Rational Faith: How Faith Construed as Trust Does, and Does Not, Go Beyond Our Evidence

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Abstract. I argue that faith is a type of trust. It is also part of a relationship in which both parties are called on to be faithful, where faithfulness is a type of trustworthiness. What distinguishes faith relationships from trust relationships is that both parties value the faith relationship intrinsically. I discuss how faith on this account can, and cannot, be rational when it goes beyond a person's evidence. It turns out that faith has the same rationality conditions as trust, differing from it only in the cases that fix our intuitions.

1. Introduction

What is faith, and what makes it rational? I will give a version of the account on which faith is a form of trust (sections 2 and 3). A key factor that distinguishes faith, beyond mere trust, is that the parties to a faith relationship value the relationship intrinsically. And faith, I argue, is best understood alongside the corresponding notion of faithfulness, just as trust is best understood alongside the notion of trustworthiness. But my aim is less to defend this account of faith, and more to put it to work in showing how faith – so construed – can be rational even as it goes beyond our evidence. I show first how *trust* can be rational while going beyond our evidence (section 4): you can value an outcome strongly enough to take a risk on it, and this risk can be rational as long as your beliefs about the value of the outcome, and how likely the other party is to come through with it, respect your evidence. One might think that rational faith presents more of a challenge, given my claim that it is distinguished from (mere) trust by the parties' valuing the relationship. After all, faith relationships might seem to recommend partiality in your beliefs about the other party's faithfulness. I address this worry by showing how faith is compatible with, indeed better for, respecting your evidence about the faithfulness of the other party (section 5).

2. Trust and Trustworthiness

Let's start with trust, which comes in different forms. In one-place trust, you have a trusting attitude that is not directed toward anyone in particular (Jones 2004). In two-place trust, you trust a particular person, but not for any particular outcome. I'll focus on three-place trust, where you trust another person for some outcome. My focus on faith, below, will be similarly limited to three-place faith.

Three-place trust, as many argue, is a form of reliance (e.g., Baier 1986). One person, *A, relies on someone or something, B, for some outcome x*, just in case *A* premises her actions on *B*'s bringing about *x*, where *A*'s interests are harmed if *B* does not do so.[1] So *A* works on the assumption that *B* will behave in a predictable way – a shelf will stay nailed to the wall, or a bus driver will drive her usual route (Dormandy 2020a). To the degree that you rely on the person or thing, you make yourself vulnerable should they not come through.

Whereas reliance can be directed toward a person or a thing, trust can only be directed toward a person. For trust adds to reliance an essentially interpersonal feature:

> *Psychological feature of the truster:* The truster relies on the trustee not just to bring about the outcome, but to do so because the trustee: (i) cares about the truster or his need for that outcome, and (ii) is committed to doing her best within reason to secure it.[2]

The trustee's care, on which the trustee premises his actions, can be deep and lasting, but it need not. It can be the distanced magnanimity we show to strangers asking for directions. As for the trustee's commitment, this can be explicit, as in a contract, or implicit, as in friendships.

In a *trust relationship*, both parties are aware that the truster trusts the trustee, and the trustee accepts the trust. (This awareness, and the trustee's acceptance, can be implicit too.) I'll limit discussion to trust relationships. There, a corresponding feature applies to the trustee:

> *Psychological feature of the trustee*: (i) The trustee is disposed to care about the truster or the need that he trusts her for, and (ii) she commits to doing her best within reason to secure it.

These psychological features make both parties to a trust relationship additionally vulnerable. Consider the truster. Already because of his reliance on the trustee, he is vulnerable should she not come through. But beyond this, the emotional element of trust makes him vulnerable to feeling hurt or betrayed should she not do her best within reason to come through. As for the trustee, she is vulnerable to practical disadvantages in case coming through proves more costly than she anticipated, or to negative feelings such as guilt (e.g., if she fails) or resentment (e.g., if the truster takes her for granted).

It is arguably because of this practical and emotional vulnerability that trust relationships have a second feature:

> *Norms of trust*: Trust relationships are governed by norms that specify appropriate behavior in the trust relationship.

