notice that a key parameter in examining whether and if so how epistemic self-trust mandates epistemic trust in others, is to consider precisely *which* others it mandates such trust in – what features of another trigger or generate a requirement that we repose trust in her.

III. Rational routes from self-trust, to others-trust?

We are looking for a rational route from the fact of pragmatically inescapable epistemic self-trust, either to a belief in the general reliability of some (which?) others' epistemic faculties and resultant beliefs, and hence to a requirement that one treat their beliefs as prima facie credible; or directly (unmediated by a general belief in others' reliability) to a requirement on one's actions, one's responses to these others, that one treat their manifested beliefs as prima facie credible[25]. In seeking such a route, I will first do so on the supposition that one does have the meta-belief 'my faculties are reliably truth-conducive in my actual environment'. Secondly, I will consider whether there is any route, simply in virtue of the fact that one exhibits first-level reliance on one's epistemic faculties – regardless of whether one has any meta-belief as to their reliability.

III.1 A Mandatory Route to Others-Trust from Belief in One's Own Epistemic Reliability?

Suppose I hold the belief: My own epistemic faculties are generally reliable in my actual environment (so the beliefs I arrive at through employing them are mainly

[25] In the interests of giving the consistency-linkage thesis its best chance, I assume that forming a belief is or can be an action; or at least that it is sufficiently action-like that consistency norms can be applied to it, as they can to actions generally. This supposition is necessary for the idea of a consistency requirement between the 'actions' involved in treating one's own faculties as trustworthy, and in treating others' beliefs as prima facie credible, to get any purchase.

true). The following bridging principle linking the fact of my own reliability to a condition for others' reliability seems apriori compelling:

BP 1: If my own faculties are epistemically reliable[26], then so are those of any others sufficiently similar to me in respects relevant to epistemic reliability.

But it is a further question how much empirical bite BP1 has when it comes to identifying others around me whom I must conclude to be reliable, and in whom I hence may or must repose epistemic trust. First: if the relevant similarity to myself is just: also having reliable faculties; then the antecedent of BP1, and any reference to myself, is irrelevant. One might just as well say: anyone with reliable faculties has reliable faculties. If I can empirically identify others as possessors of reliable faculties then it is epistemically permissible, maybe mandatory, for me to trust them. But there is no element of argument from analogy with myself in this process; no empirical element of identifying others as reliable through their recognised relevant similarity to me.

Second: It may however be that the relevant similarity is not the trivial one of also having reliable faculties, but other independently recognisable similarities with myself which are indicators of this. This case is represented by a more specific conditional-form principle in which the antecedent is not idle in obtaining results. I may be in a position to make an inference from a known fact about the basis of my own reliability, to reliability of specific identifiable others, in accordance with this schema:

BP2: If I have properties F1…Fn, indicative of my epistemic reliability[27], then any other individual that has F1…Fn is very probably also reliable, and I may/ should afford prima facie credibility to her manifested beliefs[28].

Specific instances of this schematic bridging principle BP2 may, in some circumstances, represent the empirical basis on which I have warrant to place epistemic trust in others – namely, via a known relevant similarity to myself. The

[26] Strictly, the epistemic reliability in question is relative to one's environment. For the reader's ease of comprehension I omit this detail in the discussion below. Note however that in practice, in one's empirical assessments of others' reliability, what specific local environment one is assessing them with respect to may be a key parameter.

[27] The antecedent of BP2 unpacks thus: 'If there are properties F1…Fn such that I instantiate F1…Fn, and my doing so causally explains my epistemic reliability…'

[28] Believing others to be epistemically reliable is one thing; according prima facie credibility to their manifested beliefs is a further step. I shall not in this discussion interrogate this link: it seems obvious that this belief makes treating others' expressed beliefs as prima facie credible epistemically permissible; I am not going to rest my case against epistemic universalism on the claim that it does not make it mandatory.

validity of the schema of BP2 is compelling in virtue of only the most general empirical considerations[29]; but BP2 is thoroughly empirical in its application, since I must have found out (via employment of my own faculties) that I am in a world such that I am reliable, and I am F1…Fn, and my reliability is causally explained by my being F1…Fn; so that being so indicates reliability in others[30]. This is an entirely contingent, and circumstance-ridden, situation. There is absolutely no advance guarantee that anyone who employs her epistemic faculties will find herself in a world –that is, will arrive at a theory of her world – which is such that epistemically productive instances of BP2 are fulfilled. She might find herself alone; or she might find herself surrounded by – by her lights – disanalogous, hopelessly unreliable believers[31]. And, as we will see again below, it may well be that the epistemic basis a person finds herself to have for trusting others is just straightforwardly empirical; it does not work via this kind of bridging argument from analogy with her own reliability, to that of relevantly similar others, at all.

