German Historical Institute
London

THE 2013 ANNUAL LECTURE

The Moral Economy of Trust: Modern Trajectories

by
Ute Frevert

General Editor: Andreas Gestrich
Editor: Jane Rafferty

London: 2014

Published by
The German Historical Institute London
17 Bloomsbury Square
London WC1A 2NJ
Tel: 020 7309 2050   Fax: 020 7404 5573/7309 2055
email: ghil@ghil.ac.uk   homepage: www.ghil.ac.uk

ISSN 0269-8560

Printed and bound by Page Bros., Norwich

Why bother about trust? What can we gain from a history of trust, and what does it tell us about history at large? Some colleagues might frown upon the trendiness of the topic: they are rightly classifying trust, as part of that new thing "history of emotions" that has made academic headlines in recent years, as another fad of the profession, supposedly attractive mainly to women who have long since been thought of as overly emotional anyway. And who now read emotions into each and every event of human history or, even more bewildering, who insist on the historicity of emotions.

In the first part of my talk, let me address these objections, doubts, and prejudices and challenge them in the light of older discoveries and more recent findings. Secondly, I will discuss trust as an affective state and attitude that has become part of the modern emotional lexicon. I will explain why, when, and where, providing some examples that illustrate the instrumental value of trust in what I consider as moral economies of the modern period. Finally, I will conclude with a re-evaluation of the concept of moral economy connecting it with what Francis Hutchinson, nearly three centuries ago, named the "Oeconomy" of passions, affections, and inclinations.

Do Emotions Have a History and if so, Why Does It Matter?

The easiest way to argue in favour of a "history of emotions" approach is to quote those famous and venerable members of our profession who supported it *avant la lettre*. We all stand on the shoulders of giants, as Robert Merton once paraphrased twelfth-century Bernard of Chartres. In our case, the giants are called Lucien Febvre, Norbert Elias, Johan Huizinga, and Wilhelm Dilthey.[1] Cultural history as it was conceived of in the late nineteenth century was well aware of the power and presence of feelings, emotions, affects, and passions. When in 1941, Lucien Febvre urged his colleagues to pay attention to historical sensibilities he had witnessed what he called a "glorification of basic feelings" getting out of control, threatening to turn the world into a "stinking pit of corpses".[2] Norbert Elias writing at about the same time was equally worried. Although his studies on the "civilizing process" had rejoiced at the historic victory of reason over passion in the long course of rationalization, he could not help but recognize that that process was currently under siege. As soon as the "anxiety-inducing tensions within and around us changed", reasonable conduct "with its high degree of affect-control, would

crumble or collapse". The civilizing process was by no means a linear development. "Personal affects" as well as "collective longings and fears" could once again become paramount and escape the steering grip of reason.[3]

Reading Febvre and Elias, two things stand out quite clearly: first, the emphasis they put on emotions (sentiments, affects, passions) as forces propelling human action and behaviour, and, thus, as driving forces of historical events and developments; second, their shared scepticism (to say the least) about the direction those forces took. Talking about the "fog" of affects and the "haze" of fears, Elias left no doubt about the fact that he preferred the alleged clarity and predictability of reason over the fog and haze of emotions. Similarly, Febvre was very explicit about the detrimental outcome and destructive energy inherent in "primitive feelings". Yet he proved much more positive toward cultivated sensibilities such as honour or love. He thus paved the way for a historiographical approach that, within the *histoire des mentalités*, paid ample attention to religious feelings or love among family members.[4]

On the other side of the Atlantic, cultural historian Peter Gay chose a psychoanalytical framework to shed light on emotions like love, fear, ambition, and aggressive rage. Gay's volumes on nineteenth-century "bourgeois experience" put emotions centre-stage, analyzing their effect on people's behaviour and *Lebensführung*. Emotions (or, in Freudian language, drives) were taken as given, as a kind of timeless and ubiquitous anthropological essence of humanity.[5]

The new history of emotions as it developed during the last decade makes more radical claims. It sets out to historicize emotions, to turn emotions into a genuine object of historical inquiry. What does this mean, precisely? It means, above all, taking a distance from a psychological concept of emotions that became increasingly influential in the course of the twentieth century and that conceives of emotions as biological, physiological and neuronal (and thus thoroughly ahistorical) processes. Although emotions usually occur when a person is confronted with a certain social situation or relation, they function internally. They are translated into bodily sensations and states of mind that, as modern neuroscientists tell us, are closely tied to hormonal flows affecting brain circuits.

The question arises, though, whether that which psychologists or neuroscientists explore as emotions is what people themselves define and detect as such.

A person blushing and feeling her heart rate accelerate might be experiencing rage rather than shame. A person shedding tears might feel joy rather than grief. Other emotional states that can be discovered via fMRI might go completely unnoticed by the person under examination. What a person "really" feels has a lot to do with how she names, labels, addresses those feelings through mimics, gestures, and words. Mimics, gestures, and words not only serve as expressions of feelings: they are also impressions. Once you say "I feel ashamed", this both confirms and frames what you think you feel. It lets, so to speak, the feeling sink in, it makes it tangible, noticeable for you as much as for others. It might even clarify and intensify what you feel. Words and gestures give meanings to a state of mind that itself might be chaotic, barely discernible and vague. At the same time, words and gestures are communicative practices that trigger further action and interaction. They start a chain of communication that gives people the opportunity not only to experience emotions, but also to work on them, mould them, and change them in a dynamic process.

This assumption is crucial when we invite historians to study emotions because the specific methods of psychologists and neuroscientists do not apply to our discipline. We investigate people who are no longer alive, based only on what they left behind, mostly written texts, sometimes voices, images, photographs, paintings, architecture, sculptured objects. How can we trace emotions in those sources, and what kind of methodology do we apply to decipher them and, even more challenging, prove their historicity?

I would argue here that we do not need a new methodology, but to do what we always do: read texts or images carefully and critically, along and between the lines, taking notes when we find references to emotions. We look for the place of those references and examine what follows and what precedes them, asking counterfactual questions: are references to emotions necessary in the text? What would be missing without them? Do they fulfil a strategic purpose? Are emotions defined as an actor or as a product of actions? Do they have agency? How is it explained? And what do they do to the person who is said to have emotions, and to others witnessing them? What kind of words, metaphors, and images are used to describe them?

