

# Expressing Disagreement: A Presuppositional Indexical Contextualist Relativist Account

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**Abstract** Many domains, notably the one involving predicates of personal taste, present the phenomenon of apparent faultless disagreement. Contextualism is a characteristically moderate implementation of the relativistic attempt to endorse such appearances. According to an often-voiced objection, although it straightforwardly accounts for the faultlessness, contextualism fails to respect “facts about disagreement.” With many other recent contributors to the debate, I contend that the notion of disagreement—“genuine,” “real,” “substantive,” “robust” disagreement—is indeed very flexible, and in particular can be constituted by contrasting attitudes. As such, contextualism is clearly straightforwardly compatible with facts about the *existence* of disagreement. There is, however, a genuine *prima facie* worry for contextualism involving facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement in ordinary conversations. Elaborating on a suggestion by Lewis (Proc Aristot Soc 63(Suppl):113–138, 1989), I argue that the presupposition of commonality approach in López de Sa (Relative truth. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008) shows that there are versions of contextualism that are in good standing *vis-à-vis* such facts about the expression of (existent) disagreement.

You think *King of the Hill* is pretty funny. I strongly disagree. And yet, neither you nor I need be at fault here. Or so it seems.

Things like this constitute the appearances of *faultless disagreement*, characteristically present in matters of personal taste. That the *appearances* as such exist is, I take it, a *datum* for both relativists and non-relativists alike: relativists endorse them, whereas non-relativists explain them away. Some hold that such appearances are also present in the case of moral and aesthetic issues, questions about metaphysical and epistemic modalities, and/or attributions of knowledge. In what

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follows I will be focusing on the particularly basic case of things like the funny—and the gross, the sexy, and the cool—without exploring the extent to which the discussion extends to these other, philosophically interesting domains.

So it appears as if you and I can disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. *Relativism* in general can be conceived as the general attempt to endorse such appearances, contending that *it is indeed the case* that you and I can disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. *Contextualism* provides a characteristically *moderate* framework for discourses in which relativistic attempts to endorse appearances of faultless disagreement can take place. According to contextualism, the contrasting features of my context and your context—our contrasting senses of humor, say—allow for either a difference in what ‘funny’ would express in my mouth and in your mouth—funny *for me and my mates*, funny *for the likes of you*, say—or at least a difference in the relevant feature that determines the evaluation of what we would say by means of the expression.

Thus, according to contextualism, if we were to express our faultless disagreement in the most direct simple way—by your saying ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and my responding ‘It most certainly is not,’ say—we could both be speaking the plain and literal truth. And this, most agree, manifests indeed a straightforward endorsement of the appearances of *faultlessness*. But what about the equally strong appearances regarding *disagreement*?

According to an often-voiced objection, one if not the main problem contextualism faces is precisely that it ultimately fails to respect “*facts about disagreement*,” the attempt notwithstanding. My main claim in this paper is that it is crucially unclear what exactly the worry amounts to and that, once clarified, contextualism turns out to be in good standing with respect to appearances regarding disagreement—at least, certain *presuppositional* versions thereof. The facts alluded to may be facts concerning *the existence* of the disagreement in question. But, in agreement with many other recent contributors to the debate, I will contend that the notion of disagreement—“genuine,” “real,” “substantive,” “robust” disagreement—is indeed very *flexible*, and in particular covers cases constituted by contrasting attitudes—like for instance, our contrasting senses of humor (Sect. 2), which need not involve contradictory contents. As such, contextualism is clearly straightforwardly compatible with facts about the *existence* of disagreement (Sect. 3). There is indeed, however, a genuine *prima facie* worry for contextualism involving facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement in ordinary conversations (Sect. 4). And these are facts to the effect that, in ordinary conversations, it is common ground that certain contrasting expressions of (existent) disagreement would indeed *contradict* each other whereas, contextualism has it, they could actually *all* be *true*. Elaborating on a suggestion by Lewis (1989), I will argue that the *presupposition of commonality* approach (López de Sa (2008)) shows that there are *presuppositional* versions of contextualism which are in good standing *vis-à-vis* such facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement (Sect. 5). Before all this, it will prove useful to present the positions in a more regimented manner (Sect. 1).

