A DILEMMA FOR ENTITLEMENT THEORY

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1. Introduction

Entitlement theory promises a response to scepticism in the form of a species of warrant, distinct from the familiar conception of evidential justification, that one does not need to do any specific evidential work to earn or acquire. So long as we have no evidence to believe they are false, we may be entitled—warranted by default—to certain of our anti-sceptical commitments. But what exactly is an entitlement a warrant to *do*? According to one influential account, entitlements are warrants to place *trust* in the truth of certain propositions (Wright, 2004, 2012, 2014). Trust is here understood as a species of acceptance that "comes apart from belief in cases where one is warranted in [accepting] that p for reasons that do not bear on the likely truth of p" (2004, 177). Call an account of this kind *entitlement to trust* (henceforth, ET).

Here is a question that a defender of such an account needs to answer: what degree of confidence does this notion of trust licence? A natural answer to this question is that given that trust is contrasted with outright belief, and thus it is 'mere' trust, the degree of confidence is in some sense mere partial confidence. When I trust in a proposition on the basis of an entitlement, I adopt some positive degree of confidence but not so much as to be positively certain of it. Call this a *weak* account of ET. Alternatively, perhaps the degree of confidence licensed by an entitlement to trust is nothing short of outright certainty. Call any such account a *strong* account of ET. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that drawing this distinction presents the entitlement theorist with a dilemma. I will argue that strong accounts of entitlement are not warranted by the kinds of arguments typically offered in defence of the rationality of entitlement, while weak accounts lead to irrationality and contradiction. In sum, ET is either unmotivated or incoherent.

In section 2, I begin by laying out the sceptical problem to which entitlement theory is offered as a response. I then discuss the two main arguments offered in defence of the rationality of entitlement, before distinguishing more fully between weak and strong accounts. In section 3, I argue that strong accounts are not warranted by the kinds of arguments discussed in section 3. In section 4 I introduce a further distinction between two varieties of weak accounts, anaemic and moderate, and argue that neither variety is coherent.

2.1. Entitlement to Trust

The entitlement project begins with the reflection that evidential inquiry necessarily involves taking on board certain assumptions. In order to form a belief based on evidence, one is committed to taking it that certain epistemically-friendly conditions obtain. Such assumptions are not themselves the outputs of evidential inquiry but, rather, need to be in place first in order to then begin responding to evidence and forming justified beliefs. These propositions act as 'hinges' for inquiry in the sense that inquiry turns on them and depends on them holding steadfast.[1] To doubt such a proposition would call into doubt a whole range of other propositions for which it functions as a presupposition. A typical example of a hinge is the proposition, *there is an external world.* We are committed to hinges in the sense that they function as presuppositions of inquiry. For example, in order to carry out empirical investigation and base empirical beliefs on the evidence of my senses, I am committed to presupposing:

(R) *that my perceptual faculties are functioning reliably*

but in order for the practice of doing so to be in good order, I must be warranted in holding this presupposition. So, a warrant for R is required, prior to the acquisition of warrant for any propositions that are outputs of the kind of inquiry for which R functions as a presupposition: propositions such as *here are two hands, there is a cup on the table, it is raining outside,* and so on. The problematic thought is, where could such a warrant for R come from given that there is no way to investigate the truth of R that wouldn't already depend on presupposing it? In other words, if warrant for R is a prerequisite for all beliefs based on perception, then R cannot itself be warranted by means of perception. But it is hard to see how R could be warranted any other way. Thus, there seems to be no way to acquire a warrant either for R or for the more ordinary perceptual beliefs for which it functions as a presupposition.

The response to this problem on the part of the entitlement theorist is to account for how there can be warrant for hinge propositions that is not acquired in the way that evidential justification is acquired. Crispin Wright defends an account of entitlement according to which entitlement and justification are both species of epistemic warrant, but entitlement, unlike justification, doesn't require any specific evidential work to acquire. Entitlements are unearned in the sense that they

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[1] The hinge metaphor originates in Wittgenstein (1969).

are in place by default. If successful, this suggests a gap in the above sceptical argument. From the point that there is no way to *earn* a warrant for a hinge proposition, it need not follow that hinges are unwarranted, so long as we can make sense of this idea that such propositions can be warranted by default.

