AN INTERPERSONAL FORM OF FAITH

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Abstract: An athlete has faith in her unathletic partner to run a marathon, a teacher has faith in her currently poor-performing students to improve in the future, and your friend has faith in you to succeed in the difficult project that you have been pursuing, even, and especially, when your chance of failing is non-trivial. This paper develops and defends a relational view of interpersonal faith by considering four interesting phenomena: first, in virtue of placing faith in someone, we stand in solidarity with that person; second, interpersonal faith is called for during moments of difficulty, but it can seem inappropriate during moments of ease; third, one's faith in others can feel unwelcomed, and can be rejected; and fourth, when interpersonal faith is frustrated, disappointment, rather than resentment, is warranted. I propose that when the faithor (e.g., your friend) places faith in the faithee (e.g., you) to φ, the faithor does something close to inviting the faithee to (re)commit to φ-ing. This invitation-like move, once properly taken up by the faithee, puts both sides of the faith in a new kind of normative relationship that is in the same broad family as a promissory relationship, albeit with a different normative profile.

0. Introduction

This paper is about interpersonal faith, i.e., faith in a person. To see what I mean by interpersonal faith, consider the following scenario:

> *Marathon.*
> Aaron tells his partner Beth that his New Year resolution is to run the NYC Marathon—his very first marathon. "I'm serious about this!" says Aaron. Even though Aaron works out regularly, he still needs to go through a brutal training plan. After a few months of hard training and slow progress, doubts creep in. "It'd be ideal if I can run it, but I have other good things to do as well," he thinks, "like continuing to work on my debut record instead of dying on the treadmill. Plus, it seems that my training is going nowhere. What should I do?" Beth, being an attentive partner, senses Aaron's struggle.

Aaron was committed to the difficult task of running the NYC Marathon, but now his commitment wavers. In response to the wavering commitment, one option that Beth has is to place faith in

Aaron to run the marathon. This faith can be intimately related to phrases like, "Look dear, I believe in you." It can also be related to other forms of communication, such as a silent look in the eye or a firm pat on the back every morning when Aaron struggles to get himself to the running track, and the forms of communication to which this faith is related are likely to vary based on social conventions. The thing, whatever it is, that is manifested and/or partly constituted by Beth's encouraging words and her pat on Aaron's back is what I will call interpersonal faith.

Cases like Marathon abound. Further examples include a teacher's faith in her currently poor-performing students to improve in the future, a mother's faith in her daughter to become a Broadway actor, and your friends' faith in you to succeed in the difficult project that you have been pursuing, even, and especially, if your chance of failing is non-trivial. The phenomenon of placing faith in someone is instantly intelligible, but it becomes quite puzzling once we start to theorize about it. In this paper, I focus on four interesting features of interpersonal faith: that interpersonal faith demonstrates solidarity, that it is more needed in moments of difficulty, that it can be rejected, and that disappointment or other Strawsonian "hurt feelings," rather than resentment is warranted when the faith is frustrated.[1] I call these the solidarity phenomenon, the resilience phenomenon, the rejectability phenomenon, and the disappointment phenomenon, respectively. I will call the agent who places faith in others (e.g., Beth) the *faithor*, and the agent to whom the interpersonal faith is directed (e.g., Aaron) the *faithee*. I will also use "believe in," "place faith in," and "have faith in" interchangeably throughout.[2]

The form of faith I am concerned with is faith in a person qua practical agent, i.e., someone who reasons, values, decides, and acts. The theory of interpersonal faith I develop and defend in this paper takes interpersonal faith to be irreducibly relational. I argue that when the faithor (e.g., your friend) places faith in the faithee (e.g., you) to φ, the faithor does something close to inviting the faithee to (re)commit to φ-ing. This invitation-like move, once properly taken up by the faithee, puts both sides of the faith in a new kind of normative relationship, in the same broad family as a promissory relationship. The faithor–faithee relationship is surely different from the promissor–promisee relationship, in that they have different normative profiles. Nevertheless, just as we must theorize about promises by paying special attention to the normative phenomena *between* the

[1] See Strawson (1962).

[2] One might think that we can believe in a theory, such as the second law of thermodynamics, but it's a bit strange to say that we can place faith in a theory. I contend that even if "believe in" and "place faith in" differ when the subject is a theory, they can be used interchangeably when the subject is an actual person. Thank you to Selim Berker for pointing this out.

promisor and the promisee, we must theorize about interpersonal faith by attending specifically to the normative phenomena between the faithor and the faithee, which are irreducible to the private mental events within each individual.

To sketch the normative profile of interpersonal faith, I draw on the similarity between interpersonal faith and invitations. My relational view therefore has two main theoretical commitments. Firstly, placing faith in a person is essentially communicative, and successful faith-placing requires proper uptake from the faithee, even though faith-placing is not a speech act in the same sense that an invitation is. Secondly, successful faith-placing culminates in a faithor–faithee relationship. It is constitutive of this relationship that the faithor and the faithee share the normative expectation that the faithee will φ, and it is constitutive of this normative expectation that the faithee acquires an extra reason to φ. Once we endorse this relational picture of faith, all four phenomena can be straightforwardly accounted for. We can also see more clearly why this form of faith is interpersonal—it is not something that merely happens to be about another individual; rather, it is a unique form of interpersonal relating.

The paper runs two interconnected lines of argument, one negative and one positive. The first line rejects the idea that interpersonal faith can be reduced to something non-relational, such as propositional faith, i.e., faith that *p*, where that *p* is a proposition. The upshot is to carve out a theoretical space for my relational account by pointing out what relationality is NOT. The second line is an inference to the best explanation. I argue that the relational account has strong explanatory power, for it can account for all four of our interesting phenomena. The paper will proceed as follows. I make the negative argument in section 1, primarily by engaging with Ryan Preston-Roedder's account of faith. In section 2, I spell out the four phenomena in more detail. In section 3, I articulate my relational view and explain how this view accounts for all four phenomena. Section 4 concludes.

1. Interpersonal Faith is Irreducible to Propositional Faith

The literature on faith has mainly focused on religious faith concerning God and propositional faith, i.e., faith *that p*, where that *p* is a proposition.[3] Even though this literature seldom

[3] These are of course not the sole focuses of the literature on faith. As Audi (2008) observes, "there are seven different faith-locutions in English alone," and people have written on each of these faith-locutions. Kvanvig (2013), for example, argues that faith *is* a kind of practical commitment or disposition toward certain patterns of action. One can find in Kvanvig (2016) a nice survey of various noncognitivst approaches to faith. Sliwa (2018), for another example, observes

centers on all of the four phenomena mentioned above, it does not wholly ignore cases like Marathon and other instances of interpersonal faith. These sorts of cases have been used to show that propositional faith is a complex propositional attitude about some state of affairs, which involves various cognitive element(s) (e.g., belief, assumption, acceptance, etc.) and conative/affective element(s) (e.g., desire, hope, vulnerability to disappointment, etc.). One might think that interpersonal faith is just a species of propositional faith that has a person as its content. Beth's faith *in* Aaron thereby reduces to faith *that* Aaron will successfully run the marathon, and it is constitutive of her propositional faith that she believes that Aaron will succeed despite reasons of doubt, and she will be disappointed should her belief turn out false.[4] Call this thought radical reductionism. Alternatively, one might think that interpersonal faith is different from propositional faith, but the difference can be drawn without appealing to anything relational, i.e., anything akin to invitations or promises. We can fully grasp the phenomenon of placing faith in a person by looking into the dispositions and attitudes that someone can unilaterally possess. For example, to place our faith in someone for something is to be disposed to rely on them in a certain fashion because of our positive stance toward their coming through.[5] And presumably, such a disposition and/or positive stance is not present in propositional, non-interpersonal faith. Call this view mild reductionism.[6]

I think both versions of reductionism are mistaken, for I do not think that we will land on a fruitful analysis of interpersonal faith if we focus only on the dispositions and attitudes that the faithor can unilaterally possess. Even though reductionism captures some important features of interpersonal faith, it misses out on some essential ones. I begin by arguing that radical reductionism is not a suitable account of interpersonal faith. I then consider mild reductionism by focusing particularly on Ryan Preston-Roedder's theory of faith that concerns persons.