## 1 Indexical Contextualist Relativism

This is the basic taxonomy of positions that, in my view, is becoming relatively standard in recent literature on contextualism and relativism—by MacFarlane (2009) *inter alia*, in the framework of Lewis (1980); for further details and discussion see López de Sa (2010)—those familiar with the topic can skip this section.

According to Lewis (1980), the *semantic values* of sentences must determine both which sentences are true in which contexts, and how the truth of a sentence varies when certain features of contexts are shifted—so as to help determine the semantic values of larger sentences having sentences as constituents. In order to do this, he distinguishes between *contexts* and *indices*.

A *context* is a particular concrete location—a spatiotemporally centered world—in which a sentence might be said. An *index*, by contrast, is a tuple of features of contexts, although not necessarily features that go together in any possible context. The reason why we need both contexts and indices, as introduced, is nicely summarized by Lewis himself:

Since we are unlikely to think of all the features of context on which truth sometimes depends, and hence unlikely to construct adequately rich indices, we cannot get by without context-dependence as well as index-dependence.

Since indices but not contexts can be shifted one feature at a time, we cannot get by without index-dependence as well as context-dependence. (1980, 21–22)

So the richness of contexts guarantees the availability of features on which truth of sentences might turn out to depend, and the independent shiftability of the coordinates of indices makes them suitable to account for the contribution of constituent sentences under operators of the language.

An assignment of semantic values should thus determine the general relation of a sentence  $s$  being true at context  $c$  at an arbitrary index  $i$ . But each context  $c$  determines one particular index: the index having coordinates that match the appropriate features of  $c$ . This is the index of the context,  $i_c$ . Thus, a special case of the general relation of a sentence  $s$  being true at context  $c$  at an arbitrary index  $i$  gives rise to the characteristic contention of the moderate semantic framework, to the effect that what determines the appropriate truth-value are features *of the context where a sentence is said*: sentence  $s$  as said at context  $c$  is true iff  $s$  is true at context  $c$  at its index  $i_c$ .

According to *relativism*, in general, appearances of faultless disagreement are to be endorsed. According to *moderate relativism*, endorsing appearances of faultless disagreement can be done within this general moderate semantic framework, and such moderate relativism is *contextualism*. As we have seen, it appears as if you and I can disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. According to *contextualist relativism*, the contrasting features of my context and your context—our contrasting sense of humor, say—allow that, if we were to express our faultless disagreement in the most direct simple way—our saying ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’

and ‘It is not,’ for instance—we could both be speaking the plain and literal truth. And this is so because, in general, appearances of faultless disagreement are manifested by a certain sort of contextual variation of sentences’ appropriate truth-values: it seems that sentence  $s$  can be true at a certain context  $c$  but false at another context  $c^*$ . Endorsement of such appearances can be done, contextualist relativism has it, respecting the moderate characteristic contention, as it may in effect be the case that  $s$  is true at  $c$  (at its index  $i_c$ ) but false at  $c^*$  (at  $i_{c^*}$ ), in virtue of different, contrasting features of the different contexts  $c$  and  $c^*$ .

Recently, and partly motivated by the work of John MacFarlane, some people have been convinced that this framework is shown to be inappropriate by a special sort of variation in some philosophically interesting cases: a sentence as said in a particular context could still be true *from a certain perspective* but false from another—where *perspectives* are to be thought of as the same sort of thing as contexts, but representing locations from where a sentence, as said in a (possibly different) location, is viewed or *assessed*. This departure from the moderate framework—allowing that the appropriate truth-value of a sentence as said in a context be sensitive to the perspective from which it is assessed—constitutes *radical relativism*. Notice that some people use ‘relativism’ just for this variety—so in this use contextualism contrasts with relativism—as opposed to the use here for the general attempt to endorse appearances of faultless disagreement—in which case contextualism falls under relativism.