Norms regulate relationships to protect vulnerable parties. Since the truster and the trustee can harm each other in different ways, different norms apply to each. For example, the truster should show gratitude when the trustee does her best within reason to come through, and he is entitled to feel hurt or let down when she does not (Holton 1994). But he is not entitled to negative feelings should she decline to do more than is reasonable. As for the trustee, she should be *trustworthy*. That is, she should *care about* and *commit* to meeting the truster's need, which she will trivially if she fulfills the psychological condition of accepting trust. But beyond this, trustworthiness involves *competence* to do what she is being trusted for.

Another standard norm is that the trustee is entitled, should the occasion arise, to trust the truster in return. This norm may never be exercised, as with strangers giving each other directions; but in longer-standing relationships it typically is. What this involves will differ depending on the type of relationship (for example parents and children versus psychotherapists and clients); but in general relationships of trust invite, and generate a normative presumption of, reciprocity.

With this account of trust in hand, I will turn to faith, a kind of trust.

3. Faith and Faithfulness

Along with Helm (2003) and Swinburne (2005), I'll account for faith – or at least one key sense of it, operative in marriage or religious faith – in terms of trust. Thus a *person of faith* is a type of truster. And the person toward whom faith is directed – the *recipient of faith* – is a type of trustee.

What distinguishes having faith from having trust, and what distinguishes a recipient of faith from a trustee? Start with faith. I suggest that this has two features above and beyond trust. First, faith involves a *continued relationship*, in which you continually, or habitually, trust the recipient of faith for one or more things. Contrast this with trust relationships that do not amount to faith. These can be one-off affairs, such as trusting a stranger for directions. Second, the person of faith *values the relationship itself*, for its own sake and independently of what it gets him. This contrasts too with (mere) trust relationships: even if the parties care about each other, they can value the relationship for the purely instrumental reason of obtaining the outcome they are trusting for.

Let's turn to faith *relationships*. Analogously to trust relationships, the recipient of faith accepts the other's faith, and both parties are aware that she does so. And the same psychological features apply as in trust relationships; they are just enriched by the deeper relational aspect of faith:

> *Psychological feature of the person of faith:* The person of faith relies on the recipient of faith to (i) care *a great deal* about him or his need, and (ii) commit *very strongly* to meeting his need (that is, to try even harder in the face of obstacles than in the case of mere trust), and (iii) to do (i) and (ii) *because she values the relationship* with him.

This deeper relational aspect of faith alters the character of the vulnerability in faith relationships, thereby also altering the norms that manage this vulnerability. In some ways, faith relationships come with greater vulnerability than trust relationships, and in other ways less. Here is how the vulnerability can be greater: Due to the mutual valuing of faith relationships, both parties have an added dimension of vulnerability to emotional hurt should the other fail to fulfill their role. Here is how the vulnerability of faith can be less. First, the deeper relationship of faith makes more room for forgiveness, grace, and trying again. Second, sometimes faith involves relying on the other person to do well for *herself* rather than directly for you; you may for instance have faith in someone to do her best in a job interview, and premise your actions (for example, spending time coaching her) on her doing so, but you are not directly vulnerable should she not do her best after all. You need her to do well for herself because you care about her so much.

These additional vulnerabilities in faith relationships point toward more encompassing norms to manage them. For example, on the part of the person of faith, more gratitude may be appropriate should the recipient come through, or greater hurt should she not. As for the recipient of faith, she is called upon to be not just trustworthy, but *faithful.* This means caring *more,* and not just being competent, but possibly developing new competences to use on the other's behalf. Given the continued relationship, faithfulness often involves actively anticipating needs that might arise on the part of the other person. Think here of a marriage, a deep friendship, or faith in God.

We saw that trust relationships typically invite reciprocation. This holds even more for faith relationships, given their extendedness and the intrinsic value of the relationship. So the person of faith is typically also called to faithfully receive, and deliver on, the other's faith in turn.

Trust-based accounts of faith are controversial. Because of space, and because my main aim is to explore the rationality of faith so construed, I will limit myself to a brief motivation. It draws on the language of the Jewish Scriptures and New Testament, which I refer to not as authorities but as an important heritage shaping our understanding of faith. There, the Hebrew *'emuna* and the Greek *pistis* can be variously translated as 'faith' or 'trust', on the one hand, or 'faithfulness', 'trustworthiness', 'loyalty', on the other, depending on the context (Perry 1953; Pace and McKaughan 2022, 8-9). This suggests that each cluster of notions ('trust'/'faith'-notions and 'trustworthiness'/'faithfulness'-notions) are two sides of the single coin that is a relationship of faith (Pace and McKaughan 2022, 28).

