Migrations of Trust: Reasonable Trust and Epistemic Transgressions

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Abstract
Despite an immense amount of literature on the topic of trust, there is still no account that offers a plausible epistemological framework for the phenomenon of reasonable trust. The main claim of this article is that reasonable trust and distrust are phenomena based upon practical knowledge, while non-reasonable trust and distrust result from dislocation of trust into different epistemic regimes. This dislocation can be observed in some of the influential theories such as cognitive and emotional accounts of trust and in the accounts understanding trust as a form of faith. Added to that, theoretical approaches introducing a strong idea of basic trust preclude observing the difference between reasonable and non-reasonable trust. In this article, I argue that reasonable trust is founded upon practical knowledge which includes knowledge of integrity of the trusted person and knowledge about a similarity of worldviews of the trust giver and the trust receiver. Furthermore, I elaborate on the ways reasonable trust and distrust are being transformed and disfigured in other epistemic regimes. Drawing mainly upon Aristotelian understanding of practical knowledge, I want to show how non-reasonable trust and distrust are manifested in the phenomena of blind trust, unconditional trust and absolute doubt and explain why non-reasonable trust and distrust can hardly be distinguished from loyalty, subordination, infatuation or calculation.

Keywords Trust · Reasonable trust · Practical knowledge · Integrity · Aristotle

Introduction

All human interactions are accompanied by a certain degree of trust (or distrust). It is commonplace in literature for trust to support and benefit social relations, making them flow smoothly. Focusing on the benefits of trust over distrust, the issue

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of non-reasonable trust (and distrust) is often neglected or downplayed. It is not only distrust that makes the functioning of social relations more complicated; it is particularly non-reasonable trust and distrust. The latter two are often misleading, flawed, and sometimes even incite hostilities. Blind trust, unconditional trust, broken trust and calculative quasi trust are some of the typical consequences or manifestations of non-reasonable trust. Non-reasonable distrust is sometimes manifested as absolute doubt or excessive skepticism, forming the background upon which social life is hardly possible.

Over the last hundred years, the concept of trust has been discussed or applied at length in sociological, philosophical, economical, psychological and in political science scholarship. Differing viewpoints have been established, sometimes to the point of mutual rivalry. However, the idea of reasonable trust has not been directly taken into account. Reasonable trust, as I will claim in this article, is a phenomenon of leaning upon another person grounded in practical knowledge, always including knowledge of the moral integrity of the trust receiver and of the similarity between the worldviews of the trust giver and the trusted. The concepts of practical knowledge and reasonableness employed here, as will be explained in the article, are of Aristotelian background.

The existing theories of trust cannot properly accommodate the ideas of reasonable and non-reasonable trust. Some of them imagine trust as a purely rational enterprise. Yet, rational and reasonable are significantly different. If trust is understood as the product of pure calculus, disappointment after the betrayal of trust cannot be adequately explained (Simpson, 2011). Furthermore, purely rational or cognitive trust is mostly framed as risk assessment, but the problem is that it cannot be distinguished from other types of risk assessment (as argued by Endreß, 2010), for instance, from mere prognosis. Other accounts explain trust as very close to faith (Lahno, 2001; Moellering, 2001), or as an emotional phenomenon (Baier, 1991, Jones, 1996, 2019). If trust is primarily an emotion or faith, being beyond the control or influence of reason, does this mean that one should give up the idea of remediying misplaced trust? If so, is it still possible to speak of a reasonable trust as opposed to a non-reasonable one, and revoke rational-emotional dualism? What is the difference between reasonable and non-reasonable trust? When and how do trust and distrust turn into their non-reasonable counterparts? These are the questions that I will raise in the following pages.

Despite reasonableness in trusting having stayed out of direct sight in the previous philosophical, social and humanities literature, certain authors have addressed important questions and issues or used some concepts and arguments that are highly relevant for the idea of reasonable trust. Barbalet (2009: 369; 377) indicated the significance of the connection between Weberian value-rationality and the idea of trust, contrasting it with formal rationality and explaining that there was no necessary conflict between emotions and reason in trust, but still in conclusion he resorted to a non-evidential account of trust. On the other hand, Prijić-Samardžija (2018), supporting evidentialism, insisted that trust was an epistemic decision involving responsibility and that trusting a testimony had to be evidence-based or at least responsive to evidence. Besides thus rejecting non-evidentialism, she also rightly criticized epistemic nihilism as a position repudiating justified trust and she argued
for a differentiation between strong and moderate forms of evidentialism (Prijić-
Samardžija, 2018). Simpson made a notable distinction between rational and reason-
able trust but at the same time equated these with strategic rationality and emotional
relationship respectively, interpreting reasonable trust as an internally motivated
social sentiment (2011: 413) and finally pushing it close to the status of faith and
emotional belief (2011: 406; 413). Still, the latter viewpoint allowed reaching a rel-
vant conclusion that the concept of reasonable trust implied one’s inner and dis-
cursive connections with other persons and one’s dependence upon them, as well as
placing an important emphasis upon the significance of commitments for reasons.
Bernstein (2011: 407) perceptively connected practical reason and trust but claimed
that trust preceded practical reasons and, therefore, was not rationally constituted
(2011: 395).

All the former steps practically called for situating trust in a different epistemic
framework. In this article, I will examine trust from the epistemological perspective
so as to shed light upon the idea and manifestations of reasonable and non-reasona-
ble trust (and distrust). I will argue that reasonable trust implies practical knowledge
and that it easily becomes disfigured and burdensome for human interactions when
dislocated from the practical regime into those of doxa and episteme.

The article is divided into several sections. The first lists different taxonomies of
trust and maps a few accounts of trust relevant for singling out its epistemological
fundamentals (Mapping of Accounts of Trust). Then, reasonable trust comprises the
second section with the same title (Reasonable Trust) and is situated in the realm
of practical knowledge and elaborated in its specific characteristics. Next, the trans-
formations of trust following its migrations to other epistemic regimes—the realm of
doxa and episteme (Trust in Other Epistemic Regimes)—are described and ana-
lyzed, and the prospects and consequences of reasonable and non-reasonable trust-
ing identified. In the last section (Basic Trust), the idea of basic trust in its differ-
ent versions is presented and examined from the perspective of reasonable trust. In
conclusion, I underscore the negative consequences of conflating the phenomena of
reasonable and non-reasonable trust (Conclusion).