This distinction between contextualism and radical relativism depends exclusively on claims concerning the appropriate truth-value of sentences at contexts, and not on claims involving the notion of the *content* or “proposition” of a sentence in context. If such a notion is introduced, then a further distinction becomes available. One can distinguish between *indexical* and *non-indexical* contextualism, in terms of whether the features of the different contexts determine *different contents* for the sentence, or whether these features determine different truth-values *for one and the same content*. More explicitly, appearances of faultless disagreement can be endorsed, according to contextualism, manifested by its possibly being the case that in effect  $s$  is true at  $c$  (at its index  $i_c$ ) but false at  $c^*$  (at  $i_{c^*}$ ). According to *indexical contextualist relativism*, this is so in virtue of the content of sentence  $s$  at  $c$  being different from that of  $s$  at  $c^*$ . According to *non-indexical contextualist relativism*, the content of  $s$  at  $c$  is the same as at  $c^*$ , but the truth-value it receives with respect to the relevant features of  $c$  is different from the one it receives with respect to the relevant (different) features of  $c^*$ . (For present purposes, one can conceive of *circumstances of evaluation* as the tuples of features of context to which the truth of contents is relativized. It is important to emphasize that although both *indices* and *circumstances of evaluation* are tuples of features of contexts, it cannot be assumed that the same kinds of feature would figure in both. A given feature would be a coordinate of indices provided there is an operator in the language that shifts it, and need not be an element of circumstances of evaluation if the truth of the content is not relative to it. And conversely, the features that have to be specified in order for a content to acquire a truth-value would thereby enter the circumstances, but not necessarily the indices, unless they turn out to be shiftable by an operator of the language. This crucial difference in the nature of the roles of indices vs

circumstances of evaluation is sometimes overlooked in some recent discussions, see López de Sa (2012).)

As I said, the distinction between contextualism and radical relativism is completely general, whereas by contrast the distinction between indexical and non-indexical contextualism depends on the good standing of such a notion as the content or the “proposition” of a sentence in context. For the reasons given in Lewis (1980), some have worries about this, which I tend to sympathize with, resulting in worries as to whether the distinction is ultimately substantial. In what follows, however, I will focus on the more popular *indexical* version of contextualism, without exploring how far the discussion would extend to non-indexical versions, see Egan (2010, 2012, 2014).

So let me take stock. It appears as if you and I can disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. According to *relativism*, these appearances are to be endorsed: it can indeed be the case that you and I disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. According to *contextualist* relativism, the contrasting features of my context and your context—our contrasting sense of humor—allows that, if we were to express our faultless disagreement in the most direct simple way by your saying ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and my responding ‘It is *not* funny’—we could both be speaking the plain and literal truth. According to *indexical* contextualist relativism, this is so in virtue of the difference in content that sentences with ‘funny’ would express in my mouth and you mouth.

Many agree that this indeed manifests a straightforward endorsement of the appearances of *faultlessness*. But what about the equally strong appearances regarding *disagreement*?

## 2 Flexibility of Disagreement

According to an often-voiced objection, one if not the main problem contextualism faces is precisely that it ultimately fails to respect “*facts about disagreement*,” the attempt notwithstanding.

It is not completely clear what exactly the worry is supposed to be.

One possibility is that it concerns facts about the *existence* of disagreement present in the domain in question. For suppose one were to operate with a particularly narrow, rigid conception of what it is for you and me to disagree as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny, along the lines of: it is for you and me to have *contradictory* judgments with respect to one and the same content, that *King of the Hill* is funny; to have judgments with *contradictory* contents, that *King of the Hill* is funny and that *King of the Hill* is not funny. As we have just seen, from the kind of contextualist view under consideration, if we were to express our disagreement by for instance your saying ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and my responding ‘It is not,’ we could *both* be speaking the truth. But this is so precisely in virtue of the “indexical” contents of these sentences in your context and my context—and thus, plausibly, of the contents of the contrasting judgments we would be thereby expressing. So you would be thinking and saying something like that *King of the Hill* is funny *for the likes of you*, whereas I would be thinking and saying

something like that *King of the Hill* is not funny for me and my mates. As the *King of the Hill* can well be both these at the same time, neither you nor I need be at fault here—hence the straightforward faultlessness. But precisely for this reason, we would not “really” be in disagreement given that, according to the worry under consideration, we would be precisely *not* having contradictory judgments with respect to one and the same content nor judgments with contradictory contents—which is what would be required for us to “really” disagree, according to the operative particularly narrow, rigid conception of what it is for there *to be* “real” disagreement.

