Book Section:

'Trust is Basic': Løgstrup on the Priority of Trust

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In the course of his deeply interesting analysis of the place of trust in our lives, the Danish philosopher and theologian Knud Ejler Løgstrup makes the claim that 'trust is basic', in a sense that somehow puts it prior to mistrust.[1] I take it that there is something intuitively plausible about this remark; but at the same time it is not entirely clear what it amounts to or involves. What kind of basicness or priority are we talking about here? My aim in this paper is to consider different responses to this question that might be found in Løgstrup's work, and thus to illuminate what I take to be distinctive in his account of trust. However, before doing so I will say a little about the role that his discussion of

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[1] Løgstrup is not the only philosopher to have this view in some form or other. In particular, some of the same issues discussed below have come up in discussions of Wittgenstein's remarks about trust in *On Certainty*. Cf. Hertzberg 1988 and Lagerspetz 1998, especially chapter 8. While Lagerspetz mainly focuses on Wittgenstein, he also brings Løgstrup into his final account: see chapter 9. Bob Plant has briefly but illuminatingly connected Wittgenstein's views on trust with Derrida's views, for example the latter's claim that 'elementary trust…is involved…in every address of the other. From the very first instant it is co-extensive with this other and thus conditions every "social bond", every questioning, all knowledge, performativity' (Derrida 1998, 63); see Plant 2005, 188-90. There is also an interesting parallel between Løgstrup's claim about the priority of trust over mistrust, and Levinas's claim that while we can of course encounter others with 'violence, hate and disdain', nonetheless what is 'primary' because it is 'presupposed in all human relationships' is instead 'the mastery of the Other [over oneself] and his poverty, with my submission [to the Other] and his wealth' (Levinas 1985, 89). One could ask questions concerning exactly what 'primacy' Levinas has in mind that parallel the questions we will ask about Løgstrup, where I suspect a similar answer could be given.

trust plays in Løgstrup's writings, as these are not well-known in Anglophone philosophy, so some preliminary introductory comments are required.

1. Trust in Løgstrup

Løgstrup was born in 1905 and died in 1981. He lived through the Nazi occupation of Denmark, and in the middle of this period became professor of theology at the University of Aarhus in 1943, where he spent the rest of his academic life. He published what is widely seen as his main text, *The Ethical Demand*, in 1956. This is the work in which his principal account of trust is developed, and which I will focus on in this paper. I will also discuss some later works where Løgstrup responds to criticisms ('Rejoinder' in *Art and Ethics* (1961)), and also somewhat develops his earlier views (*Controverting Kierkegaard* (1968) and *Norm and Spontaneity* (1972)).[2]

It is therefore helpful to say something very briefly about where Løgstrup's account of trust fits into the structure of *The Ethical Demand*. The book begins by focusing on 'the religious proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth', namely the proclamation to 'love your neighbour as yourself', which Løgstrup says he will try to define in 'strictly human terms' (Løgstrup 1997, 1/2010, 9). Løgstrup asks how we should understand this proclamation and what it 'answers to in our existence'[3] (Løgstrup 1997, 1/2010, 9), arguing in response that it rests on our interdependence, on the fact that 'the other person must to such a degree be dependent upon me that what I do and say in the relationship between us – I alone and nobody else, here and now and not at

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[2] *The Ethical Demand* is available in English as Løgstrup 1997. The 'Rejoinder' and extracts from the other works mentioned are available in translation in Løgstrup 2007. In references to Løgstrup, a translation is given first where available, followed by the most recent Danish edition.

[3] The Danish term Løgstrup uses here is 'tilværelse', which could also be translated as 'life', and indeed both terms are used by the translators of the English edition of *The Ethical Demand*. As we shall see, this connection to life and its proper development are important in what follows, so this should be born in mind. Løgstrup also uses 'tilværelse' as his translation of Heidegger's term 'Dasein'.

some other time or in some other manner – is of decisive importance' (Løgstrup 1997, 5/2010, 13). He then argues that to further understand the nature of this interdependence we need to focus on trust, as the logic of trust can give us insight into the ethical demand that the proclamation embodies, where he distinguishes between the ethical demand as such and what might be asked of us by the ordinary conventional requirements of moral life. Løgstrup then argues that this demand only makes sense if we see life as a gift. He finally considers objections to his account, including objections to his account of trust. Clearly this complete picture raises a number of crucial questions which cannot be considered here, particularly Løgstrup's characterization of the ethical demand as what he calls radical, silent, one-sided, isolating and unfulfillable; how it is to be distinguished from the requirements of social morality and how they relate to each other, if at all; and what he means by calling life a gift. But this sketch of the basic structure of *The Ethical Demand* should help to see how the discussion of trust in the first chapter fits in, where that structure is helpfully outlined by Løgstrup in another work as follows:

> First I analyze how the life of one person is interwoven with the life of another, and from this I deduce the content of the ethical demand, which has to do with taking care of the life of the other person that has been surrendered to us. Some way into the book I make it clear that the one-sidedness of the demand…presupposes that life has been given to the individual person. (Løgstrup 2007, 10/1961, 239)

Løgstrup's account of trust relates centrally to this theme of surrendering one's life to another person, as he thinks this is fundamental to the nature of trust. In general, for Løgstrup '[t]o trust…is to lay oneself open' (Løgstrup 1997, 9/2010, 18), which is why he believes that understanding trust is a good way to understand our interdependence, without which the proclamation would not make much sense:

> If human beings were so independent of one another that the words and deeds of one were only a dispensable luxury in the life of another and my failure in the life of the neighbour could easily be made up later, then God's relation to me would not be as intimately tied up with my relation to the neighbour as the proclamation of Jesus declares it to

be.[4] In short, the intimate connection in which Jesus places our relation to God and our relation to the neighbour presupposes that we are, as Luther expressed it, "daily bread" in the life of one another. And this presupposition for the intimate connection in the proclamation of Jesus between the two great commandments in the law can indeed be described in strictly human terms. (Løgstrup 1997, 5/2010, 13-14)

Trust is therefore important to Løgstrup because it reveals how that interdependence works: in trusting another person, I am placed in their hands and make myself vulnerable to them, while also expecting that 'surrender' of myself to play a role in their response to me; if they do not respond accordingly, I will feel resentment and hurt in a way that can quickly become moralized, sometimes in exaggerated ways.