Such questions – part and parcel of the historian's toolbox – easily lend themselves to historical analysis, both in synchronic and diachronic perspectives, as well

as in ontogenetic and phylogenetic terms. Working with ego-documents, for example, we could choose a life-span perspective asking how a person's emotions had changed over time. This is the kind of research current-day psychologists like to do, and we could very well apply their questions to people who are no longer alive (under the condition, of course, that we have letters or diaries documenting their emotional states over the course of their lives, from cradle to grave). But we could also do something that psychologists usually do not do: we could throw light on the social context in which emotions are felt and experienced, demonstrating how changes in contexts affect changes in emotional styles. We can do this by looking into the emotional agenda of social institutions like the family, school, army, the workplace, political organisations, the church and religious congregations.

What we find here is by no means confined to what Peter and Carol Stearns, in the 1980s, called "emotionology", that is, a set of norms and guidelines suggesting a certain type of emotional or unemotional behaviour.[6] Institutions are dynamic places, social fields, areas of agency that involve people with conflicting interests and different abilities to adapt, to voice criticism, or to withdraw. As such, they do not offer one fixed, once-and-for-all agenda. Instead, they allow us to see how rules and prescriptions get negotiated, contested, reset. The modern family is a case in point: in emotional terms, it is no longer what it used to be two hundred years ago. The same holds true for legal institutions that have been enormously influential in shaping the way in which societies and people think about emotions, while, at the same time, being heavily influenced by social conventions and interests. Let me only briefly refer to how law conceives of honour and honour crimes in relation to crimes of passion. Examining legal codifications and legal practice over the course of two hundred years, we can see the extent to which legal scholars were influenced by common concepts of honour and how this in turn shaped the way in which ordinary people and alleged crime perpetrators drafted narratives and defences based on the argumentation of passionate action.[7]

To retrieve historical landscapes of emotions in a given society is thus as important and challenging as any other topic, be it long-term changes in demography or religious affiliation, the development of markets, social policy, or political networks and colonial encounters. What makes it particularly attractive is that it intersects

all those fields addressing a human dimension that, at first sight, seems as self-evident as it is ubiquitous. Since it is historians' foremost task to unmask the seemingly self-evident and "natural", emotions offer themselves as ideal objects of study and scrutiny. Furthermore, the recent attention paid to emotions – in politics as well as in market research, in advertising as well as in financial analysis – calls upon historians to cast their gaze more broadly and profoundly. Emotions have long since been conceptualized as targets of political intervention, aesthetic experience, economic transaction, and educational efforts. To unearth those efforts and trace their results is to lend a historical background to current emotional policies and enable us to see them as both old and new, long-term and short-term.

Historicizing emotions, though, is not only about following the same emotions in different times and settings. It is also about questioning that very sameness. Does honour feel the same regardless who feels it: an aristocratic officer in the eighteenth century, a merchant or businessman in the nineteenth, a Viennese lady in 1860, or a Parisian service maid in 1920? And what about the feeling of honour as we encounter it in male juvenile groups or immigrant communities of our own times? What did and does pride, shame, envy, disgust mean in and for those diverse communities? Rather than assume that we know once and for all what emotions are, how they feel and what they are about, historians should be attentive to differences in time and space in order to produce thoroughly historicized notions of emotions. This is what we can do better than anybody else. And this is what is needed to complement the writing of history that has, until now, paid far too little regard to human emotions, their change in time and space, their contextual dynamics, and the many ways they were put to use by historical actors, institutions, and societies.

Trust as a Modern Emotion

In the process of historicizing emotions trust can serve as a useful example. At first glance, trusting a person seems to be a universal human behavioural trait. Psychoanalysts such as Erik Erikson talk about basic trust as something that small children develop through their interaction with their mother (or primary care-givers).[8] But do all children develop basic trust? And if trust is supposed to be a feeling that is acquired through learning and that depends on experiencing reliability, can we then assume that this feeling is available to each

and everyone, regardless of social circumstances and cultural mappings? To ask even more critical questions: are Erikson's findings universally and historically valid? Is trust always and everywhere generated through the mother-child interaction? What would people living in ancient, medieval or early modern societies say?

Reading texts is required in order to find out their opinions on trust: famous household texts such as the Holy Bible, highbrow texts from philosophers or poets, educational texts such as mirrors for princes that became popular during the late Middle Ages, merchants' notebooks informing us about the vicissitudes of trading operations. It might also involve examining pictures, such as the Flemish tapestry that was given to Charles V for his wedding in 1526. Here, *fiducia* was shown as one of those virtues subservient to *justitia*, justice. The moral message was that the emperor should practice and gain trust in order to appear as, and be, a just ruler. Trust here belonged to the semantics of love and friendship and was closely tied to *veritas* or truthfulness. Only someone who was authentic and despised cheating and treachery was deemed trustworthy.[9]

But court culture did not exactly lend itself to *veritas* and *fiducia*. In 1513, in his treatise *Il Principe*, Niccoló

Machiavelli openly declared that only appearances mattered. Princes had to be cunning as foxes in order to rule successfully; at the same time, they should pretend to be pious, loyal, benevolent and honest.[10] In his German translation of the Bible, Martin Luther warned against trusting others and, above all, never to trust those who were powerful. The only exception concerned trusting God.[11] A century later, the Spanish Jesuit Baltasar Gracián advised worldly-wise men to trust today's friends as if they were tomorrow's enemies.[12] In the same vein, the first German-language encyclopedia published in 1746 defined trust as something hardly recommendable among human beings. The author distinguished between substantiated and unsubstantiated forms of trust. Only that person who was not only able, but also willing to improve my lot and would do so on a regular basis, deserved my trust. Since human beings were generally volatile, inconsistent and fragile, they could rather not be trusted. God, on the other hand, was strong, unchanging, and benevolent, and thus the only one to deserve people's trust under all circumstances.[13]

Warnings such as Zedler's were commonplace during pre-modern times. Trust and trustworthiness, although cherished as major virtues, seemed to be in scarce supply.