Now, clearly *one*, admittedly salient way of disagreeing is precisely what this rigid conception envisages. But, contrary to frequent presentations of the worry, this is just one form of disagreeing among many others: the ordinary, intuitive notion of *disagreement* is clearly much broader and *flexible*. That this is so—and that insensitivity to this has unfortunately informed some of the recent discussion concerning contextualism and relativism—is something with respect to which a considerable consensus is in my view issuing among participants in the debate. Here is MacFarlane himself:

Suppose that Jane likes Bob, but Sarah hates him. In a perfectly respectable sense, Jane disagrees with Sarah, even if she believes all the same things about Bob.... In the same sense, two kids might disagree about licorice, one wanting to eat it, the other being repulsed by it. There need not be any proposition they differ about for them to disagree about licorice. It is enough if they just have different attitudes towards licorice. (MacFarlane 2014, 122)

These are cases of *practical* disagreement, in which the attitudes in question are non-doxastic, *conative* in nature—like desires, likings, or preferences. But the point extends to doxastic attitudes too—like the contrast in the judgments that practical disagreement arguably can give rise to. The important point for our purposes is that the ordinary, intuitive notion of disagreement is flexible and covers cases that may well go beyond that of *contradictory* judgments with respect to one and the same content and judgments with *contradictory* contents, characteristic of the narrow, rigid conception considered above.

As I said, although presentations frequently tend to be insensitive to this insight, arguably obscuring the nature of the worry against contextualism, there seems to be an increasing consensus among participants in the debate that the intuitive, ordinary notion is indeed broad and flexible in precisely this way—covering cases where the disagreement is constituted by contrasting attitudes, doxastic or not, in the envisaged way: see Baker (2014), Egan (2014), Huvenes (2012), Stojanovic (2007), Sundell (2011), among others—including non-contextualists such as MacFarlane himself.

(Some may think that acknowledging this flexibility of the ordinary notion of disagreement is somehow in tension with the following remark by Lewis:

If Jack Sprat and his wife both prefer fat meat, they *desire alike*. They are psychological duplicates, on this matter at least. But they do not *agree* in their desires, because no possible arrangement could satisfy them both. Whereas if

Jack prefers the lean and his wife prefers the fat, then they differ psychologically, they do not desire alike. But they do agree, because if he eats no fat and she eats no lean, that would satisfy them both... Agreement in desire makes for harmony; desiring alike may well make for strife. (Lewis 1989, 75)

To my mind, however, this is clearly just a (legitimate) local *stipulation*, in order to mark a certain distinction, important as it may be—rather than a point about the intuitive, ordinary notions of *agreement* and *disagreement*. For according to the latter, I take it, it is clearly indeed the case that in the second scenario Jack and his wife can also be said to *disagree* as to whether fat meat is to be preferred, if one prefers it and the other does not—in a perfectly legitimate sense of *disagreeing*.

In my view what this shows is that not every case of disagreement (intuitively conceived) need give rise to a case of *conflict* (intuitively conceived). The project of accounting for when disagreement gives rise to conflict would presumably involve practical considerations involving coordination problems in pursuing ends which might depend on and/or interfere with those of other agents, as Lewis alludes to in the passage. Interesting as this may be in its own right, it seems clearly orthogonal to our main issue here concerning (faultless) *disagreement*. See Marques (MS).