What is an entitlement a warrant to *do*? It doesn't simply follow from the possibility of a type of warrant that does not require evidence or other cognitive achievement that this would be a warrant to *believe* a proposition. A widely shared intuition is that belief is governed by some kind of evidential norm such that one ought only to believe propositions that are supported by one's evidence.[2] What is required, therefore, is a propositional attitude that is belief-like in some important sense, while lacking the strict evidential requirement of belief.[3]

Wright thinks that there are other attitudes, other *modes of acceptance*, that capture the idea that one can, in a variety of senses accept a proposition in the absence of evidence (2004, 176). One can accept that p in a number of different ways that do not involve evidential support. For example, one can take p for granted for the sake of reasoning or act on the assumption that p in deliberation. In acting on the assumption that p I act as I would if I believed that p without actually believing that p. He settles eventually on the notion of trust on the grounds that, like belief but unlike *taking for granted* or *acting on the assumption*, trust it is incompatible with open-mindedness about the truth of the proposition in question. Anything less than rational trust in the truth of one's hinge commitments will be "fully consistent" with agnosticism, which "seems impossible to square" with outright belief in the ordinary propositions which lie within the scope of those hinges (2004, 193). In rationally trusting that p one therefore adopts much the same kind of attitude towards p, taking p to be among those propositions that make up one's picture of the world. What distinguishes belief from trust, according to Wright, is the kind of epistemic support that each enjoys. Trust comes apart from belief "in cases where one is warranted in […] trusting that P for reasons that do not bear on the likely truth of P" - (2004, 177). Though identifiable by their *outputs*, belief and trust are thus distinguishable by their *inputs*, i.e. in the type of rational support they receive: while belief is evidentially warranted, trust is non-evidentially warranted. This raises the question of what

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[2] For an influential defence of this view see Feldman & Conee (1985).

[3] This particular strategy of appeal to a belief-like propositional attitude has been explored elsewhere. For example, see Pritchard's discussion of the *non-belief* reading of hinge propositions (2016, 90). Both Wright and Pritchard give accounts of a belief-like attitude for propositions such as *there is an external world*, and so on. But whereas Wright's notion of trust is distinguished from belief via the evidential connection, Pritchard cashes out his account in terms of a lack of responsiveness to "rational considerations" (*ibid*). Unlike Pritchard, Wright does not think that the attitude we take towards these propositions are unresponsive to rational considerations, merely that the rational considerations in questions are not of the *evidential* kind.

it could mean for a proposition to be non-evidentially warranted, to which we are going to turn to next.

2.2 Strategic entitlement

Wright defends a variety of rationalisations of entitlement but there are two which are explored in more detail than the rest. I will focus on those two for the purposes of this discussion.[4] Strategic entitlement is inspired by a Reichenbachian, game-theoretic defence of the rationality of our practice of relying on induction. Entitlement of cognitive project, on the other hand, is inspired by Wittgenstein's remarks on scepticism. I take each in turn.

One strategy that Wright offers for the rationality of entitlement is inspired by Hans Reichenbach's pragmatic vindication of induction. Reichenbach was responding to Hume's inductive scepticism: we rely on induction, though we have no way of knowing that induction is, in fact, reliable. Reichenbach's master thought was that perhaps the practice of relying on induction can be justified if it can be shown that it is a dominant strategy—in the (game-theoretic) sense that one strategy dominates the alternatives if, in pursuing it, one has nothing to lose and everything to gain. Consider four possible outcomes created by the following two variables: either we rely on induction or we don't, and either induction is reliable, or it is not.

