

Counterfactuals, Context, and Knowledge

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It is common opinion that counterfactuals are highly context-dependent, but there are different views about the way context influences the truth-conditions for counterfactuals. Different theories explain the context dependency of counterfactuals in different ways. For example, the so-called *standard theories* (Stalnaker, Lewis), and the so-called *pragmatic theories* or *strict implication analysis* of counterfactuals (Warmbrod, von Fintel et al.) offer explanations that are different in many important respects. I will argue that the pragmatic theories give an explanation that better fits our language practice. I will conclude by pointing to what I see as another advantage of the pragmatic theories: in applying counterfactuals to epistemology (like Nozick, DeRose and others who define knowledge in terms of counterfactuals), the standard view of the truth-conditions leads to denying the closure principle, and a specific version of the pragmatic view, which I will define, leads to epistemic contextualism and enables us to keep the closure principle.