

# A Paper On Recalcitrant Emotions<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Recalcitrant emotions conflict with our considered judgements. Faced with the rollercoaster deemed entirely safe, one might fear it nevertheless. After a vivid dream, one might feel angry with her partner and yet judge that her partner did nothing wrong.<sup>2</sup> Such pairs create a normative conflict – one *shouldn't* both be afraid and judge that there is nothing dangerous, one *shouldn't* be angry with her partner while judging that she did nothing wrong. But capturing such normative facts has proven very difficult and the various failures to capture them has guided much of the recent theorising about the emotions. Cognitivism, for all its virtues, is believed to have been completely undermined by recalcitrant emotions and the Perceptual theories that looked to take its place fell not long after. Much of the nuance and in-fighting one finds in more recent Neo-Cognitivist theorising revolves around making sense of the normativity of the emotions and one gets the sense that the theorist who can account for cases of recalcitrance will have thereby taken an important theoretical lead. The present essay offers a new approach to recalcitrant emotions, an approach that can be accepted by a great deal of theorists. It is correct that some views fall prey to the challenges posed by recalcitrant emotions and we will see why that is, but one interesting upshot of the view to be offered is that it provides a simple way of accounting for the phenomena that has room for wide adoption. If correct, although recalcitrant emotions are an interesting phenomenon in their own right, their dialectical import is less than many theorists may have thought.

## The Fallen

Cognitivism was the first to fall.<sup>3</sup> According to Cognitivists, at least part of what it is to be in an emotional state is to be in a state of belief or to make a judgement. For example, to fear the dog is (at least in part) to judge that it is dangerous. This view and nearby variants all face trouble when we consider a case of fearing the dog while judging or believing that it is not dangerous. In such a case, it looks as if the person in question is predicted to both judge the dog to be dangerous and judge the dog to be not dangerous. While not a cognitive impossibility, the attribution of such a pair of judgements has struck theorists, for various reasons, as an implausible description of the person in question. By indicting our subject of making contradictory judgements, we either impute the wrong kind of normative failure,<sup>4</sup> deem our subject incoherent,<sup>5</sup> or land ourselves in an outright contradiction.<sup>6</sup> For most theorists, there is more than reason enough to depart from Cognitivism.

But Cognitivism is elegant and powerful. Cognitivism posits a propositional content for the emotions and reduces the emotions to the familiar category of judgement. One can hence (i) make sense of the intentionality of the emotions in terms of the intentionality of judgements and can (ii) make sense of the normative “fittingness” of the emotions in terms of the truth or falsity of their contents. This provides reason to salvage what we can and Perceptualists about the emotions quickly saw that the problems posed by recalcitrant emotions can be avoided if one reduces emotions not to belief or judgement but rather to perception. After all, there is nothing normatively worrisome about perceiving things to be a way that differs from the way one judges them to be. Although one quickly falls into attributions of incoherence or even outright contradiction if one

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<sup>1</sup> Title suppressed for blind review purposes. Stop googling things you are refereeing!

<sup>2</sup> The often cited preliminary account comes from D'Arms and Jacobson (2003) who hold that a recalcitrant emotion is one that persists 'despite the agent's making a judgement that is in tension with it... A recalcitrant bout of fear, for example, is one where the agent is afraid of something despite believing that it poses little or no danger' (129).

<sup>3</sup> See, for example Solomon (1976), Neu (2000), and Nussbaum (2001).

<sup>4</sup> Brady (2009), Greenspan (1981), Roberts (1988)

<sup>5</sup> Helm (2015, forthcoming)

<sup>6</sup> Grzankowski (2016)

widely attributes to subjects the judgement that the pencil is straight and the judgement that the pencil is not straight, there is no such incoherence or contradiction in *perceiving* the pencil to be not straight while judging that, despite appearances, it is straight.

But recalcitrant emotions are left far from toothless and the perceptual theory, at least in its most basic form, has fallen as well. When one judges that the dog is harmless and yet fears it, one is doing something one *ought not* do. One shouldn't be afraid of that which is deemed harmless. A consistent person owes a change. Cases of recalcitrance give rise to a normative tension that calls out for resolution and a good theory should not dissolve this data point. But Perceptualists seem to do exactly that. They are correct, there need be nothing wrong with perceiving things to be one way while judging them to be otherwise, but something is *supposed to be* wrong in cases of recalcitrance. So, Perceptualism falls but one step ahead of Cognitivism.<sup>7</sup>

The failures of Cognitivism and Perceptualism provide guidance, and Neo-Cognitivism of a more nuanced form seeks to follow it.<sup>8</sup> One must not understand emotions in such a way as to land in incoherence or contradiction but one must also hold onto the normative pressure that is plainly present. Theorists about the emotions must find “conflict without contradiction”<sup>9</sup> and this looks to be no easy task. In what follows, I offer a new way of navigating this difficult landscape. For the time being our discussion will centre around representationalist theories of the emotions, but later we will see that one needn't adopt a representationalist theory to capture the phenomena.

### What's Recalcitrance Got To Do With It

A clarification is in order before proceeding. Although “recalcitrant” emotions make for compelling cases, it is worth highlighting that the problem with which we are centrally concerned doesn't turn on recalcitrance as such. The problem is even more widespread.

