

# Chapter Six

## Digressions

### Binding and Hidden Indexicals

In this chapter we respond to someone who reacts to Chapters 2-5 as follows: ‘Hold it, guys! No one should hold that the kind of intuition mongering described in Chapter 2 is sufficient to establish semantic context sensitivity. You are perfectly right about that. However, when that kind of evidence is combined with certain kinds of syntactic evidence, you then have a strong case for semantic context sensitivity. More specifically: If you have syntactic evidence that there's a hidden argument at some level of linguistic representation, e.g., in LF, and you also have strong attending context shifting intuitions, then you have made your case for this hidden argument being context sensitive; you are in effect forced by the confluence of the semantic and syntactic evidence to postulate a hidden indexical.’

The idea that syntactic evidence is required for the postulation of a hidden linguistic expression is reasonable. But the idea that syntactic evidence can show that what's hidden is an indexical, is, we think, mistaken.

Our discussion of these issues is structured as follows:

1. We first present arguments that have come to be known as ‘binding arguments.’
2. We then show that these arguments *alone* fail to establish semantic context sensitivity. They are relevant to issues of semantic context sensitivity only when combined with either Context Shifting Arguments or Incompleteness Arguments. These syntactic arguments are relevant only to the question of *where* to locate context sensitivity in a sentence that is already established to be context sensitive. Since Context Shifting and Incompleteness Arguments fail to establish the controversial cases (or so we will argue), binding arguments are largely irrelevant to our concerns.

Though there is much more to be said about binding arguments, that's really all *we need* to say about them for the overall purposes of this book.

However, as a service to those with either an independent interest in these issues, or those not entirely convinced by our objections against CSAs and Incompleteness Arguments, we will add two afterthoughts:

3. First afterthought: Binding Arguments over-generate: You can construct Binding Arguments to the effect that there are hidden argument places everywhere (for example, Binding Arguments can be exploited to establish that there are lots of hidden argument places in mathematical statements like '2+2=4'). We take this to be a *reductio* of Binding Arguments.
4. Second Afterthought: Postulating these hidden argument places has deeply counter-intuitive consequences even for those convinced that there's semantic context sensitivity in the relevant cases.

### **Syntactic Evidence for Hidden Arguments: Binding**

We begin with alleged syntactic evidence for hidden argument places. Normal utterances of (1) are taken to be about a restricted class of failures, perhaps, e.g., students in a specific class.

(1) Many students failed.

One explanation for how this restriction is effected is that quantifier expressions harbor an unpronounced indexical item whose semantic function is to index a quantifier domain restriction in a context of use. Stanley and Szabo advocate hidden indexicals; they insist that *syntactic* evidence must be adduced for any posited domain variable; and they cite as evidence the fact that these posited domain variables interact in binding relations with other quantifier expressions.

In sentences like (1), they claim, one can bind its hidden constituent, enabling its domain to vary according to the values introduced by a variable-binding operator (Stanley and Szabo 2000, p.243; cf., also, Stanley 2000). They infer this constituent must be present in (1). So, for example, in (2),

(2) In every class, many students failed.

the domain associated with 'many students' varies as a function of the values introduced by 'every class.' (2) means (on one of its readings), according to S&S, (2\*):

(2\*) [Every (x): class (x)][many (y): student *in x* (y)](failed y)

Assuming binding to be a syntactic phenomenon,<sup>1</sup> such examples would seem to provide evidence for a variable somewhere in the syntactic structure of quantified noun phrases.<sup>2</sup> (Stanley and Szabo go as far as to suggest that without positing a hidden domain variable, it is not clear that sentences like (2) express 'coherent propositions at all' (Stanley and Szabo 2000, p. 243).)

S&S generalize their idea by associating with each nominal an indexical, which when unbound behaves like a free variable to which a semantic value must be contextually assigned. So construed, (1) is interpreted along the lines of (1\*),

(1\*) Many students (i) failed.

where 'i' is a hidden indexical (in (1)) that, in a context of use, picks out a set (or property), which functions to restrict the extension of 'student,' and thereby, restricts the domain of 'many' further than 'student' does by itself. (Their actual account is more complex, but nothing we say requires us to go into the extra detail here.)