**Mapping of the Accounts of Trust**

There are differing accounts of trust in contemporary literature. The theories of trust
are so multi-developed that there have even been different typologies of these vari-
ous accounts provided. Certain authors have differentiated “four types of trust (dis-
positional, rational, affiliative, and systems based)” (Stern & Baird, 2015: 14), cal-
culus-based, knowledge-based, and identification-based (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996:
118f.), others noted that trust could be “defined in terms of the benefits it provides
[…], dispositions of those who give trust […], or the character of the relationship
between the trusting and the putatively trustworthy […]” (Barbalet, 2009: 368). Fur-
thermore, ideas of trust have been divided into reflective and non-reflective (Endreß,
2010: 91; 95), into relational and attitudinal (2010: 108), or into those that are thick
and thin as related to the motivation of the trusted person (Jones, 2020). Further-
more, a ubiquitous distinction is one between interpersonal trust on the one side,
generalized trust (Simmel, 2004: 177) and vertical trust on the other (Sztompka, 2019: 15), although it has been and still is a matter of contention as to whether these concepts represent the same idea (Brehm & Savel, 2019: 234).

This list of various typologies can be enlarged with another one. Given the epistemological presuppositions of the various theories of trust, they could be divided into cognitivist, emotivist and fideist. This typology obviously does not cover all the existing theories of trust, but it helps in clarifying how epistemological assumptions of trust accounts prevent them, as it will be later shown, from properly accommodating the ideas of reasonable and unreasonable trust.

The first of these accounts is based upon an influential idea that trust is above all or primarily a cognitive concept. In some of its typical versions, trust is understood as a rational expectation directed at someone’s behavior. Ratio or reason is understood here as a calculus well done, while expectation is directed at identity of the interests of the trust giver and the trust receiver (Coleman, 1988: 117; Hardin, 1996: 28). A familiar standpoint is one focusing on the assessment of risk and viewing trust as a strategy to avoid it (Sztompka, 1999: 29; Sztompka, 2019: 35), or even more deeply indulging trust with economy vocabulary such as investment, capital etc. (as described in Peng-Keller, 2011: 10).

For the proponents of the second account, trust is first and foremost an emotion, a sentiment, or an affective attitude. One of their main arguments is that only such an account can explain all our trusting behaviors (Jones, 1996), like, for example, self-perpetuating ones (Jones, 2019: 956). Some of the supportive concepts and ideas typical for these standpoints are the necessity of the particularly good will of the trustworthy towards the trust giver and the latter’s vulnerability (Jones, 1996, 2019: 956) and the granting of discrentional powers (Jones, 1996: 8; Baier, 1991: 117) to the trustworthy. As for the latter two, they relate to the emotional disposition of the trust giver to make themselves dependent upon the trust receiver or to empower someone to make decisions on their behalf without a pattern provided in advance.

To the third, fideist group, belong those accounts in which faith is considered an indispensable element of the phenomenon of trust (Moellering, 2001: 404; Lahno, 2001: 174). From this point of view, just as there is an irrational leap of faith, there is also always a leap of trust. In one of its types, the fideist approach includes a “mysterious element” of trust elaborated into the idea of suspension “as a mediator between interpretation and expectation” (Moellering, 2001: 404), which bridges “the gorge” of the unknown (Moellering, 2001: 414). In another, faith is understood as “a particularly strong form of trust” (Lahno, 2001: 177) and trust as always “to some extent, independent of the given information” (Lahno, 2001: 178).

Finally, there is another group, which will be called here theories of basic trust. Just like the previous three, this group also precludes a proper accommodation of the idea of reasonable trust, but upon a set of reasons, as will be shown later, that do not

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1 Related to the above is the idea that trust is not based upon knowledge but represents a strategic behavior one chooses in order to bridge this lack (Barbalet, 2009: 369), a “forced option” (2009: 372) of leaning upon someone. It is understood as a form of action (Barbalet, 2009: 369) instead of as a state of mind, of making oneself deliberately dependent so as to achieve a desired outcome. Trust is here regarded as a willful and calculative behavior of leaning upon another.
quite fit into the above epistemological typology. Trust is here understood as an a priori cluster of intertwined relations, similar to an existential structure or a human condition: the net of trust in the world, in oneself and in others (Bernstein, 2011; Erikson, 1968; Endreß, 2002; Lassak, 2013). This idea of a fundamental relation, often labelled basic trust or Grundvertrauen, is contrasted with trust understood as the subjective and willful attitude of an individual. In some of its versions, it is equated with the (outcome of the) genesis of trust in early childhood development stages (Erikson, 1968: 96), identified with an implicitly shared knowledge (Endreß, 2002: 47) or linked to the presupposed relation with God (Lassak, 2013: 114).

These four understandings of trust cover and underscore various human capacities like emotions, faith, and cognition and different aspects of human psychical life, from the unconscious, pre-conscious and pre-reflective to the conscious and reflective. Indeed, some of them capture the mentioned aspects and abilities in significantly different ways. Moreover, the selected accounts stem from versatile backgrounds, implying different ontological, gnoseological, and epistemological choices. The main differences among these choices will be identified and clarified in later parts of the article in order to show how the epistemological presuppositions about trust affect the understanding of the ideas of reasonable and non-reasonable trust. In the next section, I will elaborate on the relation between trust and practical knowledge in order to explain in what epistemic regime reasonable trust takes place. Following that, it will be much easier to show why other epistemological frameworks cannot properly accommodate the idea of reasonable trust and how reasonable trust turns into its non-reasonable counterparts when it migrates from practical to other epistemic realms.

Reasonable Trust

Practical Knowledge and Trust

As noted above, reasonable trust is based upon practical knowledge. In order to clarify this claim, let me first remind you of the main features of practical knowledge as Aristotle developed it, and then turn to the phenomenon of reasonable trust.

Aristotle notoriously explained practical knowledge as one concerning that which can but must not be (Arist. NE 1140b), as directed at changeable beings, at those issues that develop and transform in time. More precisely, practical knowledge concerns human affairs, which depend upon human characters and decisions. In more recent terms, it has been added that this related to situations and human understanding of them.

Next, the aim (telos) of practical knowledge is good itself, not some external goal, indifferent to this general aim, as in the case of certain skills, like martial arts or cooking that can be used for good or bad causes.