We have established that whether a bridging argument from analogy with one's own reliability, as represented by BP2, provides basis to trust any specific others one finds oneself among turns on the contingent circumstances of the world one finds oneself in. How much work can BP2 do in our actual world? Let us see how Foley's case, summarised in I.2 above, that '…[t]rust in myself radiates outwards toward others…', [Foley 2001 p.106] appears when framed in terms of BP2.

Foley cites the supposed facts of shared aetiology and similar cognitive equipment as 'pressuring' one towards treating others' beliefs as prima facie credible. But he is less than entirely specific on how exactly this pressure is generated. One can interpret his story in either of two ways on this: that the pressure is generated starting from belief one has in the reliability of one's own faculties; or that it is generated simply by the fact of one's reliance on one's own faculties. I examine this second interpretation

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[29] BP2 is not, I think, strictly a priori, since there are presuppositions about the generality of explanation involved.

[30] Strictly, the inference captured in BP2 requires only that being F1…Fn is nomologically correlated with being epistemically reliable; but it seems unlikely this would be established robustly enough to underwrite the inference from self to others, unless this correlation is founded in a causal-explanatory relationship.

[31] Epistemically even less favourable: pace Foley, she might find herself in a world such that she herself is condemned, by her own lights, as epistemically highly erratic in that world. Since we are here considering possible routes from the fact of one's own (believed-in) reliability, to a basis to afford prima facie credibility to others' beliefs, we can neglect this possibility in our discussion.

in III.2 below. On the first interpretation Foley assumes that one has, through use of one's faculties (admittedly, initially via epistemic faith), arrived at a theory of one's world that includes the (justified) belief that one is reliable; together with some more specific beliefs about what features of one ensure and explain one's reliability**.** On this interpretation of how the 'pressure' from recognition of shared aetiology and similar cognitive equipment operates, it proceeds precisely via empirically established instances of the antecedent of BP2. Foley in effect offers this first initial thesis and following argument: I am reliable in virtue of my basic human cognitive equipment; so others that have similar equipment – all normal humans – are also (very probably) reliable, and I should afford prima facie credibility to their beliefs. He also offers a second thesis and argument: my beliefs are largely and reliably true, and I acquired most of them through a process shared with my social peers; so my social peers also must have mainly true and reliably formed reliable beliefs.

How convincing are Foley's proposed empirical applications of BP2 to ground actual-world epistemic universalism in relation to other members of one's species? I do not think they are convincing. I do not think the first thesis and argument is convincing. Instead, I propose that what our world reveals to us is that normal humans all have similar basic cognitive equipment; but that how reliable they are in belief-formation turns on individual differences in how they train them and subsequently employ them. If I this is right, then Foley's self-admittedly contingent aposteriori case for his modest epistemic universalism is not after all empirically well-founded. (It does make a difference here which beliefs precisely – on what topics - of other people we are interested in. There is a convincing empirical case[32] that other people are pretty reliable about very dull everyday stuff – such as their beliefs about obvious properties of their perceptible environment, and platitudinous facts like: I have a body; there are other people, etc. But if we are considering whether to place epistemic trust in others, we are concerned with the more surprising and unlikely stuff – like what happened at an important meeting, or which make of laptop represents the best value for a limited budget, etc. Human cognitive equipment gets one so far, and then idiosyncratic

[32] However it does not seem to me that one's empirical basis for knowing this about others is particularly via analogy from one's own established reliability – it seems to me rather that as I learn about the world, I acquire grounds – from observation, induction and inference to the best explanation, to regard both others and myself as reliable in their dull everyday beliefs. I acquire confirmation of others' reliability directly at least as often as via analogy with my own established reliability.

epistemic virtues like carefulness and cautiousness and judiciousness, together with idiosyncratic specific epistemic expertise and knowledge need to be in play, for another to get the interesting stuff about a particular topic right with sufficient reliability that we properly give them prima facie credence about it.)[33].

It may be that the other main strand of Foley's contingent case for trust in others via an instance of BP2 fares better: the strand that appeals to shared aetiology, rather than similar equipment. But, as observed earlier, this does not give rise to anything like universalism, but to a highly parochial and selective answer to the question: which others does my theory of the world, and of who is relevantly similar to me, enjoin that I should trust? – others who wear my old school tie, or are members of the same professional institution; not just anyone I happen to encounter at the bus stop!

A compelling epistemic principle that takes one from one's belief in one's own reliability to a requirement to trust others' beliefs must, so far as I can see, operate via empirically confirmed facts linking the fact of one's own reliability to facts about others' likely reliability. This is so, if we rule out that some such principle as BP3 or BP4 below is certifiable as true a priori:

BP3 If I am reliable, then any other (normal) member of my species is reliable;

BP 4 If I am reliable, then any other rational thinker and agent is reliable.

