Non-indexical contextualism, relativism and retraction

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Abstract: It is commonly held that retraction data, if they exist, show that assessment relativism is preferable to non-indexical contextualism. I argue that this is not the case. Whether retraction data have the suggested probative force depends on substantive questions about the proper treatment of tense and location. One's preferred account in these domains should determine whether one accepts assessment relativism or non-indexical contextualism.

1. Introduction

It is commonly held that retraction data, if they exist, show that assessment relativism is preferable to non-indexical contextualism.[1] I argue that this is not the case. Whether retraction data have the suggested probative force depends on substantive questions about the proper treatment of tense and location. One's preferred account in these domains should determine whether one accepts assessment relativism or non-indexical contextualism.

I begin by briefly characterizing non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism (§2). I present the standard argument for assessment relativism based on retraction data (§3). I present what I take to be the most promising response to this argument on behalf of non-indexical contextualism (§4). I show that this response essentially relies on certain views about tense and location (§5). Then I conclude (§6).

2. Non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism

Non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism have been proposed as semantics for a number of expressions including deontic and epistemic modals, predicates of personal taste, "knows" and more (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014). The structural points I make in this

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[1] When I speak of assessment relativism, I have in mind what MacFarlane also calls truth-value relativism. Thus, I leave so-called content-relativism aside (see e.g. Cappelen, 2008a, 2008b and MacFarlane, 2014: 72–76).

paper apply equally in all domains. For concreteness, I focus on predicates of personal taste, more specifically, on the expression "tasty."

Non-indexical contextualists and assessment relativists agree that a proper semantics for "tasty" requires a notion of truth that is relative to a circumstance of evaluation and applies to propositions. A circumstance of evaluation, for them, is a tuple comprising at least a possible world, w, and (something like) a standard of taste, s. Let us use *fish sticks are tasty* to refer to the proposition we assert when we literally use "Fish sticks are tasty." Leaving aside other potential parameters of the circumstance of evaluation, assessment relativists and non-indexical contextualists agree on the following principle.

> *Fish sticks are tasty* is true relative to a circumstance of evaluation <w,s> iff, at w, fish sticks are tasty by the lights of s.

Non-indexical contextualists distinctively hold that we further need a notion of proposition truth that is relativized to a context of use. This notion can be defined as follows in terms of the suggested notion of truth relative to a circumstance of evaluation (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 89–90 and Ninan, 2016: 441–442).

> A proposition p is true at a context of use C iff p is true relative to <w(C), s(C)>.

Here, w(C) is the world of C, and s(C) is the taste standard of C. For simplicity, I will equate the taste standard of C with the taste standard that the speaker of C has at the time of C.[2] Returning to our proposition *fish sticks are tasty*, we thus get the following principle.

> *Fish sticks are tasty* is true at a context of use C iff, at the possible world of C, fish sticks are tasty by the lights of the taste standard that the speaker of C has at the time of C.[3]

These abstract principles by themselves do not make testable predictions about language use. One way to derive such predictions is via norms of speech acts along the following lines

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[2] So-called "exocentric uses" (Lasersohn, 2005) put pressure on this simple conception of the taste standard relevant in a given context. See also e.g. Beddor and Egan (2018) for a more flexible form of relativism.

[3] MacFarlane's own definition of truth at a context is slightly more complicated than mine because he wants to avoid talk of *the* world of a context of use (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 77). I ignore this for simplicity.

(see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 101 and Ninan, 2016: 442 for these norms and e.g. Dinges and Zakkou, 2020: 7–8 on how to derive predictions about language use from such norms).

NIC-A One is permitted to assert p in a context C only if p is true at C.

NIC-R One is obligated in a context C2 to retract an assertion of p made in a context C1 if p is not true at C1.

To illustrate, consider an assertion of *fish sticks are tasty* in a context C. By the norm of assertion NIC-A, this assertion is permissible only if *fish sticks are tasty* is true at C, that is, only if fish sticks are tasty by the lights of the taste standard that the speaker of C has at the time of C (at the possible world of C—I take the possible world parameter to be tacitly understood in what follows). In brief, the assertion is permissible if the speaker currently likes fish sticks. By the retraction norm NIC-R, the assertion has to be retracted if this condition fails to be satisfied.