The Binding Argument is alleged to generalize. To see how, consider sentence (3).

(3) It's sunny.

Notice that [3] can be embedded in larger sentence:

[4] Everywhere Sally goes, it is sunny.

Intuitively, what [4] says, or at least a natural reading of [4], is that for every place that Sally goes, it is sunny at that place. So we should represent the logical form [4] something along the following lines:

[4\*] For all places, x, if Sally goes to x, then it is sunny at x.

The quantifier phrase 'Everywhere Sally goes' is binding a place variable in the logical form of 'It is sunny' - otherwise there would be nothing for the quantifier phrase to bind. (Nelson 2001, pp. 27-28 ms; see, also, Stanley 2000, pp. 415-17)

Stanley, in fact, is optimistic that he can establish that all nominal expressions harbor context sensitive indicies:

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<sup>1</sup> We think they might be best accounted for pragmatically, but that's a topic for another occasion (see, Cappelen and Lepore 1997, 2000, 2002); see also Farkas 1997, who denies that the data require a syntactic treatment but are instead best accounted for semantically).

<sup>2</sup> For the fuller development of this theory see Stanley and Szabo 2000.

Extra-linguistic context appears to have a profound effect on the determination of what is expressed by the use of linguistic expressions. For a bewildering range of very different linguistic constructions, adhering to relatively straightforward linguistic intuition about what is expressed leads us to the conclusion that facts about the nonlinguistic context play many different roles in determining what is said. Furthermore, that so many different constructions betray this sort of sensitivity to extra-linguistic context understandably leads to pessimism about rescuing the straightforward intuitions while preserving any sort of systematicity in the theory of meaning. A presumption motivating the pessimistic inclination is that, if we accept the ordinary intuitions, what *appear* to be very different ways in which context affects semantic content in fact *are* different ways in which context affects linguistic content. Pessimism is a natural reaction to those who adopt this presumption, because if appearance is a good guide to the facts in this domain, then there are just too many ways in which context affects semantic content to preserve systematicity. One common and natural reaction to these facts is, therefore, to deny the semantic significance of the ordinary intuitions, thereby relegating the project of explaining the apparent effects of extra-linguistic context on semantic content to a domain of inquiry outside the theory of meaning proper. So doing removes the threat context poses to the systematicity of semantic explanation, but at the cost of reducing the interest of the semantic project. In this paper, I explore a different reaction to the situation. My purpose is to undermine the presumption that what appear to be very different effects of context on semantic content are very different effects. My challenge is of necessity rather limited, since it is too implausible to trace all effects of extra-linguistic context on semantic content to the very same source. Rather, I will take, as a case study, three superficially very different effects of context on semantic content, and show that they are due to the very same mechanism, what I call *Nominal Restriction*. I thereby hope to provide convincing evidence of the promise of the project of reducing all apparent effects of context on semantic content to a small number of sources (Stalnaker 2000a, pp.XXX).

### ***The Irrelevance of the Binding Argument***

Our first reaction to this argument is exceedingly simple. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Binding Argument is sound. What does it show? Well, it shows that the logical/syntactic form of 'Every penguin has a tail' is something like 'Every penguin<sub>(d)</sub> has a tail.' That argument *alone* doesn't show that the hidden argument place, 'd' is semantically context sensitive. It doesn't show that different utterances of 'Every penguin has a tail' have different truth conditions, and so, can disagree in truth-value. All it would show is that there is a

hidden argument place there. Notice, the following two claims are logically compatible:

*Hidden Domain Variable:* Every noun phrase in a quantified noun phrase co-habits with a domain variable in LF.

*Contextual Insensitivity of Quantifier Domain Restrictions:* Sentences containing quantified noun phrases are semantically stable (with respect to their domains.)

Even if you have shown that there's a hidden argument place in a sentence, you still need an additional argument to establish that that sentence exhibits semantic context sensitivity (or any other sort of context sensitivity for that matter).