While human relations were thought to lack stability and consistency, the only safe haven of trust seemed to be with God. Those who placed their trust in him did not have to worry about the future – a future that was beyond their reach anyway. Dangers and existential threats loomed everywhere: famines, wars, epidemics, disease, earthquakes, floods. And since no one could do anything to prevent those threats and dangers, trust in God helped people to stay calm, composed and confident.[14]

That sounds like a piece of pragmatic advice considering the basic insecurities people faced in those times. Furthermore, it fits nicely in the mental map of medieval or early modern societies that were profoundly shaped by Christian faith and religion. During the eighteenth century, however, those maps began to change, and Zedler's article was already part of those changes. Although he devoted eleven out of fifteen pages to trust in God, he also mentioned, though disapprovingly, modern tendencies to "trust in other people's help". Zedler dismissed those tendencies as flaws and "weaknesses" attributing them to those in favour of modernizing trends. "*Erneuerte*" and "*Erneuerung*" were contemporary buzzwords used by reformist movements in education and theology.

Among Pietists and Methodists, everyday piety and common religious practices ranked very highly; as much as they praised brotherly unity among the members of their congregations, they valued loving trust as a shared bond. In a similar vein, pedagogues started to preach the gospel of trust as a vital part of teacher-student relations. Enlightenment thinkers like Christian Wolff confirmed that only those rulers who used their power in a well-ordered and benevolent way deserved their people's "good" and "joyful" trust, while others could merely claim obedience and submission.[15] In 1753, French *encyclopédistes* defined *confiance* approvingly as the "effect of the knowledge and good opinion that we have of the qualities of someone else regarding our attitudes, our needs, our goals, and more generally any given interest". *Confiance* then "consists in reposing this interest more perfectly on that other person than on ourselves".[16]

Trust thus entered the modern emotional lexicon as a positive feeling that was widely encouraged and enthusiastically promoted. New trust words appeared in everyday speech, as German dictionaries testified: people started to talk about *Vertrauensfragen* (trust issues), *Vertrauenslehrer* (teachers of trust), *Vertrauensärzte*

(doctors of trust), *Vertrauensämter* (positions of trust), *Vertrauensbeweise* (evidence of trust). At the same time, the opposite of trust – distrust or mistrust – was mentioned less and less frequently. This did not mean that it no longer existed. The old saying *Trau schau wem* (check before you trust, or rather: trust, but look closely if the trusted person deserves trust) did by no means lose currency. But it was pitched against a profoundly affirmative interpretation of trust that emphasized its advantages, opportunities and gains. It was clear that a trusting person was seen as an amiable person, as someone who was sought after for being generous, open, frank and sympathetic to her fellow-citizens. A distrustful person, by contrast, was someone you did not really want to be friends with.

Examining definitions and explanations of trust as they appeared in nineteenth- and twentieth-century lexicons and dictionaries, there is one major change: the reference to God, which had been so prominent in 1746, completely disappeared. While Luther or Zedler had declared God as the only reliable recipient of trust, later authors instead recommended trusting people. This was a decisive departure from older ways of thinking about trust. It also marks the beginning of a new regulative idea or principle, in Kantian terms. According to this idea, societies should be organized in such a way as to allow their members to trust each other. Trust, as sociologist Georg Simmel wrote around 1900, was the glue that made social integration possible; without trust, human interaction and cooperation was bound to fail, and societies would fall apart.[17]

But trust was not a natural occurrence; there were certain structures and conditions that enabled it, and others that rendered it highly improbable. Institutions like the middle-class family, with strong emotional bonds and long-term commitment seemed to be perfect breeding places of trust. This was discovered more than a century before Erikson wrote so positively about the mother-child dyad as the primordial trusting relationship establishing and nurturing a child's trust. Nineteenth-century advice manuals increasingly urged mothers to enable their children to build trust by behaving lovingly, consistently, and trustingly. Distrust would weaken a child morally, while trust would promote his very best faculties. Experiencing trust would strengthen the child's learning ability to trust others. As Friedrich Fröbel, an important educator and founder of the German Kindergarten, claimed in the early 1820s, those others

could be kin and family members, but ultimately extended to encompass all people (*Volk*) and the state.[18]

Next to family, friendship was deemed to be a sphere that promoted learning and practicing trustful relations. Since the late eighteenth century, the new cult of friendship had prepared contemporaries to consider friends as highly important for their own emotional well-being and stability. Friends, in contrast to family, were freely chosen; in addition, economic or financial considerations quickly receded from the relationship. Instead, friends were there to share intimate secrets and experience the perfect harmony of shared interests, tastes, and feelings. Friendship without trust was unthinkable, and there were rituals to confirm mutual trust and outlaw the breach of trust as the most detrimental act between friends.[19]

The coalition between friendship and trust was so strong because there was so much at stake: those who trusted a friend made themselves vulnerable and sensitive to fraud and betrayal. They offered their trust as a gift without demanding anything in return. They did, however, expect to be treated as trustworthy. Reciprocity was built into the institution of friendship, it was its cornerstone and entailed that the trust-giver was also a trust-receiver. Again, rituals and practices to consolidate mutual trust proved necessary.[20] Just because friendship was voluntary and unprotected by other institutions such as the family, law, or markets, it needed strong personal commitment and assurances. A famous example is the friendship between Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche (including Wagner's wife Cosima). For about a decade, the relationship was as close as it could be – Nietzsche later talked about "trust without bounds" (*Vertrauen ohne Grenzen*).[21] But limitless trust had its price: it demanded total commitment and loyalty and was constantly put to the test. Nietzsche eventually did not stand the test, he insisted on a certain measure of personal freedom, betrayed Wagner's trust and proved to be disloyal to master and mistress.