Being the knowledge of changeable, human affairs, there is no pure and perfect knowledge in this realm, no absolute or eternal knowledge of good, no universal laws or exact predictions. It is imprecise knowledge, given in an outline (typos).
Practical knowledge is closely connected with virtue. The virtue which grasps this kind of knowledge in the best way is *phronesis*. A phronetic person is one who can make a right decision. To make a prudent (phronetic) decision means to strike the right balance between extreme desires, and beforehand, to realize what is an extreme desire in a specific situation. To make such a decision often also assumes to understand what the affected people desire, to be aware of their characters, to know their personal history and the way they understand the specific situation in which the decision is to be made etc. Practical knowledge includes being able to look upon all these particular experiences from a more general direction (Arist. NE 1142a15), an ability to grasp the situation in one and other ways, to compare and assess these viewpoints, or to practice, in Arendt’s terms, enlarged thought. It is an ability to appreciate the situation without exaggerating or diminishing its importance, or, in Solum’s words, to size up the situation (Solum, 2021), the capacity to rethink the action by taking into account the issue of its utility, its manner, and moment as related to its aim (Arist. NE 1142b 25), the capacity to imagine possible and working solutions and means, to prevent tragic dilemmas.

*Phronesis* and practical knowledge are not some skills that can be used only when needed as technical ones. This knowledge colors and drives the world one lives in; it is not at one’s disposal, it is rather who one is.

If practiced long enough, practical knowledge in some ordinary situations may even take the form of intuition. Only when there are different, previously unfamiliar situations, issues or affairs, does it dwell meticulously upon the mentioned details. In everyday life, most situations are handled instantly.2

If one now turns to trust and its main characteristics, and particularly to reasonable trust, it becomes clear that its features match the practical realms and that these are a suitable environment to accommodate it. First, due to the specific way these realms integrate reasons, emotions, interests and desires, they can embed the idea of trust without devaluing its relation to reason or opposing reason and emotion. Next, just as practical realms and practical knowledge, trust relates to changeable human affairs, to selves, too. Furthermore, it also is related to the interpretation of the situation, which (interpretation) is more or less based upon knowledge or at least can be based upon it. Indeed, that knowledge is limited, given in an outline, as practical knowledge is. Moreover, just like the latter, trust often takes the form of intuition. Finally, during interactions trust deeply and constantly influences one’s perspective, not being something that can be just switched on and off.

Let me start from the last point. It was observed above that practical knowledge and *phronesis* deeply influence and color one’s life and perspective; they are not something that can be just put aside when wanted. The knowledge of good is not some convenient skill, but it is always who one actually is. It is the same with trust. One can neither disregard a trusting or distrusting relationship, nor can one handle it

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2 Indeed, this automatized version of *phronesis* could be tricky ground. Intuitions can become steady and cover up the unceasing change and variability of human affairs and characters, possibly turning the advantage of experience into blindness for differences.
arbitrarily. If one deems someone to be utterly untrustworthy, one cannot just decide to regard the other as trustworthy.³

Next, just as in the practical realms, trust also concerns human affairs, changeable things. One does not trust objects or inanimate beings, but selves. When trusting, one relates to another as to one who shares one’s own beliefs, views, needs, desires, interests, choices, story, and values and more or less arrange them.

Since dealing with selves, which are, in Ricoeurian terms, in time and unique, trust is always, just as practical knowledge, beyond absolute certainty. It was stated above that practical knowledge is given in an outline and that it does not pertain to demonstration or universal laws. The same is the case with trusting; there is no full certainty in trusting, despite there still being room for comprehension. That means that trust can offer an invaluable orientation, but, even when it is reasonable, it is prone to mistakes and can be misplaced, carried to excess or understated.

When confronting familiar persons or situations, trust can take the form of intuition. Just as often happens in applying practical knowledge, in certain situations one can trust or distrust someone almost instantly, based upon specific signals that can easily be interpreted in the wider frameworks of one’s knowledge and experience.

Indeed, trust can rely upon knowledge and reasons. One could maybe object that trust is subjective. It is true that trust is always mine (in Heidegger’s terms jemeinig) and that it is given in the mode of subjectivity as a first-hand experience or that only I can have direct access to my inner world and know whether and to what extent I really trust. Yet, this does not mean that trust necessarily remains idiosyncratic, solipsistic and arbitrary. Trust can be founded upon reasons, upon something that can be understood and shared, something intersubjective. These reasons for trust never cease to relate to one’s individual horizon, experience, and the unique situations one is confronting or, in other words, to what is particular and individual, but that individual horizon and experiences can become integrated into a more general understanding of the good inherent to a worldview that can be communicated and explained to others. In that way, trust grows into reasonable trust or prudence about whom and how—in what way or to what extent—to trust (or distrust).

The structure of reasonable trust described above reveals that the knowledge behind it is interpretational. It concerns assigning meaning to someone’s behavior as related to an understanding of the good. In life, this knowledge often grows and is revised with experience. As soon as one meets a person, one starts to form a relation of trust or distrust based upon the content and manner of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, of that person towards oneself or others. This relation is not an alternative or an issue of all or nothing. Complete trust and distrust are extremes at the far ends of a continuum. Rather than by these extremes, our relation towards others is mostly characterized by certain grades of trust and distrust.⁴ This grade of one’s trust in

³ On the other hand, one can indeed have quite a limited knowledge of another’s integrity and in that case there can be room to decide whether to trust.

⁴ For instance, to totally trust a person would assume that another would only not come on time to a special occasion if there was some vis maior to prevent her or him from doing so, while to trust another slightly less would mean to expect him/her to come on time with some possibility that he or she might be late etc.
the other deeply influences the relationship since it affects the manner in which one communicates with the other, what one shares with the other, to what extent one communicates with the other etc. However, these grades of trust are not necessarily some fixed and constant characteristics of the relationship. Rather, they are prone to revision as one gains new knowledge and experience or as the situation and people’s behavior change. To borrow a phrase used for a contrary argument, there is no a priori validity of either trust or distrust (Bernstein, 2011: 402).