### 3 Existence of Disagreement

Once due sensitivity is paid to the flexibility of the ordinary notion of disagreement, it is clear that, contrary to frequent presentations, there can be no sensible worry as to whether contextualism can respect facts about the *existence* of disagreement. Quite clearly, contextualism (like many other positions) can indeed straightforwardly respect facts about the existence of disagreement, for, quite clearly, contextualism (like many other positions) is indeed straightforwardly compatible with you and me contrasting in our senses of humor, and such contrast, by itself, constitutes the existence of disagreement—in a perfectly legitimate sense of disagreeing. So, quite clearly, contextualism, like many other positions, can endorse the appearances that you and me disagree as to whether *King of the Hill* is funny. (Although they do not put it in exactly these terms, I take it that this thought is akin in nature to the one in Egan (2014), MacFarlane (2014), and Sundell (2011).)

(NB The point is that contextualism (like many other positions) can *respect* facts about the existence of disagreement, in virtue of being clearly *compatible* with the existence of cases not involving contradiction which are covered by the ordinary, flexible notion of disagreement. To *explain* the nature of (existent) disagreement in such cases would presumably require us to give a satisfactory account of the nature of the relevant contrast in the attitudes involved—be they doxastic or, in my view plausibly, ultimately grounded in the practical realm. This is certainly an important (and difficult!) enterprise—the present point simply being that there is nothing in contextualist positions as such stopping us from engaging in it. For further discussion, see Egan (2014), López de Sa (MS), and references therein.)

Thus the objection that indexical contextualist relativism cannot account for facts about disagreement cannot really be about the *existence* of disagreement, once attention to the flexibility of the notion is properly exerted. Which is not to say that there was not a genuine *prima facie* worry for contextualism in the vicinity—one concerning facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement in ordinary conversations in the domain in question.

#### 4 Expression of Disagreement

As I just said, there seems to be no objection to contextualism concerning its capacity to respect facts about the *existence* of disagreement. But as we are about to see, there is a genuine *prima facie* worry for contextualism involving facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement in ordinary conversations in the domain in question.

It appears as if you and me can disagree faultlessly as to whether or not *King of the Hill* is funny. Contextualism can clearly endorse the appearance of disagreement, as the existence of such disagreement can be ultimately constituted by our contrasting senses of humor—in a perfectly legitimate sense of disagreeing, given the flexibility of the intuitive, ordinary notion of disagreement. Now, according to contextualism, if we were to *express* our disagreement in the most direct, simple way—by your saying ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and my responding ‘It is not’—we could both be speaking the plain and literal truth. And this, according to indexical contextualism, is in virtue of the “indexical” contents of these sentences in your context and my context that *King of the Hill* is funny *for the likes of you*, that *King of the Hill* is not funny *for me and my mates*. These contrasting contents are *not* contradictory to each other—they can *both* be true: hence the account of *faultlessness*. But clearly—and *this* is the genuine difficulty—the contrasting pair of utterances that would most straightforwardly serve to *express* our disagreement *does seem contradictory* in any ordinary conversation. This is indeed a fact about intuitions concerning the expression of disagreement in ordinary conversations about such matters. I suggest labeling this, following Crispin Wright, *presumption of contradiction*:

In any ordinary, non-defective conversation it is common ground among the participants that utterances of (say) ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and ‘*King of the Hill* is not funny’ would contradict each other.

That something along the lines of this is indeed a *fact* about the expression of (existent) disagreement in the domains in question—failure to respect which would indeed constitute a serious objection to contextualism—is, in my view, robust enough. The core of it is at the heart of MacFarlane (2014)’s “disagreement markers”—although the flexibility of disagreement we have been concerned with may advise against such labeling. See also Egan (2014), López de Sa (2008), and Sundell (2011).

(Crucially, however, something like idioms for *presumption* need be in place, if the statement of an uncontroversial enough *fact* about (expressions of existing)

disagreements is to be secured—which in turn could figure in the materials for a case against contextualism. One is of course free to contend that in the domain in question there is “contradictory disagreement”—disagreement that *actually* involves contradictory judgments, or judgments of contradictory contents. But such a contention cannot be just taken for granted as a *datum*: in the absence of an independent consideration vindicating it, that contention *per se* would just beg the question against characteristic contextualist tenets, see López de Sa (2008).

