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## Editorial

The Value of the Absurd

Ana S. Moura/AMP Rodriguez

General Editor

## Detailed Table of Contents

### Section 1 Articles (including Reviews)

#### Article

**What if at the Monty Python Flying Circus had been preferred the use of the ‘long take’ technique? Exploring alternative history as a research tool for Scriptwriting and Television.**

*André Leite Coelho, Programa de Doutoramento em Criatividade e Inovação Social e Sostible, University of Vigo, Spain*

*Sol Alonso Romero, Drawing Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Vigo, Spain*

**Abstract.** This paper aims to explore the idea of narrative continuity at the Monty Python Flying Circus television series, while understanding what might have occurred in the series and audiovisual comedies had they used the long take technique to connect comedy sketches, thus imposing a non-fragmented narrative. This research first addresses the characterization of this iconic TV show and the long take audiovisual technique, as a means of transition throughout narratives, where several examples from cinema and television are considered from classics to contemporary works, alongside theoretical definitions. Secondly, different humourists inspired by the Flying Circus are presented, inspecting afterward the need for comedy to cut to a new beginning after its inevitable ending, considering the ‘cut to’ and the long take techniques. Next, this paper explores, through the use of alternative history as a research tool, the outcomes of the counterfactual use of the long take technique at a selected Flying Circus episode as a case study, finishing with perspectives towards the future of a speculative continuity in comedy.

Keywords: Alternative History; Monty Python Flying Circus; Humor; Long take technique; Sketch Transition; Fragmented Audiovisual Narrative; Continuity

#### Article

**Gaming with History: How History of Science can be used as a scientific storytelling tool**

*Dora Dias, Unidade de Ensino das Ciências, Faculty of Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal*

*José Ferraz-Caetano, REQUIMTE-LAQV, Faculty of Sciences - University of Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** Gamification can be a useful tool when engaging young students with science. When designing a new game, it is pivotal that a featured storytelling element can draw students’ attention while

providing an enjoyable experience. However, building such an insightful science dissemination narrative from scratch is often challenging. As real-life situations are frequently more appealing to students, adding alternative history elements can be helpful when designing such a game. In this paper, we present a novel educational framework to design educational, science-based storytelling activity using the history of science and alternative hypothesis as ground tools for its inception. By analyzing student's feedback when playing a science-based game with a historic episode outline, they report that their learning experience was fun and relatable, matching their scientific performance during the game.

Keywords: History of Science, Alternative History, Gamification, Storytelling, Chemistry, Ethics

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## Review

### **Using alternative stories to promote organizational change**

*Cynthia M. Montaudon Tomas, UPAEP Universidad, Business School, Puebla, Mexico*

*Ingrid N. Pinto López, UPAEP Universidad, Business School, Puebla, Mexico*

*Anna Amsler, Independent consultant*

**Abstract.** Change management involves implementing diverse strategies to achieve a desired outcome, as such, it is a process where communication is key. This article analyses how methods that include alternative stories and alternate history can be used to promote change, helping people understand complex and conflicting situations in organizational life and discover new possible ways forward. Classifications of different varieties of stories to promote change are included, as well as examples and best practices regarding the adoption of divergent narratives to connect facts, perspectives and interpretations in order to reduce resistance to change and achieve softer or even seamless transitions towards the desired state.

Keywords: Organizational change; alternate history; alternative stories; storytelling; consulting; sense-making

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## Article

### **Modeling the Past: Using History of Science to Predict Alternative Scenarios on Science-based Legislation**

*José Ferraz-Caetano, REQUIMTE-LAQV, Faculty of Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** In an ever-changing world, when we search for answers on our present challenges, it can be tricky to extrapolate past realities when concerning science-based issues. Climate change, public health or artificial intelligence embody issues on how scientific evidence is often challenged, as false beliefs could drive the design of public policies and legislation. Therefore, how can we foresee if science can tip the scales of political legislation? In this article, we outline how models of historical cases can be used to predict and understand how scientific evidence can influence the emergence (or fall-back) of science based-legislation. We also present frameworks on how to use past episodes

of History of Science and Alternative History insights to build epistemic models, based on previous successful approaches on the spread of scientific misinformation. These models will help the accuracy of the design of eventual alternative realities, that can come insightful on present decision-making methodologies.