Finally, trust as based upon practical knowledge does not assume opposition to reason and emotion. Being reasonable here is deeply connected to the idea of good and to striking the right balance between extreme desires, passions, and emotions. In the practical realms, reason is a well appreciated, cultivated, and situated desire and emotion. Such understanding of reason and of the optimal types of trust facilitates one to escape the major obstacles of cognitivist, emotivist and fideist accounts and to theoretically capture the familiar phenomena of non-reasonable trusting. These will be discussed in detail in the next section. Beforehand, in the following subsection I will dwell more upon the phenomenon of reasonable trusting.

**Trust and Integrity**

Trust and Integrity

Reasonable trust is directed at a specific person. It depends upon one’s knowledge of the moral integrity of the person one relates to. Indeed, moral integrity is a complex idea. It requires a certain level of consistency in behavior or at least appropriate justification or recognition and excuse for inconsistencies. Furthermore, moral integrity requires that a person disposes of and is aware of one’s own idea of good. This idea does not necessarily have to differ from others’ ideas but one should have an authentic personal relation towards it in the sense that it colors one’s worldview and identity (similarly: Musschenga, 2002: 187).

Certainly, moral integrity is an ethical ideal that is never fully realized. No one can be fully consistent in his or her behavior nor has anyone reached an ideally comprehensive and consistent idea of good. Still, in everyday life, one can distinguish between people of more and less moral integrity. Despite being an imperfect yardstick, moral integrity is a relevant, even indispensable, tool of moral appreciation and the basis of reasonable trust.

One may still wonder about the place of knowledge and competence in trust. According to some authors, trust depends on one’s affective attitude towards the competence and good will of others (Jones, 1996). From my point of view, it is important to note that as related to moral integrity, competence and so-called good will cannot be fully differentiated. The concept of good will understood as some pure motivation or sense of duty, as in some interpretations of Kant, does not correspond well to the ideas of trust and integrity as authors like Bernard Williams showed. There is no general or pure good will; good will always relies on a certain

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5 Maybe one could think of some rudimentary forms of trust in some higher mammal species, but this interesting issue is out of the scope of this article.
idea of what good is. Moreover, there is certainly not one comprehensive answer to the question of what good is. Morality and moral integrity are authentic personal quests towards this answer.

Indeed, in this quest individuals depart from their own particular horizons, experiences, remembrances, historical moments, and social situations and do not arrive at identical answers of what good and the good life consist of. Therefore, one’s assessment of another’s integrity will not only depend on consistency in another’s behavior but also upon the similarity of their worldviews. Let me illustrate this with an example.

If Anna considers Sonja to be a person with strong moral integrity, but knows that Sonja, unlike her, thinks that children should be punished for their bad behavior or mistakes, it would most likely be unreasonable for Anna to entrust to Sonja the care of her son Peter for a longer period. If Anna shares Sonja’s view, entrusting Peter to her could be a reasonable option.

This case illustrates that one’s worldview or ideas of what is good, in this case whether punishment is good for children’s upbringing, can affect reasonable trust, even when there is no dilemma about whether the potential trust receiver is considered to be a person with moral integrity (meaning here that s/he has her/his own authentic set of values, is consistent enough, brave etc.). Entrusting Peter to someone who regularly resorts to punishment as a method of regulating children’s behavior would probably expose him to excessive stress since he is not used to being punished; it could affect his willingness to spend time without his mother; it could negatively interfere with the more gentle upbringing methods his mother resorts to; it could induce certain traits and patterns of behavior that his mother would like to avoid; and it would most likely cause stress to his mother, who considers punishing children to be an unfortunate upbringing choice.

This example should have clarified that knowledge of the moral integrity of the trust receiver should be accompanied with knowledge of the similarity of the worldviews of the trust giver and trust receiver if reasonable trust is to take place. However, in contemporary literature, the phenomenon of moral integrity has often been neglected and instead in the described terms, trust has been captured in terms of trustworthiness. Typically, the starting point in understanding trustworthiness is to differentiate between reliance and trust (for instance, Jones, 1996: 14f.; Lahno, 2001; Mulin, 2005: 318; Simpson, 2011: 414). Upon these views, to rely upon someone is something different from trusting someone. More specifically, a reliable person is someone who would do the (right) thing anyway, while a trustworthy person is one who is motivated by someone’s trust. In my opinion, this differentiation can easily conclude in the risky conflation of trustworthiness and loyalty. Trustworthiness is here needlessly and artificially differentiated from moral integrity, so in the final run a reliable person (or at least some of them) could end up as a person of moral integrity, while a trustworthy person without much difficulty could end up as a loyal one.

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6 For a well-argued critique of this point see McLeod (2000: 466).
The distinction between loyalty and the characteristics of persons who should be trusted is important to make.\(^7\) The relation of trust, and particularly its optimal forms of reasonable trusting, should not be confused with loyalty. Being trustworthy in the sense of being loyal—since it can imply seriously compromising other virtues or, for example, misconceiving what happened—is not a virtue. Loyalty in that case is transformed into submission and instead of creating a valuable moral tissue like reasonable trust does, it nurtures bonds of compliance and domination.

The confusion between loyalty and trust may have its root in the binding element of the both phenomena. Loyalty means regrading oneself as bound to someone by a certain event, favor, help etc. Similarly, trust is mostly binding too. There is usually something binding in being told a secret or in the act of promising. Yet, trust does not bind indefinitely. It is true that the one who is being trusted is obliged to take seriously the words or behavior of the trust giver and to be specifically aware of his or her vulnerability – a concept particularly underscored in some threads of trust research (Baier, 1991: 113; Jones, 2019: 956), as well as of the limits and fragility of the practical knowledge and the goodness in general (Nussbaum, 2001). Yet, the trust receiver is not bound to hurt or deceive anyone, to let anyone suffer on the basis of the given trust or to compromise his/her own integrity. Quite to the contrary, it could rather be argued that the trust receiver has a duty to make the trust giver aware of his/her own moral flaws or mistakes, when possible.

**Non-reasonable Trust: Trust in Other Epistemic Regimes**

Let me now recollect the above developed claim: the epistemic regime of reasonable trust and distrust is a practical field. Any dislocation into another epistemic regime internally transforms trust, so that these substitutive and non-reasonable forms of trust and distrust can easily negatively impact individuals, relationships, and society.

When trust migrates to or develops inside another epistemic regime, its foundation is transformed. I will discuss here three types of such transitions: trust migrated to the realm of doxa stricto sensu, pistis, episteme, as well as its dissolution into basic trust.