Assessment relativists distinctively hold that we need a notion of proposition truth that is not just relativized to a context of use but also to a context of assessment. This notion can be defined as follows in terms of the suggested notion of truth relative to a circumstance of evaluation (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 90 and Ninan, 2016: 443–444).

A proposition p is true at a context of use C1 and a context of assessment C2 iff p is true relative to <w(C1), s(C2)>.

Here, w(C1) is the world of C1, and s(C2) is the taste standard relevant in C2. As before, I will equate this taste standard with the taste standard that the speaker of C2 has at the time of C2 for simplicity. We now get the following principle.

Fish sticks are tasty is true at a context of use C1 and a context of assessment C2 iff, at the possible world of C1, fish sticks are tasty by the lights of the taste the speaker of C2 has at the time of C2.

Again, these principles can be combined with norms of assertion and retraction to derive testable predictions about language use. Assessment relativists typically endorse norms along the following lines (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 103–104, 108-110 and Ninan, 2016: 444).

AR-A One is permitted to assert p in a context C only if p is true at C and C.

AR-R One is obligated in a context C2 to retract an assertion of p made in a context C1 if p is not true at C1 and C2.

In the assertion norm AR-A, the original context of assertion does double-duty as both the context of use and the context of assessment. By this norm, an assertion of *fish sticks are tasty*, for instance, is permitted only if this proposition is true at the context of assertion (context of use) and the context of assertion (context of assessment). An assertion of *fish sticks are tasty* is thus permitted only if fish sticks are tasty by the lights of the taste the speaker has at the context of assertion. This prediction aligns with the non-indexical contextualist prediction above. Assessment relativism and non-indexical contextualism come apart when it comes to the norm of retraction. According to the assessment relativist norm of retraction AR-R, an assertion of *fish sticks are tasty* has to be retracted in a later context if fish sticks are not tasty by the lights of the taste the speaker has in this later context. In contrast, and as we have seen, the non-indexical contextualist norm of retraction NIC-R requires retraction depending on the speaker's taste in the original context of assertion. AR-R and NIC-R thus make different predictions when a speaker's taste changes over time from the original context of assertion to the context in which this assertion is assessed.

How do we determine which of the theories described is correct? Given the outlined predictions, retraction data are a natural place to look, and indeed retraction data are normally offered as the main motivation for assessment relativism (see e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 108, Kölbel, 2015 and Ninan, 2016: 445). I present retraction data and explain why they may seem to favor assessment relativism in the next section.

3. Retraction data for assessment relativism

Suppose I liked fish sticks and correspondingly said, "Fish sticks are tasty." Later, I come to dislike fish sticks. Someone reminds me, "Didn't you say that fish-stick were tasty?" Now consider the following responses on my behalf.

"I stand by that, but fish-stick aren't tasty."

"I take that back. Fish sticks aren't tasty."

Assuming that fish sticks have not changed their taste, the second response seems intuitively much better than the first. Following e.g. MacFarlane (2014: 13–14), I assume that

this is because the norms governing our communicative practice require retraction of previous "tasty" claims after a relevant change in taste. When I speak of retraction data in what follows, I will have these requirements to retract in mind.[4]

Retraction data support assessment relativism as follows. Assessment relativism, with its norm of retraction AR-R, predicts the indicated requirement to retract. Let's refer to the context where I originally said "Fish sticks are tasty" as U and to the later context where I assess this claim as A, and let's continue to use *fish sticks are tasty* as a name for the proposition I assert by means of my utterance in U. Given the previous characterization of assessment relativism, *fish sticks are tasty* is true at U and A iff fish sticks are tasty according to the taste standard I have at the time of A. So since I do not like fish sticks anymore at the time of A, *fish sticks are tasty* comes out untrue at U and A. Given AR-R, this means that my assertion in U should be retracted in A, as desired. Meanwhile, non-indexical contextualism, with its retraction norm NIC-R, fails to predict retraction data. According to NIC-R, the original assertion of *fish sticks are tasty* has to be retracted if *fish sticks are tasty* is not true at U. However, at U, this proposition is true because, by stipulation, I liked fish sticks initially. Thus, there is no obligation to retract, contrary to our data.