My account resembles that of Pace and McKaughan (2022), who also emphasize the relationship between faith and faithfulness. One difference is this. They construe a faith relationship in terms of *trust* on the one hand and *loyalty* on the other, whereas I construe a faith relationship in terms of *faith* (which is a form of trust) on the one hand and *faithfulness* (a form of trustworthiness) on the other. One reason for preferring my framework is its greater theoretical unity: we do not need the additional notion of loyalty. Trust and trustworthiness on a continuous and intrinsically valued relationship suffice. Another reason is that faithfulness, I suggest, is a more apt notion than loyalty to encapsulate the other side of the coin. For faithfulness need not involve loyalty at all. Loyalty involves an emotional association with the other party that disposes you to 'stick by' them (Keller 2007). But you can be faithful to someone even if you no longer feel an emotional association with him but, because you care about the relationship, want to honor your commitment to him.

Recognizing these complementary dimensions of faith relationships helps adjudicate between conflicting views of faith. One account construes faith in terms of trust (Helm 2003; Swinburne 2005), and another in terms of grit, or perseverance (Matheson 2018; Kvanvig 2018, chapter 2; Malcom and Scott 2022). These differing views represent each side of faith relationships. Trust views of faith, I suggest, account for *faith*, whereas grit or perseverance views account for *faithfulness* – having the purpose, passion, interest, and hope to do what it takes to come through for the other party because you value relationship with them. As Pace and McKaughan also point out, an account of faith relationships needs both.

Job is a prime example of faith and faithfulness (Dormandy 2018). Start with faithfulness. Because he so values his relationship with God, Job does all he can to not let God down. Rather than cursing God as his wife urges him, he brings his feelings of hurt and betrayal to God – even challenging God to meet God's own moral standards. But Job is also a prime example of *faith*: Because he so values his relationship with God, he manages to keep trusting God, premising his actions on God's caring for him even as his probability that God will come through arguably sinks. Moreover, since faith relationships invite reciprocation, we would expect to observe that God is both invited to be faithful to Job, and has faith in Job.

And we do. Although God's faithfulness does not manifest itself until the end of the story when he vindicates and restores Job,[3] I suggest that this outcome does portray God as faithful. And though it may sound strange, God also has faith in Job. He premises his actions – in this case letting loose on Job not only Satan, but also Job's self-righteous companions – on Job's prevailing.

Being a person of faith and a faithful recipient of faith, then, are two aspects of a flourishing *faith relationship*. Faith is a form of continued trust, and faithfulness of continued trustworthiness; and both are accompanied by a valuing of the relationship for its own sake.

4. Rational Trust

The next question concerns faith's rationality. To address this I'll start with an account of rational trust.

4.1 The Narrow Evidential Constraint

One proposal for rational trust is endorsed by Coleman (1990, ch. 5) and Hardin (1993):[4]

> *The narrow evidential constraint:* It is rational for one person to trust another only if the truster's total evidence on balance suffices for belief that the trustee will come through.

Evidence here is any information – representational experience, justified beliefs – relevant to whether the trustee is trustworthy (Conee and Feldman 2004).[5] If the narrow evidential constraint holds, your trust in me to fetch you from the train station is rational only if you have sufficient evidence that I will come on time, that I will come at all, that I have secured enough petrol for the return trip, and so forth.

The narrow evidential constraint may seem plausible. After all, if the truster does not meet it, then trusting the other party does not seem a likely bet, for them, to secure their desired outcome. To illustrate this, let's map beliefs onto subjective probabilities, also called *credences*.[6] If belief maps onto an evidence-proportioned credence of over ½, then trusting me for a lift home despite insufficient evidence makes it, by your lights, at best 50% likely that trusting me will get you home. If belief maps onto a higher evidence-proportioned credence, such as ¾, then trusting me despite insufficient evidence makes it, by your lights, at best 25% likely that trusting me will get you home. However we map belief onto credences, embarking on a course of action with such a low evidence-proportioned credence in success does not appear rational.

But appearances are deceptive. I will argue that the narrow evidential constraint is false: there are cases of rational trust to which it does not apply (cf. Simpson 2017; Dormandy 2020b). Along the way I will make two additional claims. The slightly less controversial one is that it can be actively rational to trust someone even if your evidence fails to support belief that they will come through. The more controversial claim is that trust can even be rational when your evidence supports *disbelief* that the trustee will come through.