I think we can dismiss as entirely without plausibility that either BP3 or BP4 is an a priori necessary truth[34]. This being so, a solely epistemic case pressuring one to place prima facie credibility in others' beliefs given that one believes oneself reliable must necessarily turn on contingent features of the world one finds oneself in. I have suggested above that, against Foley's contention, in the actual world what one

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[33] This is one reason why there is an important difference between a principle of prima facie credibility regarding others beliefs, and regarding their assertions – since we only bother to talk about what is relatively surprising and of interest. I am in effect conceding here to Foley that his modest epistemic universalism holds for very dull commonplace beliefs, but that since this result is of zero interest for what matters for each one of us epistemically – on what basis, and when, we can trust people's surprising and interesting beliefs, it is not best construed as the result he intends to establish with his universalism.

[34] Specifically, I think we can rule out that the linkage from antecedent to consequent is a priori and necessary. It is a separate matter whether the truth of the consequent can be established as a priori and necessary, in which case of course the conditional would itself be so; though my view on this is also negative. I do think that any thinker-agent must have some minimal aptitude for forming simple perceptual beliefs about her environment reliably, at least in some canonical environment. But this weak condition falls far short of establishing overall reliability, even in the favoured environment.

discovers through the use of one's own epistemic faculties does not license even a modest epistemic universalism. What one discovers does not establish the prima facie credibility of other humans on interesting topics merely in virtue of their humanity. Instead what one finds out through accumulated psychological, social and institutional knowledge is that certain people, about certain topics are expert, being so in virtue of idiosyncratic special education and training they have received, or research they have done, or idiosyncratic intellectual virtues they possess, or company they have kept, or simply where they have been; and so one should treat their beliefs on those topics as authoritative. Sometimes the way we establish that another person is authoritative about a certain topic may be through an instance of BP2: she went to my school, and since I was very well taught in science subjects, so will she have been, and so I can trust her about chemistry etc. But, I suggest, in many cases one will be in a position to discover by empirical means (knowledge of some of the factors listed just above) that a certain person is authoritative about a certain topic, and thereby have a sound basis to trust her; and this empirical route is not via an analogy with one's own reliability on the matters in question at all – one may know oneself not be reliable on these matters. I can know that my doctor went to an excellent medical school, and so repose authority in her, without having been to it myself, or having any diagnostic or therapeutic competence. In short: while there is not space to make a detailed conclusive case here, I suggest that we do often have empirically-based knowledge of specific other people's authoritativeness about specific topics; and that we have broad confirmation of all normal adults' reliability about dull everyday beliefs – ones too dull to be worth passing on. But in contradiction to Foley's central contention, I do not think that analogy from one's own established reliability, instancing BP2, plays a significant role in generating one's empirically-based knowledge of others' specific reliabilities[35].

I said above that a purely *epistemic* principle linking one's belief in one's own reliability to a requirement to trust others must be empirically grounded, and I have further claimed that, against Foley's contention, this does not lead even to contingent empirically-based epistemic universalism in the actual world. I next consider whether there is a consistency requirement to treat others' beliefs as prima facie credible

[35]I argue for this account of how others' trustworthiness can be and often is established in Fricker [1994], [1995], [2002], [2006].

simply given the fact of one's first-order reliance on one's own faculties. I raise the idea that *non-epistemic* considerations may be relevant to this matter – perhaps considerations about respect to other humans, or to all other rational beings as such. My own position denies the validity of such non-epistemic factors to the normativity of belief-formation; but I think we do not get to the bottom of the felt pressure towards universalism unless we articulate such factors. In British law a defendant accused of a crime is presumed innocent until proven guilty. I think we can detect the idea lurking behind Foley's epistemic universalism that any other human – maybe any other thinker-agent – should in virtue of some *non-epistemic* requirement be presumed rational and epistemically reliable unless and until this presumption is empirically defeated.

III.2 A Mandatory Route to Others-Trust from the Fact of Self-Trust?

As we noted in II.2, pragmatically or psychologically inescapable, or just de facto, reliance on one's own faculties and resulting beliefs, does not require or ensure that one will have any general meta-belief in their reliability. One may lack any doxastic attitude; or one may have suspended belief; or one may believe that, for all one knows, one's faculties are not truth-conducive. (If this last, one is in an unfortunate situation of theoretical/practical dissonance; but this may be how it is.) If I lack belief in my own reliability, there is no question of an inference from this to a belief in others' reliability, and thence to a requirement to place epistemic trust in them[36]. Is there any way that the fact of my reliance on my own epistemic faculties can itself impose or generate a consistency requirement, that I also place epistemic trust in others – treat their beliefs as prima facie credible?[37]

Propositions are the paradigm of items that stand in logical relations to each other, such as entailment and inconsistency; hence when it comes to consistency

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[36] In a longer treatment it would be good to consider also whether believing in others' epistemic reliability requires one to engage in the responses and attitudes to others of first-level trust. In this discussion I give the link from self-trust to others'-trust its best chance, and assume that it would be irrational not to repose first-level trust in others, if one believes them worthy of trust.