Here is a scenario in which the protagonist seems to have propositional faith but not interpersonal faith:

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that faith is usually manifested in action and argues that faith involves know how. I mainly engage with the literature on propositional faith in this paper, for doing so effectively brings out the relational nature of interpersonal faith.

[4] For the sake of simplicity, I take belief as the cognitive element of propositional faith and the vulnerability to disappointment as the conative/affective element of propositional faith. This stipulation, as we will see shortly, is not going to affect the subsequent discussion.

[5] This view is articulated in McKaughan and Howard-Snyder (2022). For another potential example of mild reductionism, see Adams (1995). Preston-Roedder (2013) and Preston-Roedder (2018) also seem to belong to this category.

[6] I thank an anonymous reviewer for helping me to see the different shades of reductionism.

Thief.

Jean needs to steal from his wealthy neighbor, Myriel, to feed his sister's starving children. Even though Myriel is not particularly careful with his food, there is still a non-trivial chance that he will keep his bread well-guarded. Nevertheless, Jean judges that Myriel will leave his cupboard unlocked despite reasons for doubt. Jean is also deeply invested in his judgment—this is among the very few chances that he can save the children's lives. In the middle of the night, Jean breaks into Myriel's living room and starts searching through the cupboard.

Jean believes that Myriel will leave his bread unattended despite reasons for doubt, and he will be deeply disappointed if his belief turns out false. Intuitively, and according to some theories of propositional faith, Jean has faith *that* Myriel will leave his bread unattended. For people who wish to analyze propositional faith in terms of cognitive states other than belief, we could apply minor modifications to Thief so that the case falls more squarely under their preferred account. Some, for example, have argued that propositional faith entails acceptance but not belief, where accepting that *p* is treating that *p* as true in one's practical reasoning and, upon taking action, acting as if it were true.[7] For Jean to have propositional faith under this account, he would need to reason and act as if Myriel would leave the bread unattended even though he does not believe so. Regardless of which theory of propositional faith one endorses, however, the following crucial point holds: even though Jean can possibly be said to have faith *that* Myriel will leave his bread unattended, it would be utterly strange to say that Jean has faith *in* Myriel. In addition, it does not seem that the gap between propositional and interpersonal faith can be bridged by proposing further cognitive or conative elements that merely have Myriel as (part of) their content. Jean might hope that Myriel will leave his food unattended, he might judge that it is unfortunate for Myriel and good for the children that Myriel leaves his food unattended, and he might feel averse to stealing from Myriel. We can continue adding to this pile of cognitive and conative states, yet Jean's faith-that still falls short of faith-in.

Thief, I take, serves at least as a pro tanto reason for thinking that there is something distinctively interpersonal about placing faith in an agent. If Jean places faith in Myriel, then it seems

[7] See, for example, Jackson (2021). Some people think that faith involves assuming, where assuming is different from acceptance in that the former is more compatible with doubt than the latter. See, for example, Howard-Snyder (2013). Some think that faith involve a (rational) cognitive resilience to new counterevidence. See, for example, Buchak (2012). People also hold different views regarding the relevant conative state. See Rettler (2018) for a more thorough survey. My readers are welcome to choose their favorite analysis of propositional faith, but the distinction between propositional faith and interpersonal faith holds regardless of the difference in these theoretical details.

that he does not merely have a complex propositional attitude with Myriel being part of its propositional content. In the rest of the section, I present and evaluate Preston-Roeddder's theory of faith that concerns persons, and I will take his view to be a plausible version of mild reductionism for the sake of simplicity. Seeing his theoretical commitments will help make clear the weakness of mild reductionism and what my relational view is not.

Preston-Roedder's theory of faith is informed by the solidarity phenomenon. In two papers, he observes that placing faith in others is itself an important way of supporting them, regardless of whether such interpersonal faith results in or facilitates any positive downstream consequences.[8] He writes,

> When someone has faith in her friends, her children, and so on, she thereby stands in a kind of solidarity with them—a form of solidarity that is especially pronounced, and especially significant, when her faith yields its characteristic attitudes and behaviors.
> …
> One might say that when someone has such faith, she *roots* for her loved ones to behave or perform well in certain respects, even in the face of reasons to doubt seriously that they will do so.[9]

> Someone who has such faith is not just disposed to view people in a favorable light, but also invested in their confirming her favorable expectations. She *roots* for people to lead morally decent lives, even in the face of reasons to doubt that they can, or will, do so. She thereby ties her own flourishing, in certain respects, to the quality of these people's characters and actions.[10]

In Marathon, for example, Beth roots for Aaron and stands in solidarity with him by virtue of placing faith in him.

To account for the solidarity phenomenon, Preston-Roedder argues that the cognitive element of faith involves forming favorable beliefs about a person despite reasons for doubt. Beth believes that Aaron will run the marathon with proper support and encouragement, even though she

[8] See Preston-Roedder (2013) and Preston-Roedder (2018).
[9] See Preston-Roedder (2018), pp. 188-189.
[10] See Preston-Roedder (2013), p. 683.

can reasonably doubt that Aaron will successfully run it. Faith also involves a volitional element, namely, a disposition to feel disappointed should the favorable beliefs turn out false. And in addition to these two elements, interpersonal faith has an emotional element, namely, "a form of courage." [11] This courage consists in being sensitive to the risk involved in placing faith in another agent, strategically mitigating the risk, and *still* feeling encouraged to take the risk. Even if one does not wish to characterize this element in terms of courage or emotion, one can agree with Preston-Roedder that judging others favorably and being invested in such judgment in this non-naïve way speaks positively to the faithor's moral status.

Preston-Roedder's view captures interpersonal faith much better than radical reductionism does. In addition to the optimism and healthy stubbornness that are central to all sorts of (rational) faith, his view makes salient the moral significance of these attitudes and dispositions by centering on the faithor's reasons for possessing them. He observes that interpersonal faith naturally takes place between friends and loved ones, i.e., between people who already stand in a partial or loving relationship.[12] The faithor is invested in her positive judgment about others out of love, care, or other agential attitudes that manifest goodwill, and seeing this point will helpfully explain one central difference between Thief and Marathon. In Thief, Jean's judgments and investments that concern Myriel are not based on any loving or substantive relationship between him and Myriel. Jean uses Myriel as a mere means for furthering some other ends, and even if he were to have any favorable judgment about Myriel that is relevant to his stealing plan (e.g., that Myriel is a sympathetic person who would forgive a poor thief like him), Jean would have failed to judge him favorably out of love. In Marathon, Beth views Aaron in a favorable light and invests in her judgment out of love and care. The difference between Marathon and Optimistic Thief can be explained by the difference in reasons for the protagonist's cognitive, volitional, and emotional features, and the difference in reasons may boil down to the kind of interpersonal loving or caring relationship that people already stand in with each other.

I think Preston-Roedder's analysis helpfully points out several important features of interpersonal faith, especially those possessed by the faithor. But his view still falls short of capturing a fully interpersonal form of faith, for it fails to give enough attention to the faithee's side of the story and the normative phenomena between the faithee and the faithor. To begin to see the

[11] See Preston-Roedder (2018), p. 176.
[12] See Preston-Roedder (2018), p. 185.

weakness of his view, we can consider variations of Thief in which Jean intends to promote Myriel's flourishing out of love but must do so, for whatever reason, by stealing from Myriel.[13]

> *Reluctant Thief.*
> Myriel is a stubborn radical effective altruist, who tends to sacrifice lots of, sometimes too much of, his own food to help others. Jean judges that even though Myriel would be seriously offended if he tried to convince Myriel to give up his effective altruist commitments, Myriel would kindly forgive a poor thief like him. So, Jean has to steal some of Myriel's bread and secretly preserve it for him so that Myriel will not give away all of his food and starve himself.

