When is Something Essential?

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Outline

Three Plausible Principles

Sometime Possible

If x is the case at some time, then it's possible that x is the case.

B

If x is the case, then, necessarily, it's possible that x is the case.

Necessary Essences

Necessarily, if being F is essential to being x, then at all times when x exists, x is F.

Sometime Possible

If x is the case at some time, then either:

1. x was the case.

2. x is the case.

3. x will be the case.

However things shake out, x is possible.

If x is impossible, then:

1. x wasn't the case yesterday (or the day before...).

2. x isn't the case (now).

3. x won't be the case tomorrow (or the day after...).

However things shake out, x isn't the case at some time.

B

S5.

Necessary Essences

It's essential to Kal that he's a cat.

He can't be a loaf of bread; he must be a cat!

- He never was a loaf of bread.
- He isn't a loaf of bread.
- He never will be a loaf of bread.

The Entailments

Necessary Always

If x is necessarily the case, then x is always the case.

Entailed by Sometime Possible.

Always Possible

If x is the case, then it's always possible that x is the case.

Jointly entailed by Sometime Possible and B.

Necessary Essences and Necessary Always

Once Catie the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, she's essentially a butterfly.

- Whenever Catie exists, she's a butterfly (Necessary Essences).
- Catie is always a butterfly (Necessary Always).
- Catie isn't a butterfly when she was a caterpillar.

Necessary Essences and Always Possible

Kal exists, and being born in 2020 is essential to him.

- Any time Kal exists he is such that he was born in 2020 (Necessary Essences).
- It's always possible that Kal exists (Always Possible).
- So, it's possible that Kal exists at times other than those when he in fact exists.
- So, Kal could have been born at times other than those when he in fact was born.

Sometime Possible and B

1. Necessary Essences conflicts with Necessary Always and with Always Possible.
2. Necessary Essences and Always Possible are entailed by Sometime Possible and B.
3. So, Necessary Essences conflicts with Sometime Possible and B.

Good and Bad Essences

Non-timey essences are okay:

- Being a square.
- Being a cat.
- Being a tomato.

Timey essences aren't okay:

- Having been born in 1776.
- Being the son of Donna and Bob.
- Existing from 2020 to 2040.

Rejecting Sometime Possible?

Past Possible

If it was the case that x, then it's possible that x.

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If it's the case that x, then it's possible that x.

Future Possible

If it will be the case that x, then it's possible that x.

Rejecting Past Possible?

It was the case that it's 1776, but it's not possible that it's 1776.

- In 2024 it was the case that it's 1776.
- In 2024 it's not possible that it's 1776.

Three Options

It was the case that it's 1776:

1. It was the case that: it's 1776 at t.
2. It was the case at t that: it's 1776.
3. <It was the case that it's 1776> is true at t.

Option 1

P: It was the case that it's 1776 at t.

Either t is before 1776, is 1776, or is after 1776:

1. If t is before 1776, P is false.

2. If t is 1776, P is false.

3. If t is after 1776, P is false.

No counterexample.

Option 2

P: It was the case at t that: it's 1776.

Either t is before 1776, is 1776, or is after 1776:

1. If t is before 1776, P is false.
2. If t is 1776, P is false.
3. If t is after 1776, then it's possible that it's 1776 at t.

No counterexample.

Option 3

P: $<$It was the case that it's 1776$>$ is true at t.

Either t is before 1776, is 1776, or is after 1776:

1. If t is before 1776, P is false.

2. If t is 1776, P is false.

3. If t is after 1776, then it's possible that it's 1776 at t.

No counterexample.

Conclusion

We have good reason to accept Sometime Possible and B.

Since Sometime Possible and B conflict with Necessary Essences
(by way of Necessary Always and Always Possible), we should reject
Necessary Essences.

Timey things can't be essences.

Three Plausible Principles
OOOO

Entailments
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Conflicts
OOOO

Costs
OOOOOO

Conclusion
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Kal