It is essential here that we focus on responses like "I stand by that/I take that back" rather than e.g. "what I said is true/false" or "my assertion is permissible/impermissible." For non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism make the same predictions about the latter responses, or at least they can be implemented such that they make the same predictions. Consider "what I said is true," and let us say for concreteness that what I said was *fish sticks are tasty*. Both non-indexical contextualists and assessment relativists can assume disquotation principles for the monadic truth-predicate involved in this sentence. A non-indexical contextualist can say that the proposition expressed by "what I said is true" is true

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at a context of use U iff *fish sticks are tasty* is true at U. An assessment relativist can say that the proposition expressed by "what I said is true" is true at a context of use U and a context of assessment A iff *fish sticks are tasty* is true at U and A.[5] By the reflexive norms of assertion NIC-A and AR-A, assertions of the proposition expressed by "what I said is true" thus come out as permissible under the same conditions, namely, when the speaker likes fish sticks (mutatis mutandis for "what I said is false"). Consider "my assertion is permissible." Non-indexical contextualists can say that the proposition expressed by this sentence is true at U iff the speaker's assertion is permissible (setting aside tense and modality). Assessment relativists can likewise say that the proposition expressed by this sentence is true at U and A iff the speaker's assertion is permissible (again setting aside tense and modality). Now as indicated, non-indexical contextualists and assessment relativists agree on when taste assertions are permissible. So, asserting "my assertion is permissible" comes out as permissible under the same conditions (mutatis mutandis for "my assertion is impermissible").[6]

4. Non-indexical contextualism and retraction data

In this section, I propose and defend what I take to be the most promising account of retraction data on behalf of non-indexical contextualism. If this account withstands scrutiny, then retraction data do not motivate assessment relativism, contrary to the argument in the previous section. Given that retraction data seem to be the only reason to prefer assessment relativism to non-indexical contextualism, it even follows that we should stick with non-indexical contextualism. After all, non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism come out as explanatorily equally powerful while non-indexical contextualism is the simpler theory.

Here is my preferred non-indexical contextualist account of retraction data. Non-indexical contextualists should replace the previous retraction norm NIC-R with the following norm.

> **NIC-R*** One is obligated in a context C2 to retract an assertion of p made in a context C1 if p is not true at C2.

The only difference between this norm and the previous norm NIC-R is that requirements to retract now depend on the later context C2 rather than the original context C1. This modification allows non-indexical contextualists to explain retraction data. According to our definition of non-indexical contextualism, *fish sticks are tasty* is true at A iff fish sticks are tasty

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[5] See e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 93 for further discussion of these disquotation principles.

[6] See e.g. Kölbel, 2015 for further helpful discussion of these issues.

according to the taste standard I have at the time of A. This condition does not hold in the envisaged cases. Hence, *fish sticks are tasty* is not true at A, and my original assertion in U has to be retracted in A given NIC-R*.

In the remainder of this section, I defend NIC-R* against three concerns that might naturally arise. First, one might worry that NIC-R* is problematic because it is incompatible with non-indexical contextualism. In particular, one might think that NIC-R* entails assessment relativism. Following MacFarlane (2014: 60), for instance, we cross the "philosophically interesting line" to assessment relativism if "we relativize truth not just to a context of use and an index, but also to a *context of assessment*." MacFarlane (2014: 60) describes a context of use as "a possible situation in which a sentence might be used" and a context of assessment as "a possible situation in which a use of a sentence might be *assessed*." Now in NIC-R*, we evaluate the truth of p relative to C2, and C2 is a context of assessment in the given sense. So it may seem that we have crossed the line to assessment relativism.

But this misinterprets MacFarlane's criterion. We do not get assessment relativism just by relativizing truth to contexts that happen to be contexts of assessment. Otherwise, the non-indexical norm of assertion NIC-A would already entail assessment relativism. Take an assertion of "Fish sticks are tasty" as made in a context of assessment, i.e., a context "in which a use of a sentence might be *assessed*." NIC-A tells us that this assertion is permissible if the asserted proposition is true at that context. Thus, NIC-A, just like NIC-R*, requires a truth-predicate that can take contexts of assessment as a relatum. This cannot suffice for assessment relativism. According to MacFarlane, I take it, we cross the line to assessment relativism only if we relativize truth to *two* contexts, a context of use and a context of assessment.[7] Neither NIC-A nor NIC-R* requires this type of double-relativization.