And let's add that Jean has reasons to doubt his judgment about Myriel's forgiving nature, is invested in the truth of this judgment, and demonstrates virtue in taking up and mitigating the risk involved in making such judgment for the worthwhile end of promoting Myriel's well-being. As much as this variation of Thief is seemingly ad hoc, cases like this should not be foreign to us. Sometimes the only way to promote our loved one's well-being is to act against their will, and we wish to act against their will in ways that would offend them the least. And sometimes the only way to not offend them too much is to make use of their virtuous traits. Nevertheless, the verdict of this variation of Thief is that, it is strange to say that Jean has faith in Myriel to forgive him and thereby stands in solidarity with Myriel.

We can start to see a gap between Preston-Roedder's mild reductionism and its ambition to capture the solidarity phenomenon. Does Jean possess all three elements of faith according to Preston-Roedder? It seems he does. Is he thereby standing in solidarity with Myriel? It is at least questionable. We can come up with more scenarios that fall through this gap by thinking of cases in which Myriel's aspiration and what Jean takes to be a betterment of Myriel's life fail to align. For example, Jean might judge that even though Myriel is currently committed to radical effective altruism and will be mad at Jean for disturbing his plan by stealing from him, it's just a phase, and Myriel will eventually come to his senses. He will forgive Jean and realize that he should have taken better care of himself. Even if Jean does have the correct outlook concerning Myriel's well-being, it is strange to say that Jean stands in a kind of solidarity with Myriel by having faith in him to come to

[13] Thank you to Selim Berker for this point.

his senses, to understand Jean, or to forgive Jean. That Jean's faith involves persisting healthy optimism and high moral worth does not seem enough to fully explain the solidarity phenomenon. Furthermore, it does not seem that the explanatory gap can be bridged by bringing in love, care, or other reasons for possessing the attitudes and dispositions that constitute a mild reductionistic faith.

I think Preston-Roedder is right to take the solidarity phenomenon as one of the central phenomena of interpersonal faith, but I think we must go beyond reductionism to account for its centrality. Even if one thinks that we should have ascribed less importance to the solidarity phenomenon, I contend that we still need to look beyond reductionism if we want a principled way of explaining why some seeming instances of interpersonal faith are less closely connected to the solidarity phenomenon whereas others are more tightly connected to it. I will return to the explanatory problem concerning the solidarity phenomenon in section 3.4. For now, if my readers are not convinced that I have pointed to an important weakness of Preston-Roedder's view, it is enough for them to see the *difference* between it and the relational view. We can see the difference by attending to the responses that Preston-Roedder *can* appeal to in defending his view, since the options available to him reveal what he takes to be the nature of interpersonal faith. To distinguish Thief and its variations from Marathon, Preston-Roedder cannot merely appeal to his three elements of interpersonal faith. He instead needs to appeal to the reasons behind or the interpersonal relationship that underlies these elements. I take this as a good reason to think that Preston-Roedder does not treat the phenomenon of placing faith in a person itself as a form of interpersonal relating. He instead treats interpersonal faith as one of the many features that the faithor is disposed to possess when she stands in, say, a loving relationship with another person.

Here is another way of putting my point. When specifying the solidarity phenomenon, Presteon-Roedder mentions that someone who has faith in others' moral decency "ties her own flourishing, in certain respects, to the quality of these people's characters and actions."[14] And what Preston-Roedder means by "invested" and "rooting" is intimately related to his characterization of the solidarity phenomenon here.[15] I agree with Preston-Roedder that placing faith in a person involves a special kind of investment, but I do not think it is enough to think of such investment as being invested in the truth of some propositional judgments, as specified in the volitional element of his view. Even Preston-Roedder himself mentions in passing that faith in a person involves investing *in a person* and rooting *for her*. To arrive at a theory of fully interpersonal faith we must clarify what it

[14] See Preston-Roedder (2013), p. 683.
[15] See Preston-Roedder (2018), pp. 188–189.

means to invest in a person—it is surely different from investing in a promising stock, in which case my flourishing is also tied to the "flourishing" of the stock market. Preston-Roedder is right that the key to understanding such interpersonal investment resides in the nature of the special interpersonal tie that the investment manifests. What is lacking from his view, however, is exactly a positive account of this tie. Thief and its variations show that if standing in solidarity with someone involves forming interpersonal ties that concern the person's flourishing, and that interpersonal faith manifests one form of such ties, then these ties cannot be merely causal. For even though some necessary elements of Jean's flourishing (i.e., acquiring enough food for his loved ones' survival) are causally tied to Myriel's flourishing (i.e., being a forgiving person), Jean still does not stand in solidarity with Myriel by placing his faith in Myriel to be forgiving.

I contend that Preston-Roedder's theory of faith helpfully specifies several important aspects of interpersonal faith, especially those that pertain to a faithor. However, something crucial remains lacking. The rest of the paper articulates an alternative to Preston-Roedder's particular account as well as the reductionist approach in general.

2. The Phenomena

Insofar as Preston-Roedder is right that faith manifests a non-causal interpersonal tie, can we ascribe some positive features to this tie? The four phenomena detailed in this section—the rejectability, the disappointment, the resilience, and the solidarity phenomenon—will begin to shed some light on this mysterious black box.

The four phenomena are not exhaustive, but they are not randomly chosen either, for they pick out different important aspects of interpersonal faith's normative profile. The rejectability phenomenon speaks to the relational nature of interpersonal faith, the disappointemnt phenomenon speaks to the binding but non-demanding nature of the faithor–faithee relationship, the resilience phenomenon sheds light on the question of why we are at all motivated to enter such a relationship, and the solidarity phenomenon brings these aspects together. What I mean here will become clearer in section 3. For now, let me say more about each phenomenon.

2.1 The Rejectability Phenomenon

We do not always welcome interpersonal faith, and more importantly, it seems that we are in a position to reject others' faith in us. Consider the following two cases.

Stranger. (A continuation of Marathon)
Aaron feels very conflicted about his decision to run a marathon, and he calls to speak with Beth while he walks back home from the training track. A stranger happens to overhear Aaron's conversation with Beth. After Aaron ends his call, the stranger walks up to Aaron and says, "Hey man, I believe in you too." Aaron gives the stranger a weird look and hastens away.

Coach.
Casey has been training hard for a rock-climbing competition. His coach, Dana, believes that there is a good chance that he will place well and wants to see him succeed in the competition. Or, at least, she really wants to see him giving it a try. Even though Dana believes in Casey, Casey is full of self-doubt. He still cannot make up his mind regarding whether to participate in the competition the night before the registration closes, and he has the following conversation with Dana:

Dana: "I believe in you, Casey. I think you're in good shape. And if you participate, there's a good chance you'll place very well. I'll be there on Saturday, and I really hope to see you there."

Casey replies: "Thanks for your kind words, but please don't count on me. I don't want to disappoint you."

In Stranger, it seems that Aaron manages to reject the stranger's faith placing, and his rejection is manifested in his hasty departure.[16] In Coach, Casey explicitly rejects Dana's faith due to his fear of being a disappointment.[17]

Now, one might think that Casey is merely disagreeing with Dana's prediction and/or desire, and the unwelcomeness of interpersonal faith reduces to such disagreement. In response to this thought, it is important to distinguish between disagreement and rejection. There are many cases where one can agree or disagree with another's beliefs and decisions but is not in a position to welcome or unwelcome, accept or reject them. For example, Casey can disagree with Dana's belief that he does have a fair chance of getting a podium position, and he can disagree with Dana's judgment that it is worth her time to show up at the competition, but he is not in a position to reject Dana's beliefs. The best Casey can do is to provide Dana with good reasons, either epistemic or practical, for believing or deciding otherwise. And it remains completely up to Dana to believe or decide otherwise. Casey's rejection seems to be different in kind from such disagreement. In saying, "Don't count on me," Casey is not merely disagreeing with Dana over certain steps in her practical or theoretical reasoning. Suppose that Casey agrees with Dana's prediction of his competition outcome, and he agrees with Dana's judgment that attending the competition is worth her time. It seems that Casey can still end up rejecting something substantive with his rejection.