This therefore gives us a way to locate Løgstrup in relation to contemporary debates on trust, which have largely gone on without reference to his work. Most of those debates trace themselves back to Annette Baier's key article of 1986 on 'Trust and Antitrust', where she begins by saying that 'there has been a strange silence on the topic [of trust] in the tradition of moral philosophy with which I am familiar' (Baier 1986, 232),[5] and then proceeds to introduce certain key distinctions and issues that have now become central, such as the way the ubiquitousness of trust can make it invisible; the difference between relying on something or someone and trusting someone; the way in which trust involves dependence on the good will of a person, and thus a vulnerability to harm, leading to her account of trust as 'accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will)

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[4] Cf. Matthew 22:36-40, which has Jesus saying that what he identifies as the second most important law, namely to love your neighbor as yourself, is like the 'first and greatest commandment' to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all soul and with all your mind', thus linking love of God with love of the neighbour.

[5] Hertzberg, writing around the same time as Baier, makes a similar point: 'There does not seem to have been a great deal of discussion about the concept of trust in recent philosophy' (Hertzberg 1998, 308).

toward one' (Baier 1986, 235);[6] and the consequent role of power within trust relations. Baier's paper, and related work by her and others, has opened up a debate between two broad views of trust which have been called 'predictive' and 'affective'.[7] On the predictive approach, trust involves dependence where the expectation that this dependence will be satisfied is grounded on evidence that the trusted person can be relied upon in various ways (e.g. to speak the truth), where this evidence can come from various sources, such as past experience of her behaviour, and what one knows about her interests and character. In this sense, I can trust the used car dealer to sell me a good car, perhaps because she has done so in the past, or I know her fear of reputational damage will lead her to do so now. By contrast, on the affective approach, trust still involves dependence, but here that dependence is itself assumed to play a role in motivating the trusted party to act accordingly. Thus, in such cases you will feel 'let down' by the other, and therefore blame them, whereas if your attitude of trust was based on evidence of reliability, this would not be appropriate: if our attitude in trusting was evidential there would be no space for blame of this sort. Thus, if the car dealer sells me a duff car where I was trusting her in the first sense, I might feel annoyed at myself for having miscalculated where her interests lie and so having misplaced my

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[6] To give Baier's discussion in slightly more detail: 'When I trust another, I depend on her good will toward me… Where one depends on another's good will, one is necessarily vulnerable to the limits of that good will. One leaves others opportunities to harm one when one trusts, and also shows confidence that they will not take it… Trust then, on this first approximation, is accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) towards one' (Baier 1986, 235).

[7] I am here following Faulkner's terminology, which is itself partly drawing on Hollis. See e.g. Faulkner 2014, 1977-8, where he draws the contrast as follows: 'To say that A trusts S to ϕ on this [predictive] understanding is just to say that A depends on S ϕ-ing and expects S to ϕ…. [But on the affective] understanding to say that A trusts S to ϕ is to say that A depends on S ϕ-ing and expects this to motivate S to ϕ'. Cf. also Faulkner 2007 and 2011, and Hollis 1998.

judgement of how she would respond to me by basing that on the wrong evidence, but I would not feel resentment towards her; it is only if I trusted her in the second sense, and expected my hopelessness with cars to play some role in her response to me that I would feel in any way betrayed. And if I expected her to be trustworthy in the second sense, but found her to only be trustworthy in the first, I might also feel let down, in again realizing that my vulnerability was playing no real role in her relation to me. As a result, it is common in the literature to draw a distinction between trust as reliability and hence dependability in that sense, and trust proper: you might be dependable and I might depend on you, because your interests make it the case that you will do the best you can for me, and you are good at this; but this is not the same as being trustworthy, as my dependence on you plays no role in how or why you serve my interests (just as I might depend on a rope to hold me, but where this is not really a case of trust in a full sense).[8]

From what has been said above about Løgstrup's position, it should be clear that he is centrally concerned with trust in the second sense, as crucially involving our vulnerability to others and the role this plays and is expected to play in their response to us. Had Løgstrup's work on trust been more widely known and appreciated at the time, it might then have had the sort of impact on the debate that was made later by the contributions of Baier and others who have followed her lead.

2. 'Trust is Basic'
We have now outlined the place that the consideration of trust has in Løgstrup's work, and what view he takes of it. I now want to focus on a central part of Løgstrup's discussion of trust, namely his claim regarding the basicness of trust, and that is it somehow prior to mistrust: 'Trust and distrust

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[8] Cf. the contemporary debate, where those who defend the affective view include Annette Baier, Paul Faulkner, Karen Jones and Richard Holton, while those on the predictive side include Russell Hardin, Alvin Goldman, Michael Bacharach and Pamela Hieronymi. Central texts include: Baier 1986; Faulkner 2011; Gambetta 1988; Goldman 2011; Hardin 1996; Holton 1994; Hieronymi, 2008; Jones 1996.

are not two parallel ways of life. Trust is basic; distrust is the absence of trust'
(Løgstrup 1997, 18 note 5/2010, 28 note 1).[9] How is this idea to be
understood?

I will consider four main options:

(1) Psychological: trust is the attitude we start out with, not distrust
[developmental priority]

(2) Transcendental: trust is warranted as the default attitude, grounded in
the necessary conditions of our fundamental practices, distrust is not
[rational priority]

(3) Value: trust is a prima facie good, so distrust can only be a privation or
deficient form of trust [axiological priority]

(4) Ontological: that trust is possible is not a result of our social
arrangements, but is essential to the proper functioning of human life
itself, whereas distrust is not essential in this way [priority in being]

I will now consider each of the four options above in turn, arguing in the end
that it is the third and fourth that seems to best capture Løgstrup's position
while building on elements of the other two, so following this development will
show us how he came to understand the nature of trust.

2.1 Psychological priority

In his writing on this issue, it sometimes sounds as if Løgstrup has
psychological priority in mind: namely, as a matter of human psychology and
its development, we all first encounter people with trust, and then come to
learn to distrust when things go wrong (or we are taught they might). The
opening chapter of *The Ethical Demand* where he first talks about trust could
certainly be read this way:

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[9] While adequate, this translation is not very precise. A more literal translation
of the Danish would be: 'Distrust is therefore certainly not - as a way of being -
equal to trust. Trust is what is fundamental - and distrust arises out of a lack of
trust'. For the sake of simplicity in the paper I will continue to stick to the
phrase used in the English translation, that 'trust is basic', but where the
emphasis on fundamentality should be borne in mind.

> It is characteristic of human life that we normally encounter one another with natural trust. This is true not only in the case of persons who are well acquainted with one another but also in the case of complete strangers. Only because of some special circumstances do we ever distrust a stranger in advance…Initially we believe one another's word; initially we trust one another. (Løgstrup 1997, 8/2010, 17)[10] [11]

And slightly later Løgstrup also brings in psychological studies, especially those concerning human development:

> [T]he child, in contradistinction to the adult, is never able to trust only partially. To trust with reservation is possible only for one who has learned to hold back something of herself. But this the child has not learned consciously and deliberately to do. For her reservation takes place as a matter of psychic automatism. This is why the disappointed trust, restlessness, and insecurity which go with it create in the child far-reaching and fateful consequences. (Løgstrup 1997, 15/2010, 25)[12]

Løgstrup seems to be arguing here that when a child distrusts, it takes a very different form from the adult case, as for the child it is total rather than being

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[10] Again, a more literal and accurate translation of the beginning of this quotation would be: 'It belongs to our human life, that we normally encounter one another with natural trust. This is not just the case when we meet a person we know well, but also holds when we meet a complete stranger'. The Danish original implies more clearly that trust is a deep part of that life, and Løgstrup is talking to the reader more directly, asking them to recognize that this is what we do.