4.2 Three Situations of Rational Trust

A discussion of rational (three-place) trust needs a word about rational action more generally. For present purposes I will suppose that an action is rational, first, only if it maximizes the agent's expected utility. We get this by taking the value, for her, of the outcome she hopes to accomplish by means of the action, together with the value (or disvalue) of the action itself, and multiplying these by her credence that the action will bring that outcome about. The rational action is the one that comes out with the highest number. Second, the agent's credence (or belief) that the action will bring about the outcome, and her credence that the outcome has the value, for her, that she ascribes it, must also respect her evidence.[7] So the rationality of an action depends on (1) the person's evidence-respecting beliefs that a given action will bring about a particular outcome, and that that outcome has the value she ascribes it; and (2) how important that outcome, together with getting it by means of the action in question (as opposed to achieving it in some other way), are to her in the first place.

To argue that the narrow evidential constraint is false, I'll consider three different situations in which trust can arise (cf. Dormandy 2020b). These situations are not exhaustive of trust (or faith); they serve merely to illustrate where the constraint holds and does not hold. In particular: it holds in one but not in the other two, and so is false as a general claim.

Alternative-rich situations. Here, the outcome that you most value is securing the object that you are considering trusting for; and achieving this outcome by means of trusting has strong advantages – all else equal – over achieving it in some other way. Suppose for example that you want to get home from the station, and that trusting me to fetch you is much cheaper than hiring a cab, and much quicker than taking a bus. Whether you should trust me, then, depends on whether all else *is* equal: whether I am likely to come through, and whether I will do so in a way that does not carry significant disadvantages. For example, whether I will be on time, sober, and will not inflict *The Titanic* soundtrack on you all the way home. I call this an *alternative-rich situation*, because you have multiple options for getting home, only one of which is to trust me. So the rationality of trusting me for a lift boils down to your evidence-respecting credence about whether I will come through in a way that realizes other things you value. In alternative-rich situations, the narrow evidential constraint arguably holds: trusting me to fetch you is rational only if your evidence favors a smooth journey in all these respects. Otherwise, it would be rational to choose a different way home.

Desperate-leap situations. Suppose again that your desired outcome is to get home from the station. In this case, though, you are in a hurry: at your destination, your aunt has suddenly been taken into hospice with little time to say goodbye. And there is really no other option than to trust me to pick you up. The hospice is in a rural area, the local station has no buses, and the only local taxi driver is quarantining with Coronavirus. Taxiing all the way from the next city, let alone from your home hours away, would be prohibitively expensive. You cannot drive, so renting a car is out. If I pick you up on time, you will be at your aunt's hospice within two hours of arrival at the station. It seems that trusting me to pick you up is your only real option, at least if you want to get to your aunt quickly.

But does this also hold if your evidence produces significant doubt? Suppose that I have let you down on past occasions and you have little reason to think I am more trustworthy now. Whether trusting me is still your best option depends on how much you value reaching the hospice quickly. If a day or so's delay would *not* risk missing your aunt, then you need not trust me: you might spend a few days in a hostel three stations down the train line, and return here by train when the taxi driver emerges from quarantine. But suppose that your evidence-respecting judgment is that you cannot wait so long. In this case, trusting me may be the most rational option, simply because there is *some* chance that I will show up, and there are no other options. Think of Pascal, who advised us to premise our actions on God's existence for the outcome of eternal bliss, despite insufficient evidence to believe in God. Similarly, trusting me to pick you up, despite justified doubts about my showing up, may be the most rational decision.

These considerations favor rejecting the narrow evidential constraint. In desperate-leap situations, where you place a high value on achieving a given outcome, yet there are few if any other ways of doing so than to trust, it does not always apply. Taking the calculated risk of trusting, even if your evidence-respecting judgment does not support belief that the trustee will come through, can be the most rational act.