Trust, though, was not only to be found and worked on in mutual friendships. It was also relevant for members of larger social circles. Those circles became extremely popular during the nineteenth century, as associations such as masonic lodges, art and music societies as well as charitable organizations mushroomed, predominantly in urban middle-class milieus. We know by now how wide-ranging and multifunctional those associations were, serving as marriage and business platforms, as

incubators of political involvement and agenda-setting.[22] Their inclusionary power (which was accompanied by an equally strong exclusionary dimension) largely rested on forging trusting relations among their members and members' families. Trust nurtured through weekly gatherings and "active sociability" went far beyond family, kinship and close friends. Without doubt, it was not as intense and vulnerable as in personal friendships. At the same time, it was more than what traditional societies had to offer.[23]

This approach does not imply that trust was exclusively a modern-time phenomenon. Members of guilds, for example, had surely formed bonds of trust. But those guilds were only available to certain trades, and they had not been based on voluntary membership. Thus, relations had been much more formalized and regulated, and trust was never at the forefront as an affective attitude. A different case can be made for those associations that were formed on a voluntary basis, like the *Vertraute Gesellschaft* at Leipzig, founded in 1680. Here, merchants met for "friendly gatherings" and "confidential community" in order to share joyful moments, and collect money for the less fortunate. Such associations were rare and could by no means be compared to the dense network of societies and clubs that emerged during the nineteenth century.[24]

Talking about the degree of intensity inherent in trusting relations, we should mention another type of association that appeared in the early twentieth century: youth organizations that were marked by the strong emotional bonding among their members. A deep sense of mutual trust and shared emotions was what attracted adolescents, male and female, to the manifold groups and *Bünde*. A 19-year-old student who had joined a Catholic youth club talked about trust as the main bonding principle: "I firmly trust my comrades in my *Bund* (who are thus called *Bundesbrüder* [brothers, confederates]). I trust them because they loyally try to understand everything what I say and do, and judge me in honesty and fairness. I can completely confide in them, without a third person interfering. They also trust me. Our mutual trust is based on our common goal: to resemble Jesus Christ".[25]

What is clear from this first-hand account is that trust in the youth movement has a lot in common with trust in personal friendships: it entails personal acceptance and understanding, sharing of secrets and intimate thoughts, fears, doubts, and wishes. It is founded on

mutual honesty and fairness. Two elements distinguish this kind of trust from trust among close friends: first, it is based on a common belief and commitment (in this case, religious, but it might also be political); second, it integrates more than two people.

Trust as it was formed in the youth movement was thus emotionally strong and intense while at the same time extending to each and every member of the movement. This highly inclusive offer proved to be attractive to young people who joined those organizations in great and ever-increasing numbers. In 1922, the philosopher Herman Schmalenbach could thus describe the *Bund* as a new sociological category and "way of existence", based on emotional needs and experiences.[26] Two years later, his colleague Helmuth Plessner cast a more critical eye on the contemporary craze for community (*Gemeinschaft*). He warned about its radicalness and in-built totalitarianism, and he was sceptical about the emphasis on closeness, intimacy, and "boundless trust" among its members. He claimed that the latter gave up their sense of privacy, and were lost in the experience of a community that no longer allowed for distance, difference, and individuality. Plessner here explicitly referred to communist and fascist movements gaining momentum during the 1920s.[27]

But "boundless trust" as it characterized those community-building movements, was by no means infinite and without restraint. First, it was accompanied by deep mistrust of those who did not join, either through voluntary non-compliance or through formal exclusion. Second, trust among members was always precarious. Commitment to the common creed and cause was constantly questioned and put to the test. Treason and betrayal were fellow-travellers, especially in times of crisis or repression. He who posed as a trustworthy comrade could in fact be a spy or traitor. Communists, for example, acting under conditions of illegality and persecution, could not afford to be overly trusting. At the same time, they depended on networks of trust on which they could rely. The historian Jürgen Kuczynski, who had spent the 1930s and early 1940s working illegally for the Communist Party, wrote in retrospect: "Those years turned us into better comrades, into better fighters for progress – but they did not let us be amiable people. We became deeply distrustful in our daily lives, while at the same time putting all our confidence in the great path of humanity, in the future, in youth, in the victory of the good and the beautiful".[28]

The quote highlights the value and esteem that trust enjoyed among modern people. A trustworthy person was held to be "amiable", loveable. Kuczynski claims that the times did not allow him to be *liebenswert* and trusting. This is why he put all his faith in the bright future of socialism when people would finally be able to lead a secure life and build trusting relationships among each other and with their political leaders. The GDR (where Kuczynski lived as a prominent political figure) promised to offer those trustworthy relations and, as a mantra, repeatedly referred to the "indestructible trust" between party, state, and citizens. At the same time, the party preached "revolutionary vigilance" in order to "weed out" all enemies and "agents of imperialism".[29] The enormous growth of the Stasi apparatus especially during the 1970s, that is in a period of East-Western rapprochement and peaceful coexistence, cast severe doubt on the amount of trust that was expected and granted. And it confirms Hannah Arendt's observation that communist regimes, very much like fascist states, were based on universal suspiciousness and mistrust.[30] As recent studies show, trust here was largely confined to family and kin relations and absent in the wider social realm.[31]

Moral Economies of Trust

Those studies finally invite us to think more systemically about trust as a modern promise and predicament. Why was it that people placed so much trust in trust, that they extended trust to others who were not related to them through family and kinship ties? Under which conditions could and did trust become a major regulative idea of modern societies? And what does that tell us about the moral and emotional underpinnings of such societies?

I would like to introduce the term "moral economies" here since it allows us to link moral and emotional concerns to the structural set-up of a given society and its dynamic interactions. The term has been around since E.P. Thompson's 1971 article on the "Moral Economy of the English Crowd". Thompson, writing against the mainstream of "reductionist" economic history, tried to make a case for people's market behaviour following moral principles that were derived from other than economic logic. Those could be religiously motivated (something Thompson did not mention at all) or based on "a traditional view of social norms and obligations". In the case of the eighteenth-century food riots, those norms demanded policies of provision and market regulation rather than free markets and the protection

of private property. Crowds protesting against high food prices did so with recourse to an "old moral economy" and its "definite, and passionately held, notions of the common weal".[32]

Thompson, writing as a Marxist social historian and acknowledging the paramount importance of the economic sphere, focuses on the market-place as an arena of conflict, especially in times of crisis. During the nineteenth century, factories and mines would become sites of conflict over economic resources. In any case, moral economies, as he conceived them, were intimately connected to economic relations, that is, to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and commodities. But, as he conceded in 1991, the term could equally well be applied to other "areas of human exchange to which orthodox economics was once blind". And, as a brave act of self-criticism, he also encouraged historians to enquire "into what is 'the moral'" and come up with a historical definition that he himself had been reluctant to offer.