Recalcitrant emotions are so-called because, despite our efforts, they simply won't go away. Suppose one dreams that his partner has been nasty and in a foul mood and finds that he feels angry with his partner in the morning. He sees that his anger *ought* to go away. But sometimes, even in the face of incoming information (in this case, the information that it was all a dream), an emotion doesn't seem to dissipate. The recalcitrance as such is a problem for Cognitivism. If Cognitivists were right that our emotions are judgements or beliefs, we should expect cases of recalcitrance to be relatively rare. When new information comes in, we easily make new judgements and update our beliefs. Granted, this isn't always the case as with deeply held beliefs that are tied up with our identities or other deep commitments, but, typically, our beliefs and judgements are sensitive to new information. (I doubt many of us have tied up with our identities or deep in our commitments views about, for example, the safety of a glass bridge over a rocky canyon.) So, the fact that cases of recalcitrance are common and perhaps even frequent places yet another point of pressure on Cognitivism (that is, a point in addition to worries about incoherence or contradiction noted above). But it should be pointed out that once we turn to the problem facing Perceptualists and Neo-Cognitivists, it becomes clear that recalcitrance as such is inessential.

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<sup>7</sup> This challenge is brought out especially powerfully by Brady (2009) and Helm (2001, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Perceptual theories of the emotions are sometimes classified as Neo-Cognitivist. I don't have any serious issue with this labelling but given dialectical purposes, it will be helpful to keep track of the difference between Perceptual theorists who identify emotions with perceptions and those, who I will call Neo-Cognitivists, who wish to find a middle view between classical Cognitivism/Judgementalism and Perceptualism (perhaps by drawing analogies with perception). It's not always easy to place theorists into these compartments but it seems fair to me to hold that the following are Neo-Cognitivists: Brady (2007, 2009), Deonna (2006), Deonna and Teroni (2015), Goldie (2000), Greenspan (1988), Helm (2001), and Roberts (1988, 2003). Theorists such as Döring (2009), Tappolet (2012), and Tye (2008) inhabit the Perceptualist camp and I would include here also those who hold Neo-Jamesian accounts according to which emotions are perceptions of bodily changes such as Damasio (1994) and Prinz (2004). Part of my hope in the present paper is to provide a way of thinking about the challenge posed by recalcitrant emotions that many theorists can utilise. As we will see below, there is a good reason that identifying emotions with perceptions will land one in trouble.

<sup>9</sup> The phrase seems to originate in Döring (2008) though the challenge can also be found in Helm (2001). Helm (forthcoming) characterises the challenge as one of accounting for ‘irrationality without incoherence’. See also Benbaji (2013).

Suppose that one turns a corner and see a large, brightly coloured snake slithering by. One feels immediate fear and is taken aback. But being knowledgeable in the relevant ways, having created some distance between one and the snake, one notices that the pattern is that of a harmless snake that mimics venomous snakes. In light of one's judgement, one shouldn't be afraid and indeed, let's suppose, one calms down and carries on. A case like this one is not a case of recalcitrance since the emotion easily yields. But even a case like this presents trouble for Perceptualists who are in no position to agree that one has done *as she should* in the face of the snake she judges to be harmless. The Perceptualist view provides no normative tension between judgements and emotions and so, even when the cases of conflict are non-recalcitrant, they still pose a problem. Whether recalcitrant or compliant, there are emotion/judgement pairs that give rise to normative pressure, even if only for a moment, and this fact needs explaining just as much as the familiar cases in the literature. And Neo-Cognitivists should take heed. If a theorist was hoping to make use of the *recalcitrant* nature of the examples one so often finds, that theorist must keep in mind that this tact will be at best partial. Even in the hum-drum cases where our emotions cooperate with our judgements, the normative rears its head and must be accounted for. Cases of normative failure are rhetorically useful, but cases of normative success must find a home in our theory as well.

Because the terminology of "recalcitrant emotions" is so entrenched in the literature and because the recalcitrant cases are often vivid and compelling, I will continue to talk in terms of them and to rely on examples where one fails to bring judgements and emotions into alignment. Provided that the view ultimately offered concerning the normative strain can be extended to non-recalcitrant cases, there should be no harm in this.

### **It Isn't About *Felt* Conflict Either**

Sometimes we are consciously aware of our own inconsistencies and we might *feel* a sense of conflict. Believing with conviction that the spider is entirely harmless but covering the moment I lay eyes on it causes me to be frustrated with myself and to feel myself being pulled in two directions. But feelings of this sort (i) need not be present to generate the cases of present interest and (ii) sometimes they are present even though there is, in fact, no conflict of the sort we are seeking to capture.

First, feeling without conflict. Suppose that one is presented with what is in fact a dangerous dog and one feels afraid of it. The dangerous dog looks just like its harmless twin and in the blink of an eye the dangerous dog is, unbeknownst to the observer, swapped for the harmless dog. Our subject forms the belief that that dog is harmless. But still having alive in his mind the feeling of fear, our subject feels frustrated with himself and feels the tension of conflict. He turns away, noticing again the conflict: "I fear the dog but the dog is harmless". A case like this one does not give rise to our conflict. It is not the case that our subject is believing incorrectly nor is his fear inappropriate. Due to a case of mistaken identity, our subject thinks two distinct things are one, but if we could apprise him of the facts, his frustration would subside. And notice it wouldn't subside because his emotions disappeared or because he gave up the belief that the dog is harmless. Rather, he would come to appreciate there was never anything to be frustrated about for he was getting everything right.

Second, conflict without feeling. Suppose that one dreams that one's partner has lied about where she has been all day. Upon waking, our subject feels angry and find himself short with his partner. But he also recognises that in fact his partner has done nothing wrong. Our subject is aware of the feeling of anger and aware of the belief that it was all a dream but he feels no conflict at all. He simply doesn't care. Such a subject is certainly not beyond reproach simply for not caring. In fact, our subject seems especially blameworthy, not only for finding himself in the kind of conflict that is usually the focus in cases of recalcitrant emotions (whether he cares about it or not) but blameworthy over again for being so flippant about the conflict. Such a subject is a bit mind boggling, but not impossible. Some people aren't very interested in being consistent.