	RELY ON INDUCTION	DON'T RELY ON INDUCTION
INDUCTION IS RELIABLE	MANY TRUE BELIEFS	FEW TRUE BELIEFS
INDUCTION IS NOT RELIABLE	FEW TRUE BELIEFS	FEW TRUE BELIEFS

Of the four possible outcomes, one is better and the other three are equally bad. This is what it means to say that we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by relying on induction. By relying, we open up the path to acquiring many true and useful beliefs. The only scenario that

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[4] For Wright's discussion of entitlement of rational deliberation and entitlements of substance see 2004 (pp 197-2003).

produces the desired outcome is the one in which we rely on induction and induction is reliable. In each of the three other cases, we have few true and useful beliefs; either because we rely on induction and form beliefs via inductive methods, but it turns out those beliefs are false, or we refrain from relying on induction and thus from no inductive beliefs at all. Induction is thus the dominant strategy in the sense that it can do no worse than the other strategies and can potentially do much better.

Wright's thought is that a similar argument could be given to account for the rationality of entitlement. Either one's perceptual faculties are generally reliable, or they are not. If they are, then trusting in their reliability opens up the path to acquiring perceptual evidence and justification. If they are not, then that path is closed no matter whether one trusts or not. So one has everything to gain from trusting in perception and nothing to lose. Thus, trusting is the dominant, and hence rational, strategy.

2.3 Entitlement of cognitive project

Entitlement of cognitive project amounts to roughly the following idea: there is no coherent concept of rationality that is free from presupposition and hence the sceptic's demand that we provide justification for all propositions we accept is an incoherent ideal which we need not live up to. This model of entitlement is inspired by Wittgenstein's notes on scepticism, posthumously published as *On Certainty*. Wittgenstein writes:

> "Whenever we test anything, we are already presupposing something that is not tested… One cannot make experiments if there are not some things that one does not doubt… If I make an experiment I do not doubt the existence of the apparatus before my eyes. … If I do a calculation I believe, without any doubts, that the figures on the paper aren't switching of their own accord, and I also trust my memory the whole time and trust it without reservation" – (*OC*, 163)

The point is that this practice of presupposing in the obtaining of certain epistemically-friendly conditions is unavoidable. One cannot help but take certain things for granted. If this is true, then the sting is removed from any sceptical argument that demands we engage in a practice of inquiry free of presupposition: "If there is no such thing as a process of warrant acquisition", writes Wright, "for each of whose specific presuppositions warrant has already been earned, it should

not be reckoned to be part of the concept of an acquired warrant that it somehow aspire to this—incoherent—ideal" (2004, 190). It merely seems as though it is some failure on our part to take on board certain implicit assumptions when engaging in inquiry, but this is no failure at all if doing so is a necessary feature of the concept of rationality. Just as the mathematician cannot carry out her proof without first accepting a set of axioms that are themselves not part of the proof, we cannot carry out our investigations without first accepting a set of assumptions about our cognitive abilities and the reliability of our perceptual faculties that are themselves not the outputs of those abilities or faculties.

2.3 A Question of Confidence

Recall the question from the introduction: what is the correct degree of confidence to place in a proposition on the basis of an entitlement to trust? Plausibly, trust admits of degrees in a similar way to belief. Just as it seems quite natural to say that one believes p 'more', 'less', 'partially' or 'fully', it seems also quite natural to say that one trusts in p 'more', 'less', 'partially' or 'fully'. Moreover, since the claim is that trust and belief are both modes of acceptance which share in common their outputs, and that degrees of confidence are part of those outputs, it seems reasonable to say that to either believe that p or to trust that p is to invest some degree of confidence in p.