I cannot go into the depth of eighteenth-century moral philosophy here although I am sure (as was Thompson) that the term "moral economy" was either directly or indirectly coined in this very context.[33] I will, however, mention one of the usual suspects, Francis Hutcheson, who used "economy" in a way that suggests "human exchange" to be a much broader and much more complex notion than what classical economists have in mind. In his reflections on the Moral Sense and its underlying "passions and affections", Hutcheson attempted to discern "that just Balance and Oeconomy, which would constitute the most happy State of each Person, and promote the greatest Good in the whole".[34] Oeconomy here was not restricted to the handling of goods and commodities: it meant, above all, the orderly conduct of diverse and numerous "passions and inclinations" so as to render them compatible and consistent "with the publick Good". Hutcheson's emotional economy was thus both private and public, individual and collective. It comprised "publick Passions" such as compassion and honour, as well as private passions, such as self-love and avarice.

What happens if we add trust to those affections, passions and inclinations that had to be harmonized and brought into a "just Balance and Oeconomy"? In Hutcheson's terms, trust can be viewed as a private as well as a public passion; it serves private ends as much as it encourages "services to Offspring, Friends,

Communities, Countries". It builds short- and long-term relations, and it enables exchange and cooperation among people who would otherwise refrain from socializing and working on a common project. Such projects could be of a financial nature, such as trading goods or starting a joint venture business. They could as well be of a non-financial nature, such as founding a political party or running for parliament and mobilizing people's support. In all these (and many other) operations, trust is necessary. But it cannot be ordered and demanded. Trust is granted voluntarily, and can be withdrawn *al gusto*. It functions like a gift that is generously given.[35] But it also makes demands: it generally asks for reciprocity, and it is based on conditions: I trust you as long as you give me reason to trust you and behave in a way that is in my own best interest. As soon as I have reason to doubt this, I can retrieve my gift and put an end to our relationship. The notion of trust as gift is accompanied by feelings of joy and pride in the person who gains someone's trust. To be recognized and appreciated as trustworthy is deemed as enviable and beneficial, and is often rewarded with social advantages.

But again, trust comes with conditions. In modern terms, unconditional trust is a *contradictio in adiecto*.

Trust, considered as a bet on the future, has to be based on some former knowledge and experience. We might remember Christian Wolff here who linked trust in a ruler to the quality of his government. The more trust a ruler accumulates by reigning justly and benevolently, the more trust he or she receives in return. At the same time, trust as social capital depends on and feeds the moral economy of mutual exchange. A person who trusts another person engages in a relationship that produces ever more trust, on both sides. This is how citizens during the nineteenth century, and particularly in times of political upheaval, framed it when they approached the ruling monarchs in order to gain political rights for themselves. Under the motto "trust breeds trust" German citizens in the 1830s and 1840s sought to convince kings and magistrates to share political power and draft a liberal constitution. Authorities could only be trusted when they trusted the people and allowed them to participate in legislation and government functions. Once those rights had been granted, trust entered the relation between voters and parliamentary representatives. The latter perceived themselves as *Vertrauensmänner*, men of trust, but they had to earn that trust first and then work hard to maintain it in order to be re-elected.[36]

Gaining people's trust is generally accompanied by moral obligations. Those who receive trust do so because they are considered trustworthy. Trustworthiness here entails much more than being reliable, consistent, and calculable; it is not just about keeping promises and delivering what has been promised. It is about the offer itself that is supposed to be generous, potentially altruistic, and aimed at preserving the "security and well-being" of the trusting person.[37] Definitions of trust were usually associated with a moralistic overtone. An equally strong moral verdict was issued against those who betrayed somebody's trust. This was condemned as the "worst character flaw" and a clear sign of "infamy", since trust called upon the trusted to act with "deep moral commitment".[38]

Considering the high moral status of trust, we might wonder why modern societies put so much weight on trust, promoting it as an educational objective as well as an essential component of social, economic, and political relationships. I have two explanations to offer. First, modern societies are in a position to both produce and afford trust. Structurally speaking, they render the ordinary life of citizens far more secure and calculable, mainly by building and strengthening formal institutions that make predictable claims and offer reliable services. The professionalization of the legal system and the extension of state governance are cases in point. They allow citizens to be more confident about the future and take risks protected by legal provisions and sanctions. Equality before the law as well as inclusive institutions such as school, the military or the welfare system all greatly contribute to an overall confident attitude. The figure of a stranger who could and should not be trusted has lost its negative connotations; although it might, time and again, be evoked for political or religious reasons, it is not as ubiquitous and threatening as before. Broadly speaking, common institutions transform strangers into fellow-citizens who share basic similarities and follow common rules of conduct. This makes it easier to develop trust among citizens. General confidence in institutionalized principles and regulations thus enables trusting relations on a personal level and extending trust to people who are neither kin nor family. Although this might still be considered risky behaviour, the risk is calculated and no longer poses an existential threat. Furthermore, modern societies build institutions and nurture relationships that directly and

positively teach and preach trust. The family serves as an example, as well as schools and civil associations.

My second explanation draws on the morality of trust. It is noteworthy that modern societies put so much weight on morally approved values and emotions. This goes back to the beginnings of bourgeois emancipation and the project of civil progress and improvement. Directed both against aristocratic mores and the seemingly uncivilized lower classes, the educated middle-classes defined themselves as honest, sincere, and trustworthy. Criticizing the Old Regime as corrupt, dishonest and self-serving, the challenger claimed moral supremacy promising a better world – better not only in terms of economic or political efficacy, but also in terms of social fairness expressed by the major principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity (to quote the battle cries of the French Revolution). Trust is inextricably built into this world, both as its foundation and as its consequence. Trust is what keeps the modern world functioning in a smooth and harmonious manner, defending it against charges of social disintegration, anomy and cold rationality. Trust secures social cohesion and builds communities, without, however, infringing on people's freedom and voluntary choices. Since trust is supposed to be conditional and flexible, it offers the option of withdrawal and resetting the clock. This logic underlies parliamentary politics as much as it was, gradually, introduced into conflict-ridden industrial relations. Even headstrong factory owners who had long fought against labour unions and social democrats, came to appreciate workers' representatives and unions as trust-building institutions facilitating communication and allowing for problems to be solved at an early stage.

