

1. Possibility premise

Possibility premise Possibly, every* country now at war is at peace.

‘every*’ rules out vacuous truth; thus this means:

Possibly: some country now at war is at peace, and every country now at war is at peace

2. Necessity premise

Necessity premise Necessarily, for all p , p iff now p

To motivate the necessity premise, consider any true statement whatsoever. This statement, no matter what it is, will also be true now. And, conversely, consider any statement that is true now: no matter what it is, it will also be true. This does not seem to be an accident. It is no accident, that is, that whatever is true is true now and vice versa. On the contrary, this generalization has a kind of necessity. (p. 2)

Given Kaplan’s account of ‘I am here now’:

In any context $\langle s, l, t \rangle$, the content of ‘I am here now’ is the proposition that s is at location l at time t

that sentence is a “logical truth” (since its character guarantees that it is true whenever uttered), but the propositions it expresses are contingent and temporary. Similarly for ‘for all p , p iff now p ’:

In any context, $\langle s, l, t \rangle$, the content of ‘for all p , p iff now p ’ is the proposition that *for all p , p iff p at time t*

There was, to be sure, a tradition in twentieth-century philosophy according to which necessity was to be explained away as a linguistic phenomenon. Think of ‘Bachelors are unmarried’, for instance, or ‘ p iff $\sim\sim p$ ’, or even ‘ $2 + 2 = 4$ ’. These statements appear to be necessary, but this appearance was taken as an indication not of their possessing any genuine necessity

but simply of their being analytically true. And although today few would endorse this kind of deflationary treatment across the board, one still sometimes sees it proposed in particular cases.

The question of when, exactly, a deflationary treatment of apparent necessity is warranted is too large to address here. But in my view it is no more plausible for the case of ‘ ϕ iff now ϕ ’ than for ‘ p iff $\sim\sim p$ ’. I will therefore set aside the possibility of this treatment in what follows, although the issue certainly deserves further discussion. (pp. 2–3)

3. The puzzle

1. $\Diamond\exists x(NWx \wedge Px)$ (From possibility premise)
Possibly, some country now at war is at peace
2. $\Box\forall x(NWx \leftrightarrow Wx)$ (From necessity premise)
Necessarily, a country is now at war iff it is at war
3. $\Diamond\exists x(Wx \wedge Px)$ (1,2)
Possibly, some country is at war and at peace (This is absurd)

4. Objection: two senses of ‘now’

An objector distinguishes a rigid from a nonrigid sense of ‘now’:

When a sentence token is prefixed with ‘now’ in the rigid sense, this ensures that its world of evaluation is the actual world, even if the token lies within the scope of another operator. The nonrigid sense, by contrast, does not shift the world of evaluation (although, since it is nonredundant, it might shift the *moment* of evaluation). It is true only in the rigid sense that, possibly, the man who is now US president is never born. After all, any possible world at which a man is never born is a world at which he is never US president. And it is true only in the nonrigid sense that, possibly, Trump is now US president. After all, at the actual world, Trump is *not* now US president. (p. 7)

Glazier’s response: the premises of the argument are both true under the nonrigid reading.

Argument for possibility premise:

1. Was: every country now (nonrigidly) at war is at peace
2. For all p , if was p then possibly p (Possibility of the past)
3. Therefore, possibly: every country now (nonrigidly) at war is at peace

Note: the following is true:

Was: not: Ted is sitting if and only if now (nonrigidly) Ted is sitting

(Since 'now' isn't temporally redundant.) So by Possibility of the past:

Possibly: not: Ted is sitting if and only if now (nonrigidly) Ted is sitting

Thus Possibility of the past conflicts with the Necessity premise. (Compare Dorr and Goodman (2020, p. 641).) That's ok.

5. Yalcinian (2015) concerns about 'now'

We've been assuming that the meaning of 'now' ensures the truth of, e.g.:

It was the case that everyone now poor is rich.

But this truth can also be expressed without 'now':

It was the case that everyone poor is rich

Also, suppose you put 'now' in the consequent:

It was the case that everyone poor is now rich

This *doesn't* have the "temporally rigidifying meaning". Also, in alleged cases of temporal rigidifying like this:

It once was the case that someone now rich was poor

the rigidification is dispelled by apparently innocuous rephrasing:

It once was the case that there was someone now rich who is poor

and by order-switching:

It once was the case that someone rich was now poor

References

Dorr, Cian and Jeremy Goodman (2020). "Diamonds are Forever." *Noûs* 54: 632–65. Forthcoming.

Glazier, Martin (forthcoming). "Maybe Some Other Time." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* .

Yalcin, Seth (2015). "Actually, Actually." *Analysis* 75(2): 185–191.