We can distinguish between two types of answer to the question of which is the correct degree of rational confidence to place in a proposition on the basis of an entitlement. An entitlement is either a warrant to be fully confident—i.e. certain—or it is a warrant to be less than fully confident. This distinction is exhaustive. Either an account licences certainty or it does not. Call any account that licences nothing short of certainty a *strong* account of ET. Alternatively, call any account of ET a *weak* account so long as it recommends a less-than-certain degree of confidence. In terms of credences, *strong* accounts licence credence 1, while *weak* accounts licence some degree between .5 and 1. We have the following two options available:

(STRONG) an entitlement to trust is a warrant to be fully confident in a proposition

(WEAK) an entitlement to trust is a warrant to be partially confident

The dilemma for trust-based accounts of entitlement is thus that the entitlement theorist must specify whether they have in mind a weak or a strong account of ET, but, as we shall see, both

options face seemingly insurmountable problems. The problem for *strong* accounts will be relatively easier to appreciate, so we shall deal with this first before moving onto *weak* accounts.

3. A Problem for *Strong* Accounts

Recall the two main arguments offered in defence of entitlement theory, the *strategic* and *cognitive* project models. It is important to stress that these are not in any way *truth conducive*. Speaking of the former, Wright says that "What the Reichenbachian thought provides us with is one relatively clear paradigm of how such a commitment can be rational for reasons which do not impinge on the likelihood of the truth of the assumption in question" (2004, 182). Let us grant for the sake of argument that this strategy is successful such that it validates a positive attitude of trusting acceptance in the truth of certain propositions. Can it be that this strategy rationalises a *strong* notion of entitlement rather than a *weak* one? It should be clear that it cannot. The simple reason why is that, while it is surely *difficult* to see how to combine the acknowledgement that one has no reasons that indicate the likely truth of a proposition with any positive (i.e., above .5) degree of confidence, it is strictly *impossible* to see how to combine it with an attitude of certainty. Trying to do so leads us to contradiction. Here is the argument. Assume that the degree of confidence that I am entitled to take towards p is 1. Since the argument that rationalises this confidence is no indication of the likely truth of p, I am committed acknowledging that ~p is an epistemic possibility. If ~p is an epistemic possibility, then the degree of confidence that I am warranted in having towards ~p cannot be 0. Furthermore, coherence demands that my degrees of confidence in a proposition and its negation sum to 1. Thus, if my degree of confidence in ~p is higher than 0, then my degree of confidence in p must be lower than 1. But this contradicts the assumption from the start that my degree of confidence in p is 1. This is why strong accounts of entitlement cannot be warranted on the basis of any kind of argument that leaves open the question of whether the proposition in question is in fact true. Wright's two strategies fail to rationalise a notion of trust that entails credence 1. But perhaps some weaker version of entitlement theory can make do with more moderate degrees of confidence.

4.1 Problems for *Weak* Accounts

A weak account is any account that licences degrees of confidence less than 1. However, I want to draw a further distinction between two kinds of weak account. One kind of weak account relates to degrees of confidence that are very high but just short of 1, while another kind relates to relatively lower (but still above .5) degrees of confidence. Call the former moderate and the latter

anaemic.[5] Both accounts face serious problems. We shall begin with anaemic because, as we shall see, it is a more natural way to understand this notion of 'mere' trust as opposed to belief.

4.2 Problems for Anaemic Accounts

As noted earlier, a natural answer to the confidence question is that entitlements warrant mere partial degrees of confidence. Where I am entitled to trust that p, I am entitled to be more confident of p than I would if I were merely agnostic, but not so confident as to count as believing p, and certainly nowhere near being certain of p. This answer fits neatly with speaking about this species of warrant as "mere" entitlement (Wright, 2004, 208). It would be great if we could have evidential justification to *believe* that there is an external world and so on, but in the absence of such evidence, perhaps an entitlement to merely trust—in this weak sense—in the existence of the external world will suffice. This way of thinking suggests that we should look to *anaemic* accounts of entitlement for our anti-sceptical strategy.

I will now provide two problems for *anaemic* accounts of entitlement. It will be clear that both problems are very much in the same spirit as one another but pertain to two different types of hinge proposition. The first problem concerns some probabilistic constraints across deductively valid arguments, while the second concerns an epistemological principle that constrains degrees of confidence that rational subjects are warranted in placing in the output of epistemic methods or faculties.