2.2 The Disappointment Phenomenon

Interpersonal faith, when frustrated, does not warrant certain reactive attitudes such as blame and resentment, though it does warrant disappointment. Compare Marathon with a different

[16] One might suspect that there is simply no genuine interpersonal faith in Stranger, and that there is nothing to be rejected in the first place. I am sympathetic to such suspicion, for I think that placing faith in a person presupposes some pre-existing relationship(s) and/or other context(s) between the faithor and the faithee. The relationship/context can be pretty thin. For example, consider the supporters who cheer for every athlete on the side of the road. The supporter–athlete context may be enough for the supporters to place faith in an athlete whom they did not know before. There is, however, a further question of what such presupposition bears on. It might turn out that the presupposition is a necessary condition for there being genuine interpersonal faith, in which case there is simply no genuine faith to be rejected in Stranger. It might, alternatively, turn out that the presupposition is a necessary condition not for genuine faith, but for appropriate faith. That is, there is a genuine but inappropriate faith to be rejected in Stranger, and Aaron has a good reason to reject such faith due to its inappropriateness. I leave it to my readers to choose their preferred reading. If my readers find that their suspicion is getting in their way of grasping the rejectability phenomenon, I recommend that they focus just on Coach.

[17] There are probably other good grounds for such a rejection. Perhaps Casey thinks that he is too far from meeting Dana's expectation, or perhaps he simply dislikes Dana and so does not want anything from her, including her faith. I wish to remain silent with respect to what, in principle, constitutes a good ground for rejecting interpersonal faith.

case where Aaron promises Beth that he will run the NYC marathon with her. Suppose Aaron fails to run the marathon with Beth by consistently giving in to the temptation to stay in bed. In the promissory case, Beth is entitled to anger and resentment—she is in a position to blame Aaron for breaking his promise. By contrast, it seems that if Aaron fails to run, or even fails to try to run the marathon in the original case, the same kind of anger, resentment, or blame is unwarranted. Beth, at most, is entitled to disappointment, a kind of Strawsonian hurt feeling, instead of anger or blame.[18]

2.3 The Resilience Phenomenon

Moments of difficulty call for interpersonal faith, and a situation that is more dire calls more strongly for faith. Moments of ease, however, do not call for it. It seems that interpersonal faith is called for when the faithee needs to resist some pressures against her aspiration, and the faith is not called for when there is no such need. The case of Marathon shows that moments of difficulty call for faith. I now offer a case that shows that interpersonal faith is more strongly called for when the situation is more dire.

> *Misfortune.* (A continuation of Marathon)
> Aaron's training plan has not gone well, and he has been feeling very conflicted about his decision to run a marathon. On top of that, Aaron has picked the worst time for this commitment. All the nearby running tracks, including the one that Aaron usually goes to, happen to close down for construction. Aaron's training partners, who have been a great company to Aaron, give up outdoor training for various reasons, including injury.

Aaron's goal is a difficult one in Marathon, but it is even more difficult for Aaron to keep up his training plan in Misfortune. It seems that Beth's faith is more strongly called for in Misfortune than in Marathon.

Marathon and Misfortune show that interpersonal faith is called for in moments of difficulty. I now turn to the case below to show that interpersonal faith is uncalled for in moments of ease.

[18] One might worry that anger, resentment, and/or blame are indeed warranted when the faithee fails to even try to φ. I will address this worry when I articulate my account for this phenomenon in section 3.1.

Trash.

Ethan is Fiona's roommate, and he has been pretty good at keeping up with the chores. This morning Ethan tells Fiona that he will take out the trash when he leaves for work, to which Fiona says, "Thanks Ethan, I believe in you."

Suppose that Fiona trusts Ethan to take out the trash instead. Fiona's trust would seem perfectly appropriate in Trash. However, notice how awkward it is for her to place faith in Ethan to take out the trash and act in ways that manifest such faith. In saying, "I believe in you," Fiona would at best appear funny, and at worst appear offensive. Unless Ethan has been considerably bad with doing chores, he is entitled to an angry response, "What do you mean? Have I been so bad with this?" Interpersonal faith does not seem to be called for in response to Ethan's plan of taking out the trash.

2.4 The Solidarity Phenomenon

We have seen some excerpts from Preston-Roedder in section 1 that nicely capture the solidarity phenomenon, and I want to highlight here a non-material aspect of it. Beth provides Aaron with a special kind of support *just* by virtue of her faith in Aaron. The support seems to be a moral support, which need not involve any material aid. Beth does not need to pay for Aaron's Gatorade, nor does she need to add insightful suggestions to Aaron's weekly workout plan. And yet, it seems that Aaron can rightly credit Beth for her support if he successfully runs the marathon.[19] In virtue of her faith, Beth stands in a kind of solidarity with Aaron and faces his challenge *with* him, even though the project of running a marathon is, strictly speaking, Aaron's own project, and his challenge remains his own. Interpersonal faith itself seems sufficient to manifest a substantive sense of "standing in solidarity with."

3. An Interpersonal Form of Faith

So, interpersonal faith demonstrates solidarity, is more needed in moments of difficulty, can be rejected, and warrants disappointment instead of resentment when frustrated.[20] In light of these

[19] For us academics, think of how we give our friends and families credit in our acknowledgements.

[20] Given these phenomena, there are good reasons to think that the form of interpersonal faith I intend to theorize is different in kind from the religious faith in God. It seems strange to say that one can stand in solidarity with God by placing faith in God, perhaps due to God's unlimited power and special normative and metaphysical status. It also seems

phenomena, I propose that the normative profiles of interpersonal faith and invitations largely overlap:

> When the faithor places faith in the faithee to φ, the faithor quasi-invites the faithee to (re)commit to φ-ing. This invitation-like move, once properly taken up by the person, puts both sides of faith in a new kind of **normative relationship**.
>
> It is constitutive of this **normative relationship** that the faithor and the faithee share the normative expectation that the faithee will φ. And it is constitutive of this shared normative expectation that the faithee gets an extra reason to φ, given that there already are consideration(s) that count in favor of φ-ing.[21]

I specify here a condition that partially constitutes interpersonal faith. According to this relational view, reductionism is mistaken simply because it overlooks the invitation-like features of interpersonal faith. The relational view gives a straightforward diagnosis of how Jean does not place faith in Myriel in Thief, and how Jean's faith in Myriel (if there is one) in Thief's variations fails to thereby put Jean in solidarity with Myriel: Jean and Myriel's expectations fail to align, and Jean does not invite or intend to invite Myriel to share the same expectations with him.

My relational view has two main theoretical commitments. Firstly, successful faith-placing requires uptake from the faithee, and it culminates in a faithor–faithee relationship. The faithor–faithee relationship belongs to the same broad family as the promisor–promisee relationship, albeit with a different normative profile.

Secondly, I take it that interpersonal faith is essentially communicative, and the communication can be manifested in various culturally informed ways, be it spoken, gestured,

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strange to say that one can be disappointed in God, for it is very hard to find reasonable ground for such disappointment given God's unlimited knowledge and unwavering commitment to the good. One may at most be reasonably disappointed *that* things fail to meet one's prediction. The resilience phenomenon also seems out of place given God's power, knowledge, and unwavering commitment to the good. Therefore, there is a theoretical space for thinking that faith-in is not a unified category. Even if some theologian interpretations of divine beings can help to make sense of these phenomena in the religious context, I submit that it is a non-trivial task, and is therefore beyond the scope of this paper. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for pushing me to address this point.