There's significant logical gap between the claim that there's a hidden syntactic unit in S and the claim that S is semantically context sensitive. You get from hidden syntactic entities to semantic context sensitivity using the kind of arguments we presented in Chapter 2.

We should point out that this is not a view that's a surprise to proponents of Binding Arguments. Recall, we quoted one major proponent of the Binding Argument, *viz.*, Stanley, extensively in Chapter 2. He's certainly aware of the fact that he needs additional arguments.

Some readers might opt now to skip the rest of this chapter. For, this chapter, as we mentioned earlier, should be of interest only to those who, for some reason or other, are unconvinced by our objections to the supplementary arguments (i.e., those arguments that are supposed to combine with the Binding Arguments, in particular, the CSAs and Incompleteness Arguments), or to those researchers with a special interest in binding *per se*.

In remainder of this chapter, we present four 'internal' objections to the Binding Argument. We show that if you think the 'classical' versions of this argument are sound, then there are innumerable 'hidden' argument places in, e.g., the arithmetical sentence '2+2=4'. We take that establishing that this sentence has indefinitely many 'hidden' argument places to be a *reductio* of the Binding Argument. We also show that postulating these hidden argument places have deeply counter-intuitive implications: It predicts that there should be anaphoric relations where there are none; and it predicts that certain sentences,

indeed, some of them false, express *a priori* and/or necessary truths and falsehoods.

### **First Afterthought: Reductio of Binding Argument**

A confused mathematical anthropologist (call her 'Sally') trying to find out if mathematical truths are universal utters (5) as a summary of her findings:

(5) Everywhere I go,  $2+2=4$ .

Here's the Binding Argument applied to (5):

Intuitively, (5) says that for every place Sally goes,  $2+2=4$  at that place. So we should present the logical form of (5) along the following lines:

(5\*) For all places,  $x$ , if Sally goes to  $x$ , then  $2+2=4$  at  $x$ .

The quantifier phrase 'Everywhere Sally goes' is binding a place variable in the logical form of ' $2+2=4$ ' – otherwise, there would be nothing for the quantifier phrase to bind. This establishes that the logical form of the sentence ' $2+2=4$ ' has a freely occurring place variable.

Since there is obviously *no* variable ranging over locations in ' $2+2=4$ ', this is a *reductio* of the Binding Argument.

We would like to leave the argument here; it is close to indisputable that arithmetical statements lack hidden indexicals referring to places. However, since no bullet is unbitable, two brief remarks are in order.

First, since both speakers and audiences are blissfully unaware of any reference to a location in utterances of ' $2+2=4$ ,' the referent of a hidden indexical would have to be fixed in a manner entirely unconnected with speaker intentions. Such a reference fixing mechanism would be unique. We are owed a substantive story about how it is achieved.

Second, those who recognize a place index in ' $2+2=4$ ' are vulnerable to a most slippery slope, for consider (5\*\*):

(5\*\*) No matter where Sally goes, no matter when she goes there,  $2+2=4$ .

Based on the Binding Argument should the logical form of (5\*\*) be (5+)?

(5+) For all places  $x$ , for all times  $y$ , if Sally goes to  $x$  at time  $y$ , then  $2+2=4$  at  $x$  at  $y$ .

No one should want to conclude that the complex quantifier expression 'No matter where I go, no matter when I go there' binds two hidden variables in ' $2+2=4$ .' Such examples illustrate that a blind endorsement of the Binding

Argument might ultimately require positing *indefinitely* many dedicated variables in every single sentence. Other examples that might help you see the point, if, for reasons beyond us, you haven't already, are:

Wherever I kiss her, she smiles [hidden argument place for location in 'kiss'].

Whenever I kiss her with my socks on, she smiles [hidden argument place for what we wear].

Notice that our unboundedness charge has an analog in an earlier debate about event verbs and adverbial modification. Recall, according to one early proposal, ascribing (6\*) as (6)'s logical form was supposed to *explain* why (7) entails (6).