This typology of epistemic regimes is derived from Plato’s and Aristotle’s epistemologies, but does not pretend to be the only possible, nor the most correct or comprehensive interpretation of the mentioned types of cognition respectively. Rather, I will make use of a selection of particular types of cognition present in Plato and Aristotle that will be of considerable help in exposing the epistemic status of reasonable and non-reasonable trust. The typology provided here is not only a mix of Plato’s and Aristotle’s specific types of knowledge and cognition but also a choice of certain interpretations of these cognition-types. Indeed, there is a significant disagreement regarding the right interpretation of some of them, for example, in the case of doxa.

\(^7\) Endreß suitably notes that loyalty must not always be accompanied by trust (Endreß, 2002: 73).
Doxa and Trust

Doxa is an important topic of Plato’s Republic. According to some authors, it is even one of its major topics (Storey, 2020: 19f.). In Aristotle, doxa is not only opposed to knowledge, it is also the beginning of knowledge (Angioni, 2019: 204f.). In Plato’s metaphor of the divided line, doxa represents a lower part of cognition and it is opposed to knowledge. Doxa is “unenlightened state of mind which takes sensible appearances and current moral notions at their face value” (Plato, 1944: 217). It is not only a downgraded knowledge; it presupposes a certain mental state or even a mindset (Antognazza, 2020: 277; 282f.). Doxa is connected to the unreasonable part of the soul and divided into eikasia and pístis. The whole realm of doxa is usually understood as the realm of belief, while eikasia is more specifically interpreted as guesswork, apprehension of appearances or unoriginal objects of cognition, grasping of the world of Anschein, passive yielding to appearances, haphazard and conjectural thinking (Storey, 2020: 46), uncritical embrace of the common opinion (Storey, 2020: 19) or of “what is held to be so” (Ophuusen, 2000: 120).

Having trust as the subject of this article, I will consider eikasia as haphazard thinking and uncritical approval of common opinion and address it further as doxa stricto sensu. In this general meaning, doxa occurs, directly or indirectly, both in Plato and Aristotle.

How is one being introduced into doxa stricto sensu? Some of the main mechanisms of transmitting doxa are tradition, authority, identification, social pressure, gossip, and fervor. Doxa is rarely argued, it is rather straightforwardly posited or is occasionally rather than essentially pushed along a certain argument. For example, a person might say that COVID 19 does not exist or that people with green eyes are mean, but adds nothing to support it, or just explains that he or she has once been told so, or that he or she has read it somewhere on the internet. This and other cases of doxa, viewed from the realm of knowledge, appear as guesswork or even imagination, phantasy.

When trust is embedded into doxa or when it migrates to doxa, it mostly takes the form of gullibility. Trust and distrust are here for the most part the result of public opinion or of individual affection. Since they do not rely upon reasons, doxa is prone to manipulation: being gullible is what it takes to be manipulated.

From the epistemological point of view, reasonable trust is significantly more than guesswork, gamble, reputation, emotion, optimism or infatuation. Despite one indeed having sometimes to rely upon a guess in everyday life since there is no other path at one’s disposal, reasonable trust still depends upon practical knowledge derived from the complex union of experience, knowledge of the particulars, and the idea of the good and prudent.

Therefore, trusting someone just because he/she claims something in good faith, i.e., holds the information to be true, is not per se good enough for reasonable trust. The issue is how one constructs this good faith, what in the end is captured with the previously developed notion of moral integrity. This could be suitably illustrated with the following example. A usually honest child comes home from the playground and tells its parents that his friend owns a real T-rex (the friend told him so). Parents reasonably distrust their child, despite actually
thinking that it shared the information in good faith. The reasonable distrust is based upon the child’s lack of knowledge and corresponding parents’ knowledge that there are no live dinosaurs.\(^8\)

Emotional accounts situate trust in the regime of *doxa stricto sensu* or in the regime of *pistis* as the other *doxastic* domain. As long as trust is taken to be a nice, optimistic feeling, not at all or not to a significant extent reason-based,\(^9\) trust migrates to *pistis*, i.e., it is understood as similar to faith, infatuation or a prevailing emotion. For instance, a person believes a charming colleague’s promise that she will come on time tomorrow despite her breaking all previous promises. To authors (for example, Jones, 2019: 956, 958) who observe trust primarily as emotion, trust in general appears as highly resistant to evidence (as emotions and conformism typically are), but it seems that they thus underestimate the phenomena of withdrawing trust and diminishing trust. Indeed, even reasonable trust can give rise to a viewpoint resistant to evidence, but that is the case when new evidence to a certain extent contradicts the old and therefore it becomes difficult to reconcile them.

By all means, in Plato *pistis* is not faith, but direct apprehension of material objects, of the so-called originals (Storey, 2020: 19), conviction, active affirmation or assent of something “existing in nature” (Moss, 2014: 214). It is, however, situated in the *doxastic* regime and therefore, just like *eikasia*, is opposed to knowledge. Only among Neoplatonists, Christians, and commentators does *pistis* become faith, *fides* (Ophuusen, 2000: 119), confidence in an unknown, a faculty related to *gnosis* and hope. Still, according to some interpretations (Ophuusen, 2000), there is some ambivalence in the concept and certain locations in Plato’s texts that could have stimulated such reading of *pistis*.

One could be introduced into *pistis* understood as faith in a similar way to *doxa stricto sensu*: tradition, authority, identification, social pressure being some of the most important ways. There are particular stages of life and (vulnerable) situations in which one is more prone to the regime of *pistis*. Modern sociology (Durkheim and others) has notoriously underscored the place and importance of habit in the regime of faith. Indeed, faith is the regime that places emotion and will to the forefront, so it can take different forms, even those counterfactual (as in Tertullian’s *credo quia absurdum est*). In short, the realm of *pistis* as faith is in the final run always separated from reason and situated above reason. Quite contrary to this regime, the experience of reasonable trust is familiar with the phenomenon of giving or withdrawing trust upon the basis of individual experience, reasons and practical knowledge. As long as the emotion-based accounts of trust infuse the phenomena of blind trust and unconditional trust into the heart of this concept, trust has migrated to the *doxastic* regime of *pistis*.

\(^8\) A contrary case would be one when the same child could be reasonably trusted to have seen a dog playing outside.