[21] For example, that φ-ing is itself valuable can be a consideration that counts in favor for φ-ing. If φ-ing is itself pointless (e.g., φ being "count the blades of grass in your front yard"), then we need to look elsewhere for such a consideration, and, as an example, my promise to you that I will φ can constitute one. My point here is that unlike promise and other interactions that have the power to drastically alter the normative landscape, interpersonal faith cannot wield the "normative magic" of generating reasons from the void. The reasons that interpersonal faith gives rise to must be parasitic on some other reasons that already exist.

written, etc. The sense of "essentially communicative" is intentionally left vague here. As nicely surveyed in Macnamara (2015), the literature on reactive attitudes involves at least three different ways of capturing the sense in which an attitude can be essentially communicative: it can mean that the attitude is paradigmatically expressed in communicative acts,[22] that the attitude is meant to be expressed,[23] or that the attitude is conceptually connected to uptake.[24] It is not a trivial task to clarify and/or give a unified account of these claims, and my view of interpersonal faith can remain neutral with respect to them.[25] Note, however, that faith-placing is not a speech act in the sense that an invitation is. I can ask if you'd like to come to my party without sincerely wanting you to be there, and my asking nonetheless constitutes a genuine invitation, even though it is insincere. In virtue of saying, "Are you free next weekend? I'm throwing a party at my place," I *hereby* invite you to my party, even if I'd rather that you are not free. But if I just say, "I believe in you" or pat on your back as a sincere faithor would, while secretly hoping that your project fails, then I do not genuinely place faith in you. For my faith to be genuine, I must sincerely hold certain cognitive, conative, and/or volitional states, and the relevant states can very well be those specified by reductionists. There are other disanalogies between invitation and interpersonal faith, and their normative profiles are not co-extensive.[26] For this reason, I take interpersonal faith to be "invitation-like," and to place faith in someone is to "quasi-invite" the person.

One might worry that taking interpersonal faith as essentially communicative would arrive at an account of faith that fails to respect some of our ordinary linguistic practices. Sometimes we say things like, "I have always had faith in you even though I have never told you about it," and we seem to be referring to a kind of silent, non-communicative interpersonal faith. I take this to be a case where our ordinary use of language both muddles the conceptual water and points to a genuine conceptual difference. Silent faith like this falls short of fully interpersonal faith, but it remains different from fully non-interpersonal faith (e.g., ordinary propositional faith) in that it *aspires* to be

[22] See, for example, Wallace (2010).
[23] See, for example, Watson (2011).
[24] See, for example, Smith (2012).
[25] My exchanges with Eugene Chislenko, Catherine Rioux, and two anonymous reviewers help me to see this point. Special thanks to Catherine Rioux for pointing me to Macnamara (2015).
[26] For example, gratitude will be called for from both the inviter and the invitee in the ideal situation, but this need not be the case for interpersonal faith. Suppose that I invite you to my party and you happily accept my invitation and show up on my front porch. In the ideal case where the invitation and uptake are both sincere, I will be grateful for your presence, and you will be grateful for my invitation. This phenomenon is articulated in Kukla (2018), p. 81. In the case of interpersonal faith, however, even though the faithee might feel grateful for the faithor's faith placing, the faithor need not be grateful for the faithee's uptake. The gratitude called for is only mono-directional.

communicated.[27] It is therefore a faith that aspires to be fully interpersonal. Such difference explains why some silent faith may feel phenomenologically different from some propositional faith that never purports to be communicated. Some silent faith is, therefore, interpersonal-faith-like.

In the remainder of this section, I first articulate how thinking about interpersonal faith in relation to invitations helps to account for the disappointment and the rejectability phenomenon. I then clarify what I mean by sharing a normative expectation and the kind of reason the expectation generates. I then consider the solidarity and the resilience phenomenon.

3.1. An invitation can be disappointed and rejected.

It would be ideal if I could offer a comprehensive analysis of invitations in the form of necessary and sufficient conditions, but, unfortunately, I have no such analysis to offer. We do not require such an analysis, however, to see how viewing interpersonal faith in relation to invitations already accounts for some of the phenomena. Jacques Derrida has pointed to some important normative features of invitations:

> An invitation leaves one free, otherwise it becomes a constraint. It should never imply: You are obliged to come, you have to come, it is necessary. But the invitation must be pressing, not indifferent. It should never imply: You are free not to come and if you don't come, never mind, it doesn't matter.[28]

I think Derrida is simply right. An invitation presses but does not demand. If I invite you to my dinner party and you turn down my invitation simply because you feel like taking a break from social events, then I can be reasonably disappointed, but I cannot reasonably resent you for prioritizing your own preference. My invitation gives you a pressing but non-demanding reason to accept my invitation. And upon your acceptance, my invitation gives you a pressing but non-demanding reason to come to my party. Interpersonal faith is pressing but non-demanding in the exact same way. My

[27] There are at least two different ways of understanding the sense of 'aspire' here. It can be read as normative. For example, the silent faith should have been communicated if there weren't good reasons not to. That communicating the faith might hinder the faithee's performance would be one of such good reasons. Macnamara (2015) specifies a functional view of the communicative-ness of private reactive attitudes, and it is another helpful way of understanding the sense of normativity here. The sense of 'aspire' can also be descriptive. That is, it is only a psychological matter that the silent faith cries out to be communicated. I wish to remain neutral with respect to these two readings.
[28] See Derrida (1995), p. 14.

faith in you to φ gives you a pressing but non-demanding reason to take up my faith placing. And upon your uptake, my faith in you to φ gives you a pressing but non-demanding reason to φ.

Thinking about interpersonal faith in relation to invitations provides a straightforward account of the rejectability phenomenon. Interpersonal faith can be rejected in the same way that an invitation can be rejected. When you turn down my invitation to my dinner party, you are not (merely) disagreeing with me over some proposition, such as whether I am a mediocre host or whether you in fact have the bandwidth to attend my party. By turning down my invitation, you reject my invitation as such. Suppose that Aaron rejects Beth's faith in him by saying, "Thanks Beth, but don't count on me." Aaron is not (merely) disagreeing with Beth over the truth of some propositions. He instead rejects her faith placing as such.

Interpersonal faith, like an invitation, presses but does not demand. Therefore, the frustration of interpersonal faith warrants disappointment rather than blame, anger, resentment, etc., which are characteristic reactions to the frustration of moral demands. One might, however, still doubt that my account can account for the disappointment phenomenon. Suppose that we come to share an expectation that you will φ in virtue of me inviting you and you accepting my invitation, can't I resent you for negligently failing to, or not even trying to, do your part in meeting the expectation?

Let me first address the case where you fail to do your part in meeting the expectation. I contend that one way of accepting someone's invitation to φ is by promising that one will φ. However, note that accepting an invitation does not require making such a promise. We can accept an invitation by saying, "Thanks for inviting me. I'll see what I can do, but I can't promise to make it." If you accept my invitation to my dinner party, it does not mean that you have promised me to come, in which case I might be entitled to resent you had you negligently failed to show up. Instead, your acceptance at best entails that you are aware that I will expect you to show up and that you give my expectation a significant role in your practical reasoning concerning your plan for the future. Suppose that in Marathon, Aaron takes up Beth's faith in him. This does not mean that Aaron has promised Beth that he is going to run the marathon. Beth therefore is not entitled to resentment if Aaron fails to run it.

There is an extra layer of complication when you fail even to try to do your part in meeting the expectation. In this case, certain negative reactive attitudes are warranted, and I agree that such a reactive attitude needs to be characteristically different from the disappointment I would be subject to should you simply turn down my invitation. However, this does not mean that the negative

reactive attitude needs to be resentment. I might be disappointed *that* you turned down my invitation, but I will be disappointed *in* you if you accept my invitation to my dinner party and fail to even try to make it.[29] In Marathon, if Aaron takes up Beth's faith and does not even try to run the marathon, then this is a sign that Aaron fails to give Beth's faith proper weight in his practical reasoning, and Beth is entitled to be disappointed *in* Aaron for not taking her faith seriously.