4.2.1. The probabilistic argument.

The first problem for anaemic accounts concerns the set of hinges for which it is the case that there is an entailment from the ordinary proposition p to the hinge proposition q.[6] Given such an entailment relation, considerations from probability theory will force a restriction on the rational confidence an agent may place in the ordinary proposition given a restricted degree of confidence in the hinge.

Consider the following consequence of the probability axioms:

If p$\rightarrow$q then $P(p) \leq P(q)$

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[5] Martin Smith introduces the terminology of weak and moderate accounts of entitlement, although the distinction he makes is not the same one I make here (Smith, forthcoming).

[6] See section 3.3. for a case in which there is no entailment from the ordinary proposition to the hinge proposition q.

Where p entails q, the probability of p cannot be higher than that of q. This is a principle about objective probability. However, notice that, on assumption that a rational agent's credences will satisfy the laws of probability,[7] we can derive the following related principle:

> (CR) where p implies q, the credence that it is rational to assign to q must be a least as high as the credence that it is rational to assign to p[8]

Taking this principle about credences as our starting point, we are now able to construct a puzzle. First assume that p implies q and that q is a hinge proposition for p.

1. Where p implies q, the degree of confidence that it is rational to assign to q is at least as high as the degree of confidence that it is rational to assign to p   (CR)
2. I am warranted in having a high degree of confidence in p   (assumption)
3. I am warranted in having (at most) a low degree of confidence in q   (anaemic ET)
4. I am warranted in having a high degree of confidence in q   (1,2)
⊥   (3,4)

The assumption at step 2 is one that all (non-sceptical) epistemologists ought to grant. Call this the *optimistic assumption*. However, when we combine the *optimistic assumption* with the CR principle, we get the thought that I must be warranted in having a high degree of confidence in q. This is in direct contradiction with premise 3, which is the statement of anaemic ET. Thus, we have our contradiction. The anaemic reading of ET when applied to the kinds of cases where there is an entailment from the quotidian proposition to the entitled hinge proposition is incoherent.

4.2.2. The epistemological argument

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[7] This assumption is known as probabilism. For a discussion of *probabilism* and related principles, see Pettigrew (2016).

[8] This principle is what Richard Pettigrew calls "No Drop", which, loosely stated, says that "rationality requires that an agent's credences not drop over a logical entailment" (2016, 2). More formally, *No Drop* says that "If an agent has opinion set {A, B} and A entails B, then rationality requires that c(A) ≤ c(B)" (*ibid*). While some readers may object to the idea of capturing our epistemic practices using the axioms of probability, I presume that such readers will still appreciate there is a sense in which it is irrational to be more confident of the antecedent of a conditional than of its consequent (assuming that one grasps the entailment).

This argument is related to the previous but is, in a sense, more general. The trouble highlighted in the previous case will arise for all hinges that are deductively entailed by the propositions for which they function as hinges. This is true of many hinges. For example, the proposition that my friend was upset yesterday deductively entails *that there is an external world, that there are other minds,* and *that the world has a past* (*extending at least as far as yesterday*). However, it is not the case that for any ordinary proposition p, all propositions that function as hinges for p are deductively entailed by it. Consider, for example, the following pair:

> (p) there is a laptop on the table in front of me
> (q) my perceptual faculties are functioning reliably

In this case there is no entailment from p to q. It is perfectly compatible with the truth of p that I am right now the victim of a sustained hallucination or trapped in some brain-in-a-vat-type scenario such that my perceptual faculties are wholly unreliable. Thus, the argument from the previous section will get no purchase here. There is, however, a fairly plausible epistemological principle that will give us more or less the same result. Suppose that one wants to carry out an investigation. There is a method and an output or answer that the method will produce. Very plausibly, the confidence that one places in the reliability of a method places an upper bound on the confidence that one may rationally place in the output of that method. Call this the *upper-bound principle*:

> (UBP) a rational subject S cannot be more confident in the output of an epistemic faculty or method M than S is in the reliability of M

UBP is eminently plausible. If one wanted to test the temperature of a liquid and the only method one had of doing that was to use a thermometer, it would be irrational to be less than fully confident in the reliability of the thermometer as an instrument for detecting temperatures of liquids than in the reading one got from it. Likewise, it would be irrational to be less confident in the reliability of one's perceptual faculties than in any belief formed via those faculties. Note, however, that UBP will apply only to cases in which subjects have some degree of confidence in the reliability of a method or faculty—the issue is one of incompatible combinations of degrees of confidence, so insofar as one has no degree of confidence in the reliability of a method or faculty, there can be no incompatibility.

We are now able to appreciate another puzzle generated by UBP together with ET and the *optimistic assumption*.

1*.	One cannot be more confident in p than in q	(UBP)
2*.	I am warranted in having high confidence in p	(optimistic assumption)
3*.	I am warranted in having (at most) low confidence in q	(anaemic ET)
4*.	I am warranted in having high confidence in q	(1,2)
⊥		(3,4)

The *optimistic assumption* and UBP jointly entail that I am warranted in having a high degree of confidence in q. But, as before, this is in direct contradiction to the anaemic reading of ET. Insofar as we find UBP and the *optimistic assumption* plausible, the puzzle can only be solved by rejecting the anaemic reading.

The lesson from this puzzle is that an entitlement needs to be a warrant for being at least as confident in the presuppositions of a particular project or method of inquiry as in the outputs of that method. If we want to allow that subjects can be warranted in placing high degrees of confidence in propositions concerning the presence of objects in one's immediate visual field, then the entitlement theorist needs to account for how we can be equally confident of the reliability of one's perceptual faculties delivering the visual information about such objects.

What these two problems show is that an entitlement theory that is weak in the *anaemic* sense outlined above will not be sustainable. More accurately, it will not be sustainable as long as it is intended to fit with high degrees of confidence in ordinary everyday propositions. One way for the entitlement theorist to respond to these worries might be to argue that the degree of confidence that is licensed by entitlement theory is in fact very high. Not so high as to count as certainty, but near enough. If we are entitled to very high—albeit non-maximal—degrees of confidence in hinge propositions, then we can sometimes also be justified to hold equally high degrees of confidence in ordinary propositions. And maybe this is enough to be getting on with. It would be nice if we could be certain some of the time but if the upshot of philosophical investigation is that certainty is always beyond our grasp, then this need not be such a damaging realization if we can still be very highly confident at least some of the time. However, as we shall now see, even this 'moderate' version of ET will be unstable also.

4.3. Problems for the Moderate Account

The moderate account says that an entitlement to trust is a warrant to be very highly confident of hinge propositions, though it stops short of warranting certainty. Dialectically speaking, this account looks like a promising move for the entitlement theorist, in that it sidesteps the problems identified for both the anaemic and strong accounts considered above. So long as we can be content with capping our degrees of confidence in propositions at a high but less-than-full degree, we will not be forced into condoning the kind of irrational doxastic attitudes that caused problems for anaemic accounts. Granted, this means that certainty with respect to both hinges and ordinary propositions is forever out of reach. But perhaps this is not too huge a price to pay given the threat of scepticism.[9] Likewise, this view will not suffer from the kinds of challenges faced by strong accounts of entitlement. The inherent conflict between outright certainty in hinge propositions and the admission that it is epistemically possible that one is in error with respect to such propositions, goes away once we give up on outright certainty. There is clearly nothing incoherent in affirming that one is almost certain that p is true and yet that ~p is an epistemic possibility. This moderately more robust theory of entitlement therefore looks more promising than both the anaemic and strong accounts.