[11] Cf. Baier, who speaks about an 'innate but fragile trust' (1986, 242), arguing that we must suppose that 'infants emerge from the womb already equipped with some ur-confidence in what supports them, so that no choice is needed to continue with that attitude, until something happens to shake or destroy that attitude' (Baier 1986, 244).

[12] Cf. also: 'Trust is an original phenomenon. The child comes trustingly into the world, the child psychiatrist ascertains' (Løgstrup 1995, II, 355/2013b, 230).

selective, which is why a child who learns to distrust is so psychologically damaged by the experience; but this in turn suggests that the attitude with which a child begins is not one in which trust and distrust are both in play (as is typical for adults), but one in which trust is complete, and hence basic in this sense – it is the attitude from which we start out, but which can be flipped round into its opposite in exceptional circumstances, with catastrophic psychological effects when this occurs. Løgstrup also goes on to offer an explanation of why the child will begin with trust, which is that she is outside the various conventional norms, where it is those norms that make us 'hold ourselves in reserve and do not allow ourselves completely to trust one another' (Løgstrup 1997, 19/2010, 28), thereby using convention 'as a means for keeping aloof from one another and for insulating ourselves' (Løgstrup 1997, 20/2010, 30); but the child is 'outside convention', so 'he or she is able to trust only without reservation' (Løgstrup 1997, 20/2010, 30).

However, while there is reason to think from these passages that Løgstrup might support this psychological priority claim, there is also reason to think it is not the fundamental issue for him. Firstly, to place too much weight on it would be to run counter to the methodology that he wants to adopt, which he insists is phenomenological rather than psychological. Thus, while he says that the psychology 'supports' the position he holds, he does not claim that it is the basis for his view, which he identifies as primarily 'an analysis of a phenomenological character' (Løgstrup 1997, 15/2010, 24). And elsewhere, he makes plain that he sees a significant difference between scientific claims and phenomenological ones.[13]

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[13] '[T]here are facts that everyday language is better at establishing than the sciences are. There are phenomena we can only describe and distinctions we can only express using natural language. That is why much philosophy remains within the interpretation of the world, of things, and of human existence that is given in our everyday language. Conversely, everyday language's "sorting" of things is useless in attempts to track down the laws in which the exact sciences are interested. In order to track these down, we must carry out a new and different classification of things, and that is what takes place in the so-called scientific languages. But as I said earlier, I have

Secondly, but relatedly, when Løgstrup deals with subsequent challenges to these more psychological passages from *The Ethical Demand*, he does so by downplaying the 'scientific' nature of his position, suggesting that his priority thesis should not really be understood in these psychological terms. This can be seen clearly in one of his 'Rejoinders', written in response to Henrik Stangerup, who argues against Løgstrup that we normally meet one another with distrust, where trust only follows after as a 'result of the fulfillment of love or friendship' (Løgstrup 2007, 2/1961, 229).[14] Løgstrup's reply is as follows:

> To this I would say that the disagreement between Stangerup and myself is not merely, as he presumes, a question of what comes first and what comes last, trust or distrust. He and I take the words 'first' and 'last' to mean different things. The difference can be pinned down as follows: Stangerup is inquiring into which of the two comes first in time, and which comes last, whereas I see the difference between first and last more as a difference in rank, having my sights set on the foundational relation. When Stangerup says that distrust comes first, he means – and this is also how he expresses himself – that in a person's historically progressing existence, trust 'follows after' distrust. When I, on the other hand, say that trust is primary, I mean that distrust is the negation of trust, and is, as such, founded in trust. (Løgstrup 2007, 2/1961, 229)

Løgstrup goes on:

> Whether Stangerup and I still disagree depends on the position he takes on the distinction I have made here, and which one could, perhaps, call a distinction between a psychological status report and an

not sought to establish scientific laws. This I leave to psychology, sociology, and similar sciences. In my description of the phenomena, I have only worked with comparisons and distinctions within the natural language's interpretation of life. In short, I have stuck to phenomenological analyses and steered clear of scientific investigations' (Løgstrup 2007, 9-10/1961, 238). For a more extended discussion, see Løgstrup 1987.

[14] The article Løgstrup is responding to is Stangerup 1960.

investigation of the foundational relation. For if I am correct in perceiving Stangerup's reflections on trust and distrust as such a status report, then I can follow his reasoning. The question is whether Stangerup, on his part, will concede that it is possible to practice a philosophical psychology that includes an explanation of the foundational relations, and whether he can follow my particular reasoning in favor of the foundational relation that I believe exists between trust and distrust. (Løgstrup 2007, 4/1961, 231-2)

In these passages, Løgstrup seems to concede here that Stangerup could be right that distrust comes first developmentally – or at least, it wouldn't matter to Løgstrup's central point if it did, as that is not the kind of priority he really has in mind. But then, if the priority of trust over mistrust is not a matter of 'scientific psychology' (Løgstrup 2007, 2-3/1961, 229-30), but some other kind of 'foundational relation', what is it?

2.2 Transcendental priority

A second alternative is to argue that the priority is not merely empirical and developmental, but rather takes a transcendental form which in turn makes it ceteris paribus more rational to opt for an attitude of trust rather than distrust, regardless of how people may actually behave. That is, while as a matter of psychology particular individuals may start out with an attitude of distrust and not trust, this is not really relevant to Løgstrup's position, as this cannot be the said to be the *right* attitude for people to have, as our forms of life must in general warrant the attitude of trust over that of distrust, as otherwise that kind of life would be impossible for us in various ways.

