

The Duality of Might and Would Counterfactuals

"If A were the case, \sim C might be the case" seems to undermine the claim that "if A were the case, then C would be the case". But given that for many ordinary A and C we can affirm the former claim, it seems that many ordinary counterfactuals are false. This line of thought succeeds iff might counterfactuals are the dual of would counterfactuals. I argue, however, that such a duality is implausible since it entails that would counterfactuals are strict conditionals and Stalnaker and Lewis have shown this not to be the case. However, Stalnaker and Lewis show only that the counterfactual is not a contextually-invariant strict conditional. Recently von Fintel and Gillies have advocated that the counterfactual is a contextually-sensitive strict conditional. I argue however, that their semantics is falsifiable, and so the counterfactual is not any type of strict conditional. As a result the would counterfactual is not the dual of the might counterfactual, and so the argument that most counterfactuals are false fails.