It is clear, however, that this position is in fact utterly unstable. To appreciate why, first notice that for any one proposition that enjoys evidential support, there will not be merely one hinge proposition in place but rather arbitrarily many. And the crucial point is that small degrees of doubt about individual hinges will lead, when those hinges are conjoined together, to high degrees of doubt about their conjunction. Consider again the 'ordinary' proposition *there is a laptop on the table in front of me.* In discussing this proposition earlier on we took the example of *my perceptual faculties are functioning reliably* as a respective hinge assumption. But it is easy to see how to inflate the relevant set of hinges. Not only does one need entitlement for this hinge assumption and for the other usual suspects—*I am not a brain in a vat; I am not dreaming; I am not in a matrix-style scenario; there is an external world to which I have perceptual access*—but one would need warrant to discount each possible sceptical scenario, and the set of all possible sceptical scenarios is going to be arbitrarily large, given that there seems to be no principled limit to the number of distinct sceptical scenarios that one could be in at any one time. This argument assumes that distinct sceptical scenarios represent distinct possible worlds that one could be in at any one time which would entail that one has the

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[9] The price will be much higher for one who is already committed to some forms of infallibilism which say that if one knows that p then one is certain that p. On the assumption that we are committed to infallibilism about knowledge, all versions of ET will have the consequence that knowledge—of hinges an of ordinary propositions—is impossible.

same subjective experience that one currently has. So, in one sceptical scenario I have been envatted and tricked into believing that I am having the experience that I currently take myself to be having for the purposes of a late-night television show, while another scenario differs from this only in that I have been envatted for the purposes of a university laboratory experiment. If this characterisation is correct, then it is easy to appreciate how a set of possible sceptical scenarios can be made arbitrarily large.

One might object that these scenarios are not really distinct qua *sceptical* scenario, insisting that the differences between the two are superficial and do not really pertain to what is pertinent to them as hypotheses about the causal origin of my experience. This objection would insist that two sceptical scenarios that are purportedly distinguishable by arbitrary non-essential features are not really distinct scenarios. While I have some sympathy for this line, I find it very difficult to see on what principled grounds one could distinguish between superficial and pertinent details of scenarios. In the absence of such a principled distinction, I will take each possible world compatible with a subject's subjective experience to be one sceptical hypothesis. Thus, the set of sceptical hypotheses for an agent at any given time is immensely large.

With respect to a given ordinary proposition and its evidential basis, let C^1 be a hinge proposition, C^2 another, C^3 another, and so on. The set of all possible hinges is then $(\forall C)$: $C^1 + C^2 + C^3 \ldots C^n$. Suppose that we can indeed make 'n' arbitrarily high. And suppose furthermore that, as the *moderate* account specifies, the degree of confidence that we are entitled to have towards any given hinges is less than 1, meaning that there is necessarily always a degree of doubt about the truth of a hinge that an entitlement to trust cannot overcome. However small this residual degree of doubt is, when it is multiplied by a sufficiently large *n*, it will become large enough to cause one to be highly unconfident of $\forall C$. Provided that the rational degree of confidence that one is warranted in having towards hinges is less than 1, the rational degree of confidence that one is warranted in having towards a sufficiently large set of hinges will be very low. If the set is large enough, the degree of confidence that one has towards the proposition that at least one of the hinge propositions is false will be close to 0. Thus, the moderate account, although on first glance looked like a promising alternative to the discredited 'strong' and 'anaemic' accounts, is ultimately incoherent.