This approach seems to find support in what Løgstrup has to say about the crucial case of language and speech, where he notes that 'trust is essential to every conversation' (Løgstrup 1997, 14/2010, 24). In later work, Løgstrup argues that '[t]o speak is to speak openly' (Løgstrup 2007, 55/2013a, 100); and he gives an example based on an actual interview of his wife by a Nazi officer, who was trying to locate Løgstrup's whereabouts, to show how difficult it is not to speak openly, even when faced by a 'destroyer' to whom telling the truth would lead to disaster, where this difficulty is taken to reflect the fundamental nature of speech itself:

Let me offer an illustration. Let us imagine that we stand facing a destroyer who is trying to win us for his cause, but we know that he will shun no means in doing so and that he is not to be trusted. Face to face with the destroyer, we discover how much effort it takes to remain on our guard. The thought that, by talking things out, we would be able to dissuade the destroyer from his destructive enterprise keeps presenting itself; there is no eradicating it once and for all. We must keep telling ourselves that it is an illusion to think that we could talk things out, and must continually bear in mind that anything we say will be used to put a third vulnerable party out of the way. But why is that thought so persistent? Why do we need to make such an effort to restrain ourselves, and why do we experience doing so as nothing less than contrary to nature? It is because we are opposing the requirement inherent in speech that speech be open. To speak is to speak openly. (Løgstrup 2007, 54-55/2013a, 100; cf. also Løgstrup 2007, 83-5/1972,17-18)

'The requirement inherent in speech that speech be open' could be understood as a transcendental claim: Unless speech is open, in the sense that most people speak to each other truly and honestly, in a way that means they can be trusted in what they say, speech would be impossible as a form of life. For example, one could not learn to speak in the first place, and could not learn from testimony so that speech could not serve this fundamental epistemic role. And even more fundamentally, speech could not work at all unless people were mostly open and sincere, as otherwise we would have no way to assess content of what people were saying, if we could not generally take it on face value.[15]

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[15] Cf. Wittgenstein, where Hertzberg (1988, 308) draws attention to the following passages from *On Certainty* (Wittgenstein 1969):

As children we learn facts; e.g., that every human being has a brain, and we take them on trust. I believe that there is an island, Australia, of such-and-such a shape, and so on and so on; I believe that I had great-grand-parents, that the people who gave themselves out as my parents really were my parents, etc. . . .

How strong is this transcendental claim? At its strongest, it would be the claim that all possible forms of speech would become impossible in conditions of dishonesty. But that may seem to make it implausible, as perhaps we can imagine conditions in which speech and testimony could still work even under these extreme circumstances. But even if this were so, all Løgstrup would need is a more modest claim: that for *our* form of life, in the way that co-operation and communication work *for us*, this would be impossible if people in general could not be trusted to speak the truth: for this would still warrant *us* in treating trust as the default attitude, as we could be assured that in general it is reliable for the conditions in which we find ourselves.[16]

Thus, it could be argued, 'trust is basic' when it comes to speech, as for us dishonesty and deception using speech must be parasitic on more fundamental honesty and truth-telling, in which case the default right attitude of the listener should be that of trust, not mistrust. Thus, just as Kant famously took his universalizability test of false promising to hinge on the impossibility

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The child learns by believing the adult. Doubt comes after belief. (§§159-60)

I really want to say that a language-game is only possible if one trusts something

(I did not say 'can trust something'). (§509)

In this last passage, however, Wittgenstein is arguably talking more about reliance than the sort of trust that concerns Løgstrup; the translation is somewhat misleading in this respect, as Wittgenstein is using 'sich verlassen auf', rather than 'vertrauen' or 'glauben', though cognates of 'glauben' are used in §159.

[16] Cf. also the quotation from Derrida cited previously: 'elementary trust…is involved…in every address of the other. From the very first instant it is co-extensive with this other and thus conditions every "social bond", every questioning, all knowledge, performativity'.

of this becoming the norm,[17] so Løgstrup could be read in a similar manner, where he puts the point in comparable terms:

> …we can only be insincere by means of the openness of speech. We can only be untruthful by dissimulation and by deceiving the other person. By what means? By the openness of speech. By this means we get the other to swallow the bait of our lies. We can only disregard the openness of speech by making it a feigned openness. Openness can never be eliminated, not even in the deepest deception. Mere speech involves it. It is just as much of a condition for lying as for telling the truth. (Løgstrup 2007, 137/1982, 115)

So, it seems we have a transcendental argument for why we *should* treat trust as prior to distrust, even if as a matter of empirical psychology people might start by distrusting others and then learn to trust: namely, because we know that human life could not function at all unless people can generally be trusted, we therefore have good grounds for taking trust as our default attitude to one another.

But then, if we take this line, couldn't we also have a transcendental claim that refutes the psychological suggestion that people start by distrusting others? For, how could a community of distrustful people of this sort learn language or anything about the world through testimony, if the transcendental claims made above about speech are right? So isn't Stangerup also wrong about the developmental empirical claim, and can't Løgstrup now demonstrate that too, so we can also claim priority in the first sense? Just this combination of views may seem to be what Løgstrup is suggesting in the following passage:

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[17] Kant 2011, 73 [Akademie edition 4:422]: 'Now, I then see at once that [false promising] could never hold as a universal law of nature and harmonize with itself, but must necessarily contradict itself. For the universality of a law that everyone, once he believes himself to be in need, could promise whatever he fancies with the intention not to keep it, would make the promise and the end one may pursue with it itself impossible, as no one would believe he was being promised anything, but would laugh about any such utterance, as a vain pretence'.

Initially we believe one another's word; initially we trust one another. This may indeed seem strange, but it is part of what it means to be human. Human life could hardly exist if it were otherwise. We would simply not be able to live; our life would be impaired and wither away if we were in advance to distrust one another, if we were to suspect the other of thievery and falsehood from the very outset. (Løgstrup 1997, 8-9/2010, 17)[18]

We might thus read Løgstrup as advancing a transcendental claim designed to also refute the kind of empirical psychological point that someone like Stangerup thinks he can make.

However, as an interpretation of Løgstrup's view this stands awkwardly with his apparent later willingness to distance himself from the psychological claim. But more importantly, perhaps, it also leaves him vulnerable to a more philosophical objection, namely that when it comes to the developmental claim in psychology, neither side is right. For, while the transcendental claim might show that we can't generally begin with the attitude of distrust, it still might be said that we could begin with an attitude that is not really trust either, as it is less substantive than that: for, it is just the *absence* of distrust, but not properly trust as such. To see the space for this possibility, consider the child who asks me for the first time on a long car journey: 'Are we nearly there yet?'. If young enough, and if this really is the first time it has happened, and if generally our relations have given her no cause to question me up to this point, it could be argued that it just doesn't even occur to her that I might say anything other than the truth, so she is not taking it that my dependence on her figures in my thinking about her in a way that we have said is fundamental to the trusting attitude for Løgstrup: she just takes it for granted that I will answer her correctly. It could thus be said that while she clearly doesn't distrust me, she actually doesn't trust me either, but is in some state prior to both, where the distinction has not even yet arisen.[19] This then would be the

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[18] The third sentence might be translated more literally as: 'It would be hostile to life [livsfjendsk] to behave otherwise'.