Keywords: History of Science, Epistemic Models, Science-based legislation, Alternative History

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## Article

### **The Anesthesiologist amidst a Pandemic: Storying an Alternate History provides Insights to improve the Practice of Anesthesiology in a VUCA World**

*Maria Minerva P. Calimag, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery/ Research Center for Social Science and Education/ Research Center for the Health Sciences/ Department of Anesthesiology Santo Tomas University Hospital, University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines*

**Abstract.** The anesthesiologist has taken the front row in airway management, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Many anesthesiologists succumbed to the disease when unbeknownst to them, they rushed to the patients' bedside unprotected while trying to secure their airways during the early days of the pandemic. Anchored on counterfactual history as a research tool, a form of historiography that attempts to answer "what if" questions, this case study research explores an alternate history of the Specialty of Anesthesiology so that through a science fiction storytelling account of what is yet to happen, an alternative outcome is hypothesized as a result of a change in the course of history. Through a fictional tale that allows W. T. G. Morton to travel in time, he is transported into the modern world, and an alternate history of the development of the specialty is written. In the present time, Morton realizes that the field of Anesthesiology he jump-started has expanded beyond his expectations, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. By focusing on the philosophical and sociological underpinnings and on ethical evidence-based medicine, a holistic view of the Specialty of Anesthesiology is created. Through a 'minimal-rewrite' or 'plausible' counterfactual, the paper purported that even a small detail such as the writing of a detailed Case Report about the public demonstration of ether inhalation anesthesia that includes the patient's perspective at the center of the experience can contribute greatly to the more rapid growth and recognition of the Specialty. It can lead to a change in the epistemological development of the anesthesiologists' medical mind and make it more resilient to adapt to rapid changes during times of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). The paper underscores how alternate history and storytelling as research tools can provide insights about probabilistic outcomes in crisis situations such as in a pandemic.

Keywords: alternate history, storytelling, anesthesiology, etherization, COVID-19 pandemic

## Article

### **Women and Men in technology: an alternative historical proposal for equals**

*Renata L. Frade, Departamento de Comunicação e Arte (DeCa/DigiMedia), Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal/ Faculdade de Letras (FLUP), Universidade do Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** Pioneers in programming from the 19th to the 20th century, women were also responsible for the creation of ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), one of the projects that gave rise to the Web. However, their role is usually absent from STEM official narrative, either in educational or media context. This work aims to reveal hidden aspects of women in technology at two crucial moments: the 60s (return of men to the labor market) and the 80s (influence of advertising and behavior shaped by capitalist consumption). More specifically, it intends to identify specific key aspects that were pivotal in the construction of today's invisibility of women's role in tech from the majority of persons. Based on ethnographic work with the online communities of women in technology, this study, while also resourcing to Alternative History, explores how a better historical knowledge of female IT accomplishments and communities could have determined present-day equal pay and professional opportunities in the area. Through counterfactual/factual historical discussion, we conclude that if they had not been emptied socially, politically, historically and economically in the 80s within IT and STEM context as pioneers, the fourth wave of feminism and women's rights would faced an altogether more positive scenario at present.

Keywords: Technology; Feminism; History; Communication; Alternative History; Storytelling

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## Review

### **The value of alternative stories in scenario planning**

*Cynthia M. Montaudon Tomas, UPAEP Universidad, Business School, Puebla, Mexico*  
*Anna Amsler, Independent consultant*

**Abstract.** Scenario planning has increased in use due to the possibility of considering multiple futures that include social, technological, economic, and political challenges. Alternative stories present improbable and dramatic twists that help answer the question "What if?" while proposing multiple explorations about potential trends and developments. With the objective of establishing the value of alternative stories about the future to develop strategies, this article reviews and analyzes the use of alternative stories in scenario planning. Within the analysis, examples and cases of scenario planning in different countries and sectors are introduced, as well as the historical aspects of scenario planning, the use of alternative stories, and alternate history. Furthermore, visual elements, such as comparative tables, explore similarities and differences in the use of alternative stories in scenario planning. A brief presentation of how alternative stories can be used in uncertain times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is also integrated into the work, as well as a proposal of how alternative history could be used to complement scenarios.