5. Rejecting the Credence Game

So far I have shown that once we allow for rational trust to be cashed out in terms of credences, we run into trouble when trying to answer the question of precisely what credence we are rationally

permitted to take on the basis of an entitlement. A possible way to avoid the foregoing problems is therefore to reject this whole idea that trust admits of degrees. In section 2 I argued that trust admits of degrees on the basis that belief admits of degrees and that belief and trust are identical in all but 'input', i.e. the type of rational support they receive. But this argument will fail if this difference in input could conceivably give rise to a difference in whether these modes of acceptance are gradable. Here is how such an objection might run. The rationality of your attitude to hinges is not a function of your evidence. But the rationality of your credal attitudes *is* a function of your evidence. Ergo, your attitudes towards hinges should not be understood as credal attitudes.[10] The motivation for the first premise is Wright's general account of non-evidential entitlement and the hinge epistemology outlook more generally. The motivation for the second premise is as follows. Consider a set of hinge propositions such as (EW) *there is an external world*, (IN) *induction is reliable*, and (PR) *perception is generally reliable*. Entitlement theory predicts that we trust each of these equally. Moreover, if we consider their negations, ~EW, ~IN, ~PR, it seems like we deny these equally also. So, we do not have any basis for thinking that our attitudes towards these propositions admits of degrees. Contrast this to ordinary, empirical propositions such as (CO) *there are cars outside*, (RO) *it is raining outside*, or (SO) *the corner store is currently open*. These look like the kinds of propositions that are a straightforward matter of belief or credence. We can be certain that CO is true, fairly confident that RO is true, and not very confident that SO is true. In each case, where our attitude is a matter of credence, what credence we should adopt is a matter of our evidence, and thus credal states are inextricably linked to evidence.

By way of response to this kind of argument, the first thing to note is that strictly speaking all that we can really rule out about propositions such as EW, IN and PR is a variation in our rational confidences in them. But we cannot infer from the intuition that we trust in each equally, that such trust is not to be measured in degrees of confidence. Granted, with respect to credences of the everyday kind, it is easy to see how credences are fixed by evidential probability, and thus in the absence of evidence it is very hard to see how to rationally assign credences. This is a difficult problem, but it is not clear that it can be solved by simply stipulating a form of trust that does not involve any degree of confidence whatsoever. After all, it is compatible with the admission that credences are ordinarily a function of evidence that there is a given credence that we are rationally committed to take towards hinge propositions that is not a function of our evidence but that is axiomatic of rationality in the way suggested by the entitlement theorist, the above dilemma notwithstanding. Although this involves revising our orthodox conception of how credences

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[10] I would like to thank an anonymous referee for raising this objection.

function, it is arguably not less revisionary than the general thesis of entitlement theory which says there can be epistemic warrant that is non-evidential.

A second thing to say in response to the above argument is to grant the point that (the relevant notion of) trust is *not* gradable and see where it takes us. Suppose that where we are rationally committed to trusting that p on the basis of an entitlement, this is not to be understood in terms of investing any degree of confidence in p. The problem this then raises is analogous to the problems raised for weak accounts of entitlement earlier on in section 4, namely what is the correct rational response to the recognition that a hinge proposition q follows deductively from an empirical proposition in which one places a high degree of confidence. Rationality demands that where one is *a priori* certain that *p entails q*, one must be at least as highly confident that q is true as one is that p is true. For all that the entitlement theorist has offered by way of an appeal to trust as a mode of acceptance that is not a function of evidence, we are yet to hear anything which would suggest inferences involving entailments to hinge propositions are exempt from these kinds of constraints on rationality.

6. Conclusion

This paper began with a question for the entitlement theorist, concerning the warranted degree of confidence licenced by entitlement theory. We noted that either an account licences certainty or it does not. We have seen that accounts that seek to construe entitlement as warranting certainty are not at all supported by the two main arguments offered in defence of entitlement theory. Furthermore, we have seen that accounts that licence less than certainty lead, in various ways, to trouble. In order to demonstrate this, we have drawn a further distinction between two kinds of less-than-certainty accounts: anaemic and moderate. Anaemic accounts face the problem that, when combined with high degrees of confidence in ordinary propositions, they lead to irrational doxastic attitudes. Yet moderate accounts face the problem that even the smallest degrees of doubt about many hinge propositions multiply together leading to extremely low degrees of confidence in the complete set of hinges. No account of entitlement, be it weak or strong, is both coherent and well supported by the kinds of arguments entitlement theorists appeal to.

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