One might still worry that NIC-R* entails assessment relativism, because one might object to MacFarlane's characterization of assessment relativism (or my interpretation of it). Unlike MacFarlane, Kölbel (2015), for instance, suggests that "the important dividing line" between assessment relativism and non-indexical contextualism "is the one beyond which the normative status (i.e. as permissible or obligatory) of the use of a sentence is not absolute but depends on the situation in which its status is assessed." But even on this understanding

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[7] One should presumably add that both the context of use and the context of assessment must play some theoretical role in generating the predictions of one's overall semantic theory. See also MacFarlane, 2014: 89n24 for helpful discussion on how one can accept this double-relativization without making it "notationally salient."

of assessment relativism, NIC-R* does not cross the line to assessment relativism. NIC-R* only governs the use of sentences like "I take that back". And according to NIC-R*, the permissibility of using these sentences depends solely on their context of use. Moreover, NIC-R* is perfectly compatible with a norm of assertion like NIC-A for sentences like "Fish sticks are tasty," according to which the permissibility of using these sentences also depends solely on their context of use.

Unlike MacFarlane and Kölbel, Ninan (2016: 444) and Marques (2018: 3342) seem to construe assessment relativism as entailing the conjunction of the above described assessment relative semantic framework with the retraction norm AR-R. On this interpretation, NIC-R* fails to cross the line to assessment relativism simply because NIC-R* differs from AR-R.

One might suggest that we cross the line to assessment relativism once the context of assessment partially determines whether a previous assertion must be retracted. Both AR-R and NIC-R* entail assessment relativism in this sense. But this definition of assessment relativism is untenable because it is too wide. Suppose I hold that assertions are permissible when the underlying belief is epistemically justified but that they have to be retracted when new evidence defeats this justification. This view does not entail relativism in any sense, and yet it would count as assessment relativism on the given definition because it would mandate retraction depending on the evidence available in the context of assessment (see, relatedly, MacFarlane, 2014: 110).

In sum, there is no plausible conception of assessment relativism on which NIC-R* entails assessment relativism.

Second, one might worry that NIC-R* clashes with plausible general principles about retraction. As indicated, non-indexical contextualists typically assume norms of assertion according to which an assertion of p is permissible only if p is true at the context of the assertion. NIC-R* thus entails that we sometimes have to retract permissible assertions; namely, when our taste standard has relevantly shifted so that the asserted proposition is no longer true at our present context. This result clashes with the initially plausible principle that one should not retract permissible assertions.

To respond, note that the very same problem arises for AR-R. As indicated, assessment relativists also tend to favour norms of assertion where an assertion of p is permissible only if p is true as used and assessed from the context of the assertion. As before in the case of NIC-R*, the satisfaction of this condition does not rule out a requirement to retract in a later

context. So once more, we arrive at the conclusion that permissible assertions have to be retracted sometimes.

Maybe this means that we have to abandon both NIC-R* and AR-R and that neither non-indexical contextualism nor assessment relativism properly accommodates retraction data. This is unproblematic in the present context. My goal here is to elucidate how we can decide between non-indexical contextualism and assessment relativism *if* we want to subscribe to one or the other position. I do not want to argue that we should, or plausibly can, subscribe to such a view at all. Let me flag though that, on my view, we lack independent evidence for the claim that we should not retract permissible assertions, and so I think that both non-indexical contextualists and assessment relativists should respond to the above worry by just rejecting this principle.[8]

Third, one might worry that NIC-R* implausibly requires us to retract assertions made in relevantly different possible worlds. Assume that I assert that the earth is flat in a possible world w, where the earth in fact is flat. This proposition is not actually true and thus it is not true at my actual context. Thus, it has to be retracted by NIC-R*; which is implausible. Once more, AR-R already has this consequence. Just assume that I assert that the earth is flat in a possible world w*, where the earth is not flat. This proposition is not true as used in the original context and assessed from the actual context. After all, the earth is not flat in w*. By AR-R, the assertion has to be retracted. We can easily avoid these problems if we stipulate that C1 and C2 in NIC-R* and AR-R must belong to the same possible world.

In sum, NIC-R* seems like a plausible alternative to AR-R, and if this principle withstands scrutiny, we should abandon assessment relativism. After all, non-indexical contextualism is the simpler theory while having equal explanatory power. As we will see in the next section, however, this conclusion is not quite warranted. If we accept certain views about tense and location, then NIC-R* is untenable, retraction data turn out to be a severe challenge for non-indexical contextualism and we should opt for assessment relativism after all.