Higher-outcome situations. In the first two situations, the outcome you most value is to secure what you are considering trusting the other person for – in the examples, a lift from the station. In higher-outcome situations, by contrast, you do value the outcome that you are considering trusting the other person for, but there is a different outcome you value even more. Imagine that your evidence does not support belief that I will show up at the station on time or even at all. But here, you are not in a great hurry – you just want to get home in decent time after trip abroad. And there is an outcome that you value more than arriving in decent time. This 'higher' outcome has something to do with me. For example, you might want to help me become a more trustworthy person, and your evidence supports the belief that trusting me for a lift is an excellent way to secure this outcome. This is what the literature calls *therapeutic trust* (Horsburgh 1960). If I get you home in decent time, this will encourage me to be more trustworthy in the future. But even if I do not pick you up on time or even at all, the gentle heart-to-heart you have in store will very likely make me more trustworthy. In this event, you must find your own way home via expensive or inefficient public transport, but the therapeutic outcome for me is worth it. The literature tends to focus on therapeutic trust, but alternative-outcome situations are a broader category. For example, you might trust someone to pick you up because you want to get to know her better, you think she may be a good professional contact, or because you have a crush on her friend.

Note that in order for higher-outcome situations to count as trust, you do have to place *some* value on the thing that the trustee would deliver if they came through (here, a lift from the station), and there must be *some* cost to you should they fail; for trust entails vulnerability. What marks a higher-outcome situation is simply that the possibility that your interests are damaged in this way matters less to you than the higher outcome, whatever it is.

We thus have another situation where the narrow evidential constraint does not apply. In higher-outcome situations, it can be rational to trust that the other party will deliver your desired outcome, despite evidence to the contrary; this is because the outcome that trusting them *is* likely to have on your evidence, whether or not they come through, is one that you value highly.

So the narrow evidential constraint is false: trust can be rational even if the truster's total evidence on balance does *not* suffice for belief that the trustee will come through. But what does this mean exactly? A weak interpretation is that the evidence that the trustee will come through must still support a credence of ½ (Hawley 2014). A stronger interpretation is that the evidence could support belief that she will *not* come through (which for present purposes we may think of as a credence of less than ½).

I suggest that an evidence-respecting credence of ½ is an unduly random cutoff point for rational trust. Consider first desperate-leap situations. Suppose that you place a very high value on an outcome that, according to your evidence, trust is the only way, or by far the best way among a bad lot, to secure. In this case, as long as you value the outcome highly enough, we have seen that trust can be rational. Now consider higher-outcome situations. Suppose that you value an outcome that trust is not very likely to secure (because the trustee is untrustworthy); but suppose that trusting her anyway is very likely to secure an outcome that you value highly. In this case trusting her can be rational given your higher outcome. Indeed, it might be *because* she is unlikely to come through, which you judge is *more* likely to yield your most valued outcome (say, because of the heart-to-heart you have in store), that trust is rational.

I thus endorse the stronger claim: Trust can be rational even if your evidence supports disbelief (or a credence of less than ½) that the trustee will come through. Moreover, in the special case of higher-outcome scenarios, if you value the higher outcome highly enough, trust can even be rational if you are *certain* that the trustee will not come through, as long as your evidence strongly suggests that trusting her in these circumstances will bring about the higher outcome.

One might object that I am stretching the concept of trust beyond what it will bear. Some hold that trust *entails* belief that the other party will come through (Baier 1986; Nickel 2007; McMyler 2011; Keren 2014). If this is so, then the trust-like actions I am describing might be rational, but do not count as trust. In response, I suggest that trust is not about belief that the other party will come through, but about vulnerability to her – placing yourself in her hands (cf. Baier 1986). But it is hard to settle this debate without a clash of intuitions. For space reasons, I will not try to do so here, but for discussion see Simpson (2018) and Dormandy (2020b).

In summary, I have argued that the narrow evidential constraint is false – trust can be rational even if your evidence does not support belief, and in some cases even if it supports disbelief, that the trustee will come through.

4.3 The Broad Evidential Constraint

But not anything goes. Trust is subject to a broader evidential constraint:

> *The broad evidential constraint:* It is rational for one person to trust another only if the truster respects her total evidence concerning (i) the value of the outcomes under consideration, and (ii) the extent to which trust, or any alternative actions available to her, are likely to bring about those outcomes.

The broad evidential constraint falls naturally out of our account of rational trust. For this account involves performing actions that advance particular outcomes, in light of our evidence-respecting beliefs both about their value and about what will advance them. For these actions to be rational, these beliefs must respect our evidence, supposing as I am that this is the best way by far for a limited cognitive agent to believe truly.

So trust can be rational even when it goes beyond your evidence, as long as the truster values the outcome that she believes that trust is the best shot for securing. But trust can *only* be rational if her beliefs about the value of her outcomes, and about the extent to which trust or other actions will promote those outcomes, respect her evidence.