This fact about the *expression* of disagreement, as opposed to its *existence*, *does* represent a genuine problem for indexical contextualism. (One which merely stressing the flexibility of disagreement, and the practical ultimate nature of genuine forms thereof, by itself would fail to address, see Huvenes (2012).) For how is it that it is a fact that people would generally *presume* a contradiction if, according to the view, *there need be no such* contradiction?

## 5 Presuppositions of Commonality

This is indeed a genuine difficulty concerning indexical contextualism’s ability to account for facts about the expression of (existent) disagreement. And a difficulty which, I claim, my presuppositional version—unlike other versions of indexical contextualism—is indeed in a position to overcome. My proposal elaborates on a suggestion by Lewis concerning the more general case of values:

Wouldn’t you hear them saying ‘value for me and my mates’ or ‘value for the likes of you’? Wouldn’t you think they’d stop arguing after one speaker says X is a value and the other says it isn’t?—Not necessarily. They might always presuppose, with more or less confidence (well-founded or otherwise), that whatever relativity there is won’t matter in *this* conversation. (Lewis 1989, 84)

According to *presuppositional* indexical contextualist relativism, the relevant predicates trigger a *presupposition of commonality* to the effect that the addressees are relevantly like the speaker—or, more generally, that they are relevantly like the way that is salient in the conversation taking place at the center of the context. So in particular, ‘is funny’ triggers the presupposition that the addressees share the relevant sense of humor (say).

(Although suggested (to me, at least) by Lewis’s remark, his suggestion may have been more general in kind than this, allowing for alternative—also “presuppositional”—implementations. I will not explore this further here, see Zakkou (MS).)

The notion of *presupposition* I presuppose is basically Stalnakerian. Here is a recent statement of the core by Stalnaker himself (replacing ‘context’ (set) for ‘conversation’ in order to avoid confusion with Lewisian ‘contexts’):

Acceptance... is a category of propositional attitudes and methodological stances towards a proposition, a category that includes belief, but also some attitudes (presumption, assumption, acceptance for the purposes of an argument or an inquiry) that contrasts with belief, and with each other. To

accept a proposition is to treat it as true for some reason. One ignores, at least temporally, and perhaps in a limited context, the possibility that it is false... It is common ground that  $\phi$  in a group if all members *accept* (for the purposes of the conversation) that  $\phi$ , and all *believe* that all accept  $\phi$ , and *believe* that all *believe* that all accept  $\phi$ , etc. The speaker presuppositions [are] the speaker's beliefs about the common ground... A *nondefective* [conversation] is a [conversation] in which the participants' beliefs about the common ground are all correct. Equivalently, a nondefective [conversation] is one in which all of the parties to the conversation presuppose the same things. (Stalnaker 2002, 716–17)

Now in terms of this basic notion of “pragmatic” presupposition, one can characterize the “semantic” presupposition an expression triggers, along the lines of:

A given *expression* triggers a certain presupposition if an utterance of it would be infelicitous when the presupposition is not part of the common ground of the conversation—unless participants accommodate it by coming to presuppose it on the basis of the fact that the utterance has been produced.

It is thus that the contention of the presupposition of commonality approach is to be understood. And it is this presuppositional component of presuppositional indexical contextualist relativism that, I claim, puts it in a position to account for the fact concerning the expression of (existent) disagreement that is the presumption of contradiction. For suppose that ‘is funny’ does trigger such a presupposition of commonality. Then utterances of ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and ‘*King of the Hill* is not funny’ would be infelicitous when the presupposition is not part of the common ground of the conversation (unless people accommodate). In any ordinary, non-defective conversation, all of the parties to the conversation presuppose the same things. So in particular, if you and I were to utter ‘*King of the Hill* is funny’ and ‘*King of the Hill* is not funny’, participants would presuppose that we all are relevantly alike—share the relevant sense of humor. But then it’d be part of the common ground that *King of the Hill* cannot both be funny for the likes of you but not funny for me and my mates—for it would be part of the common ground that I am one of the likes of you and you one of my mates. So it’d be part of the common ground that the utterances would indeed contradict each other. And that’s the fact that presumption of contradiction states.