Keywords: Scenario planning, Alternative stories, Alternative/Alternate history, Narrative, Strategy, Future

## Article

### **What if we can be heroes just for one day? The improbable possibility of an artistic career in Portugal**

*Ondina Pires, Informal artist, Portugal*

*Ana Oliveira, DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte, Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal*

**Abstract.** In the history of modern Portuguese alternative music, female names do not abound for different reasons. They seem almost invisible. It was from this premise that we studied a specific case in order to determine the causes of this ‘almost’ invisibility in Portugal, and its consequences in terms of recognition abroad. Our main goals are to determine the causes of the improbable possibility of a Portuguese female former musician to proceed in a career in indie music, as well as to provide a new content of study, that of an Alternative History, concerning social background and music in Portugal. In view of our objectives, we chose the case of Ondina Pires as our study corpus, she who left a legacy of self-discipline and resilience in the alternative Portuguese music scene. Due to the lack of Portuguese detailed studies in the area of an Alternative History of Music in Portugal, concerning the role of women in Portuguese indie music, we opted to make a descriptive study based on the corpus under analysis, and embodied in the views of academic authors, most of them foreigner. This descriptive and historical study provide a reflection on three parallel dimensions. If they had taken on other outlines, in an Alternative History, could have made it possible for Ondina to be a hero for more than one day, not giving up her musical projects.

Keywords: Alternative History; music; audiences; cultural and social environment.

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## Section 2 Round Table Chair Perspectives

The Round Table Chair Perspectives contributions are authored by chairs of the Oral Presentation Round Tables of the International Meeting of ‘What if?...’ World History, associated with the *Hypothesis Historia Periodical*. The Oral Presentation Round Tables are dialogue sessions and this type of contribution reflects the critical perspective of the chairs regarding the works presented, as well as the ensued dialogue and novelty of the themes to the field;

### Round Table Chair Perspectives

#### **What if... the History told the resistance? The unlikely odds of the Do-It-Yourself attitude – insights regarding Zines and artistic heroes from the Oral Presentation Round Table 4 chair**

*Susana Januário, Institute of Sociology, University of Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** The Second International Meeting of “What if?...” World History (Whatif’20) had as theme “Art and Alternative History” which was a – as was said then – an umbrella for a several diverse proposals, such as transversal research themes, inclusion or globalization. The round table #4 presentations focused on what can be called the philosophy, lifestyle or Do-It-Yourself (DIY) attitude. Under discussion were proposals for alternatives to the current economic and social model, with regard to editorial

forms of dissemination of scientific knowledge, and alternative and independent artistic trajectories. These are social practices that structure a non-fictional alternative history, once real, concrete, resultant from significant reflexivity and creativity, in the way they react and resist the dominant, capitalist, mercantilist, and competitive model. The DIY mode can be understood as a concrete alternative to the hegemonic model that perpetuates processes and mechanisms of cultural and knowledge exclusion. In fact, with these specific examples – DIY editions on scientific knowledge and independent music career – we can think and realise in alternatives ways of doing things, beyond the hegemonic course of History – that is what we intend to do in this paper. These experiences show us as future perspective a real change for those who are not able – in spite of the many reasons that can explain it – to play the game or don't want to follow the mainstream rules, once they think alternatively.