Both examples involve a closely related and highly interesting topic of trusting testimonies already debated by scholars (for instance, Prijić-Samardžija, 2018) that cannot be discussed here at length, but it is important to mention that evidence contradicting a testimony (shared information) can render trust non-reasonable.

\(^9\) Authors who observe trust as primarily affective phenomenon, mostly maintain a concept of emotion which can infuse some cognitive aspects.
In the regime of *pistis*, just as in the regime of *doxa stricto sensu*, an argument from authority (*argumentum ad verecundiam*) often has a significant value per se. Therefore, the regime of *pistis* as faith is prone to enabling submissive attitudes instead of relations of reasonable trust.

3. 2 *Episteme* and Trust.

On the other hand, *episteme* belongs to the realm of knowledge. *Episteme* is a kind of knowledge representing Aristotle’s equivalent of Plato’s faculty of *dianoia*. In Plato, *dianoia* is a lower cognitive faculty of the upper part of the divided line. In Aristotle, *episteme* is demonstrative knowledge (Arist. NE 1139b 20) and belongs to the realm of eternal knowledge. *Episteme* grasps explanatory connections as universal and necessary (Angioni, 2019: 158). If there was a modern equivalent to *episteme*, it would be science or knowledge acquired by means of scientific method usually described as a tool pertaining to the standards of universality, objectivity, accuracy, reliability, and reproducibility.

In the regime of *episteme*, distrust takes the form of doubt. The notorious image here is the one of Cartesian doubt, always directed at absolute certainty. Descartes used this paradigm in his *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations* in an endeavor to break from the regime of faith and to found the regime of knowledge relying upon the certitude equivalent to mathematic demonstration. It is well known that this new regime should have replaced all other epistemic regimes.

Migration of trust into the regime of *episteme* transforms it into calculations of probability, into knowledge of the general laws instead of the knowledge of particulars and specific situations. Trust here tends to rely upon scientific laws which, in social sciences, mostly take the form of probabilities and statistics. Trust is here not based upon first-hand experience, but upon rational expectations of how often humans or their subgroups conform to the threat of sanction, succumb to pressure, passions, specific needs and interests etc. For example, when someone who could reasonably trust a friend, on the basis of her keeping all her promises for many years, asks her to keep a promise to avoid an empty house for some reason for several weeks and at the same time secretly takes care that she does not go to the house because of her excessive fear of spiders, dark or etc., then he or she invalidates reasonable trust and turns to the stance of doubt or epistemic trust. The same stance takes place when someone expects a former offender to inevitably break the law again, which Victor Hugo in “Les Misérables” impressively described with the character of inspector Javert relentlessly running after the former convict Valjean.

This change of epistemic regime concludes in a substitute of trust which could be labelled non-reasonable trust, quasi trust or surrogate trust (or distrust) since it approaches practical issues from the theoretical perspective. In other words, human affairs are treated as if they had a constant and universal nature notwithstanding the relevance of human individuality and what Ricoeur termed narrativity. Such substitution of trust (and distrust) is non-reasonable since it disables one to grasp the specific situation and to size it up. Missing the context, interpretations, and individuality, the regime of *episteme* reduces selves to objects and interpersonal relations to those aspects that can be scientifically handled. This stance misses the individuality of another and subordinates individuals to the unfeasible demands of skepticism or to impersonal laws of big numbers.
Misfortunes of Non-Reasonable Trust and Prospects of Reasonable Trusting

To sum up, non-reasonable trust in its different forms is mostly an unfortunate stance. Trusting non-reasonably often leads to false hope and frustration. In the above example, when one bases trust just upon charm, one will most probably be disappointed, sad or angry when one’s colleague does not turn up on time, and maybe undergo some other harm due to the late meeting. Since non-reasonable trust is based upon uncritical attitudes towards other persons and typically cannot be distinguished from affection or loyalty, it very well prepares the ground for possible deception, manipulation, abuse of vulnerability, even for indoctrination and idolatry. If a person saying that people with green eyes are mean was trusted, this misstatement could be spread around and even end up harmfully. The uncritical stance inherent in the non-reasonable trust empowers stereotypes and prejudices and therefore easily increases the existing misunderstanding and paves the way for deep and hostile confrontations in society.

Trusting and distrusting have sometimes been based upon stereotypes developed along the existing lines of social division—those of class, stratus, gender, religion, generation, or nation. Such alliances of non-reasonable trust or distrust empower these divisions, making them deeper and more rigid. Non-reasonable trust taking place within them nurtures their externally oriented non-reasonable distrust. These alliances sometimes become so strong that above the lines of social division, non-reasonable distrust is the only “trusting” that takes place—this is the unfortunate situation typical for wars.

In contrast to the above non-reasonable trust based upon doxa, the one grounded upon episteme leads to disregarding persons and their dignity, counting on their reactions as if they were definitely determined by their urges and interests. With its rigorous requirements and unachievable standard of mathematical demonstration, it prevents establishing deeper social relations, friendship, respect and love, and hinders cooperation. The horizon of values and meanings remains beyond the reach of such absolute doubt, and society is left deprived of its invaluable moral tissue.

Indeed, in some cases, trust as an invitation to be trustworthy can have positive effects upon someone’s self-esteem even if there are significant reasons to withdraw it. Therefore, it can occasionally induce respectable behavior and, depending upon what is at stake in trusting, could be a preferable choice. This is particularly the case for those who are still in the intensive process of forming their personality, like children, or those with fragile self-esteem shattered by constant non-reasonable distrust. A comprehensive account of to whom or to what situations this might apply would be a significant contribution to understanding trust.

Still, the importance of the described awareness does not devalue the relevance of reasonable trusting. Reasonable trust is a manifestation of respect that unites people in their values and commitments, paves the path for secure, long-term relations, like friendships, joint ventures, and smooth cooperation. At the same time, reasonable trust and reasonable distrust are moral vehicles which discourage some abominable interpersonal relations, like manipulative and calculative ones or those of loyalty, as well as some unhealthy types of society well known to twentieth-century humanities scholarship. Loyalty includes an unbounded sense of indebtedness, often fear, and a
desire for protection by the other, and therefore is teemed with subjection, while reasonable trust always assumes affirmation of another’s integrity, without disregarding one’s own self and values. Reasonable trust enables giving and withdrawing trust, dependent upon the reasons backing someone’s behavior and thus disadvantages authoritarian society, mass society, and other society types and traits that nurture obstacles to freedom, respect and plurality.