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[8] See e.g. MacFarlane, 2014: 110 and Marques, 2014, 2018: 3347–3350 for further discussion of worries along the above lines. See also Dinges, 2017. See Ross and Schroeder, 2013; MacFarlane, 2014: 305–319; Ninan, 2016: 445–446 and Marques, 2019 on the "rationality" of having a practice of assertion governed by norms like NIC-R* and AR-R.

5. Temporalism and locationism

Consider the sentence "It is raining," and let us use *it is raining* to refer to the proposition we assert when we literally use this sentence. Let us now define *temporalism* as a view that entails the following. A circumstance of evaluation comprises a time t in addition to the already established components w and s such that

> *It is raining* is true relative to <w,s,t> iff, at w, it is raining at t.

In maybe more familiar terms, temporalism says that *it is raining* is a temporally neutral proposition, one that changes its truth-value depending on the time of evaluation (see e.g. Richard, 1981: 1).[9] If we adopt temporalism, so understood, the non-indexical contextualist has to adapt her notion of truth relative to a context of use, which so far assumes that circumstances of evaluation just comprise a world and a taste standard. In particular, we now get the following principle.

> A proposition p is true at a context of use C iff p is true relative to <w(C), s(C), t(C)>.

Here, t(C) is the time of C, and everything else is as before. Applying this principle to our proposition *it is raining*, we get that

> *It is raining* is true at a context of use C iff, at the possible world of C, it is raining at the time of C.

Assume temporalism so understood. Assume further that it is raining at a given point in time and that I concurrently assert "It is raining." It stops raining, and someone reminds me that I said it was raining. Unlike in the case of "tasty," it would be odd to respond,

> "I take that back. It isn't raining."

The appropriate response rather seems to be,

> "I stand by that. But it isn't raining (anymore)."

According to NIC-R*, however, it should be the other way around. Let us use A to refer to the context where it has stopped raining and U to refer to the context of my original assertion. Let us further continue to use *it is raining* for the proposition I assert by my use of "It

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[9] To qualify as a temporalist in the envisaged sense, it does not suffice to posit temporally neutral compositional sentential semantic values. One must assume further that these semantic values are the objects of assertion. See e.g. Rabern, 2012 for pertinent discussion. The same goes for locationism below.

is raining." The proposition *it is raining* is untrue at A because it is not raining at the time of A. Given NIC-R*, this means that, in A, I have to retract my assertion of *it is raining* in U.

No similar problem arises for the assessment relativist. Even granting temporalism, the assessment relativist can adopt the following definition of truth relative to a context of use and assessment.

> A proposition p is true at a context of use C1 and a context of assessment C2 iff p is true relative to <w(C1), s(C2), t(C1)>.

In other words, assessment relativists can assume that, while the taste standard is initialized by the context of assessment, world and time are set by the context of use. We thus get that

> *It is raining* is true at a context of use C1 and a context of assessment C2 iff, at the possible world of C1, it is raining at the time of C1.

Given that, an assertion of *it is raining* is true at U and A iff it is raining at the time of U. This condition is satisfied in the envisaged case above, so even given AR-R, no retraction is required when I find myself in A.

Similar points can be made with respect to location. Let us say that *locationism* is the view that adds a location to the circumstance of evaluation in the same way in which temporalists add a point in time (see e.g. Kaplan, 1989: 504). Given locationism, NIC-R* makes the problematic prediction that we may have to retract assertions of *it is raining* just because we have moved to a different location where it is not raining. As before, the assessment relativist can avoid this commitment if she takes locations to be provided by the context of use rather than the context of assessment.[10]

I have assumed that, when we evaluate a previous utterance, then the time and the location of the context of evaluation are the time and the location at which the evaluation takes place.

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[10] One might think that a further problem arises for NIC-R* if we assume that e.g. "My pants are on fire" can be used to assert a *de se* proposition that varies in truth-value with the speaker (see e.g. Lewis, 1979). This is not the case, however. AR-R and NIC-R* impose retraction requirements only on one's own assertions. Thus, the speaker cannot relevantly vary. There is an additional problem for NIC-R*, though, if the proposition asserted with e.g. "Your pants are on fire" varies in truth-value with the addressee. This position should be added to the list of positions that make trouble for non-indexical contextualism to the extent that it is deemed defensible.