[19] Cf. Hertzberg, 1988, 316: 'The upshot of this is that it would be misleading to say, "The child behaves in this way because he trusts the adults", rather he

objection to Løgstrup when he writes that 'distrust is founded on trust' on the grounds that 'distrust arises when the individual has the experience that things do not go as he has trusted that they would go', as distrust of this sort may arise not out of 'disappointed trust' but out of the disappointment of one's expectations, but where having such expectations does not amount to trust proper.[20] So even if we accept the transcendental approach to Løgstrup's priority claim, it would still seem unwise to use this to also connect Løgstrup's claim to the developmental question, where what we start out with may best be characterized in a more neutral manner altogether.

Nonetheless, even if this is right, we can still use the transcendental approach to make the first move we considered and to give content to a distinctive kind of priority thesis: namely, based on a transcendental claim about how speech works, if the question of trust vs distrust arises, it is right to default to trust, all things being equal. So far, then, we have argued that trust is prior to mistrust because we have transcendental grounds to think it will be the more warranted attitude than distrust; for example, given that speech requires openness to be possible at all, if I distrust what people are telling me, I am more likely to end up with false beliefs than true ones, or at least to lose out on getting true beliefs. So this seems to show that trust can be given a rational justification that distrust cannot, based on transcendental claims about what makes human life (or our kind of human life) possible in the first place.

However, the problem with taking this to be the core of Løgstrup's priority thesis is that it would seem to commit him to a predictive rather than affective conception of trust, whereas we argued previously that the opposite is the case. For, the role of the transcendental claim would appear to ground trust in something other than the role our dependence has in motivating the other person, and instead to ground it in what we take to be the way in which human life operates, for example that speech must involve openness where it

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simply behaves in this way, and out of this relation (perhaps it could be less misleadingly described as an absence of distrust) there gradually evolve attitudes which may be called trustful'.

[20] Cf. Løgstrup, 1980, 223 (my translation).

is this that is said to warrant our attitude of trust. However, while this can certainly be enough for trust in the predictive sense, we nonetheless argued earlier that Løgstrup's view of trust does not take this predictive form, so to treat the priority thesis in this transcendental manner would seem to run counter to conception of trust as he understands it.

This issue relates to the complex question of Løgstrup's distinction between the ethical demand itself, and our conventional moral norms, where this distinction cannot be fully explored here.[21] But one way to understand it would be in terms of the predictive/affective contrast drawn above: whereas in trusting people within the conventional norms it is mainly the predictive notion that is in play, and which may therefore be given a transcendental grounding, when we think of trust in relation to the ethical demand it is the affective notion that is central, and so some other sense of priority is appropriate. Thus, within the terms of conventional morality, I might trust you to speak openly and if necessary justify this with the claim that speech could not operate unless this was generally the case, just as I might trust my car dealer to sell me a decent car and justify this with the thought that if too many car dealers were dishonest they would all be out of business; but this is not to justify trust in you in a deeper sense, as someone responsive to the ethical demand, because this is not to see my dependence on you as in any way responsible for the truths I expect you to utter.

It may be, however, that there is another way to adopt a transcendental approach that would avoid this objection. Thus far, we have used a transcendental claim as grounds for the reliability of speech and other social practices, and thus as giving us rational grounds for trusting those involved in them that outweigh grounds for distrust, so making trust rationally prior. But we might offer a transcendental claim at another level, namely that unless people were generally trusting in their attitudes to one another, they could not function at all and so even be capable of distrust, so in this sense trust is basic: some degree of trust in others is a necessary condition for the possibility of distrust, which is what makes the former more fundamental than

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[21] For further discussion, see Fink forthcoming.

the latter in this transcendental sense. One writer on trust has put the trust/distrust relation in a way that might suggest this approach:

> Trust, in the broadest sense of confidence in one's expectations, is a basic fact of social life. In many situations, of course, man can choose in certain respects whether or not to bestow trust. But a complete absence of trust would prevent him even from getting up in the morning. He would be prey to a vague sense of dread, to paralyzing fears. He would not even be capable of formulating distrust and making that a basis for precautionary measures, since this would presuppose trust in other directions. Anything and everything would be possible. Such abrupt confrontation with the complexity of the world at its most extreme is beyond human endurance. (Luhmann 1979, 4; cited Lagerspetz, 1998, 141)

As has been noted (Lagerspetz, 1998, 141), this seems to be more than just a thesis about a 'psychological impossibility', and so to resemble a transcendental claim: we need trust in order to even be capable of distrust, and to this extent it is basic.

However, while avoiding the problems of the first transcendental approach, I would suggest that Løgstrup would still not subscribe to this position. First, as before, the conception of trust involved is not the same as Løgstrup's, and it is not clear the transcendental claim would be plausible on his conception. For, while 'confidence in one's expectations' might be necessary to function at all and so to be capable of distrust, this is not trust as Løgstrup envisages it, as it is merely predictive trust; but conversely, it seems less plausible to claim that trust as Løgstrup *does* envisage it is necessary for us to function sufficiently to be capable of distrust, as predictive trust would seem to be adequate for this. But secondly, because this is just a claim of transcendental priority, namely that trust is a necessary condition for distrust, this position tells us nothing regarding the *normative* relation of trust and distrust; that is, it just tells us we can't have the latter without the former, but not what makes the former *better* than the latter. Of course, we could answer this by going back to the first transcendental approach, as that argues that conditions for speech and communication mean that trust will be more reliable than distrust, and so should be preferred on rational grounds; but we have

seen reasons to reject that approach as well, from Løgstrup's perspective. As we shall now see, however, the normative question is important to Løgstrup's view, so is there another option?

2.3 Axiological priority

To appreciate how this might be possible, it is useful to return to the passage with which we began, and Løgstrup's apparently paradoxical claim there that trust is basic in so far as it doesn't really *require* justification in relation to distrust, because we can only view the latter as the 'deficient form' of the former, and so as inferior to it in first place:

> Trust and distrust are not two parallel ways of life. Trust is basic; distrust is the absence of trust. This is why we do not normally advance arguments and justifications for trust as we do for distrust. To use a modern philosophical expression, distrust is the 'deficient form' of trust. (Løgstrup 1997, 18 note 5/2010, 28 note 1)

The 'modern philosophical expression' Løgstrup is referring to is to be found in Heidegger, where in *Being and Time* Heidegger speaks about deficient modes of being-in-the-world and of solicitude, for example.[22] How does putting things in these terms help us with our puzzle?