[37] I take it as obvious that given that, as we saw in the previous section, a belief in my own epistemic reliability cannot engender a required belief in others' epistemic reliability, the mere fact of my first-level reliance cannot do so; and I spend no time pursuing this possibility.

requirements on ourselves, human thinker-agents, it is our beliefs in such propositions that most obviously stand to each other in entailment, inconsistency etc relations, in virtue of their propositional contents; so that one may derivatively say *of a thinker* that she is guilty of inconsistency if she, for instance, persists in maintaining two inconsistent beliefs, despite appreciating their inconsistency. In III.1 we explored the possibility of a consistency requirement mandating epistemic trust in others as a consequence of epistemic self-trust, which operated in this way on those paradigm subjects of logical relations, one's propositional beliefs: the idea we explored was that if I believe myself epistemically reliable I must also, on pain of inconsistency in my beliefs, also believe certain others to be epistemically reliable. The final step to an ongoing first-level requirement to repose epistemic trust in others, treat their beliefs as prima facie credible, comes via a further posited consistency requirement holding between beliefs and actions, in particular between that of belief in others' epistemic reliability and one's ongoing actions of accepting as true what others tell one or otherwise manifest their belief in.[38]

Can actions, or general policies for or dispositions towards action, stand in logical relations, in particular can they be inconsistent? It is easy to define a sense in which a particular action A1 done for reason R1 by an agent is inconsistent with another potential action-type A2, namely if R1 rationalises refraining from doing an action of type A2. (For instance, if I remain indoors in very hot weather in order to keep cool, it would be inconsistent if I then turn on the central heating.) Extending this thought, we can say that an action-type A1 has ***belief-derived inconsistency*** with a type A2 just if the only possible belief-desire rationalisation for doing A1 enjoins refraining from doing A2; conversely, we can say that an action-type A1 ***engenders a belief-derived mandate*** of action-type A2 just if the only possible belief-desire rationalisation for doing A1 enjoins also doing A2. And we may add the further complication: the belief-derived inconsistency with A2, or belief-derived mandate for A2, may hold outright; or conditionally upon the agent's possession of certain other beliefs. For instance: If the only possible rationalisation for trusting my own faculties

[38] One can see the requirement of acceptance of what another states as a straightforward instance of maintaining consistency in one's beliefs thus: suppose one believes both that S would not state that P unless she knew that P; and that S stated that P; it is an obvious logical consequence that P. So to withhold belief that P when one knows a trustworthy speaker has stated that P involves refusing to draw an obvious entailment of things one knows. See Fricker [2006a]

includes the belief that they are reliable, and I trust my own faculties out of my belief that they are reliable; then if I also believe that I am reliable in virtue of being F1…Fn, this generates a belief-derived mandate also to trust others who are F1…Fn. This sort of belief-derived mandate for doing A1 given that one does A2 does not really give us a distinct consistency requirement on action, but merely one consequential on an epistemic requirement of consistency on one's beliefs, plus the general manner in which beliefs can mandate action.

Are there consistency requirements on actions, requirements holding between action-types as such, ones that do not stem from their relation to the beliefs that produce said actions and logical relations among these beliefs as explored above? Immanual Kant believed there are, claiming all rational thinker-agents are bound in virtue of their rational will to 'act only on that maxim which you can will to become a universal law (Kant 1991). In the same vein, he claimed all rational thinker-agents are similarly bound always to treat all other rational thinker-agents as an end-in-themself, never merely as a means to some further end. An idea closely related to Kant's maxim is that it is a consistency requirement on actions that one must 'treat like cases alike'. For instance, suppose I am a teacher in a primary school, and so am in a position where I must sometimes sanction transgressive behaviour by the pupils in my charge in appropriate ways. Suppose several children are found to have stolen items from the stationary cupboard, which was by error left unlocked. Suppose I believe that stealing school property is a sufficiently severe misdemeanour to merit punishment (say, being deprived of the usual sweets at break-time). This rationalises my applying this punishment to one child; and no less to all of the children who stole items. (Similarly if I have the general belief that human cognitive equipment is reliable, this mandates placing epistemic trust both in myself, and in others.) But it may be that I am unsure about whether the misdemeanour is bad enough to require punishment, rather than merely a reprimand. Nonetheless, if I decide to punish one child then, by the 'treat like cases alike' precept, I must in fairness punish all those who stole (assuming there are no special excusing or mitigating circumstances regarding any of them). Here, the requirement to punish further children derives only from the fact that I have punished one, and the 'treat like alike' principle. Even if punishing the first child was an error of judgement, once I have punished her, I must in fairness also punish the rest – or so the Kant-inspired maxim has it. Armed with

these thoughts about kinds of possible consistency requirements on action, I now turn to consider our present concern, self-trust and other-trust.