Trust was thus widely and thoroughly promoted as a major asset and result of modern moral economies – those of liberal-democratic societies that sought to distinguish themselves favourably from pre-modern and/or undemocratic societies. Interestingly, it became so popular and appealing a notion that it was even adopted by those regimes that proudly posed as self-proclaimed enemies of open societies. When the National Socialists assumed power, they quickly decided to rename work councils (*Betriebsräte*) that had been introduced in 1920, as councils of trust (*Vertrauensräte*).[39] At the same time, fascism, very much like communist parties and regimes, completely distorted the moral economy of trust. Although they hijacked the term in order to benefit from its good reputation, they stripped it of its basic meaning

and components: voluntariness, conditionality, and reciprocity. Citizens and workers no longer had a choice: they had to trust. But they were not trusted in return. By effectively reducing trust to pre-modern notions of unconditional fidelity (*Treue*), National Socialism thus negatively confirmed trust's genuine connection with modern notions of freedom and individual choice. It also confirmed how pervasive and attractive those semantics had become so that even totalitarian regimes were eager to adopt them while thoroughly subverting them.

Subversion did not stop in 1945 or 1989. What we can see today, during the last two or three decades, is a proliferation of trust talk and trust work under the reign of neoliberal politics. As early as 2002, the philosopher Onora O'Neill pointed to what she perceived as a growing culture of suspicion. Journalists and academics writing constantly about crises of trust in fact bred and caused mistrust, above all of public institutions.[40] O'Neill truly had a point, especially in a country like Britain where journalists are generally considered as not overly trustworthy themselves. But this is not the whole story. What we have been witnessing since the 1980s is an extraordinary surge of trust talk, particularly in business and in politics. Each and every conflict is being framed and presented as a crisis of trust. Banks especially find reasons to woo their clients' trust, and have come to evaluate it as a major economic asset. Trust Management Institutes are mushrooming, and so are trust surveys. On the political level, the Euro crisis has been framed as a crisis of trust between EU countries, and the NSA's spying on European stateswomen, politicians, and citizens has been compared with a breach of trust among close friends.

What do we make of this from a history of emotions perspective? First, we can observe a remarkable shift of meaning. Trust, as it was defined during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, has undergone profound semantic changes. Once restricted to close personal relations among family and friends, neighbours and colleagues, it has become attached to all kinds of remote transactions and services in economics and politics. Considering the ongoing moral underpinnings of trust as something utterly valuable and intrinsically positive, we can detect a subtle moralization of social, economic, and political relations among allegedly trustworthy partners. Still, the "thick" and emotionally "hot" interpersonal quality of trust is mostly absent from those "trusting" relations. They rather work on objectifiable expectations

of reliability and accountability. The social proliferation and delimitation of trust thus goes hand in hand with the emptying-out of content, or, to put it more precisely, with a shift from altruistic care and concern to calculable behaviour and strategic planning.[41]

Second, this shift poses questions as to how and why and under which circumstances it occurred. Who were and are the agents of change, and what has been on their agenda? Emotions, as was stated at the beginning, never come "naturally", nor does their change simply reflect or react to developments in other social domains. In the case of trust, we can see deliberate and intentional semantic politics at work. When, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, progressive reformers dethroned God as the sole bearer of trust and emphatically encouraged people to trust other people, they were promoting a new kind of society that valued horizontal relations rather than vertical and hierarchical ones. When citizens in the 1830s and 1840s turned trust upside down and presented themselves as both trusting and trustworthy, they challenged traditional political authority and demanded a share in politics.

So what is at stake when in contemporary society, banks and other businesses use the language of trust and aggressively market themselves as trustworthy instead of, say, reliable and accountable? Why do politicians who talk about domestic and international political relations use and usurp notions of personal friendship, trust included? The purpose seems obvious: they all want to buy into the moral economy of trust and benefit from its emotional zeal. Talking trust means acknowledging humanity and its basic needs, conveying a shared sense of vulnerability and mutual dependency, and promising fairness, generosity, and empathy. These are concepts and values that have come to play a vital role since the second half of the twentieth century, accompanying processes of global connectivity and interaction. They also have a role to play in the ongoing transformations that have been turning Western economies into ever-growing service industries. The not-so-new figure of the citizen-consumer is increasingly wooed by those industries, and the language of trust comes in handy: it promises transparency as well as control, and it evokes neo-liberal notions of accountability that seemingly aim at empowering those who hold others accountable.

There is a dilemma, though. Those who market trust as a convenient commodity run the risk of either, in the long run, depleting it of its moral and emotional

substance and leaving an empty shell. Or they raise expectations that they ultimately cannot meet since they are *de facto* interested in smooth political and business operations, not in "thick" personal relations. But, as John Maynard Keynes used to say, in the long run we are all dead. It will then be up to future historians of emotions to write the history of trust in the age of neo-liberalism.

References

[1] Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History – Lost and Found* (Budapest and New York, 2011), pp. 26-30; Jan Plamper, *Geschichte und Gefühl*, part 1 (Munich, 2012).

[2] Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past (1941)', in: Peter Burke (ed.), *A New Kind of History* (New York, 1973), pp. 12–26, quotes p. 26.

[3] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 400, 441.

[4] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Familles: parenté, maison, sexualité dans l'ancienne société* (Paris, 1976); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1971).

[5] Peter Gay, *The Bourgeois Experience. From Victoria to Freud*, 5 vols (New York, 1984-1998).

[6] Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, 'Emotionology. Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *The American Historical Review* 90, 4 (1985), pp. 813-836.