To see how it might, it is worth returning to Løgstrup's reply to Stangerup. Here, Løgstrup makes clear that his reason for drawing the contrast between children and adults was not to make the claim about developmental priority (that trust comes first in time), but to make a claim about how we see the life of the trusting child to be 'more true, more genuine' than that of the distrustful adult:

> The point is, the difference between child and adult lies not only in a person being a child first, and then becoming an adult; we all find that the two are essentially different kinds of existence. And do we not, indeed, regard the child's life as being, in certain respects, more true, more genuine than the adult's life – precisely because, among other

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[22] Cf. Heidegger 1962, §12, 83 and §26, 158. Løgstrup makes the connection with Heidegger explicit in Løgstrup 1950, 30, and in Løgstrup 1995, II, 355/1982, 220: 'in Heidegger's words, mistrust is trust's deficient mode'.

things, trust plays such an enormous, decisive role? (Løgsrup 2007,
3/1961, 230)

This passage, I suggest, should be understood in axiological terms, as
claiming that the life of the child is better than the life of the adult, and the role
of trust in it is crucial to making it so; and precisely because it is a good of this
sort, we do not need any kind of argument to justify adopting it over distrust
wherever this is possible.[23]

One way of getting at what Løgstrup has in mind here, I think, is to
compare the case of trust and distrust to that of health and illness. Here it
seems plausible to argue that health is the primary notion, as illness can only
be conceived as the absence of health, of which illness is the privation or
deficient form. And this means we must accord a prior value to health over
illness, so while it always makes sense to ask (e.g. of a smoker): 'why choose
to be ill rather than healthy?', it doesn't generally make sense to ask (e.g. of
someone exercising) 'why choose to be healthy rather than ill?'; a question of
this sort can only make sense in special circumstances, that are themselves
less than normal or ideal (e.g. of someone starving themselves in a hunger
strike, where a fellow prisoner might ask why the hunger striker has decided
to eat the food that has been given to him). To ask the question is to seek for
an explanation for something which (if you understand the relative
significance of health and illness) shouldn't need to be explained or even
arise.

We might then hold something similar in the case of trust and distrust:
that is, we could hold that trust is the primary notion, as mistrust can only be
defined or understood as the absence of trust, of which mistrust is the
privation or deficient form. And this means we must accord a prior value to
trust over mistrust, so while it always makes sense to ask: 'why decide to
distrust rather than trust?', it doesn't generally make sense to ask 'why decide
to trust rather than distrust?'; this question can only make sense in special
circumstances, that are themselves less than normal or ideal (e.g. in
conditions where one has been fooled before). As Løgstrup himself puts it:

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[23] This approach is also discussed in Rabjerg 2007.

> In order to establish the foundational relation between trust and
> distrust, I have mentioned that one normally does not ask anyone to
> account for the trust they might have in someone else, but rather for
> their distrust of someone else. (Løgstrup 2007, 4/1961, 231)

To ask the question is to seek for an explanation for something which (if you
understand the relative significance of trust over distrust) shouldn't need to be
explained or even arise as a question.

Løgstrup thus argues that at a conceptual level, it is part of the concept
of trust that it is positively assessed, as an 'ethically descriptive phenomenon'
(or what we might nowadays call a 'thick ethical concept'):

> Take trust and distrust, for instance: the positivity of trust and the
> negativity of distrust are not some evaluative accretions of which trust
> and distrust are the subjects, but inhere in the phenomena themselves.
> Positivity and negativity, respectively, reside in the very meanings of
> these two words. It runs counter to the intrinsic nature of trust, and is
> contrary to the very meaning of the term, to evaluate trust as a
> negative phenomenon. Strictly speaking, we are precluded from
> conceiving trust as something negative. We may, of course, appraise
> trust as a negative thing, but this can only come about through our
> applying a perspective to trust in which we discount what trust itself
> imparts to us, namely, that it is positive. This is not merely a theoretical
> possibility – it does happen that, despite its nature, we appraise trust
> negatively because in a particular situation it is dangerous. Trust can
> be exploited; and so in bringing up a child we have to caution him or
> her against a trusting attitude in certain sorts of circumstances. But that
> does not make trust a neutral phenomenon which we are free to
> conceive of positively or negatively. It is only possible to evaluate it
> negatively by flouting its positive nature. The same applies, of course,
> to a positive evaluation of distrust: it is possible only in spite of the
> negativity of distrust. (Løgstrup 2007, 115/1972, 48)[24]

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[24] Cf. also Løgstrup 1997, 249/2010, 279, where Løgstrup identifies trust
along with love as one of the 'realities which we have summarized as the
goodness of our human life', which then means that '[t]rust is there in

So, Løgstrup argues, trust is like the other 'sovereign expressions of life', such as mercy, love and hope, that by default can only be evaluated positively, and thus have a priority over their 'deficient forms' as a result.

Nonetheless, the question can arise *why* trust is of positive value, what is it about trust that makes this the case? Løgstrup makes clear that this is tied up with a proper understanding of the fundamental operations that govern life, much like those that relate to health, and being cut off from those operations cannot but cause us damage. Thus, the attitude of trust is an important part of the human good, without which we would be greatly impoverished, so that a world in which trust is possible is a better world than one in which it is not, thus making trust axiologically fundamental.[25] But how, more precisely, is this so?

One central reason can be found in the way Løgstrup identifies trust as crucial to a certain openness we can have to one another, which is lost in conditions of distrust:

> Not to let the other person emerge through words, deeds, and conduct, but to hinder this instead by our suspicion and by the picture we have formed of him or her as a result of our antipathy is a denial of life.
> (Løgstrup 1997, 14/2010, 23)

For Løgstrup, this openness is characteristic of trust, and also characteristic of love and sympathy, because in these relations we take people at face value as they present themselves to us and connect to them directly, rather than forming a certain image or picture of their character, a theory about what makes them tick, and using that to define them for us. We can form such theories for various reasons, but Løgstrup thinks that what is important about the trusting relation is that it breaks them down as we go back to seeing the person again, rather than defining them in terms of our picture of them:

advance, as surely as reserve and mistrust are a lack of trust and not the reverse', hereby clearly suggesting an axiological priority of trust over distrust.

[25] Cf. Løgstrup 1995, II, 355/1982, 220: '[E]xternal conditions either cause trust and provide good conditions for growth, or they harm it at its very source and provide poor conditions for growth'.

The basic character of trust is revealed in yet another way. In love and sympathy there is no impulse to investigate the other person's character. We do not construct an image of who he or she is… If, on the other hand, we are not in sympathy with the other person…then we begin to form a picture of the other's character… However, when we are in the direct association with that person this picture usually breaks down; the personal presence erases it…Only where the proof of her unreliability has in the most positive sense become an ingrown distrust, or where the irritation and antipathy have shut me off completely, does the picture continue to stand. (Løgstrup 1997, 13/2010, 22-23)[26]

Distrust for Løgstrup thus amounts to a denial of life because it is to put a picture of the person in place of the person themselves,[27] and to define them in terms of what they have been rather than allowing them to be capable of making themselves new, just as (Løgstrup thinks) life itself can renew itself. Thus, he writes, 'We might call this a trust in life itself, in the ongoing renewal of life' (Løgstrup 1997, 14/2010, 23).