If there is an underived consistency requirement holding between some types of action, or between some general policies for or dispositions to action, stemming from the precept that one must treat like cases alike, then it is worth exploring the supposition that the fact of one's first-level epistemic self-trust, one's general disposition to rely on one's own epistemic faculties, generates a requirement on one's general disposition regarding others, that one treats their manifested beliefs as prima facie credible – reposes epistemic trust in them. So consider:

> BP5: 'If you trust your own faculties, you should trust those of any others with relevantly similar faculties.'

As with BP1, BP5 in itself has very little empirical bite, and for similar reasons. Even if it could be established that BP5 is a maxim with a priori force, BP5 itself is silent on the question of whether one is in a world containing relevantly similar others. This is a wholly empirical question. And an epistemic egotist, like an ethical egoist, could refuse to trust any others, while remaining consistent, conforming to the universalising principle, by insisting that she is special and unique – as a matter of contingent fact, everyone else she encounters is empirically established by her to be inferior and defective, none have faculties relevantly similar to her own. This epistemic egotist can acknowledge that *if* she were to encounter an epistemic peer, she would be constrained by the maxim; but deny that she has any. - That is to say, this position is not a priori incoherent. It may be that, in the world the egotist finds herself in, it is empirically preposterous to maintain that she is epistemically special. But – our present point – the principle itself, as opposed to broad empirical theory, does not force epistemic trust in any specific others.

As with BP1, to get any prospect of substantial results we need empirical data about specific respects of relevant similarity, as BP2 schematised. Now, in considering BP5 as a principle requiring trust in relevantly similar others *independently of one's believing that one is oneself reliable*, it becomes more fiddly to formulate what constitutes relevant similarity. Foley's idea is: what I have found out about my world shows me that shared aetiology and common cognitive equipment make for parity in terms of reliability. So I believe and know this: I am reliable just if other normal humans and/or my social peers are so too. This means that these features are relevant

similarities, and so we can apply BP5 thus: whether or not I believe myself to be reliable, I trust my own faculties; and the principle that one must treat like cases alike entails that I must thence also repose epistemic trust in relevantly similar others – namely, in this world that I have found myself in, other humans generally, and more specifically my social peers.[39] Restated once more: "I have found out that I and my social peers/other humans are on a par as to epistemic reliability; hence consistency requires me to treat myself and these others equally, in terms of reposing epistemic trust. So given that I trust myself, I must on pain of inconsistency also trust these others, my broad epistemic peers." Notice that, unlike the argument we considered in III.1, neither belief in my own reliability, nor in that of others, is invoked or concluded here. The argument does not show that I must believe others to be reliable, only that I must treat them as if they are – since that is how I treat myself. (The situation is analogous to the teacher/pupil/punishment case described above. The teacher may be unsure whether any pupil truly deserves punishment; but if she punishes one, she must, so the treat-like-alike precept tells us, punish all.)

Does this application of BP5 provide a compelling empirically-based case for modest actual-world epistemic universalism? It does not, since it encounters the same objections that were raised in III.1 to similar cognitive equipment and shared aetiology as purportedly grounding a belief-based route to epistemic universalism. First, common humanity is not a relevant similarity, since it is not an established empirical truth that I am on a par reliability-wise with all other humans just in virtue of our similar cognitive equipment; second, even if I am on a par reliability-wise with my social peers, this does not establish anything like epistemic universalism, but instead a cliquey epistemic parochialism.

So if the empirical claims made in III.1 about what we find out about our own world are accepted, then BP5 fails to yield any significant results in the actual world, in particular it does not yield modest epistemic universalism via an acknowledgement that other humans are as such relevantly similar epistemically to oneself, and so demand similar treatment to that one gives oneself, in terms of epistemic trust. But I

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[39] In accordance with Foley's general epistemic internalist approach, I take the 'treat like alike' precept to require one, on pain of irrationality of some kind, to treat alike cases that one *believes* to be relevantly similar. This constitutes one part of practical responsibility, a parallel to epistemic responsibility. An externalist principle requiring similar treatment of what are *in fact* similar cases is very different.