If the solidarity phenomenon highlights the bright side of interpersonal faith, then the rejectability and the disappointment phenomena bring out its darker side. Our faithors do not just lift us up by standing in solidarity with us. Sometimes they also drag us down by placing an extra burden on us, for we as faithees are uniquely positioned to disappoint them. And we may reasonably refuse to enter a faithor–faithee relationship by rejecting other's faith in us, for we do not want to risk letting someone down. Such aversion to the burden can be legitimate even if the particular faithor–faithee relationship would have been established on recognition and respect for one's agency. Compare: intimacy is a wonderful thing when it is based on mutual recognition and respect. One can, however, legitimately feel burdened by the norms and demands that come with the intimate relationship and, for this reason, refuse to enter such a relationship despite all the valuable things that constitute and spring out of it. Interpersonal faith is, in some sense, a double-edged sword.[30]

3.2. Shared Normative Expectation and Reason Generation

I take it that a shared normative expectation involves a shared vision of an aspirational future. This vision involves seeing one's future course of action as settled. That is, this vision involves seeing the practical question of whether to φ as being settled and closed. Note that the faithee and faithor need not thereby settle the theoretical question of whether the event of the faithee φ-ing will in fact take place, for they can reasonably recognize that this aspirational future requires the collaborations of many factors that are beyond their control. Suppose that in Marathon, Aaron properly takes up Beth's faith in him. They thereby both see Aaron's practical question of whether to run the marathon as settled and answered in the affirmative. They may, but need not thereby see the theoretical question of whether the event of Aaron running the marathon will in fact

[29] I owe this point to Selim Berker and Quinn White. There has also been a growing literature that either makes use of or theorizes about the different textures of disappointment. See, for example, Martin (2013) and Telech and Katz (2022).
[30] Thank you to Richard Moran for helping me to articulate this interesting tension within interpersonal faith.

take place as settled and answered in the affirmative.[31] Deciding what to do need not entail predicting what will take place.

I mentioned that the vision and the expectation are shared, and I take it that the sharedness is more than having the same expectation or the same vision, in the following sense. The faithor must base her vision on the faithee's initial commitment, or if the faithee is still ambivalent about her commitment, on a commitment that the faithee has been seriously considering. I will mainly focus on the case where the faithee does have an initial commitment in the rest of the paper for the sake of simplicity. Beth may or may not value running a marathon herself. She might even think that running marathons is one of those pointless, boring sports, and that she herself would not attempt to run one even if someone paid her to. But Aaron committed to running a marathon, so Beth comes to share the vision of an aspirational future where Aaron successfully runs one. The question of whether to run a marathon used to be settled for Aaron when he made his New Year resolution, but the answer to the question becomes a bit shaky because of the moments of difficulty he needs to endure. In virtue of Beth's faith, Aaron is invited to base his answer to the question on hers, and thereby regain the vision of an aspirational future that he used to possess when he first made this commitment. The shared expectation provides the faithee reasons for action. Beth expects that Aaron will run the marathon, and this gives Aaron a weighty but nonetheless non-demanding reason to run the marathon.

I specified above one of the many ways of understanding commitment and normative expectation, and I should note that my theory of interpersonal faith does not presuppose particular views of them. One can follow Calhoun (2009) and hold that commitments are active, sustained intentions to pursue a project or end—ones that are resistant to reconsideration or revision.[32] And if one combines Calhoun's view with an Anscombian view of intention that takes one's belief that one will φ to be a constitutive part of one's intention to φ[33], one can come to the reasonable view that a commitment to φ involves a belief that one will φ. Alternatively, one can combine Calhoun's view

[31] See Hieronymi (2005) for more on this question-settling view. Hieronymi takes that the practical question and the theoretical question are conceptually separated. Her view is largely neutral with respect to the relationship between these two conceptually separated questions. Some hold that there is a tight relationship between these two questions under certain circumstances. See Marušić (2015), for example, for an argument that settling the practical question does require or entail settling the theoretical question when φ-ing is up to the agent. As we will see shortly, the complication here does not bear on the main point I want to make in this paper.

[32] For other views on the nature of commitment and the (ir)rational revision of commitment, see Holton (2004) and Shpall (2014).

[33] See Anscombe (1957).

with a view of intention that disagrees with the Anscombian view.[34] There are many possible variations and combinations, given the rich literature on intention and the tight connection between intention, commitment, and normative expectation. One merit of my view of interpersonal faith, I take it, is that it is flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of these variations and combinations. My readers can reasonably disagree over the right theory of intention, commitment, and/or normative expectation, and still find my theory of interpersonal faith plausible. For my purposes, I only need the relevant normative expectation and commitment to be reason-giving. That is, insofar as the faithee and faithor share the normative expectation that the faithee will φ, the faithee is bound by a sense of 'should' regarding φ-ing as well as acts that are necessary for promoting φ-ing—it's not merely that it would be nice if Aaron follows his training plan.[35] Rather, Aaron *should* go through such necessary training.

An accurate account of the kind of reason and the sense of 'should' mentioned above deserves separate treatment in a different paper—there is indeed a growing literature arguing for the category of reasons that depend on relations between people but are nonetheless non-obligatory.[36] For now, it is enough to grasp the approximate texture of this kind of reason and the sense of 'should' that it gives rise to. The sense of 'should' seems less demanding than the moral should in, say, "You shouldn't kill for fun," but it seems more demanding than the average practical should in, say, "You should brush your teeth twice a day." I suspect that the kind of reason that interpersonal faith provides has its ground in both the faithee's own end and the faithor's calling for the faithee to fulfill this end, and its being doubly grounded contributes to the reason's complex texture. The kind of reason and its being "doubly grounded" will become clearer in the next section. But before that, let me address some concerns.

I have said that interpersonal faith involves a shared vision of an aspirational future, and the faithor must base her vision on the faithee's initial commitment, or if the faithee is still ambivalent about her commitment, on a commitment that the faithee has been seriously considering. One might worry that this view is bespoke for cases like Marathon, which is, in some respects, a rather special case, for Aaron is someone who has full agential capacity and, at one point, had a clear commitment in mind. If my view focuses just on agents like Aaron, then it risks leaving out at least

[34] See, for example, Bratman (1987). Michael Bratman argues that intending to φ is somewhat close to planning to φ, and that one can plan to φ without believing that the plan will be successfully carried out.
[35] This means that insofar as the normative expectation is reason-giving, it cannot give mere enticing reason as specified by Dancy (2004).
[36] See, for example, Lewis (2022) and Darwall (2019).

two paradigmatic instances of interpersonal faith by ascribing too much authority to the faithee. Firstly, we may wish to place faith in quasi-agents—such as very young children and patients with dementia—who are not (yet) in a position to seriously consider a commitment or settle on a vision of an aspirational future due to their limited agential capacity. Secondly, we may wish to place faith in someone to φ when φ-ing is completely off the person's radar or even when it is something that the person is averse to, perhaps because φ-ing is indeed a valuable end and our faith will prompt the person to begin to consider φ-ing as a viable option. I will come back to the second concern toward the end of the next section, and I take up the first concern here.[37]

To address the first concern, I want to clarify what I mean by seriously considering a commitment. One may consider committing to φ-ing by consciously weighing various considerations for or against φ-ing and hopefully landing on a decision on the basis of such a weighing. I do not, however, intend to use the notion in such a stringent way.[38] I prefer to understand such considering to include phases in which the person already has some substantive grip on the value of φ-ing but is nevertheless not very conscious or deliberative about φ-ing as an option. The person is in partial contact with the value of φ-ing, so to speak, and such contact usually takes place prior to the climatic moment of trying to consciously decide whether to φ.[39] An established violinist may come to realize that she had been in substantive contact with the rich value of playing the violin ever since she listened to her parents' CD collections at the age of 9, long before she made her difficult choice between becoming a professional violinist and pursuing a college degree. Sometimes our contact with values is so rigid that nothing can derail us, but other times such contact is rather fragile, and interpersonal faith is a response to such fragility. In Marathon, even though Aaron might once have a full grip on the value of running a marathon, he can still lose grip of it due to the extreme difficulty of his task, and Beth's faith in him can help him to hold on to it for a bit longer, this time for the sake of her. Quasi-agents can surely value things. Or to the very least, they can surely be in partial contact with values, for they remain quasi-agents rather than non-agents. The clarified notion of seriously considering a commitment should be loose