The subject of present interest is the coherence or consistency (or lack thereof) one finds between one's emotions and one's representations of how things are in the world. When consistency between one's emotions and representations of how things are breaks down, there is a normative failing. Part of the point of the present essay is to try to draw out exactly what that failing consists in. Although especially salient are cases that manifest recalcitrance, I've argued that being

recalcitrant isn't of central import. And although in typical situations perhaps the breakdown of consistency comes with a feeling a conflict, such feelings aren't always a good guide to the phenomena at issue. At some junctures it will be simpler to stick to familiar and simple cases, but we should keep in mind that what we are seeking to explain is the normative conflict that arises from inconsistency between our emotions and our representations of how things are, whether or not one notices it in one's self and whether or not it is a situation that resolves easily.

### What Cognitivism *Seems* to Get Right

Cognitivists are wedded to reducing the emotions (at least in part) to judgements or beliefs. Perceptualists are wedded to reducing the emotions (at least in part) to perceptions. Neo-Cognitivists have more flexibility. As I'm understanding the view, Neo-Cognitivism is a representationalist theory of the emotions that aims to elucidate their nature but not necessarily by reducing the emotions to some other attitude or state. The further details of the theory are wide open. For instance, one might hold that although anger and fear aren't to be reduced to some other categories such as judgement or perception, there is much to be gained from taking them to have propositional content which can help make sense of their aboutness and their evaluability for fittingness or appropriateness. For example and just as an illustration, one might hold that to fear something is to represent that the thing is dangerous. Building the illustration out a bit more, one might hold that fear is a functional state isolated by its typical causes and effects and for one to fear that something is dangerous is for there to be a token representation to the effect that something is dangerous playing the right kind of role in one's mental economy. This would be one way of utilising familiar resources from theories of intentional states and it wouldn't demand taking an emotion such as fear to be, upon philosophical reflection, a special sort of perception, belief, judgement, or whatever. But if a Neo-Cognitivist theory is to avoid a charge of *ad hoc-ery*, some account of why emotions sometimes conflict with judgements is still needed. When it comes to our puzzle – the puzzle of accounting for the normative strain in cases of conflict between emotions and judgements – it would be decidedly *unilluminating* to simply hold that it is in the nature of emotions to find conflict with certain judgements. Certainly more should be said and Neo-Cognitivists have indeed aimed to say more. In fact, part of what differentiates subtle variations amongst Neo-Cognitivists is the story they tell at this juncture. In the present section, I want to draw out a lesson one might reasonably take from Cognitivism in order to get one important style of approach to our puzzle on the table.

Cognitivism gets into trouble with recalcitrant emotions but at least their view, unlike the view of their Perceptualist competitors, predicts *some* conflict. Cognitivists are able to utilise a *logical* conflict in explaining our normative conflict that arises in cases of recalcitrance. Suppose one fears the dog (and so, according to Cognitivism, judges it to be dangerous) and judges the very same dog to not be dangerous.<sup>10</sup> To judge that p and to judge that not-p is to make judgements which contradict one another, and one *ought not* so judge. When the contents p and not-p are both the contents of a single subject's present judgements, the logical conflict between those contents constitutes a normative conflict (in particular an epistemic conflict). And now this fact can explain why one ought not be in the pair of fear and judgement. In contrast, when one desires that p and also judges that not-p or when one perceives that p and also judges that not-p, no such normative failure arises. Attitudes such as desire and perception don't "mix" with judgement in the same way that other judgements do – when their contents stand in the relation of logical contradiction to the contents of one's judgements, one doesn't thereby enter into a position of normative failure or tension.<sup>11</sup>

With these points in mind, here is perhaps a helpful way of looking again at the puzzle of recalcitrance: if we want to capture the normative data point that those suffering from cases of recalcitrant are doing something they shouldn't be doing, we must understand their content bearing *attitudes* to be ones (such as judgement) that yield a normative problem when their

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<sup>10</sup> If one thinks that we might save Cognitivism by appealing to judgements that one isn't aware of or that are somehow unconscious, add the stipulation that one openly, consciously, and knowingly fears and judges in the case at hand. As noted above, this isn't essential to the phenomenon but some cases are of this sort. A theory should handle all of the cases.

<sup>11</sup> See Schroeder (2008, p 43) for a discussion of 'inconsistency transmitting attitudes'.

contents contradict one another. But when we do so, we run the risk of indicting subjects of the wrong normative failure, or too big a failure, or a failure that makes no sense, so we had better tread lightly. A puzzle arises because Cognitivists land themselves on one end of a spectrum – “too much” conflict – and Perceptualists on the other – no conflict at all. There seems to be no obvious room to manoeuvre. Any attitude short of judgement doesn’t seem to give rise to *any* conflict but judgement and its ilk (*e.g.* belief, endorsement, assertion, and so on) immediately land us in the realm of the “wrong kind” or “too much”. What we seem to need is an especially nuanced understanding of the nature of the emotions *qua attitudes* that provides us with “conflict without contradiction”.

This is precisely the sort of approach taken by the Neo-Cognitivist Bennet Helm (2001, 2015). According to Helm, if we are to have any hope of making sense of the conflict arising in cases of recalcitrance, the emotions must be a kind of *assent*. Helm is guided by the Cognitivist “template” as I’ll call it. The Cognitivist template goes like this: the normative conflict between judgement and emotion is to be accounted for in terms of the logical conflict between the contents of the judgement and the emotion. It is Helm’s view that if we give up on the idea of *assent* when trying to understand the emotions, we will inevitably be left with no conflict at all. When one has assenting attitudes to the effect that *p* and to the effect that not-*p*, one thereby fails normatively. But of course, for reasons given above, the assent in the emotions somehow has to be “less than” that found in judgement.