5. Rational Faith

Let's return to faith. We are now in a position to show how faith can be rational while going beyond your evidence. I suggest that faith, a type of trust, has the same rationality conditions as trust. It is thus rational for one person to have faith in another only if the person of faith respects her total evidence concerning: (i) the value of the outcomes under consideration, and (ii) the extent to which faith in the recipient, or any alternative action available to her, is likely to bring about those outcomes.

That faith has the same rationality conditions as trust might strike some as odd – for surely faith goes beyond your evidence even more than trust does (for discussion see Kvanvig [2018, 9-10]; Malcolm [2020]). Supposing that there is something to this intuition, my view can account for it. To see how, recall what distinguishes faith relationships from trust relationships: faith relationships are a special type of trust relationship that is continuous and that both parties value intrinsically. Because of this, the central – or prototypical, intuition-fixing – cases of faith differ from the central cases of trust. When we think about faith, we tend to think of different sorts of case than when we think about mere trust.

For example, central cases of mere trust relationships tend to involve meeting practical or mundane needs, such as being fetched from the station, receiving knowledgeable testimony, having a contract honored, or having strangers not molest you in the street. In contrast, central cases of faith relationships tend to involve the meeting of *relational* needs.[8] Examples include the other party's playing her part in a friendship, her succeeding at a project you are rooting for her to complete ('You can do it, I have faith in you!'), or her fulfilling marital vows, on her making the most of herself with your caring support.

Rational faith, then, does not differ structurally from rational trust, but only in the content of the central cases that fix our intuitions about it. In faith relationships it is often the intrinsic value of the relationship itself that sets the outcome, whereas in relationships of (mere) trust it can be anything at all, but tends to be mundane needs. Because of this, faith relationships, more than trust relationships, are apt to involve the types of situations I described that go beyond your evidence. To see this, consider our three situations. Take first *alternative-rich situations.* These are arguably a central example of a mere trust relationship – think of getting a lift from the station instead of taking the bus: you have other options than trusting. In faith relationships, by contrast, alternative-rich situations are arguably less typical. Why? Because the relationship, and associated goods, that we value intrinsically in faith relationships, and for which we rely on the other party, are usually not so easily obtained in other ways. Alternative-rich situations are not apt to be a central case of faith.

What about *desperate-leap situations*? These might be more commonplace in faith than in (mere) trust. The reason is that the sorts of things you rely on people in faith relationships for are often tied to a particular person or relationship – and since you value these intrinsically, you are more apt to hold out for them when your evidence that the other party will deliver them is shaky. For example, we may read Job as having faith in God to save Job's very ability to have faith in God, as that ability comes more under duress from Job's suffering (Dormandy 2018). In the context of a relationship of supreme value to him, Job staked everything on God's coming through.

Consider finally *alternative-outcome situations*. At least when your outcome involves the other person's good, these may skew towards being faith relationships rather than (mere) trust relationships. Take for example relying on someone to accomplishing something great for themselves, as when you say, 'You can do it, I have faith in you.' On your most valued outcome, the other person achieves an aim of her own that you have premised your actions on her achieving, such as doing her best at a job interview, but even more important to you than this is the "higher" outcome of her happiness.[9]

So the cases that tend to violate the narrow evidential constraint are apt to be skewed toward faith rather than (mere) trust. This may explain the intuition that faith is apt to go beyond your evidence more than trust is. But I suggest that, as long as the broad evidential constraint is respected, these cases of faith, like any form of trust, can be rational.

Of course, there are other types of faith scenario. One is what we may call a *stable-faith situation*. We have these in continuous friendships, partnerships, or other relationships that we value intrinsically and where there is no reason to doubt the other's faithfulness. Here faith is typically rational too. Such cases, however, arguably do not play a large role in fixing the intuition that faith has a greater tendency to go beyond our evidence than trust does. For the questions they raise are not as existentially or philosophically pressing, and so get less attention, than cases like Job, or the contemporary believer who doubts God's existence – such cases, rather than faithful marriages, are the bread and butter of faith-and-reason debates.