think the case re BP5 is worse than this. I think BP5 – in contrast with BP1 and BP2 - is not an a priori compelling maxim. (A belief-based argument from analogy instancing BP2 does indeed make a particular compelling empirically-based case to trust certain specific others on a certain topic, as was acknowledged in III.1.) BP5 underwrites as valid this argument: "I am reliable just if certain relevantly similar others are; I treat myself as reliable; hence I must also treat those others as reliable." I do not see that this argument is compelling. Whether its conclusion is forced by its premises may turn on precisely *why* it is that I rely on my own faculties. I think the argument certainly does not compel, if – as I have endorsed – the basis for epistemic self-trust is nothing more epistemically positive than its pragmatic and psychological inescapability. This basis for self-reliance, I submit, does not engender a requirement also to rely no less on others' faculties, in virtue of a 'treat like alike' precept, in despite of the fact that reliance on others in contrast *is not pragmatically or psychologically inescapable.*

We may reinforce this negative claim by analogy. Recall our previous example: suppose the only way across a chasm, to escape a deadly predator, is over a rotten-looking bridge. So I have no choice but to rely on it to take my weight, taking a leap of epistemic faith in doing so. This in no way means that I am guilty of culpable inconsistency, if (having survived my ordeal!) I refuse to cross other similar, rotten-looking bridges, when I am not constrained by compelling practical motives to do so. I have no choice, we have maintained, but to place epistemic faith in my own faculties' reliability. This does not mean that I can or must also repose trust in others' faculties out of no more than epistemic faith.[40]

If this is right, then not only does BP5 fail to yield substantial results, fail to deliver actual-world modest epistemic universalism mediated by relevant similarity of all normal humans as such; it does not even have a priori force as a formal maxim, and there is no possible world in which it rationally compels trust in any others. There is no rational compulsion from the fact of self-trust to a requirement to place equal trust in relevantly similar others.

[40] I assume here that trust in others' faculties is not psychologically or pragmatically inescapable. Even those who maintain it is natural, such as Reid[1975] and Zagzebski [2012]do not make this implausible claim.

I said in III.1 that there are two possible interpretations of Foley's case from shared aetiology and common cognitive equipment for his modest universalism. In III.1 we examined the version which posits and starts from a belief in one's own reliability. In this section we have examined the alternative version which starts simply from the fact of one's self-trust. We saw that, as with the first version, it fails to establish even actual-world modest epistemic universalism; and that it fares worse than the starts-with-belief version, since BP5 is not even an a priori compelling formal maxim.

We are not quite done. As noted in III.1, we do not dig out what is really behind some writers' thinking about how self-trust generates a requirement of trust in others, if we do not consider the idea that non-epistemic considerations can sometimes provide reasons for forming a belief. This is a deep central issue in epistemology. Here I have space only to advertise some relevant considerations and state my own view. Recall the principle regarding actions that one must 'treat like cases alike'. Why must one do this? Or better: why does it matter, in a particular case, whether one does this? Suppose that on some occasions when I am offered chocolate I accept, and on others I decline; there is no apparent difference in the circumstances regarding myself, and regarding my situation, between these occasions. It seems I am failing to treat like cases alike and my actions of refusal/acceptance are in a sense inconsistent. Certainly my behaviour is capricious; but no-one would make a fuss about my violating a precept applying to actions that ought to be bothered about. I am free, epistemically, practically and morally, to be as capricious as I like in my acceptance and refusal of chocolate. Unlike the requirement of epistemic rationality on me that I remove inconsistency in my beliefs when detected, the requirement I may sometimes be subject to, to treat like cases alike is not, as they say 'all about me'. The requirement on me to be consistent in my treatment of certain cases stems from some feature of *those cases*, and flows to me from them. 'Treat like alike' matters only when those on the receiving end of my treatment have some kind of value or worth of their own, and hence are owed by me fair and equal treatment.

The following line of thought, I propose, if correct would underwrite and establish a modest universalism: "Since I trust my own faculties, I owe it to similar others – other members of my species, or even all other rational agents as such – to treat them with no less epistemic respect than I give to myself; and this involves

treating their expressed beliefs as prima facie credible." This idea, if accepted, provides a *non-epistemic* reason to treat others' beliefs as prima facie credible; so a non-epistemic reason to form beliefs. I do not think that non-epistemic reasons can ever be reasons for belief. They are the wrong kind of reasons. Reasons to form belief that P are factors that bear on whether P. Reasons why believing P would have some good feature –would be loyal, or polite, or convenient, or show respect to another – can never be reasons directly to form belief. (They may be reasons to try indirectly to get oneself to come to believe P; but that is very different.) [See (Hieronymi 2005)] This is why, in my view, BP5 is not and cannot be a priori compelling. That I owe other humans, or all other rational beings, respect, even if true, does not and cannot give me a reason also to form belief in what they believe just because they believe it.[41]

Notice also that, even if one did think that considerations of respect etc can be reasons to form belief, it is not clear that this idea lends itself most naturally to bolstering the case for epistemic universalism via a consistency requirement from my epistemic trust in myself. If, on non-epistemic grounds, I owe epistemic respect to others, then this idea lends credence to a principle such as Burge's 'Acceptance Principle' – which says, in effect, that I should treat apparent expressions of others' beliefs as prima facie credible (see Burge [1993]). My trust in my own faculties does not feature, it is simply a principle claimed to have a priori force that one's default epistemic stance in relation to others should be to treat their expressed beliefs as prima facie credible.