Across a number of works,<sup>12</sup> Helm has developed a story about “passive assent”. On his view, because emotions are tied to each other and are tied to values in a way that makes them committal, they are assents. A simple example brings out the idea. If one fears the growling dog, there are various other attitudes one ought to also take towards the dog: she should be relieved when the dog goes away, she should believe that the dog might cause harm, she should want to not be harmed, and so on. This pattern of attitudes constitutes a stance of valuing: the subject values her safety. Accord to Helm, being afraid of the dog *commits* one to an array of other attitudes. So emotions, being a kind of assent, do conflict with judgements in a way not dissimilar to the way the judgements conflict with judgements (though the conflict is passive and so, in some way, a bit less).

This very brief outline of Helm’s view doesn’t do it complete justice and in similarly brief fashion I will offer some reasons that I don’t wish to follow Helm on the details of his view. The main point I hope to draw out is that there is certain style of approach to our puzzle that Helm exemplifies – the approach that follows the Cognitivist template as far as is possible but just short of trouble. As we will see later, the Cognitivist template needs rethinking.

Given my overall interests, brevity on the details of Helm’s account seems appropriate. There seem to be three ways that Helm is tempted to make use of the patterns of attitudes he identifies. First, Helm sometimes looks to move from there being a pattern of attitudes one is committed to having in virtue of having the original emotion to the claim that the emotion *itself* is a commitment (and so an assent) to things being as they are represented as being. If this is the way to understand Helm, then the view trades on a fallacious step. I might want to drink coffee and in so wanting, come (all else equal) to be committed to undertaking certain actions to get what I want. But from the fact that a desire commits me to undertake certain actions, it doesn’t follow that desire itself is an attitude of commitment or assent. If any attitude relation stands in contrast to those that we deem to be committal or deem to be assents (such as judgement and belief), it is desire. And yet desire lands us in a pattern of further attitudes when all is going well and normally, so from such patterns assent does not follow. A second way Helm sometimes seems to argue turns on a judgement or a belief to which one is committed. One who fears the dog is committed to other attitudes towards the dog and one of those might be judging that the dog is dangerous. But if this is the correct way to understand Helm, then we look to be back to the problematic Cognitivist explanation of the conflict – the subject judges that *p* and judges that not-*p* and this simply isn’t progress. A third way that Helm might be arguing is a more nuanced version of the second. One who fears the dog need not *judge* that the dog is dangerous, but one is *committed* to so judging. But it isn’t at all clear to me that by being committed to making a judgement that conflicts with some other judgement that one has made yields conflict of the sort we are trying to capture. Suppose that I promise you that I will judge that taking my morning flight is safe when I arrive at the airport

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<sup>12</sup> Helm (2001, 2015, forthcoming)

tomorrow. Tomorrow arrives and after looking at the planes and watching them take off and land, I judge that taking this flight is not safe. I have indeed done something wrong – I have broken a promise – but it is far from clear that I admit of the kind of failing present in cases of recalcitrance. I have not obviously done anything irrational or unfitting. Imagine, for example, that upon looking at the planes I identify a broken wing, a loose wheel, and pilots drinking vodka in the cockpit. It would be rational for me to judge that taking the flight is not safe even though I committed myself yesterday to judging otherwise. So being committed to judging that not *p* while judging that *p* doesn't obviously constitute the normative conflict of the sort we are after.

Others have also pressured Helm's view and so I think there are many good reasons not to follow Helm,<sup>13</sup> but I think we can draw out a general concern that will be helpful for our overall purposes. There seem to be no good examples of the kind of "partial", "passive", or "quasi-" assent attitudes that yield conflict without contradiction. Attitudes such as belief, judgement, assertion, and so on conflict with judgements, but not in the way we need. Attitudes such as perception, desire, hope, supposition, wish, and so on create no conflict of the sort we are after. Helm has identified what at first looks like a promising strategy – find that Goldilocks attitude that is just assent-ish enough. But it would go a long way if we had any example at all of a familiar attitude that we have an independent grip on that conflicts with judgement in this way. I worry that the "spectrum" offered above is in fact a binary, not obviously admitting of a middle ground at all. Following Helm, we might hope to move from a logical conflict in content to the normative conflict we are seeking to capture, but folk psychology seems to admit only of an on/off profile: logical conflict in content takes emotions all the way to incoherence or contradiction or doesn't come with any normative conflict at all. This of course isn't a guarantee that one couldn't develop the Goldilocks approach in a convincing way, but I'm left unhelpful and I think there is a more attractive option in the offing anyway. We'll return to that thought below.

There is a second style of approach that will also be informative to have on the table. The approach I have in mind comes in different sub-forms but a common feature is the idea that we shouldn't seek a "lightweight" version of the Cognitivist's conflict as Helm does. Rather, we should look for a different type of conflict altogether, a practical conflict. In other words, this style of approach departs from the spectrum by giving up on the logical conflict in content and instead aims to find some other notion of conflict that makes sense of cases of recalcitrance. For instance, Brady (2009) argues that when one judges that the dog is not dangerous but fears the dog nevertheless, one's fear primes one to act in a way that goes against one's best judgement and that this is a waste of resources.<sup>14</sup> In a related vein, Greenspan (1988) holds that fear comes with discomfort, and discomfort motivates one to act in a way that conflicts with the way one is (or perhaps should be) motivated given one's considered judgement. As with Brady, the idea here is that one should be motivated in ways that, practically, make good sense.