[37] Thank you to two anonymous reviewers for raising these concerns.
[38] Especially when, as observed in Ullmann-Margalit (2006), it seems that people tend to make big decisions in a rather cavalier fashion.
[39] See Callard (2018) for insights on the phenomena of aspiration and being in partial contact with value as an aspirant.

enough such that quasi-agents are at least in a position to seriously consider a vision of an aspirational future, making them proper subjects of interpersonal faith.[40]

3.3 The Solidarity and the Resilience Phenomenon

My relational picture of interpersonal faith accounts for the resilience phenomenon. One essential function of interpersonal faith is that the faithor's expectation of the faithee helps to anchor and stabilize the faithee's plan for the latter's own future. And the faithor does so by inviting the faithee into a faithor–faithee relationship in which they endorse a shared expectation, and this shared expectation provides the faithee a weighty but non-demanding reason for action. The faithee does the thing that the faithor believes in her to do for the faithee in some sense, albeit not in the sense of answering a demand. The faithor–faithee relationship provides the faithee an extra reason to φ that the faithee can fall back on during moments of difficulty, since these are moments when the faithee's commitment to her course of action becomes most shaky.

The solidarity phenomenon can also be accounted for. The faithor keeps the faithee company in the latter's lonely journey, and interpersonal faith constitutes companionship because it itself is relational. I have argued that Beth's faith in Aaron, when properly taken up by Aaron, enables them to stand in a normative relation that is irreducible to some complex propositional attitudes. To further motivate the idea that such a relationship constitutes companionship, I want to draw out two further points: first on the relational nature of interpersonal faith, and second on how the faithor–faithee relationship is something that is inherently *for* the faithee, in a sense that I will soon clarify.

First point first. I have talked mostly about how interpersonal faith, once taken up, is binding for the faithee. The faithee is bound by the faithor's expectation that the former will φ, and the faithee is thereby uniquely positioned to disappoint the faithor by failing to properly situate this

[40] One might think that given my emphasis on quasi-agents being in partial contact with values, the relevant normative attitude that constitutes the faithor-faithee relationship should be more akin to normative hope, or at least should also include normative hope. As pointed out by Martin (2013) and Telech and Katz (2022), normative expectation presupposes that we relate to each other as reasoners who have conformed to (roughly) the same set of norms, and normative hope presupposes that we relate to each other as aspirants toward certain norms or values. I am willing to expand the normative attitude that constitutes the faithor-faithee relationship to include normative hope with a bit of caution, since the normative profile of interpersonal faith I have sketched here does not completely map onto the constitutive conditions of normative hope outlined in Martin (2013), pp. 130–131. Nevertheless, my readers should feel free to see the normative expectation in my view as a placeholder for normative attitude(s) that they see fit, as long as the normative attitude is reason-giving.

expectation in her practical reasoning. What I have not mentioned, and which I take to be both entailed by my view and phenomenologically correct, is that interpersonal faith, once taken up, is equally binding for the faithor. The faithor is also uniquely positioned to disappoint the faithee by revoking her faith for no good reason. Let us go back to the phenomenon of invitation for a bit. When I invite you to come to my dinner party and you accept my invitation, I'd better not be a flake and randomly revoke my invitation for no good reason. Otherwise, you are entitled to be disappointed in me as a host. I think something similar happens in the case of interpersonal faith. If the faithor simply revokes her faith in the faithee for no good reason (and perhaps, even for some impersonal reasons), then the faithee is entitled to be disappointed in the faithor.

That both the faithor and the faithee are uniquely positioned to disappoint each other gives us good reason to think that they stand in a bipolar relationship in virtue of the faithor's faith placing and the faithee's uptake. I take it to be constitutive of this bipolar relationship that agent A has a reason to (not) φ because a particular agent B is in a position to call for A to (not) φ. In the case of interpersonal faith, Beth has a weighty reason to not revoke her faith in Aaron because Aaron is in a position to call for Beth to be consistent in her faith placing, and Aaron has a weighty reason to run the marathon because Beth is in a position to call for Aaron to run it. And to repeat, the sense of "call for" here needs not imply that A owes B to (not) φ, that A is obliged to (not) φ, or that A would wrong B were A fail to (not) φ.[41] By contrast, I have reason not to litter in a desert not because I am answerable to anyone in particular to not do so. The reason against littering instead has its ground in some impersonal principles against harming the environment.

I now clarify the sense in which the faithor–faithee relationship is *for* the faithee. To see this point, we need to consider two different cases where even though an agent is unlikely to succeed in achieving some difficult tasks, it seems inappropriate to place faith in the agent. Consider first a variation of Marathon where it becomes physically impossible for Aaron to run the Marathon that year, even though Aaron resolved to run it. Suppose that year's NYC Marathon gets canceled. Or suppose that Aaron severely injures himself while training, and he needs to stay in a wheelchair for a while and call off his marathon plan. In both cases, it seems inappropriate for Beth to place faith in Aaron to run the NYC Mararthon that year. In the first variation, Beth can at best place faith in Aaron that he will stick to his training plan, which is still up to Aaron. In the latter variation, Beth

[41] To clarify, the bipolar framework is usually developed in relation to moral obligations, moral claim rights, and wrongs. See, for example, Thompson (2004) and Darwall (1996). There are, however, recent attempts of articulating a kind of bipolar relationship that does not imply obligations. See, for example, Darwall (2019) and Lewis (2022).

cannot even properly have faith in Aaron to carry out his training plan, since it is not up to Aaron to recover from his injury.

Consider then a different possible world where Aaron has never seriously considered committing to running that year's NYC Marathon. Suppose that he sees the value in running a marathon, and perhaps has always valued marathon as a sport. He just does not want to run one himself and therefore never seriously considers committing to running one. It seems inappropriate for Beth to place faith in Aaron to run a marathon in the absence of Aaron's serious consideration, however much Beth wants Aaron to run one.

To sum up, there are at least two conditions under which placing faith in an agent to φ seems inappropriate, even though the agent sees the value in φ-ing and φ-ing is in some sense difficult for the agent:

(1) Whether the agent will φ or not is not up to the agent[42]; and

(2) The agent has never seriously considered committing to φ-ing.

When (1) or (2) or both obtain, it seems that one can at best have faith *that* some states of affairs will come about. Beth might reasonably have faith that the NYC Marathon will still take place despite its early cancellation. She might have faith that one day Aaron will commit to running a marathon given that he values the sport. However, it seems inappropriate for Beth to place faith in Aaron in these cases. Interpersonal faith is called for only when the faithee has and cares to exercise her agential control over how her project unfolds. One might say that the faithee sets the agenda for interpersonal faith:[43] the faithee determines the scope of this interpersonal faith and when such faith is called for, and the agential support that the faithor offers the faithee must be based on the proper recognition and respect of such an agenda. This is the sense in which the faithor–faithee relationship is *for* the faithee, and this is partly why the faithee can rightly credit the faithor if the faithee successfully achieves the goal. Such a faithee-centered aspect of faith, I think, helpfully accounts for the solidarity phenomenon.

This is a good place to address the second concern I have been tabling. To rephrase the concern in light of condition (2), one might worry that this condition is too stringent, for it seems quite appropriate to place faith in someone to φ when φ-ing is completely off the person's radar,

[42] I use "up to the agent" in a rather non-technical way. Even though I think my theory of faith can accommodate a broad range of up-to-meness that has been discussed in the free will literature, I encourage my readers to just use their common sense here. Alternatively, my readers should feel free to substitute "φ" with "try to φ," if the latter makes more sense to them.