One might object that this account of faith rationally going beyond your evidence gets something wrong about faith. What we may call the *partiality objection* says that faith involves believing good things about the other party, including that she will respond faithfully – and faith involves believing this even if your evidence suggests otherwise (Stroud 2006; Keller 2007). This is not the claim that central cases of faith involve desperate-leap or alternate-outcome situations. For in these situations, you take a calculated risk on the basis of your evidence about the recipient of faith. The objection, rather, says that evaluating your evidence about the other party's faithfulness is wrong-headed to begin with. Faith rather involves believing positively about the other party's faithfulness regardless of your evidence, and acting accordingly (see Malcolm 2020) Dormandy 2021b).

My first response is that if faith involves *believing* positively beyond your evidence, then it is not rational. Some would think that this is just the right result – that rationality is not a good-making feature of faith. But there are other reasons to reject a partialist conception of faith.

Second, a faith that flies free of evidence about the recipient's faithfulness is more likely to be unexpectedly disappointed. In contrast, if faith *rationally* goes beyond your evidence, then you are aware of the risk you are taking. The objector might ask why awareness of risk would be good for faith. For surely awareness of risk is a way of maintaining control, whereas faith involves surrendering control. My response to this worry brings me to the third and fourth reasons for rejecting the partialist conception of faith.

Third, faith does entail surrendering control in one sense: you make yourself vulnerable to the other party. But you can be vulnerable while having a decent estimation on your evidence of the chances that they will let you down. In this way, faith does not entail surrendering control. Of course sometimes your evidence does not permit a precise evaluation of risk, and sometimes it can be rational (given the high value of your desired outcome) to step out in faith anyway. My claim is just that evidence-based awareness of risk is compatible with faith.

Fourth, the partiality view makes the person of faith vulnerable to *self-gaslighting* (Dormandy 2021a). Attempting to believe positively about the other party, he will be prone to interpreting, or even perceiving, unfaithful behavior on her part in a positive light that his evidence does not warrant, and explaining it away. ('She is having a bad day', 'I must have provoked her', etc.). Of course, charity is important in faith as in any valued relationship. But charity must go with respect for evidence. Otherwise it could promote self-gaslighting, which in extreme cases can lead to whitewashing abuse.

Fifth, respecting your evidence about whether the other party will come through can help you have a better faith relationship. To see why, recall that the person of faith is also called upon to be *faithful*. If your beliefs about the other party are inaccurately positive because you didn't respect your evidence, then you will be hindered at exercising faithfulness – in competently caring for the other party. For you will be less apt to have an accurate picture of what the other's weaknesses, and thus his needs, may be.

In summary, I suggest that faith, on the trust-based account I defend, can be rational in the same way that trust can be rational. If faith seems to go beyond your evidence more than trust does, the reason is that the deeper relational aspects of faith alter the central cases that fix our intuitions. As long as faith obeys the broad evidential constraint, it can be rational. More than this, for reasons just given it makes it better faith.

6. Conclusion

I have given a trust-based account of faith, and explored how faith, so construed, can rationally go beyond your evidence about the other party's faithfulness. It turns out that faith has the same rational structure as trust, but that central, intuition-fixing, cases differ. This generates the intuition that faith goes beyond your evidence more than trust does. But as long as the person of faith values their desired outcome highly enough, and as long as they respect their evidence about this value and about the other party's faithfulness, their faith can be rational even as it goes beyond their evidence. And faith that is rational in this way is better, not least because it does not make you vulnerable to self-gaslighting.

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NOTES

1 I alternate between she, they, and he for the singular.
2 For (i) see Baier (1986); Jones (1996); Faulkner (2007); for (ii) see Faulkner (2007); Hinchman (2005); Jones (2017); Hawley (2014).
3 Although this is arguably the gist of the story, one wonders how God could be faithful for allowing these things to happen to Job to begin with, as well as for not bringing back his original murdered children.
4 The name is mine; for critical discussion see Simpson (2017).
5 Those who prefer a different account of evidence may substitute it.

6 This mapping is purely for illustration; I do not claim that one of these can be explained reductively in terms of the other.

7 I give an account of respect for evidence in Dormandy (2021b), but all that matters here is that it be truth-conducive.

8 Baier (1986) emphasizes trust arising between people with longstanding relationships, as when children trust parents for sustenance. I suggest that, to the extent that the truster premises his trust on the trustee's intrinsically valuing the relationship, and to the extent that the trustee is motivated by doing so, we have the special kind of trust and trustworthiness that amounts to faith and faithfulness.

9 Thus, therapeutic *trust* is more apt to be therapeutic *faith*, typically arising in continued and intrinsically valued relationships.