Getting some distance from the spectrum and the hunt for just-right-attitude is a good idea, but unfortunately views of the sort now under consideration do not seem to capture the conflict we are after. First, it seems possible to be primed to act in a way that isn't in accord with our judgments and yet not to reach our normative tension. This can be brought out by considering perceptual illusions again. Everyone in the debate agrees that when one perceives that *p* and judges that not-*p*, there is no conflict of the sort we are aiming to capture. But when the Müller-Lyer lines *look* to me to be different in length, I am *primed* to believe or judge they are different in length. When I go on to judge, on the basis of careful measurement that they are the same in length, my being primed otherwise still does not create our conflict, so even if priming yields a practical failure, it isn't enough for us (and things don't look any better when we switch from priming to being motivated by a feeling). And the other direction fails as well – there are cases where the conflict we are after arises but there is no practical failing. Suppose that one has a tendency to focus on his failings and not his successes and is given advice by a therapist to celebrate all successes, even small ones. One is asked, for the sake of psychological well being, to celebrate that one has, say, completed a task or taken a risk. But suppose further that the day comes and a small success is achieved and one does

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<sup>13</sup> See Benbaji (2013) and Brady (2009).

<sup>14</sup> Roberts (2003) offers a related view according to which emotions sometimes motivate one to act in a way that one believes one ought not act. Brady (2009) offers a compelling case against Roberts and aims to offer an improvement. See Helm (2015) for criticism of both Brady and Roberts.

indeed allow himself some happiness and pride about the achievement. Nevertheless, there is a nagging judgement that this was just a one-off, or merely a small success and not yet worthy of pride and celebration. One feels proud but judges that there isn't anything of significance to feel proud about. And suppose one is also correct – the achievement is nothing to write home about. One seems here, practically speaking, without reproach. One has completed the therapist's task and it might even be one that really does contribute to overall well being, and yet there is still a tension between pride and the conflicting judgement left to be accounted for. In short: no practical failing but still our normative failing. Further, we may suppose that no resources have been wasted here. In fact, the hope might be that feeling proud despite one's better judgements starts to lead to bigger successes that really are one day worthy of pride and celebration, so one's efforts were not wasted.

Trying to capture cases of recalcitrance in terms of a practical conflict simply seems to miss the target.<sup>15</sup> In a case of recalcitrant emotion, the failure is not merely that one is being impractical but is instead that one is, in some sense, inconsistent.

Despite these shortcomings, what the approach we've just been considering gets right is that we should not look to logically conflicting contents to do the heavy lifting. Those who hope to find the middle ground on the spectrum hope to utilise a logical conflict and "raise it up" to the level of a normative failing. Those who go for the practical failing give up on that tactic and they are right to do so.

We've landed in a difficult position. If we adopt a representationalist account of the emotions, we have a logical conflict in content and no good way to use it. If we work towards an attitude of assent, we seem to land back in the troubles of Cognitivism and if we don't work towards assent, we simply come up short. Once this is appreciated, we start to reach for some conflict that doesn't rely on the logical conflict such as a conflict in motivation or a waste of resources. But this looks to change the subject. It is my view that that an alternative approach is needed and in fact has been right under our noses.

### What Cognitivism Really Got Right

When one judges that *p* and judges that not-*p*, one does something worthy of criticism – one ought not judge contradictorily. But why not? At least one important thing that is wrong with contradictory judgments is that they *guarantee* that one will falter on the norm of judgement. Judgements are governed by the truth norm – if one's judgement is true, then one's judgement meets the norm, but if one's judgement is false, it violates that norm. Contradictory judgements are such that one is bound to be making at least one norm-violating judgement. Suppose I judge that seven is prime and judge that seven is not prime. Since it cannot be the case that seven is both prime and not prime, at least one of my judgements will have a false content and so will itself be false and so will violate the truth norm governing it. To make a pair of judgements with contradictory contents is a surefire way to violate the truth norm and that's a problem.

In effect, two things go wrong when one makes contradictory judgements. First, there is the problem just mentioned: one has judged in a such a way that one is guaranteed to violate a norm. The judgement that *p* and the judgement that not-*p* are related in such a way that, necessarily, one will violate a norm. Second, there is the actual violation. If I both judge that the cup is three centimetres from the keys and judge that the cup is not three centimetres from the keys, it is necessarily the case that one of my judgements is false and (let us suppose) it is actually the case that the cup is four centimetres from the keys, so it is the judgement that the cup is three centimetres from the keys that is actually false.

Above I suggested that one approach to our puzzle is to look to a "Cognitivist template" for guidance in providing an account of the normative failure in cases recalcitrance. Earlier, that template looked like this: use the contradictory contents between a pair of attitudes to make sense of a normative failure. That is, tell a story about how and when *logical* conflict gives rise to

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<sup>15</sup> See Döring (2009) for an attempt to offer an error theory. Döring's take on the puzzle bears certain similarities to Brady's but on her view there is no irrationality to account for. I'm far less inclined to give up the prima facie data point that there really is rational conflict in cases of recalcitrance, especially when I think there is a way to account for the appearances without positing error.

normative conflict. My suggestion presently is that there is a different idea to be drawn out of Cognitivism, namely that some pairs of attitudes are structured in such a way that, necessarily, one will violate a norm by being in that pair of attitudes.

To be clear, I'm not advocating a return to Cognitivism, but I do think that the Cognitivists' story, at least in structure *and when properly understood*, is something we can make use of.