There are therefore two fundamentally damaging effects in a world where trust is not possible, which shows how crucial it is to our good – one

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[26] A more accurate translation of the last sentence would be: 'Only where it is established that the other cannot be trusted, and where this has literally become an ingrown distrust, or where irritation and antipathy have shut one off completely, does the picture continue to stand'.

[27] While Løgstrup never gives up the view that this is to be avoided, he later recognizes that one can also sometimes become so focused on the person that one becomes hypnotized by their presence, as it were, which can also create problems in its own way, by leading us to just take account of their current concerns: 'As the meeting [with the other] is absorbing me, it clips my imagination. My imagination cannot move freely in the other's history and world, for my attitude, thought, and feeling are narrowed to being an answer to what is currently occupying the other person and what he requires and expects from me' (Løgstrup 1983, 51; cited and translated in Bugge forthcoming).

that involves damage to the person who is distrusted, and one that involve damage to the person who distrusts.

The argument for damage to the distrusted person might be put as follows:

(1) As living creatures, we have the capacity for renewal, which must be realized if our lives are to go well.

(2) This capacity cannot be realized if we are confined by the picture or theory imposed on us by others.

(3) Trust involves relating to another without a picture or theory.

(4) So being trusted by others enables us to function in the right way.

(5) To distrust is to impose a picture or theory on someone.

(6) So to distrust someone is to risk blocking their capacity for renewal, and thus to prevent their life going well.

And the argument for damage to the distrusting person might be put as follows:

(1) The capacity of persons for renewal is central to the value of life; it is how lives develop for the good.

(2) If we fail to recognize (1), we lose our sense of how life can be bettered, and if we lose this, we lose the 'zest for life' or the 'courage to be' in our own lives.

(3) To lose one's 'zest for life' or 'courage to be' is to be damaged.

(4) To recognize (1) one must not see others as confined by a picture or theory   one has about them.

(5) Trust involves relating to another without a picture or theory.

(6) So trust enables us to recognize (1) and is therefore sufficient to avoid the damage that is (3).

And one might then construct a more general argument that brings in damage to both parties, through the distrusting relation:

(1) Relating to another directly, without a picture or a theory, is central to having a proper relation to them as living beings, without interposing anything into that relation.

(2) Trust relates us to another without a picture or theory.

(3) So trust involves a proper relation to others.

(4) To distrust is to have a picture or theory.

(5) So distrust does not allow for a proper relation to others.

Trust is thus essential to us as a constitutive basic human good, alongside the other 'sovereign expressions of life', in the way that distrust is not; distrust is rather a deprivation of those goods, and so less fundamental, just in the way that illness is a deprivation of health.

To understand what Løgstrup might have in mind here, it is instructive to consider the example of Charles Myriel, the Bishop of Digne in Victor Hugo's classic novel *Les Misérables*. The Bishop, whose character and history are presented in the first chapter of the book, then goes on to show not just compassion and pity towards the ex-convict Jean Valjean, but also trust in allowing him into his home at all, and particularly letting him sleep with access to the silverware owned by the household. It is clear that while the Bishop's sister Mademoiselle Baptistine is prepared to go along with him out of respect for his judgement and goodness, the Bishop's housekeeper Madame Magloire thinks that he has gone too far this time, and is profoundly shocked by his actions in trusting Valjean. What seems to be emphasized by Hugo's narrative, at least from a Løgstrupian perspective, is that while everyone else sees Valjean as what he has done and thus become – a criminal, a vagrant, an outcast – the Bishop (and thus to a lesser extent his sister) see him as an individual human being standing before the Bishop as such. Even Valjean seems shocked by the openness the Bishop shows to him, and seeks to remind him of how he should be categorized:

> 'Mme Magloire,' said the bishop, 'will you please lay another place?'

> The man [Valjean] moved nearer to the light of the table-lamp, seeming not to understand.

> 'It's not like that,' he said. 'Weren't you listening? I'm a convict, a felon, I've served in the galleys.' He pulled a sheet of yellow paper out of his pocket and unfolded it. 'This is my ticket-of-leave – yellow, as you see. This is why everybody turns me away. Do you want to read it? I can read. There were classes in prison for anyone who wanted to learn. You can see what it says – "Jean Valjean, released convict, born in –" not that that matters "– served nineteen years, five years for

robbery with violence, fourteen years for four attempts to escape – a very dangerous man." So there you are. (Hugo 1983, 85)

The Bishop, however, ignores all this and insists he is not interested, where in a letter from his sister that is then quoted in the text, she ponders on his behaviour, emphasizing in particular that 'my brother did not so much as ask the man where he was born. He did not ask his story. For the story would have included some account of his crimes and my brother clearly wished to avoid all reference to these'. She gives the following explanation of why the Bishop behaved in this manner: 'He must have reflected that the man, this Jean Valjean, was sufficiently oppressed already with the burden of his wretchedness, and that it was better to distract his thoughts and make him feel, if only for a little while, that he was a man like any other' (Hugo 1983, 90). Again, from Løgstrup's perspective, we might understand Hugo's point to be that to trust Valjean just *is* to see him as no longer defined by his past, whereas conversely to see Valjean through the eye's of the Bishop's distrustful housekeeper is not really to see the person as such, but all the things he stands for – a convict, a felon, a criminal with a yellow ticket-of-leave. Like Løgstrup's child, we might also think this gives the Bishop a 'joy in living, a courage to be' which the housekeeper, for all that we understand her sensible caution and reasonable doubts, can never possess, partly because she cannot see life as capable of the kind of renewal and reform in the same way as the Bishop can, while also being deprived of the kind of direct interaction with others that his attitude of trust also makes possible.

Løgstrup is of course not claiming that such distrust is never warranted, or denying that it could in some sense become ingrained in a person for good reason; but nonetheless trust is prior to distrust as this could not but cut us off from a better way of relating to others and to life itself. As someone who lived through the Nazi experience both in Germany and in Denmark, and the consequent erosion in relations of trust that this entailed, this must be seen as the fundamental lesson Løgstrup learned: not that society could not function in such conditions, because in some sense it did, but that it is still a pathological form of human life, in which important goods were lost as different and 'deficient' kinds of inter-relations took hold that required people to be committed to a limited way of understanding one another as living

beings. Such is the force of our sense that it *is* limited in this way, that even when faced with 'a destroyer' we may find it difficult not to be open and trusting, as even in such an encounter it can be hard not to hope that this goodness can be realized, even while we know it cannot.