- (6) Mary kissed John.
- (6\*) Mary kissed John in some place.
- (7) Mary kissed John in the park.

We increase the adicity of an event verb like 'kiss' in order to accommodate an inferential relation. However, following this strategy consistently would require each event verb to harbor indefinitely many 'hidden' places in order to accommodate inferential data among (6)-(10), etc. (see Davidson 1967).

- (8) Mary kissed John in the park after midnight.
- (9) Mary kissed John in the park after midnight behind his left ear.
- (10) Mary kissed John in the park after midnight behind his left ear on August 24, 1999.

So, for example, in order to explain how (10) logically implies (6), should we treat (6)'s logical form as (11)?

- (11) Mary kissed John *in some place at some time behind some place on some date.*

Following this strategy would render the adicity of an ordinary verb like 'kiss' indefinitely large. How would anyone ever learn his language (Larson and Segal 1995, p. 468)?

Likewise, the seemingly unboundedness of the Binding Argument requires too many indexicals. So, the Binding Argument fails to be decisive for the existence of hidden indexicals.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> What does the Binding Argument show? The data it invokes are interesting, and require explanation. The facts are these: Sentences like (1), (3), and '2 + 2 = 4' lack a place variable (or any other hidden variable of the sort S&S posit). However, these sentences are still grammatical, and so their initial quantifiers are non-

We turn now to further constraints on indexicality.

### **Second Afterthought: Three Additional Objections to the Postulation of Hidden Indexicals**

Positing hidden linguistic expressions incurs certain obligations. With indexicals there are at least two:<sup>4</sup> on the syntactic side, a posited indexical should enter into anaphoric relationships; on the semantic/epistemological side, it should generate certain kinds of *a priori* truths and falsehoods; and it should not generate certain necessary truths and falsehoods. We discuss these in turn.

#### **Anaphora**

Overt indexicals can participate in anaphoric relationships. In (12) and (13), the antecedents of 'it' and 'himself' are the indexicals 'that' and 'he'.

- (12) That's a table but *it* is not a book.
- (13) He's a senator who likes *himself*.

Since hidden indexicals are just the same indexicals, they too should be capable of entering into anaphoric relationships. So, if (1) harbors a hidden reference to a restricted domain, (14) should be intelligible, with 'it' anaphoric.

- ?(14) Many students failed, and it is a big domain.

That (14) makes no sense (even though (14\*) below does) is evidence against a hidden indexical in (1).

- (14\*) Many students in this (domain) failed, and it is a big domain.

For another illustration, consider Stanley and Szabo's view that (15), roughly, has the form (15\*),

- (15) Tigers are mammals.
- (15\*) Tigers (i) are mammals.

where 'i' indexes, in a context of use, a domain. But, then, (15\*\*) should make as much sense as (15+) does, where 'it' is alleged to be anaphoric on 'i'.

- (15\*\*) Tigers are mammals, and it is a big domain.
- (15+) Tigers in this (domain) are mammals, and it is a big domain.

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vacuous. Without positing hidden indexicals of the sort S&S favor, how are we to explain their grammaticality? It goes beyond the scope of this book to provide an answer to this grammatical question; however, we refer the interested reader to Cappelen and Lepore 2002, where we sketch a possible answer.

<sup>4</sup> Hidden indexicals fail other tests, e.g., so-called weak cross violations, but we'll not pursue this criticism. Cf., Blair 2002 ms and Hawthorne 20003.

The impossibility of reading 'it' anaphorically on the alleged indexical is evidence against a hidden indexical in (15).

We are not committed to the view that *every* alleged covert element goes our way in this respect. For example, it is not easy to make reference to the covert subject of 'please' in 'John is easy to please'. But even if it's hard/impossible to get anaphora on controlled 'PRO,' because the potential constructions have their own 'PRO' controlled by a matrix subject, that in itself might be good reason to treat controlled 'PRO' as a special case. Our point is that either you do get anaphora, or there is an independent explanation for why not; minimally proponents of unpronounced indexicals owe us an independent explanation.<sup>5</sup>

### **A *Priori* Truths**

According to Kaplan, it is an essential feature of an indexical that its linguistic meaning can be used to generate certain kinds of *a priori* truths.