[7] Ute Frevert, 'Honour and/or as Passion: Historical Trajectories of Legal Defenses', *Rechtsgeschichte/Legal History* 22 (2014), pp. 1-11 (http://www.rg-rechtsgeschichte.de/rg22).

[8] Erik Erikson, *Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society* (1950), (2nd revised edn, New York, 1963), pp. 247-251.

[9] Guy Delmarcel, *Los Honores: Flemish Tapestries for the Emperor Charles V* (Antwerp, 2000); Petra Schulte, 'Die Ethik politischer Kommunikation im franko-burgundischen Spätmittelalter', in: Christoph Dartmann et al. (eds), *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz: Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 461-489.

[10] Niccoló Machiavelli, *Der Fürst* (Frankfurt a.M., 2001), p. 87f.; Michael Stolleis, 'Löwe und Fuchs. Eine politische Maxime im Frühabsolutismus', in: Ingo von Münch (ed.), *Staatsrecht – Völkerrecht – Europarecht* (Berlin, 1981), pp. 151-163.

[11] Dorothea Weltecke, 'Gab es "Vertrauen" im Mittelalter?' in: Ute Frevert (ed.), *Vertrauen. Historische Annäherungen* (Göttingen, 2003), pp. 67-89, esp. 81-88.

[12] Baltasar Gracián, *Handorakel und Kunst der Weltklugheit*, transl. Arthur Schopenhauer (Frankfurt a.M, 2008), p. 113.

[13] Johann Heinrich Zedler, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschafften und Künste*, vol. 48 (Leipzig, 1746), pp. 19-33.

[14] Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedancken von Gott, der Welt und der Seele des Menschen* (1720), (new edn, Halle 1752), p. 289; id., *Grundsätze des Natur- und Völkerrechts* (1754), (2nd edn, Halle, 1769), p. 107.

[15] Id., *Vernünfftige Gedancken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben der Menschen und insonderheit dem gemeinen Wesen* (1721), (6th edn, Frankfurt, 1747), p. 540.

[16] Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert, *Encyclopédie. Ou Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts Et Des Métiers*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1753), pp. 849f.: "CONFIANCE, s.f. (*Gramm.*) est un effet de la connoissance & de la bonne opinion que nous avons des qualités d'un être, relatives à nos vûes, à nos besoins, à nos desseins, & plus généralement à quelqu'intérêt marqué, qui consiste à nous en reposer sur lui quelquefois plus parfaitement que sur nous-mêmes, de ce qui concerne cet intérêt. Cette définition est générale, & peut s'appliquer à *confiance* prise au simple & au figuré, & considérée par rapport aux êtres intelligens & aux êtres corporels… CONFIDENCE, s. f. (*Gramm.*) est un effet de la bonne opinion que nous avons conçûe de la discrétion & des secours d'une personne, en conséquence de laquelle nous lui révélons des choses qu'il nous importe de laisser ignorer aux autres: d'où il s'ensuit que la *confidence* perd son caractere, & cesse plus ou moins à marquer de l'estime, à mesure qu'elle devient plus générale".

[17] Georg Simmel, *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (1908), (Frankfurt a.M., 1992), p. 393.

[18] Gunilla-Friederike Budde, 'Familienvertrauen – Selbstvertrauen – Gesellschaftsvertrauen. Pädagogische Ideale und Praxis im 19. Jahrhundert', in: Frevert, *Vertrauen*, pp. 152-184.

[19] Ute Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen: Eine Obsession der Moderne* (Munich, 2013), pp. 75-79; Wolfram Mauser, "'Ich lasse den Freund dir als Bürgen": Das Prinzip *Vertrauen* und die Freundschaftsdichtung des 18. Jahrhunderts', in: Ute Pott (ed.), *Das Jahrhundert der Freundschaft* (Göttingen, 2004), pp. 11-20.

[20] Klaus Manger and Ute Pott (eds), *Rituale der Freundschaft* (Heidelberg, 2007).

[21] Friedrich Nietzsche to Georg Brandes, 10 April 1888, in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke in drei Bänden*, vol. 3 (Munich, 1954), p. 1285; Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen*, pp. 79-81.

[22] Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Civil Society*, 1750-1914 (Basingstoke, 2006); id., *Politics of Sociability: Freemasonry and German Civil Society, 1840-1918* (Ann Arbor, 2007).

[23] Thomas Nipperdey, 'Verein als soziale Struktur in Deutschland im späten 18. und frühen 19. Jahrhundert', in: id., *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 174-205, esp. 185f.

[24] Herbert Helbig, *Die Vertrauten 1680-1980. Eine Vereinigung Leipziger Kaufleute* (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 11-16, quote p. 11.

[25] Marianne Englert, 'Das Vertrauen insbesondere seine Bedeutung für die Erziehung' (PhD Thesis Munich 1934), quote p. 63f.: "Fest vertraue ich auf meine Kameraden in meinem Bund (daher Bundesbrüder genannt), weil sie in

Treue alles verstehen oder zu verstehen suchen, was ich sage und tue, und ehrlich und gerecht ihr Urteil über mein Handeln fällen und es dadurch zu bessern suchen. Auch kann ich ihnen alles anvertrauen, ohne daß ein Dritter es erfährt. Weiterhin schenken auch sie mir Vertrauen. Begründet ist dieses gegenseitige Vertrauen darin, daß wir alle auf katholischer Grundlage uns zu möglichst guten Menschen zu machen suchen, d.h. daß wir alle ein Ziel, Christus, vor Augen haben."

[26] Herman Schmalenbach, 'Die soziologische Kategorie des Bundes', *Die Dioskuren* 1 (1922), pp. 35-105, quotes p. 79.

[27] Helmuth Plessner, *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft. Eine Kritik des sozialen Radikalismus* (1924), (2nd edn, Bonn 1972), p. 53 [*The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism* (Amherst, 1999)].