Emotions are norm governed. There are situations in which emotions are (or are not) fitting or appropriate. Sometimes this is expressed as a fact about the 'formal objects' of the emotions. Fear's formal object is dangerousness, anger's formal object is offensiveness, and so on.<sup>16</sup> The present essay isn't the place for a defence of *why* it is that emotions have the formal objects they have (and maybe there is no further story). At present, it is enough to appreciate that everyone in the debate is prepared to agree that emotions can be appropriate or inappropriate. Everyone agrees that fearing that which isn't dangerous is unfitting or inappropriate and so one ought not fear such things, for example.<sup>17</sup>

Formal objects are our friction point. Notice that some judgements *do not* conflict with our emotions. The kind of conflict present in cases of recalcitrance doesn't arise in pairs like these:

- (A) Fearing the dog.
- (B) Judging that the dog has not wronged one.

- (A) Feeling angry with one's partner.
- (B) Judging that one's partner is a kind person.

The B-judgements might feature in a story that helps provide *reasons why* (perhaps even in a practical sense) one shouldn't (or should) be afraid or shouldn't (or should) be angry, but these pairs *all on their own* don't give rise to *our* conflict. We find no inconsistency of the sort on which we are focused between the A-emotions and their respective B-judgements. In contrast, the following pairs *do* give rise to our conflict:

- (A) Fearing the dog.
- (C) Judging that the dog isn't dangerous.

- (A) Being angry with one's partner.
- (C) Judging that one's partner has not wronged one.

It should be striking that the C-judgements predicate the very properties that are uncontroversially taken to be the formal objects of the A-emotions. It is a judgment about *dangerousness* that interfaces in the conflicting way with fear, for example. Because of what is predicated in the C-judgements, there is "friction" between the C-judgements and the formal objects governing the A-emotions. It is this point of contact that gives rise to (and ultimately allows us to explain) the conflict present in cases of recalcitrance.

What has always been available to Cognitivists is the observation that judgements with contradictory contents can't both be true. As I've noted, since the norm governing judgement is the truth-norm, at least one judgement must violate its norm when one judges contradictorily. But now notice that things are relevantly the same in the sort of cases we have been interested in. If one fears a dog and judges that dog to be not dangerous, then one's fear is normatively correct (appropriate/fitting) just in case one's judgement is normatively incorrect (inappropriate/unfitting). And the reverse is true as well. If one's judgement is true and so normatively correct, then one's fear will be in violation of the norm of dangerousness because the true judgement that the dog isn't dangerous guarantees that the object is in fact not dangerous. The normative

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<sup>16</sup> For further discussion of formal objects, see Kenny (1963), Wilson (1972) and Teroni (2007). I agree with Teroni that the formal objects aren't that which individuate emotion types. In my view, functional roles are a better candidate for that job. The formal object of an attitude tells us which property must be instantiated by the intentional object of the attitude in order for the attitude to be appropriate or fitting and it's possible that some attitudes might have the same formal object.

<sup>17</sup> See D'Arms and Jacobson (2000)

correctness of the judgement turns on whether the dog is dangerous because it predicates dangerousness of the dog. The normative correctness of the fear turns on the whether the dog is dangerous because (for whatever further reason we might wish to give, if any) dangerousness is the formal object of fear. We needn't somehow turn a logical contradiction into an instance of normative failing by embedding it in just the right Goldilocks attitude. *The failing is that, necessarily, one violates a norm when fearing that which is judged to be not dangerous.* This structure can be generalised. Let us introduce the term "property analog" for ease of exposition. Being true is the property analog of the norm of truth. Being dangerous is the property analog of the danger norm. And so on. If something feared instantiates the property of being dangerous, then one's fear meets its norm and if something feared does not instantiate the property of being dangerous, then one's fear violates its norm. It is easy enough to see how to extend that idea to other emotions. We can now generalise as follows: If one is in an emotional state/undergoing an emotion that is about  $o$  and the emotion is governed by norm  $N$  and if one simultaneously predicates the negation of the property analog of  $N$  to  $o$  in judgement or belief, then, necessarily, one will violate a norm. It's worth looking at one more case to clarify. Suppose I am angry with someone who has not wronged me in any way. It is appropriate to be angry with one who has wronged you and it is inappropriate to be angry with one who hasn't. The property analog of the norm governing anger is the property of having wronged one. If I am angry with you and I simultaneously judge that you have not wronged one, I am guaranteed to fail normatively. If in actuality you have wronged me, my judgement is false and so a violation of the truth norm. If in actuality you have not wronged me, my anger violates its norm. In any possibly situation, I violate a norm and it is this modal fact that captures the conflict present in cases of recalcitrance.

### Wide Application and Dialectical Irrelevance

Many contemporary theorists of the emotions are Neo-Cognitivists and they are well positioned to take up my suggestion. But possible application is wider still. One could hold that emotions are attitudes towards objects that represent things but that do not represent those things as, say, dangerous or as having wronged one. One could even hold that emotions are simply non-representational sensations and tell the story I've told about the conflict in cases of recalcitrance. In the present section I will make the case that accounting for the normative conflict that arises in cases of recalcitrance in the way I've recommended is something just about everyone can capture in their theory. And for those who cannot, there is a clear explanation as to why. One upshot of this is that if one thought that by focusing on cases of recalcitrance that one could whittle their way down to a specific view of the emotions, one would be mistaken. Recalcitrant emotions, while interesting and important, aren't as dialectically useful as one might have hoped.