**Basic Trust**

Basic Trust

Besides the above presented accounts differing in their epistemology of trust, there is another interesting group of contemporary approaches to trust that should be considered when contemplating the issue of reasonable trust. These accounts support a claim that everyday trust is preceded, either temporally or ontologically, by foundational or basic trust (*das Grundvertrauen, fungierendes Vertrauen*) (Endreß, 2002, 2010; Angehern, 2013; Erikson, 1968; Bernstein, 2011: 402). Their relation to the question of reasonable and non-reasonable trusting is not primarily based upon underlining specific human capacities as in the case of cognitivist or emotivist approaches, but rather upon particularly and deeply immersing the phenomenon of trust into some background phenomena, relations, or knowledge. There are significant varieties of this claim and I will here consider only some of them.

Most of the authors that rely upon *Grundvertrauen* or a similar term, develop the concept of trust in different directions. In other words, there is not only trust in others, but also, most commonly among these views, trust in oneself and trust in the world. The concept of trust is expanded so as to include the relation towards the world, self-relation, and sometimes the relation to a transcendent being.

The idea behind this broadening is that everyday trust in others presupposes a certain relation towards the world and oneself. Only on the basis of certain implicit, preconceived relations towards self and the world is trust in others possible. I will briefly outline three very different types of this widening of the concept of trust: the psychological one, the sociological one, and the theological one.

The notorious example of the psychological extending of the phenomenon of trust is Eric Erikson’s theory of life stages. In his account, there is a basic trust created at an early stage of child development. This kind of trust is the first psychosocial accomplishment of a child and her or his mother (caregiver), “a favorable ratio of trust over mistrust” generating precious psychological strength (Erikson, 1968: 105). Basic trust is the most important psychosocial precondition of mental health or, in Erikson’s terms, mental vitality (1968: 96) and accounts for “a pervasive attitude toward oneself and the world derived from the experiences of the first year of life […] an essential trustfulness of others as well as a fundamental sense of one’s own trustworthiness” (1968: 96). Furthermore, Erikson identified basic trust with the “capacity for faith,” and religion as the institution which had the task of verifying such basic trust and of “rituals of restoring such trust” (1968: 106).

Yet, Erikson himself recognized that the term confidence would be more adequate for the phenomenon he was describing, but he did not use it because it was, in
his opinion, one-directional (not mutual) and more suitable to the more adult stages of life.

The sociological extension of the concept of trust is developed in the works of Martin Endreß. Trust is here not understood as related to some individual characteristics, but it is a reciprocal relation between the trust giver and trust receiver based on their shared understanding of the situation and actions (Endreß, 2002: 71). Some of the shared understanding is tacit and therefore, according to Endreß, trust cannot primarily be explained from expectations (Erwartungshaltung) (2002: 72). He distinguishes three modes of trust: fungierendes Vertrauen (implicit trust), habitualisiertes Vertrauen (habit-trust), and reflexives Vertrauen (reflective trust). Reflexives Vertrauen is cognitive, thematic, strategic, and risk oriented, while habitualisiertes Vertrauen is implicit, potentially thematic, conventional, the result of everyday routines and repetitive practices, and proceeds from the reflective mode (Endreß, 2010: 100). The fungierendes Vertrauen is, however, the essence of trust (Kernphänomen; Endreß, 2010: 107) and the precondition of its other two modes. Fungierendes Vertrauen is implicit, pre-reflective, and meta-reflective (2010: 95). As pre-reflective, it is not conscious, and as meta-reflective it is a precondition of reflexives Vertrauen (Endreß, 2010: 95). Fungierendes Vertrauen is a shared unthematic relation towards the world, based on the shared phenomena of self-evidence (Selbstverständlichkeitssannahmen). Endreß explains it as tacit knowledge. Therefore, it is not a subjective relation, but rather an intersubjective one. According to Endreß, only upon this constitutive background, the unity of Vetrauthheit and Vertrauen, or constitutive relation to the world and self (2010: 101; 108), can the reflective mode of trust be built (2010: 95).

Some authors directly use the term fundamental trust (Grundvertrauen) (Meibert & Michalak, 2013: 95; Angehern, 2013: 171; Lassak, 2013: 113). Some understand trust as a fundamental attitude, a specific mode of experiencing the world, and differentiate between trust in others, trust in oneself, trust in world, trust in being (Sein), and trust in meaning (Sinn) (Angehern, 2013), in their search for the basic kind of trust. There have even been projects aimed at proving empirically the concept of fundamental trust by means of differentiating trust understood as Mut zum Sein (courage to be) and Haltung der Offenheit (attitude of openness) from similar phenomena such as optimism and resilience (Meibert & Michalak, 2013: 95). In the realm of theology, Grundvertrauen boils down to trust in God (as in Lassak, 2013: 114).

It is obvious that there are huge differences among all the mentioned accounts of basic or fundamental trust. The psychological idea of the primordial trust underlines important preconditions to the phenomenon of trust, but these preconditions seem to be too broad and indeterminate to be equated with this specific phenomenon that is to be developed and shaped in the later periods of life. In other words, the early-development accounts of trust identify it with its rudimentary forms. These early rudiments are too undifferentiated from other phenomena, but the rudiments of reasonable trust do correspond to the early rudiments of practical reason. As already observed, in these accounts trust cannot be differentiated from self-confidence, optimism and resilience. As for the specific account of trust in Erikson, the phenomena
of faith and trust are here also being conflated, partly due to the fact that religion is interpreted as the main institution upholding trust.

Certain accounts such as those more ontologically oriented sometimes underline the connection between trust and Angst reduction.\textsuperscript{10} Despite being important, underlining this characteristic excessively easily results in disregarding or diminishing the relevance of the other essential aspects of the phenomenon of trust. Reasonable trust can also be at odds with anxiety control; basically a safe or confident child or (young) person will easily unreasonably direct her or his trust when she or he lacks practical knowledge.

The multiplication of types, stages, figures, or modi of trust leads to the issue of their interrelation and priority, or to the question of the so-called basic or fundamental trust, its status, function and essence. Such differentiation often induces excessive emphasis on specific characteristics or aspects of trust or upon its related phenomena at the expense of some other dimension, and finally to the often misleading question of hierarchy. In the case of the theological account, the problem becomes particularly obvious: identifying basic trust with trust in God sheds serious doubts upon the possibility of any trust of non-believers.