Intuitively, (6) ['I'm here now'] is deeply, and in some sense, which we will shortly make precise, universally true. One need only understand the meaning of (6) to know that it cannot be uttered false. No such guarantees apply to (7) ['D.K. is in Portland on 3/26/1977']. *A Logic of Indexicals* which does not reflect this intuitive difference between (6) and (7) has bypassed something *essential* to the logic of indexicals. (Kaplan, 1989, p.509, our emphasis)

These 'universal' truths are generated as follows: Kaplan identifies the linguistic meaning of an expression with its *character*, which is a function that delivers the expression's content at each context. So, the character of the first person indexical 'I' is a function on contexts whose value at any context is the agent of

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley (2002) claims (p. 368) that the reason for the unavailability of anaphoric link is due to the fact that the domain variable co-habits the node with the noun. This case is alleged to be similar to that of incorporation, as the contrast between (a) and (b) illustrates:

(a) John owns a bicycle. He rides it daily.

\*(b) John is a bicycle-owner. He rides it daily.

Of course, one needs to motivate claims about incorporation, if the latter notion is taken in its technical sense. So, we need to hear Stanley's argument that the index 'cohabits' a node with the noun, as opposed to merely being a sister of the noun. This can't be stipulated, since one can't stipulate that there is syntax that behaves as though it isn't there. Also, incorporation typically involves some kind of movement, driven for some independent reason. We know that compounding of the 'bicycle-owner' variety blocks modification of various sorts; and even if we don't know why this is the case, we have independent grounds for treating 'bicycle-owner' as a compound. But while we see that appeal to incorporation blunts the worry Stanley faces, we don't see the independent reason for thinking that the (alleged) syntax of indices is relevantly like the familiar cases. Thanks to Paul Pietroski for walking us through this subtle debate.

that context. Suppose the character of an indexical D specifies that its referent in a context, U, is whatever object satisfies conditions C in U. Then an *a priori* truth will be expressed by an utterance of:

D satisfies conditions C

This kind of sentence cannot be uttered falsely. For instance, no utterance of (15) or (16) is false; and anyone who understands 'I' and 'you' will recognize this, that is, it constitutes *a priori* knowledge.

(15) I am the person who utters this sentence.

(16) You are the person addressed by this utterance.

However, no utterance of (15) or (16) is necessarily true; whatever proposition an utterance of (15) expresses is false in any context, say, where the utterer does not exist. Since any speaker could fail to exist, this proposition is contingent.

Kaplan infers that his semantics for indexical expressions provides examples of the contingent *a priori*.

We are now positioned to state our worry about hidden indexicals. In all of these cases none of these essential features is manifested.

According to Stanley and Szabo (2000), (1) properly construed means the same as (1\*). Since 'i' is an expression it has a character, i.e., a linguistic meaning. Given what Stanley and Szabo (2000) say we assume they intend the character of 'i' to be something like 'the contextually salient domain'. We (or they) might be wrong about this. But this indexical, according to Kaplan, must have some character or other; call whatever it is F. Then (17) (or (17\*)) ought to be such that their every utterance is true and this is knowable *a priori*.

(17) Everyone is in the contextually salient domain.

(17\*) Everyone is in F.

Likewise, speakers should know *a priori* that every utterance of (18)-(19) is false.

(18) Some ducks are only in non-salient domains.

(19) At least one little duck is not in a salient domain.

However, not every utterance of (17) is true, and not every utterance of (18) or (19) is false. (We doubt any utterance of (18) or (19) is false.) Hence, no one has any such *a priori* knowledge.

If we are right, the analogy between hidden indexicals referring to contextually salient domains and ordinary overt indexicals breaks down. But if Kaplan is right about the semantics and epistemology of indexicals, it follows that Stanley and Szabo (2000) must be wrong. Minimally, they need to defend their departure.