It is typically Neo-Cognitivists who discuss recalcitrant emotions in detail. They can and should adopt the proposal I've just offered and that's true whether one spells their view out in terms of feelings of import, evaluative construals, perception-like representations of value, or whatever. It is common amongst Neo-Cognitivists that the way in which formal objects feature in the emotions is by getting into their contents. The formal object of the emotion is *predicated* of the thing one's emotion is about and this yields a propositional content of the emotion: to fear  $o$  is to represent  $o$  as dangerous (for example). As is familiar, on this view, one's fear is appropriate or fitting just in case things are as they are propositionally represented as being, just in case the content is true. And all of this is perfectly in keeping with my suggestion that what goes wrong in cases of recalcitrance is that at least one attitude is bound to violate its norm. Now, as it happens, on the Neo-Cognitivist view, there is a logical conflict in content between the judgement and the emotion, but this fact is not pulling any weight fundamentally. Even if we say that fear (for example) is a representational state with a propositional content that can be assessed for truth, notice that truth is not thereby the norm of fear. Rather, truth and falsity are being brought in to help explain how it is that emotions are norm governed and when it is that emotions meet (or fail to meet) their norms. Question: How is it that emotions are norm governed? Answer: By representing things as having certain properties. Question: And when are they normatively correct? Answer: When they represent accurately. The ability to give those answers are nice features of the view! But what I'm suggesting is that the *basic* fact that makes sense of the normative tension in cases of recalcitrance is the modal fact I offered above: that necessarily one will flout a norm when one adopts the pair of attitudes. That the local facts about which emotions of ours violate norms might then be further explicated in terms of truth and falsity of content is an optional, theoretical add-on that tells us how it is and when it is that a given emotion interfaces with evaluative properties. But one cannot

start with a story concerning logically conflicting contents and then derive the result that there is the conflict we are after. Remember, if we focus too heavily on logical conflict in content, it is all but inevitable that we will find our way back to the Goldilocks predicament outlined earlier. And this isn't a good predicament to be in since it leads one to the idea that it is a logical conflict that *grounds* the normative failure we are hoping to capture in cases of recalcitrance. But it is not. It only could be if emotions were governed by the truth norm so that emotions and judgements could interface in an 'inconsistency transmitting' way. The good news is that without trying to force the emotions into a category that is a bit like judgement but not quite as committal and a bit like perception but not as normatively toothless, Neo-Cognitivists can simply adopt the view I've offered. They can hold that in cases of recalcitrant emotions it is necessarily the case that one will flout a norm and then they can then add that the flouting attitude will have a false content. Neo-Cognitivists are welcome, on this way of looking at things, to retain the idea that the emotions are representations of value or other properties such as being dangerous or being offensive, but it must be noted that when it comes to making sense of the way emotions interface with judgement, content isn't what's doing the work.

Bully for Neo-Cognitivists, but the view I've offered can be utilised even more widely still. Suppose one wished to stay very close to appearances – Pat fears Fido, Sam is angry at Sally, Sally is jealous of her sister – and so wished to hold that the emotions are irreducibly attitudes towards objects.<sup>18</sup> That is, that they are intentional states that are about objects but which do not predicate anything of those objects. On a view like this one, to fear the dog (say) is to stand in an intentional relation simply to the dog and not in virtue of representing that the dog is thus and so. One who holds such a view is still perfectly able to take on board the data point that the emotions have formal objects, that they can be (in)appropriate or (un)fitting. Anger is appropriate just in case the thing one's anger is about or directed towards has wronged one. Fear is appropriate just in case the thing one's fear is about or is directed towards is dangerous. On a view like this one, the formal objects of the emotions are not properties predicated of intentional objects, rather they are "carried by" the attitudes themselves. Attitudes have properties such as being appropriate just in case the intentional object of the attitude has, say, the property of being dangerous. But even without propositional content, we have all we need to generate and explain the conflict between emotion and judgement. Fear is fitting when the thing feared *is* dangerous. Judgments to the effect that something is not dangerous are fitting when the thing *is not* dangerous. This pair is inconsistent and easily slots into the framework offered above: If one is in an emotional state/undergoing an emotion that is about *o* and that is governed by norm *N* and if one simultaneously predicates the negation of the property analog of *N* to *o* in judgement or belief, then, necessarily, one will violate a norm. No need to hold that the emotions have propositional contents to tell this story.

We can go further still. Suppose one were attracted to a pure feelings theory of the emotions – emotions are feelings or sensations (where feelings or sensations are not understood as representations). Such a theorist certainly incurs various and I think difficult burdens such as making sense of how it could be that an emotion is directed upon things even though it doesn't *represent* them<sup>19</sup> but provided that such theorists can help themselves to the claim that emotions have aboutness and are norm governed, they will have all that they need to explain the inconsistency in cases of recalcitrance. If one finds such views hopeless, so be it, but it shouldn't be because they have no chance of capturing the conflict in cases of recalcitrance.

There are plenty of details to debate concerning the many alternative approaches to the emotions. The modest point I wish to make presently is that the solution offered in the present paper to the puzzle of how to make sense of the "conflict without contradiction" raised by recalcitrant emotions is widely applicable and this speaks in its favour. Moreover, the solution doesn't require that one

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<sup>18</sup> See Deonna and Teroni (2011) for a view that comes close to this suggestion. See Grzankowski (2016) for a discussion of attitudes towards objects and Grzankowski and Montague (2018) for a collection of essays on non-propositional intentionality.

