

Review of: "The Ethics of Retraction"

Kazim Besirli

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Summary: Quill R. Kukla's essay, "The Ethics of Retraction," delves into the ethical dimensions of retraction using the tools of speech act theory. Kukla argues that retraction is a central tool for repair in our imperfect world, where mistakes are inevitable. The essay explores when retraction is possible, ethically permissible, and ethically advisable, examining its role in repairing both personal integrity and social relationships.

Strengths:

Comprehensive Theoretical Framework: Kukla provides a robust theoretical foundation for understanding retraction within the context of speech act theory. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the normative and social impacts of retraction, which is essential for fully grasping its ethical significance.

Pragmatic Analysis: The pragmatic analysis of retraction and its success conditions is particularly well-articulated. Kukla effectively distinguishes between different types of speech acts and their unique challenges when it comes to retraction, enhancing our understanding of the complexity involved in retracting a speech act.

Ethical Nuances: Kukla adeptly navigates the ethical nuances of retraction, emphasizing that it is not merely about undoing a previous statement but involves a broader consideration of normative and social contexts. This depth of analysis is crucial for developing a sophisticated ethics of retraction.

Use of Analogies: The analogy to the Japanese art of Kintsugi is a compelling and effective way to illustrate the concept of retraction. It underscores the idea that retraction, like Kintsugi, is about creating something new and valuable from the remnants of the past, rather than attempting to erase it.

Areas for Improvement:

Clarity and Structure: While the essay is theoretically rich, its structure can be somewhat dense and challenging to follow. A clearer organization of sections and more explicit signposting of key arguments would enhance readability and accessibility, especially for readers less familiar with speech act theory.

Practical Implications: The essay would benefit from a more detailed discussion of the practical implications of the ethics of retraction. Providing concrete examples or case studies from various fields, such as academia, law, or interpersonal relationships, would illustrate how these theoretical insights apply in real-world scenarios.

Engagement with Opposing Views: Although the essay references existing literature on retraction, a more thorough engagement with opposing viewpoints would strengthen the argument. Addressing potential criticisms or alternative

perspectives in greater detail would provide a more balanced and rigorous analysis.

Extended Analysis of Retractive Apologies: While the discussion of retraction as a tool of social repair is insightful, the analysis of retractive apologies could be further expanded. Exploring how retractive apologies differ from standard apologies and their unique ethical considerations would add depth to this section.

Conclusion: Quill R. Kukla's "The Ethics of Retraction" is a thought-provoking and significant contribution to the field of ethical theory and speech act analysis. The essay offers a detailed and nuanced exploration of retraction, emphasizing its importance as a tool for repair in our imperfect world. With improvements in clarity, structure, and practical application, this work has the potential to serve as a foundational text in understanding the ethics of retraction.

Recommendation: Accept with minor revisions.