[28] Jürgen Kuczynski, *Memoiren. Die Erziehung des J.K. zum Kommunisten und Wissenschaftler* (Berlin and Weimar, 1973), p. 271. Interestingly, Kuczynski's sister Ruth Werner, herself a famous Communist spy, was much less self-critical in her autobiography: *Sonjas Rapport* (Berlin, 1977). For trust and betrayal in political movements, see Doris Danzer, *Zwischen Vertrauen und Verrat. Deutschsprachige kommunistische Intellektuelle und ihre sozialen Beziehungen (1918-1960)* (Göttingen, 2012); Daniel Brückenhaus, '"Every Stranger Must Be Suspected": Trust Relationships and the Surveillance of Anti-Colonialists in early Twentieth-Century Western Europe', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36 (2010), pp. 523-566.

[29] Matthias Judt (ed.), *DDR-Geschichte in Dokumenten. Beschlüsse, Berichte, interne Materialien und Alltagszeugnisse* (2nd edn, Berlin, 1998), p. 487 (quotes from Wilhelm Pieck in 1950).

[30] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 2004), pp. 555f.: "Mutual suspicion, therefore, permeates all social relationships in totalitarian countries and creates an all-pervasive atmosphere even outside the special purview of the secret police."

[31] Sarah Davies, '"Us Against Them": Social Identity in Soviet Russia, 1934-41', in: Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism* (London, 2000), pp. 47-70; see the special issue on 'Trust and Distrust in the USSR', *Slavonic & East European Review* 91 (2013), pp. 1-146.

[32] Edward P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past & Present* 50 (1971), pp. 76-136, quotes pp. 79, 132; id., 'The Moral Economy Reviewed', in: id., *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), pp. 259-351, following quotes pp. 344, 351.

[33] See, for example, the article on Moral Philosophy, or Morals, in: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1st edn, vol. 3, 1771, pp. 270-309. The author frequently mentions the "economy of powers and passions" or the "just oeconomy of our nature" (p. 274).

[34] Francis Hutcheson, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (1728), ed. Aaron Garrett (Indianapolis, 2002), p. 47.

[35] The German language makes this voluntariness and generosity of giving trust even more plain: *Vertrauen schenken*.

[36] Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen*, pp. 160-175.

[37] Zedler, *Universal-Lexicon*, vol. 48, p. 19.

[38] *Der Große Herder. Nachschlagewerk für Wissen und Leben*, 4th edn, vol. 12 (Freiburg, 1935), p. 283.

[39] Frevert, *Vertrauensfragen*, pp. 125-130.

[40] Onora O'Neill, *A Question of Trust* (Cambridge, 2002). See also Geoffrey Husking, *Trust: Money, Markets, and Society* (London, 2010), pp. 6-9.

[41] This is how economists mainly choose to define trust: as calculativeness that underlies and eases economic cooperation and transactions. As a critique of this view, see Oliver E. Williamson, 'Calculativeness, Trust and Economic Organization', *Journal of Law and Economics* 36 (1993), pp. 453-486.

German Historical Institute London
Annual Lectures

1979 Samuel Berrick Saul, *Industrialisation and De-Industrialisation? The Interaction of the German and British Economies before the First World War* (London, 1980)

1980 Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Gustav Stresemann: The Revision of Versailles and the Weimar Parliamentary System* (London, 1981)

1981 A.J.P. Taylor, *1939 Revisited* (London, 1982)

1982 Gordon A. Craig, *Germany and the West. The Ambivalent Relationship* (London, 1983)

1983 Wolfram Fischer, *Germany in the World Economy during the Nineteeth Century* (London, 1984)

1984 James Joll, *National Histories and National Historians: Some German and English Views of the Past* (London, 1985)

1985 Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Britain and Germany 1800 to 1914: Two Developmental Paths Towards Industrial Society* (London, 1986)

1986 Owen Chadwick, *Acton, Döllinger and History* (London, 1987)

1987 Hagen Schulze, *Is there a German History?* (London, 1988)

1988 Roger Morgan, *Britain and Germany since1945. Two Societies and Two Foreign Policies* (London, 1989)

1989 Thomas Nipperdey, *The Rise of the Arts in Modern Society* (London, 1990)

1990 *Not published*

1991 Lothar Gall, *Confronting Clio: Myth-Makers and Other Historians* (London, 1992)

1992 Keith Robbins, *Protestant Germany through British Eyes: A Complex Victorian Encounter* (London, 1993)

1993 Klaus Hildebrand, *Reich – Nation-State – Great Power. Reflections on German Foreign Policy 1871-1945* (London, 1994)

1994 Alan Bullock, *Personality and Power: the Strange Case of Hitler and Stalin* (London, 1995)

1995 Ernst Schulin, *'The Most Historical of All Peoples'. Nationalism and the New Construction of Jewish History in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (London, 1996)

1996 Michael Howard, *The Crisis of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1916-1917* (London, 1997)

1997 Johannes Fried, *The Veil of Memory: Anthropological Problems When Considering the Past* (London, 1998)

1998 David Blackbourn, *A Sense of Place. New Directions in German History* (London, 1999)

1999 Gerhard A. Ritter, *Continuity and Change. Political and Social Developments in Germany after 1945 and 1989/90* (London, 2000)

2000 Peter Pulzer, *Fog in Channel. Anglo-German Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2001)

2001 Heinrich August Winkler, *The Long Shadow of the Reich. Weighing Up German History* (London, 2002)

2002 *Not published*

2003 Werner Paravicini, *Fact and Fiction. St. Patrick's Purgatory and the European Chivalry in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 2004)

2004 Anthony J. Nicholls, *Always Good Neighbours – Never Good Friends? Anglo-German Relations 1949-2001* (London, 2005)

2005 Jürgen Osterhammel, *Europe, the "West" and the Civilizing Mission* (London, 2006)

2006 John Breuilly, *Nationalism, Power and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (London, 2007)

2007 Stig Förster, *The Battlefield: Towards a Modern History of War* (London, 2008)

2008 Janet L. Nelson, *Opposition to Charlemagne* (London, 2009)

2009 Hartmut Kaelble, *The 1970s in Europe: A Period of Disillusionment or Promise?* (London, 2010)

2010 *Not published*

2011 Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich's Britain* (London, 2012)

2012 Jane Caplan, *'Jetzt judenfrei'. Writing Tourism in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (London, 2013)