In Part II I offered careful formulations of epistemic self-trust and other-trust. In light of these in Part III I explored what possible routes there might be from epistemic self-trust to a requirement to repose no less epistemic trust in others. Foley's own arguments were placed within the scheme of possible forms of argument that were discovered and explored. We saw that there is no a priori compelling principle that yields any constraints on a thinker necessarily to trust others given her epistemic self-trust. The mere fact of first-level epistemic self-trust does not compel one through a

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[41] Suppose showing epistemic respect is part of showing respect. One does this to others not by simply believing what they tell one, even without any evidence of their reliability on the topic. Instead one may afford respect by such means as: listening to them and considering carefully what they say; being prepared to re-think one's own view; taking time to examine their credentials – and so forth.

consistency requirement on action to treat other humans' beliefs as prima facie credible. Even if use of one's faculties induces the belief that others are relevantly similar to one epistemically, so that one is on a par with them reliability-wise, this belief in epistemic parity between oneself and others does not compel one to treat them epistemically in the same way one treats oneself- so it does not force one to trust them no less than one trusts oneself epistemically. Nor does one's belief that oneself is reliable by itself compel one to believe any specific others are also epistemically reliable, or to repose trust in them.

In the circumstances when epistemic self-trust produces a 'pressure' towards epistemic trust in others, this turns entirely on the contingencies of what world one is in – on what one discovers about the nature of oneself and the others in one's world, through their use. In contradiction of Foley's contention, use of one's own faculties to acquire beliefs in the actual world does not lead to an empirical basis for modest epistemic universalism. What one finds out is not that all humans are epistemically reliable about interesting topics just in virtue of their similar human cognitive equipment; but that reliability is an idiosyncratic matter, turning on contingencies of temperament and experience – training, education, research and so forth.

Sometimes what one finds out leads to a specific argument by analogy to trust certain others: I am epistemically reliable in virtue of features F1---Fn, so others with F1…Fn are also very probably reliable. But, our concluding moral was, this is just one particular way in which acquiring beliefs about the epistemic qualities of the others around one may be mediated, on some particular occasions. It is in fact more typical that one will find out that others are to be trusted on some particular topic in contrast to one's own lack of expertise on it, not via an empirically-grounded analogy with one's own expertise. Often my own peculiar epistemic status on the topic in question simply will not figure in my basis for treating another's beliefs on a particular topic as authoritative. I expect people who have lived in Australia to know quite a bit about that country – such as what the weather, the landscape, the roads are like. And so on mutatis mutandis for so many other specific topics where specific experience and training of others indicate their likely authority. Analogy with myself is simply irrelevant.

My own account of these matters was developed here using Foley's insightful and engaging treatment as a reference point. Linda Zagzebski (Zagzebski [2012]) has

also recently offered an important discussion of the same issue. There is no space left for the detailed discussion of Zagzebski's position that it merits. So I briefly register my view that the case she offers does not introduce any new form of argument distinct from those considered and rejected in Part III above. Zagzebski offers what on my reading amounts to a version of the argument discussed and rejected in III.2 . This posits a consistency requirement on action to treat like cases alike, and couples this with the supposed empirical discovery that other humans are relevantly similar epistemically to me, so that the treat-like-alike requirement kicks in: "If I have a general trust in myself and I accept the principle that I should treat like cases alike, I am rationally committed to having a general trust in [relevantly similar others]". For Zagzebski, the relevantly similar others are 'other normal, mature humans' since I have found out that 'they have the same natural desire for truth and the same general powers and capacities that I have." (Zagzebski [2012], p.55) Again, she writes: 'Trust in myself means there is a presumption in favour of the output of my faculties; so consistency requires me to have a presumption in favour of the faculties of others who share my faculties; which is to say, virtually all other human beings. The default position is trust, not distrust." (Zagzebski [2012], p.56) This is the argument for others-trust from self-trust that was carefully formulated and rejected as uncompelling in III.2, and I will not repeat the points made there.