What if a presupposition of commonality of the conversation is in fact false? Well, then the participants’ presumption that the utterances contradict each other is also in fact false. Which might be OK for the purpose of the conversation—*accepting* is not *believing*. What if participants actually presuppose otherwise? The prediction is that participants would refrain from using the relevant unconditioned predicates. Instead, they might cancel the presupposition by conditionalizing, expressing thus the (existent) disagreement. Which, on the face of it, seems to me to be precisely what happens with ‘is funny’: “Come here and watch this! *King of the Hill* is so funny!!”—“Funny for you, darling. You should remember that it doesn’t amuse me at all.” For further discussion, see Egan (2014), López de Sa (2008).

Two final observations may be in order. First, the presuppositions of commonality are submitted as accounting for the facts about the *expression* of disagreement that something like presumption of contradiction states. Crucially they are *not* supposed to explain the *existence* of disagreement itself—which, as alluded to above, in my view would very plausibly depend on the ultimately practical grounds of the relevant contrast in attitudes.

(This has apparently escaped some critics, who object to my proposal on the basis that disagreement can be present in situations where the relevant presupposition of commonality is not in place, but actually the contrasting presupposition of *uncommonality* might well be—see Egan (2014), Marques and García-Carpintero (2014). Indeed. But precisely, as observed, that hardly constitutes an objection to the proposal, as the proposal never implied otherwise. I covered this point explicitly in the earlier presentation, although perhaps without stressing it appropriately:

Hannah and Sarah might disagree as to whether Homer is funny, and their respective distinctive senses of humor be perfectly apparent to them... Intuitively, I submit, *the disagreement in our case is constituted by the contrastive features of Hannah's and Sarah's senses of humor* (say). In non-defective conversations where they presuppose they are alike, this disagreement would be naturally expressible by the relevant pair of (unqualified) contrasting utterances... But in equally non-defective conversations where they do not presuppose they are alike, but may indeed presuppose they are not, *their disagreement exists all the same*, but it need not be so expressible (López de Sa 2008, 307–308, emphasis added.)

Second, I take my proposal to potentially complement, rather than conflict with, that of Sundell (2011)—in which linguistic behavior similar to that involved in the presumption of contradiction is accounted for in terms of the negotiation that may issue in certain contexts. Clearly such a phenomenon also exists. In my view, however, his explanation is partial, in that it is not available in all the relevant cases. See for further discussion López de Sa (MS).

## 6 Conclusion

This was by no means a full defense of presuppositional indexical contextualist relativism. Such a defense should include discussion of the objections that have been submitted against the predictions of the postulation of such presuppositions of commonality (Baker (2012), Egan (2014), MacFarlane (2014)), as well as a comparison with relatedly presuppositional *non-indexical* contextualist relativism (Egan (2010, 2012, 2014)), and with proposals that appeal to *implicatures* rather than presuppositions triggered by expressions (Finlay (2005)).

It was not my aim to provide a defense of this kind here—I attempt to do this elsewhere (López de Sa MS). My goal here was to shed light on the often-voiced—but I think obscure—objection that, in its relativistic attempt to endorse appearances of faultless disagreement, (indexical) contextualism fails to respect “*facts about disagreement.*”

There is no objection to contextualism concerning its capacity to respect facts about the *existence* of disagreement, as this can be constituted by contrasting attitudes—in a perfectly legitimate sense of disagreeing, given the flexibility of the intuitive, ordinary notion of disagreement.

But there is indeed a genuine *prima facie* worry for contextualism—one involving facts about the *expression* of (existent) disagreement in ordinary conversations: the presumption of contradiction of certain utterances, which (according to the view) need not actually contradict each other. A genuine *prima facie* worry, but one that, I claim, presuppositional indexical contextualist relativism is in a good position to allay.

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