The so-called fungierendes Vertrauen (Endreß, 2010) makes obvious the presence of self-evidences in the phenomenon of trust. Yet, the differentiation between fungierendes Vertrauen and reflexives Vertrauen seems to downplay the phenomenon of reasonable trust since the practical idea of reason cannot be comfortably situated in any of these modes. “Unreflective trust” cannot be reasonable since it \textit{per definitio} lacks reflection and reason; neither can the reflective one be reasonable since it reduces reason to some abstract calculation, is oblivious to the unity of reasons, values, and emotions and to the (implicit) knowledge it is built upon. In the practical regime, which is the right epistemological and ontological framework for reasonable trust, however, reason can flow and integrate the contents separated here in the two divided modes of fungierendes Vertrauen and reflexives Vertrauen, by striking now and again the right balance of emotions, passions, needs and interests. Reasonable trust searches deep down into ultimate commitments, values and worldview of the other person, questions them, and observes whether and how that person’s behavior itself aligns with them. Reason is here a constant experiential and contemplative quest for unity and harmony, for a place where particulars and universals, or specific situations and worldviews, best fit.

The practical regime is not a homogenous field, it is not a realm of identical self-evidences. It is the field where, in Gadamer’s terms, different horizons melt and fuse. In that sense, reasonable distrust can follow from the lack of integrity of another, but also from differences in worldview.

Indeed, trust is not \textit{per se} good or bad (Endreß, 2002), but reasonable trust is good and therefore it is important that it can be differentiated from non-reasonable trust, which is the consequence of the described epistemic transgressions, and is often misleading and fallacious. This differentiation is possible only if the realms of self-evidence or worldviews can also be regarded as open for examining and

\textsuperscript{10} Giddens also brought trust into connection with ontological security (Giddens, 2012).
potentially being identified as reasonable enough or rather doxastic, faith-driven, counter-factual etc.

All in all, if one reconsiders the whole versatile group of approaches that place an emphasis upon basic trust, it is now apparent that when trust is pushed to the underlying structure of human existence and understanding, the difference between reasonable and non-reasonable trust becomes less visible, or even dubious and incomprehensive. The observation of this difference is precluded in different ways: by prioritizing implicit knowledge over reflective trust, by basing trust in faith in God, or by identifying trust with the quality of early childhood relations with a caregiver. Whatever the case, it is the consequence of establishing the fore-structures of trust as pre-reflective and pre-experiential. That is exactly why the place of reason and reasonableness in trust is considerably weakened in accounts employing Grund-vertrauen or similar idea. Reasonable trust assumes leaning on another on the basis of practical knowledge, which presumes the possibility of being aware of and bringing to light the worldview, commitments, values, and self-evidences of another and affirming them. This is not possible if they are thought of as beyond reach.

**Conclusion**

Trust and distrust are such fundamental phenomena of social reality that it is impossible to disregard them. However, it is possible to make space for trusting or distrusting reasonably. I have argued in this article that this metaphorical space is inherently practical. Only when one recognizes in this article that this metaphorical space is inherently practical. Only when one recognizes the practical characteristics of reasonable trust and distrust, it is possible to distinguish reasonable trust from its misleading, confusing and deceitful substitutes.

Reasonable trust is an authentic first-hand experience, built upon practical knowledge. This knowledge is an imperfect, temporal union of particulars and universals, intrinsically prone to mistakes. Reasonable trust relies upon the wider practical knowledge, and upon the experience and knowledge of the good and of the integrity of another person. Reasonable trust is the manifestation of prudence as it is the practice of proper interpreting and sizing up (unique) situations. Although it is always personal and mine (jemeinig), such interpretation is never idiosyncratic, but rather developed upon reasons as something that can be understood and shared. These reasons are not opposed to desires and emotions but are built upon desires and emotions well appreciated.

The practical framework of reasonable trust depicted in the preceding lines is nowadays being depreciated or disputed by various accounts of trust reducing it to emotion, faith, rational calculation or strategic behavior, or by those introducing the strong idea of fundamental trust. Such accounts enable or induce epistemic transgressions that downplay or completely invalidate the phenomenon of reasonable trust.

Migration of trust from the practical field to other epistemic regimes refutes its practical nature and at the same time negates the fact that all social and human relations are relations of selves. I have described a few such typical transgressions: into doxa stricto sensu, into pistis and into episteme.

In the regime of doxa stricto sensu, trust becomes particularly resistant to evidence since it does not rely upon reasons anymore. Trust here relies on haphazard
thinking, subjection to authority, or prevailing attitudes. This lack of reasonable basis easily transforms trust into gullibility, loyalty, and stereotypical thinking.

In the regime of *pistis*, trust becomes conflated with faith and absolute trust becomes its regulative ideal. Everyday forms of absolute trust are blind trust and unconditional trust. Such faithful trust contradicts the fact that people in everyday life give and withdraw their trust, that they trust and distrust, that they base trust upon previous experiences. This contradiction is in the end the result of the idea that trust is a form of faith, or a regime that can include counterfactual ideas.

In the regime of *episteme*, trust turns into probability assessments or even into a stance of Cartesian doubt. This kind of non-reasonable or substitute trust does not grasp the particulars and individualities of the practical world since it operates in the regime of large numbers, statistical laws and approximations. Turning trust into expediency calculus means treating selves as things under universal laws. Such an approach cannot seize the world and the phenomena of values, meanings, and integrity upon which selves constitute their lives. Epistemic distrust (doubt) disfigures interpersonal relations to the point of being hardly possible, while epistemic trust reduces them to the artefacts of pure interests or some other deterministic loops.

The space for reasonable trust and distrust is a fragile one. It can be covered up and occupied with the described forms of surrogate trust to the point of perceiving and declaring this space illusionary. I have argued that the recognition of its practical and moral nature is what it above all takes to set up, preserve and safeguard this space. Afterwards, there is an invaluable task of researching, reminding of, and rediscovering all those conditions, factors and influences enabling and strengthening the described epistemic transgressions: the historical, social, psychological and other reasons for the hesitance to trust or distrust reasonably, the typical legitimizing practices of the non-reasonable trust and distrust, and all the other driving forces that support surrogate trusting and distrusting.

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