[43] Thank you to Britta Clark for this very helpful phrasing.

especially when our faith will prompt the person to begin to consider φ-ing as a viable option. The faith seems quite appropriate even if the person is averse to φ-ing, especially when φ-ing is indeed a valuable end.[44] To address this concern, I want to point out that some forms of demand (or demand-minus, if you will) may take place in the guise of interpersonal faith, especially within some special relationships. An immigrant father may "place faith in" his daughter to eventually attend law school when she chooses the unstable and unprofitable career of freelance writing. I do not deny that parents, friends, partners, or some other people with whom we stand in a special relationship are in a position to watch out for us, and sometimes the watching out can legitimately take the form of a demand. A mother may demand her son to be a morally decent person, even if he currently has no interest at all in becoming one. And if we may recall Reluctant Thief—Jean may very well be in a position to demand his friend Myriel to come to his senses and give up his radical effective altruism, even if Myriel is completely unmoved by a more sensible lifestyle. What I wish to point out is that we should not mistake demand for interpersonal faith, nor the non-interpersonal one for the interpersonal one. The immigrant father may reasonably have faith *that* his daughter will attend law school, especially if he sincerely sees a legal career as more suitable to her temperament, but he is not in a position to place faith in her if she is completely unmoved by a legal career. Likewise, the desperate but hopeful mother may reasonably have faith *that* her son will grow into a morally decent adult, but she is not in a position to place faith *in* him if he is completely unmoved by moral decency. Even if one is not in a position to demand that another person to φ, perhaps because the value of φ-ing is not robust enough to license a demand, or perhaps because they do not stand in a thick enough relationship that can bear the weight of such a demand, one may still invite (or perform other forms of demand-minus) the person to φ. For example, an art instructor may invite her students to see the beauty of modern arts, even though her students currently think that modern arts are nonsense. Here we see another disanalogy between invitation and interpersonal faith. An inviter needs not base her invitation on the invitee's vision. I can legitimately invite you to give a certain movie genre another try, knowing that you did not think much of it in the past, and perhaps have even committed to never watch movies of this genre ever again. In the case of interpersonal faith, however, the reflexive structure of shared normative expectation is necessary. If an option is completely off someone's radar, or if the person simply loathes the option, what one can do is either demand or invite the person to consider the option, or in other words, to be in contact with the

[44] cf. p. 21.

value of the option. And if the person seriously considers the option, perhaps upon one's demand or invitation, one might then be in a position to place faith in the person. Separating these seemingly continuous interpersonal interactions into different kinds is not ad hoc. Some human interactions serve to call certain things to our attention, and others serve to enable us to commit to the option we are still ambivalent about or keep going down the route we have already chosen. I take it that demand and invitation may serve the former purpose, and that interpersonal faith serve the latter.

3.4 Preston-Roedder's View (and Reductionism) Revisited

It follows from my account of the solidarity phenomenon that solidarity is constituted/manifested by something "out there" between agents, instead of a mere private attitude that the faithor might possess. This account can be understood in contrast with what reductionism can offer.[45] Preston-Roedder, for example, thinks that rationally possessing some complex propositional attitudes toward others can constitute one way of standing in solidarity with them. The rational complex attitudes involve judging others in a favorable light, being invested in this judgment, and "having the courage to express that faith in certain ways and in certain circumstances, despite the dangers involved."[46] These elements just are what constitutes interpersonal faith, so *ipso facto* placing faith in others can constitute one way of standing in solidarity with them.

Preston-Roedder's account does have some explanatory power, for it sheds some light on the question of why someone standing in solidarity with us often elicits positive feelings in us. It is no news that we often feel good when we know that someone else judges us in a positive light and cares enough to invest in such judgments, even if we are convinced that the person is biased and over-optimistic. The problem with this account, however, is that it is at best incomplete. I take the quintessential psychological aspect of solidarity to be a sense of togetherness and companionship, that someone else is in this, with us, together. Sometimes we do feel a sense of togetherness when others (rationally) possess these complex attitudes towards us, but other times the nice feeling we get seems to reduce to pathological elation that manifests our vanity. The reductionist outlook in general cannot provide a principled way of distinguishing the sense of togetherness from mere hedonic elation. My relational outlook, on the other hand, does provide a principled distinction. The sense of

[45] For further discussion about solidarity and its features, see Zhao (2019) and Dishaw (2024). Insofar as my view of interpersonal faith provides a good reason to endorse a relational view of solidarity, I take such a relational view to be largely compatible with and perhaps complimentary to Zhao's and Dishaw's views.
[46] Preston-Roedder (2018), pp. 188–190.

togetherness is explained by the faithor–faithee relationship formed by virtue of the faithor's faith placing and the faithee's uptake. The good feeling that other's positivity gives rise to remain a hedonic elation when there is no such faithor–faithee relationship.[47]

I have said in section 1 that Preston-Roedder's view specifies important aspects of interpersonal faith but nevertheless remains incomplete, especially given its ambition to capture the solidarity phenomenon. I have elaborated on its incompleteness, and I will end by saying a bit more about how my view and Preston-Roedder's view (or other forms of reductionism) may jointly provide a full picture of this interpersonal form of faith. Preston-Roedder and other reductionists have helpfully pointed toward components of and rational grounds for a judgment of faith-worthiness (e.g., that we are confident about the faithee's capacity for achieving the end, that we believe that the faithee has indeed committed to something valuable, etc.), as well as the dispositions and attitudes that pair well with such a judgment. And these cognitive and conative components may very well partially constitute one's faith in a person. What I have aimed to show is that interpersonal faith is more than a rational judgment of faithworthiness, and adding reasons for such judgment and further private dispositions or attitudes to the picture does not give us a theory of fully interpersonal faith. Placing faith in someone essentially involves a readiness to enter a special normative relationship with the person, and successful faith-placing culminates in such a special relationship. Once we see the theoretical distance between interpersonal faith and a judgment of faithworthiness, we can see that there are various positions one can take with respect to the relationship between them—positions that are reminiscent of some reasonable positions on the relationship between trust and a judgment of trustworthiness. The judgment of faithworthiness may partially constitute interpersonal faith, rationalize it, enable it, or may not even be necessary if the faith is "substantive."[48] I have carved out the theoretical space for such discussion, and for now, I wish to remain silent about how the matter should be settled.

4. Conclusion

I have argued that seeing interpersonal faith as irreducibly relational is essential for making sense of its various features. The four phenomena and their accounts bring to light different aspects

[47] Thank you to Denish Jaswal for raising a worry that leads to this point.
[48] The corresponding stances can be found in the trust literature. See, for example, Hieronymi (2008), Marušić (2017), and McGeer (2008).

of this form of interpersonal relating. The rejectability phenomenon suggests that interpersonal faith is something relational. That is, it is something "out there" that can be rejected by someone else, rather than some private features that the faithor can unilaterally possess. The disappointment phenomenon suggests that this form of interpersonal relating is not constituted by moral demands. The resilience phenomenon and its account answer the motivational question, namely, why are people motivated to place faith in others at all? The solidarity phenomenon brings all these aspects together, and we can begin to see the contour of a special form of interpersonal support that interpersonal faith constitutes.

That interpersonal faith constitutes a special kind of support is among the motivating thoughts behind this project, and instances of this kind of support should not be foreign to us. We have many aspirations and plans for the future, but unfortunately, the world (and sometimes even ourselves) often seems to work against our will, trying to derail us from what we have resolved to do. Sometimes we get ourselves back on track with grit.[49] Other times we push against these forces with some help from others. Some help promote our ends by directly tackling the specific problems that pertain to our endeavor, and the help comes in the form of productive discussions, words of wisdom, financial support, etc. Other help, however, is only non-material moral support that seems to recognize, respect, and thereby empower our agency. These types of interpersonal support are responses from one person to another's inevitable human fragility, vulnerability, and fallibility. It is indeed a mystery how such non-material and distanced support from an equally fragile and fallible fellow human being can reach us with such force, and my theory of faith can be read as an attempt at decoding this mystery—others can offer us a special form of support by helping us to anchor our plan for the future with their faith in us.[50]

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[49] For a theory on the epistemic aspect of grit, see Morton and Paul (2019). For a theory on the conative and volitional aspects of grit, see Duckworth (2016), which takes grit to be passionate preservice to obtain long-term goals.

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