It might be objected to this account, however, that if the priority of trust is viewed axiologically in this manner, and we then explain the value of trust in the way I have claimed that Løgstrup does, it leaves him open to a fundamental difficulty: namely, won't we now have a reason to trust others based on the goodness that such trust brings to our lives, but isn't that precisely the wrong reason to trust others, so that if we give it this axiological basis it cannot then function properly? Indeed, it could be said, we might think of the Bishop in precisely these terms: because his positive view of the world is so important to him, this is why he trusts Valjean, thus leading him to trust for the wrong reason and in a way that blinds him to all the reasons he has to distrust; but the housekeeper has no such positive view of life, so she is more clear-eyed about the grounds she has to distrust Valjean, so that for her the attitude of trust is operating as it should.

Now, Løgstrup himself arguably has an interesting response to this difficulty.[28] For, he suggests, along with all the sovereign expressions of life, it is not possible to trust for instrumental reasons – for then one no longer *is* trusting, so that while trusting others may bring us important goods, there cannot be the reasons *why* we trust. So the 'wrong reasons' problem cannot arise:

> This unconditionality [of sovereign expressions of life, like trust] manifests itself in the fact that as soon as an expression of life is called upon to serve another purpose than its own, it disappears or is transformed into its opposite.… Mercy consists in an impulse to free another person from suffering. If it serves another purpose, such as stabilizing society, it is replaced by indifference towards the other person's suffering. The ulterior motive transforms mercy into its own opposite.

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[28] For helpful more general discussions of this issue, see Williams 2002, 90-93, and Faulkner 2011, 174-5.

> This is why the spontaneous expressions of life defy all justification. The very moment we seek to give a reason for them, we make them contingent upon that which we present as our reason, and they become corrupted right then and there. We have made them a means to obtain a goal other than their own: a means for the goal that is present in the justification. (Løgstrup 2007, 128/1982, 107)

And this argument seems very plausible in the case of trust, at least as Løgstrup conceives it: for, as we have seen, to trust is to be open to the other person, to see them for themselves rather than through a picture or a theory. But, if you trust the other for the good such trust brings you, as a way of helping retain a positive view of life, this is just another way to cut oneself off from the person concerned, by focusing in on yourself instead. This is why, if we did find out that the Bishop trusted Valjean because he wishes to retain the goods that come with trust, we would no longer say he trusted Valjean at all. Thus, while the axiological view can explain why 'trust is basic' in the manner we have explained, it does not threaten to undermine the grounds for trust in a way that would be problematic, for by the logic of Løgstrup's account of trust, the value of trust cannot serve as the reason for trust and so distort trust in this way.

2.4 Ontological priority

We have seen, then, that we can take Løgstrup's intriguing claim that 'trust is basic' in an axiological manner: that is, a world in which trust is possible is better than a world in which it is absent, and not just because lack of trust will damage or make impossible other human relations (though it doubtless will), but because the world will be deprived of goods intrinsic to trust itself, which are taken away or threatened once we live in a world of distrust. In this way, then, trust is not parallel or equal to distrust, but rather what is basic: not because we start out by trusting and then learn to distrust; or because we have better reasons for trusting than distrusting; or because we cannot distrust unless we trust; but because trust is of prior value, and thus distrust can only be its deprivation or deficient form.

However, this is not quite the end of the story. For, in Løgstrup's way of thinking (which cannot be fully set out here), this kind of axiological priority is

closely related to another form of priority that can be attributed to trust: namely, what I have called ontological priority, which is captured in Løgstrup's remark (to which his claim that 'trust is basic' is added in a footnote) that '[t]rust is not of our own making; it is given' (Løgstrup 1997, 18/2010, 27).[29] For Løgstrup, essentially what this means is that *we* do not create or bring about trust as a practice or norm, in the way that we bring about practices or norms like driving on the left, marriage or even property, which govern our various social institutions in ways that we hope are for the best. These practices or norms are brought into being by us in a contractual or quasi-contractual manner, and are thus goods that we bring into the world and over which we have control. But there are other structures which are fundamental to life itself, of which we are part, that we could not bring about in this way as without them we could not come to be at all, and trust (along with the other sovereign expressions of life) are structures of this sort, as without trust we could not function as the creatures we are in the first place, given our vulnerability and interdependence. In this sense, then, 'trust is not of our own making', but is something given with the nature of human life as such, and thus a 'good' for which we are not ourselves responsible, and for which we can therefore claim no credit.[30] By contrast, distrust is *not* ontologically basic in this way, as human life could function perfectly well without distrust, where it only becomes required because we distort life through our own selfishness, which is why it is not essential to the proper functioning of human life itself, and why the fact of its existence is to our *dis*credit.

It should be clear, therefore, that on Løgstrup's account, the claims of axiological and ontological priority need to be thought together: the latter claim is not a value neutral one, for example like the claim that individuals are prior to social agents as the latter are not possible without the former. Rather, the ontological priority of trust stems from the fact that trust is a requirement or

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[29] A more accurate translation would be: 'Trust is not down to us. It is given'.

[30] Cf. Løgstrup 1997, 141/2010,161 (translation modified), where Løgstrup rejects the thought that trust and love can be subtracted from our evil – 'as though trust and natural love were not given to man, but were his own achievements and could be credited to the account of the self'.

condition for the proper functioning of human life, which is what makes it something we do not create ourselves (ontological priority), but also makes it a fundamental good and thus prior in this sense too, as having a value that is also not attributed to it by us (axiological priority).[31]

This also shows why the two kinds of priority we rejected – psychological and transcendental – may nonetheless come to have some place in Løgstrup's account in a suitably modified way. For while we argued that Løgstrup's view does not operate at just a psychological level, and we can now see why, nonetheless we can also see why he appeals to psychological evidence of the damaging effects of distrust on children and adults. And likewise, while we also argued that Løgstrup's view does not argue primarily for the rational priority of trust over distrust on the grounds that the latter makes the former possible, nonetheless his claims about the ontological priority of trust do nonetheless contain what might be thought of as a world-directed transcendental claim, namely that trust is a necessary condition to the proper functioning of human life on which distrust is parasitic, and thus is a normative structure in which we are grounded as a 'given', rather than something we create for ourselves and for which we can claim any credit.[32] The hope is, therefore, that having pulled apart these strands in Løgstrup's complex conception of trust and also how they relate to one

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[31] Cf. Løgstrup 2007, 115/1972, 48, where both claims come together when Løgstrup writes of a phenomenon like trust: 'Whether such phenomena are positive or negative, good or bad, is not first determined in our evaluation of them; it is not first decided in our engaging with them. They make me their own before I make them my own. They have intimated to me what is good and bad before I consider the matter myself and evaluate it. This is the reason for calling the positive expressions of life sovereign'.

[32] Cf. Løgstrup 1962, 532: 'Suspicion lives at the expense of trust, the evil will to overcome the other is parasitic on the created possibility of life'.

another, we can now see more clearly what it means for him to claim that trust is basic, and what makes that claim of significant interest.[33]

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