Foley says en passant that the contrast between epistemic universalism versus epistemic egoism (recall that this latter reposes epistemic trust in another only when there is evidence of her specific reliability about the topic in question) is really one of degree, not of kind. How so? Surely one either takes the stance that another human person is presumed trustworthy until shown otherwise; or in contrast requires evidence amounting to proof of their trustworthiness. But Foley suggests it is a matter of degree how much evidence about someone one requires, before one will treat them as trustworthy. This suggests to me the following line of thought, as mounting the best case for actual-world modest epistemic universalism: One learns from use of one's own faculties that one is in a world with other humans all of whom share one's basic cognitive equipment, and as such are *capable of* acquiring a large range of beliefs via reliable methods. Once one knows that much, a non-epistemically based requirement of epistemic respect for others kicks in: one knows they are built to be capable of attaining knowledge, reliable belief; and this being so, one is required to

regard them as, as it were, epistemically innocent until proven guilty – to treat them as epistemically reliable unless and until specific evidence defeats this presumption. This position offers a mix of epistemic reasons with non-epistemic, morally-based reasons grounding one's epistemic attitude to other members of one's species. I myself reject this view, since I disbelieve there can be non-epistemic reasons to form beliefs. But I leave it on the table as the best option for the advocate of actual-world epistemic universalism. It may be that this represents Zagzebski's view.

Before closing this discussion I must deal with what would be, if sustained, a crushing objection to the interest of the topic here discussed, of whether epistemic self-trust rationally mandates epistemic other-trust. The objection is that the project is misconceived, since epistemic other-trust is at least as psychologically and epistemically basic as self-trust. Again, this worry deserves fuller exploration than is here possible. I think the worry is misplaced given these points: first, our topic has been about first-level reliance on one's basic epistemic faculties – forming belief from perceptual experience, trusting one's memories, engaging in simple empirical reasoning. It has not been about one's self-concept – what kind of person one thinks one is, and so forth. It is very plausible that one's self-concept is deeply influenced by what one sees of oneself reflected in others' treatment of one. It is much less plausible to maintain that one's ability and tendency to form simple perceptual beliefs is so influenced. Paul Harris (Harris 2012) cites experimental studies showing that quite young children will reject an authoritative adult's testimony when it conflicts with their own perceptual beliefs. Second: our project is not offered as an – obviously fictitious – real-time account of how one comes to have beliefs on one hand from one's own faculties, and on the other from one's acceptance of what others tell one or otherwise manifest their belief in. It is instead a rational reconstruction of what the epistemic justificatory basis for our belief-system rests on: an account of what makes us sometimes justified in accepting certain others' beliefs as prima facie credible. Epistemic trust in others is perhaps natural, but it is not psychologically inescapable, and it can be suspended on particular occasions and quite widely across whole situations. This is enough to make our enquiry an important exploration of the epistemic foundations of our beliefs[42].

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[42] The fact that in developing one's belief system each one of us goes through an initial period of uncritical trust in what others teach us means one can attain only a 'local', not a 'global' empirical

It is a tempting idea that there is a rational link from the fact of 'self-trust', reliance on one's own epistemic faculties, to a requirement to trust others, perhaps via a Kantian-style universalising consistency requirement on actions. But our investigation has shown this attractive thought to be an illusion. The basis we may actually have, for trusting others' beliefs, and their reports, is straightforwardly empirical; and analogies with oneself play only an incidental, contingent role, in some particular situations. There is no necessary general role for argument from analogy, or its like, in the basis one may arrive at for placing reliance on other people's expressions of their beliefs.

Conclusion: Justified Religious Belief From Authority?

We began by identifying the acceptance of others' teachings as one key source of religious belief. If Foleyian epistemic universalism were correct, then accepting what others tell one would in a wide variety of situations yield justified belief, even without one having engaged in scrutiny of their credentials. (Not however universally, since there must be no defeaters present to one of the credibility of their testimony.) If instead the arguments and position developed here is correct, then acceptance of what others tell one must, if it is to yield epistemically justified belief, be mediated by apt critical scrutiny of their credentials and trustworthiness on the topic in question. This makes it a lot harder – no easier than it should be - to gain epistemically justified belief through believing what one is told. I have no further space in the present discussion to follow through further the consequences for the rationality and epistemic justifiedness of religious belief. But it is clear that, on the view advocated here, more is required than merely soaking up the prevailing belief-system around one, in order to acquire justified beliefs. One implication for religious belief could be to place more emphasis on individual thought and experience in the foundation of justified religious belief. With this indication of possible directions of enquiry, I must leave the topic for this occasion[43].

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grounding of one's entitlement to trust what others believe and tell us. See Fricker [1994] for this distinction, and for a sketch of how one can sometimes empirically establish others' trustworthiness.

[43] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at a conference on Autonomy at the Humboldt University in Berlin in August 2011, at an epistemology conference hosted by Kings College London in May 2012, and most recently in the Philosophy Department of New York University in May 2013, as well as in graduate seminars at Oxford University. My thanks to audiences for comments which

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enabled me to improve and clarify the argument in various respects. Thanks to John Hawthorne for discussions on these themes.

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