<sup>19</sup> Though to help this theorist a bit, it is optional to hold that intentionality must be understood representationally. Naive realists about perception do not typically lean on the idea of representation when theorising about the aboutness of perception (see, for example, Brewer 2011). Or recall acquaintance theorists such as Russell (1912) who hold that there is a direct and immediate relation between the mind and various things (such as the qualitative properties of one's own experience). The most basic aboutness facts are direct and not representational on such a picture.

offer a theory that deals in propositional contents that might contradict the contents of judgement. Although recalcitrant emotions have guided a great deal of the theorising of the emotions by raising serious problems for Cognitivists and Perceptualists, we shouldn't expect the puzzle of recalcitrance to lead us all the way to the correct view of the emotions.

## Two Explanatory Benefits

Very briefly I want to consider two further virtues of the theory on offer. The first is that it can easily be adapted to new cases outside of the emotions. Second, it helps explain why it is that the Perceptualist theory of the emotions cannot overcome the puzzle of recalcitrance.

First, consider desire rather than emotion. A normative tension very much like the one that arises in cases of recalcitrant emotions arises in cases of desire. Let's suppose for a moment that desires are fitting just in case what's desired is desirable (and if you have a more nuanced story – perhaps in terms of the norm of the good – I'll show in a moment why the specific commitment to this norm doesn't really matter for the point I want to make.) And now suppose that one believes that tearing pages out of a first edition of *Crime and Punishment* and selling them one-by-one for great profit is *not* a desirable state of affairs. Quite the contrary. If one desires to tear out the pages one-by-one and sell them despite this belief, a tension arises. There is an important sense in which one with that desire and that belief is inconsistent. How can we explain this failing?

The view I offered above easily scoops up this example. If the desires are fitting just in case the thing desired is desirable and if one's belief predicates the negated property analog, one is thereby guaranteed to fail normatively. (And notice that if you hold that desire is governed by the good or some other favoured norm, it is easy to see how to slot in your preference. Pick your favoured view of the norm against which desires are measured for appropriateness or inappropriateness and then find a belief that predicates the relevant property analog and you will have a case that fits with your preferred view.)<sup>20</sup>

Turn now to the Perceptual theory of the emotions. I have in mind here, to reiterate from above, a view that says that the emotions are perceptions (not "perception-like" but *literally perceptions*) of some sort. One might hold that the emotions are perceptions as of things having various value-properties for example. Perceptions are not governed by a norm in the way belief is governed by truth and the way desire is governed by the good or the desirable. When one goes to the optometrist and learns that one is farsighted, one has not learned that one's perceptual system is unfitting or inappropriate. Rather, it is malfunctioning. The emotions, on the other hand, can be (in)appropriate or (un)fitting. This mismatch leads to trouble for Perceptualists.<sup>21</sup> As I noted above, the recipe for making sense of the normative tension in cases of recalcitrance utilises the fact that there is a norm governing an emotion and a judgement that has something to say about the

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<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that if one hoped to offer a theory of the emotions according to which emotions are or are like desires, this application should come as good news. Even though desires have a different direction of fit from belief and judgement, it is still possible to generate normative conflict. The Goldilocks approach is blind to this possibility.

<sup>21</sup> Tappolet (2016) aims to use malfunctioning as a component in an explanation of the normative failure in cases of recalcitrance. Her idea is that correct accusations of irrationality stem from the fact that our emotions are plastic and when one has a judgement to the effect that, say, the dog is not dangerous while fearing the dog, there is an indication that something might be wrong with the emotional system and one *ought* to take action to improve it (see p. 38). There are at least two reasons this approach won't work. First, it doesn't seem to tell us anything about cases that run in the other order, where it is the belief that it is at fault. If one's emotion is fitting while one falsely believes that the dog is not dangerous, it's not obviously the case that one should change the emotional system. A good explanation should have something to say about both kinds of cases. Second, on Tappolet's view the force of the ought seems to come from the fact that emotions ought to be reliable and that there is something like an obligation to make them so. But cases of recalcitrance appear to be cases of inconsistency. We simply do not need to know about the reliability of emotion or of belief. The puzzle consists in making sense of the pairwise-inconsistency as such. There is nothing *inconsistent* in noticing that a system isn't working properly but then doing nothing about it.

property analog of that norm. If perceptions aren't norm governed in the relevant way, there is no hope for generating the conflict between judgement and emotion conceived of as perception.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

In cases of recalcitrance one is guaranteed to violate a norm and that fact holds because emotions are governed by normative properties and the judgements that conflict with them have something to say about those properties. The explanation of the conflict that arises in cases of recalcitrance that I've offered is one that can be accepted by a wide array of theorists. This wide applicability should make the view look attractive, but it also has dialectical import. In the present landscape, recalcitrant emotions often look like a litmus test for a theory of the emotions. And recalcitrant emotions do indeed make trouble for Cognitivism and for Perceptualism. But by adopting the strategy offered here, everyone else (or at least anyone who thinks emotions are norm governed and have aboutness) can make sense of the normative strain present in cases of recalcitrance. Something other than recalcitrant emotions will have to help us decide amongst those remaining alternatives.

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<sup>22</sup> One might disagree and hope to argue that perception is norm governed in the relevant way. I do grant that perception is governed by practical norms. If one is hallucinating purple spots, one might correctly say, "You really shouldn't be seeing spots, I think you need a doctor." But one would not scold or chastise one for hallucinating. Or when one visits the optometrist, the doctor might suggest that one ought to get glasses on the grounds that one's visual system isn't functioning properly. The doctor would not, however, take one's inability to read the bottom line to be inappropriate the way fearing something harmless is inappropriate. All of this suggests a strategy on behalf of the Perceptual theorist: show that perceptions really are governed by norms in the way that emotions are. My own position is that this is unlikely to work out.

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