Our goal is not to conclusively establish that all hidden indexicals fail these two above constraints, but it is, however, fairly simple to construct similar arguments for every example mentioned in the introduction. As a brief illustration, consider comparative adjectives. Suppose, as is commonly supposed (Ludlow 1989; Stanley 2002), sentences with comparative adjectives contain a hidden reference to a comparison class and that for each context of utterance it is a contextually salient comparison class that's referenced. It should then, first, be possible to refer anaphorically to these classes, as in (20) and, second, to generate certain kinds of *a priori* truths or falsehoods, as in (21).

(20) She's tall, and it has many five year-old members.

(21) She's tall, but not compared to a salient class.

However, we can't get 'it' in (20) to refer to a comparison class, and (21) doesn't seem *a priori* false to us.

### **Non-Existent Interpretations?**

On the hidden indexical proposal, an utterance of (22) can be used to express a truth, because its context of utterance can effect a domain restriction on underspecified quantifier: context restricts the range of its quantifier 'every'.

(22) Every table is covered with books.

Suppose that in using (22) a speaker succeeds in restricting the domain of the quantifier 'every' to tables in domain D, and thereby, expresses what she would have had she instead uttered (22').

(22') Every table in domain D is covered with books.

What, then, shall we conclude about (23)?

(23) Every table is in domain D.

(23) is as likely to be used to express a truth as (22). Since (22) can express what (22') can in the same context, why can't we infer that (23) can express in a context what (23') would?

(23') Every table in domain D is in domain D.

The hidden indexical account is a semantic one about what can be said (or expressed) by sentences with underspecified quantifiers and so complaining that (23') looks less informative than (23) needn't be a problem. After all, a present utterances of 'I am here now' by Lepore and 'Lepore is at Rutgers University on November 21, 2003' aren't equally informative, but on, at least one respectable semantic story, these sentences can be used to say (or express) the same proposition. If the same proposition can be expressed by non-synonymous sentences, where one, in some sense, is analytic and the other is not, then perhaps that sort of explanation extends to (23) and (23').

A genuine challenge to the hidden indexical account must establish that, once appropriately contextually relativized, (23) and (23') do indeed express *distinct* propositions. Here are considerations intended to support this challenge.

(23) does not have a true necessary reading, yet (23') does. Minimally, it's worth pointing out that embracing the hidden indexical account requires accommodating such necessary interpretations.

Much along the same lines, but worse, consider the sentence 'Every table isn't in domain D'. It doesn't seem to have a reading under which it expresses a necessarily false proposition, but the hidden indexical account predicts that it should, since, assigning its negation narrow scope, any utterance of 'Every table in domain D isn't in domain D' expresses a necessarily false proposition. Represented as '[Every x: table in D(x)]NOT(x is in D)', to be true, it would have to be true of every table in D that it is false that it is in D.

Though not knockout punches, the accretion of these counter-intuitions succeeds in clarifying commitments inherited from adopting the hidden indexical account.<sup>6</sup> Each of these various cases appeals to speaker intuitions, but these

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<sup>6</sup>Of course, our intuition is also that we *cannot* express with an utterance of 'Every table is in domain D' a necessarily false proposition. But what prevents, on semantic grounds alone, a restriction from issuing in a

intuitions seem no less firm than whatever other intuitions were supposed to have motivated the hidden indexical account in the first place.

### Screening Off

A hidden indexicalist might protest that these alleged troublesome interpretations are never available. Perhaps a policy of *screening off* is in place, thereby, excluding any contextually determined domain that is explicitly referenced in a predicate (or elsewhere). So, e.g., take domain D – if explicitly referenced by an utterance of (23), it is screened off as a candidate domain restriction.

(23) Every table is in domain D.

This constraint is supposed to preempt contextual domain restrictions that would render some seemingly contingent sentences as expressing necessarily true or false propositions. Any domain referenced, or expressed, explicitly is thereby rendered contextually irrelevant, at least for the purposes of restricting an underspecified quantifier. If this ploy can be made to work, then what's expressed with (23) cannot be what would be expressed with (23'), but, perhaps, instead what would be expressed with (24).