This assumption was essential for deriving the indicated problematic predictions, according to which assertions of *it is raining* must be retracted when it has stopped raining or when you have moved to a different location where it is not raining. One might suggest that non-indexical contextualists could be more flexible here. In particular, couldn't they say that the time and location of such contexts of evaluation are the time and location of the original utterance? This would avoid the previous problems.[11]

To make this plausible, one would need a suitable meta-semantic story of how contexts determine a time and a location, and I do not see what this story should be. For instance, suppose we say that the time of a context is the point in time that is most salient in the context. It might be that, typically, when I assess a previous utterance, the most salient point in time is the time of the original utterance. But this need not be the case. In principle, at least, it should be possible to consider a previous utterance while focusing on the present point in time. So there should be at least *some* contexts where you have to retract an assertion of *it is raining* after a change in the weather, but there do not seem to be *any* such contexts. More generally, there seems to be tension between the idea of adopting a *flexible* approach towards the question of how contexts determine points in time and locations and the entirely *stable* phenomenon that you are *never* required to a retract assertions of *it is raining* just because of a change in the weather. So far, I do not see how this tension can be resolved.

As things stand, then, NIC-R* is untenable if we accept temporalism or locationism. A non-indexical contextualist who subscribes to either of these positions thus has to abandon NIC-R* in favor of some other plausible principle that predicts retraction data. It is far from obvious what this principle would be. Let me briefly address two options that might naturally come to mind.

First, some indexical contextualists offer pragmatic accounts of disagreement data (see e.g. López de Sa, 2008, Plunkett and Sundell, 2013 and Zakkou, 2019), and these accounts may be extendable to retraction data. Non-indexical contextualists might try to co-opt these pragmatic accounts. Following Zakkou (2019), for instance, they might argue that assertions of "Fish sticks are tasty" presuppose (or conventionally implicate) that one's own taste is superior to the others and that retraction is required after a change in taste because after a change in taste, one can no longer accept this presupposition. But once we accept the presence of a such a presupposition of superiority, it is unclear why we would still need non-

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[11] Thanks to Dan Zeman for pressing me on this point.

indexical contextualism. According to Zakkou (2019), at least, such a presupposition explains e.g. disagreement and retraction data even within an indexical contextualist framework (see likewise López de Sa, 2008 and Plunkett and Sundell, 2013). Thus, appeals to e.g. presuppositions of superiority on behalf of non-indexical contextualism are self-defeating.

Second, non-indexical contextualists could propose domain specific norms of retraction, e.g., one for tensed propositions tied to the original utterance context and one for taste propositions tied to the context of assessment. They could specifically assume that an assertion of a tensed proposition must be retracted if the asserted proposition is false at the context of use while an assertion of a taste proposition must be retracted if the asserted proposition is false at the context of assessment. However, take an assertion of the proposition *it is raining and fish sticks are tasty*, which is both a tensed proposition and a taste proposition. Now assume that the speaker likes fish sticks throughout while it has stopped raining after the assertion. Retraction is intuitively not required. According to the given norms, however, retraction is required because *it is raining and fish sticks are tasty* is not true at the context of assessment where it is no longer raining and because, by the retraction norm for taste propositions, the respective assertion must be retracted under these conditions.

In sum, if we accept temporalism or locationism, retraction data raise a serious concern for non-indexical contextualism. My previous account in terms of NIC-R* comes out as untenable, and no alternative account seems forthcoming.

6. Conclusion

We have seen that retraction data by themselves do not show that assessment relativism is preferable to non-indexical contextualism. If we reject temporalism and locationism, we should stick with non-indexical contextualism even in the face of retraction data. For NIC-R* makes perfect sense of retraction data and there is thus no need to adopt the more complicated assessment relativist framework. Meanwhile, if we accept temporalism or locationism, then we should go for assessment relativism. For NIC-R* becomes untenable and non-indexical contextualists have no alternative account of retraction data to offer. In sum, one's take on temporalism and locationism should determine one's preference for assessment relativism or non-indexical contextualism.

Which view should we adopt if we are still undecided whether temporalism or locationism holds? There is a methodological choice to be made. Either we go for assessment relativism in order to be safe. Assessment relativism properly accounts for retraction data even if tem-

poralism and locationism turn out to be true. Or we go for non-indexical contextualism because we do not want to complicate our theory unless we are forced to. We can have it either safe or simple. I tend to side with the latter approach, but both strategies seem acceptable.

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