(23') Every table in domain D is domain D.

(24) Every table in domain E is domain D.

Contextually supplementing a token of 'every table' by indexing, say, a domain E secures uniqueness without rendering an utterance of (23), relative to the same assumptions, as expressing a necessity.

Whatever can be said in favor of screening off surely reflects nothing more than handy wisdom about the pragmatics of sound interpretation, and *nothing* about semantics. For how can semantics prohibit an explicitly referenced domain from also being most contextually salient domain restriction?<sup>7</sup> With uses of quantifier expressions, as 'Every table in domain D', an explicitly referenced

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proposition that expresses what 'Every table in domain E is in domain D' would, with non-intersecting domains indexed. That is to say, what prevents the restricted domain of the utterance from being the most contextually salient domain?

<sup>7</sup>Or worse, hearkening back to the last footnote, the screening off strategy would somehow have to be made to work so as to prohibit internal incoherence, as with 'Every table in E is in D' (where E and D are non-intersecting domains).

domain is typically also contextually salient. Indeed, why can't a speaker stipulate beforehand that she wants a certain domain (and that domain alone) to be the most contextually salient domain of our conversation, and then proceed with (23)? Even in such circumstances, we presume, what's she expresses is not, in any sense, rendered necessary.

Furthermore, even if some sort of screening off strategy could be made to work in the simple cases we have been discussing – though we don't see how – it wouldn't help to avoid counter-intuitive consequences for more complicated cases.

Contexts may or may not be accurately representable as sequences of items which context-sensitive expressions can take as semantic values (<speaker, addressee, time, place, topic of discourse, perceptually salient objects, etc.>),<sup>8</sup> but we presume it's not controversial that in any given context at most finitely many domains are salient. Let  $C$  be an ordering  $\langle a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n \rangle$  of every salient domain, and then try to denote a table with a use of a sentence of form (25),

(25) Every table  $\varphi(i)$ ,

where 'i' indexes a domain of  $C$ , and ' $\varphi$ ' specifies the predicate of which 'i' is a constituent. ' $\varphi(i)$ ', e.g., might be 'is domain D', , etc. None of these envisaged instances of (25) seems to express a necessary truth (or falsehood) in  $C$ , yet counterparts of form (26) can,

(26) Every table  $(i_1) \varphi_1(i_2)$ .

(as would 'Every table in domain D is in domain D'; 'Every table in domain E is domain D', and so on). Suppose, because ' $i_2$ ' occurs in the predicate in (25) it follows that distinct contextually salient domains must be indexed by ' $i_1$ ' and ' $i_2$ ' in (26). But consider a new sentence with enough disjoint predicates such that each item in  $C$  can be picked out by a distinct index, as in (27).

(27) Every table  $\varphi_1(i_2)$  or  $\varphi_2(i_3)$  or ....  $\varphi_m(i_n)$ .

According to the hidden indexical proposals, an utterance of (27) expresses in  $C$  what (27') would.

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<sup>8</sup> Montague (1974), Kaplan (1989), and Lewis (1970).

(27') Every table ( $i_1$ ) is  $\varphi_1(i_2)$  or  $\varphi_2(i_3)$  or.... $\varphi_m(i_n)$ .

But then (27), which expresses a seemingly contingent claim about the contextual salient setting of what, if anything, 'the table' denotes, has been transformed into sentence which in that same contextual setting has a (nearly) necessary reading, without a possibility of further screening off. That we can devise such sentences might convince you something is fundamentally wrong with the hidden indexical account.

### *Conclusion*

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, whether the Binding Argument is sound or not (in any given case) in no way can establish the presence of semantic context sensitivity. Just the same, the argument has attracted enough attention that we thought it worthwhile to refute. Having done so, we return to the chief topics of this book, the adequacy of Radical Contextualism. After having established in Chapters 3-5 that Moderate Contextualism is unstable, a view that inevitably slips into Radical Contextualism, in the next few chapters we will discuss and argue for, first, its empirical inadequacy and then its internal incoherence.