Keywords: Do-It-Yourself (DIY); Alternative dissemination of scientific knowledge; Independent and alternative artistic trajectories; Alternative History

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## Round Table Chair Perspectives

### **What if different parallel realities converged? Insights regarding Edutainment, History of Science, and the value of Alternative Stories in Scenario Planning presented during the 2nd International Meeting of 'What if?... World History.**

*André Leite Coelho, Programa de Doutoramento em Criatividade e Inovação Social e Sostible, University of Vigo, Spain*

**Abstract.** This paper analyzes the points of convergence and combined implications of distinct papers presented by its respective authors at the 2nd International Meeting of 'What if?' World History by University of Porto, Portugal. As an innovative division of this alternative meeting, different Oral Presentations were held bringing together live discussions with the researchers scheduled, being the round table number 5 the one presenting these papers' analysis: 'Gaming with History: How History of Science can be an alternative source for science communication', and 'The value of alternative stories in scenario planning'. Both different types of research are first analyzed throughout its key ideas and outcomes which, subsequently in this paper, are then verified, so to conclude at its final section, the common importance of alternative stories in future planning.

Keywords: Alternative History, Edutainment, History of Science, Gamification, Scenario Planning, Stories

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## Section 3 Invited Lecturers f2f Insights

The Invited Lecturers f2f Insights contributions are authored by the invited lecturers for the Invited Lectures f2f sessions of the International Meeting of 'What if?...' World History, associated with the Hypothesis Historia Periodical. These are dialogue sessions where two renowned researchers and academics, from different areas of expertise, talk and debate ideas around a common AH, or AH akin theme. The contribution is a critical essay of their lecture and interaction during the session. As such, there can be two parts regarding the same session, one for each invited lecturer.

## Invited Lecturers f2f Insights

### **Fanzines, Resistance and Feminism: An alternative story told by Portuguese fanzines meets Alternative History**

*Paula Guerra, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** The first fanzines, ‘home-made objects’ - produced individually or collectively, and with a limited circulation – against alternative stories, appeared in the 1920s-30s and were associated with science fiction fans; later, during the 1950s-60s, band and music fanzines became increasingly popular. However, the production, distribution and consumption of fanzines gained global relevance with the emergence of the punk phenomenon in the UK and the US during the 1970-80s, assuming itself as an area of freedom of thought and do-it-yourself (DIY) creation, and as an alternative to conventional media. In this article, we address and analyze Portuguese feminist fanzines as invisible storytellers of women in contemporaneity, namely in the denunciation of male and patriarchal dynamics of symbolic domination, i.e. as a form of alternative history. Through that analysis we are able to identify key aspects and moments where this invisibility could have been addressed and the attitude of the status quo regarding these fanzines could have become positive. This identification provides the data for an analytical construction of an Alternative Chronology regarding the Portuguese feminist fanzine path, and through such lenses more insight regarding past and present prejudice against de DIY artistry is achieved.

Keywords: Fanzines; Feminism; Resistance; Portugal; Punk; Alternative History

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## Invited Lecturers f2f Insights

### **Literature, Text and Context: Insights regarding Alternative History, Humour, Zen and more**

*João Ventura, Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon, Portugal (retired)*

**Abstract.** Storytelling has accompanied humanity since the dawn of consciousness, and the reader is the ultimate recipient of these stories. However, the parameters shaping the nature of the reader’s enjoyment and understanding of the stories is still a matter of discussion. Starting from the contents of a f2f Invited Lectures on Alternative History and Fanzines, this paper develops the idea that a shift in the point of view of the observer/reader is important in many aspects of art and life. Using an experiential perspective and autoethnography as methodology, both as a reader and a writer of speculative fiction, it is argued that such shift provides a richer experience on reading an Alternative History, Fantastic or Steampunk novel, and it may ease some problems in the appreciation of a translated story or novel. Finally, this mind shift is an essential part in the structure of humour, and it is present in the stories which are part of Zen teaching techniques. This reflexion proposes that these are some essential parameters to the reading experience and sustains them through literary examples from genre literature.

Keywords: Alternative History; Genre literature; Reading Experience; Cultural context; Experiential Perspective

## Section 4 Opinion

### **Fiction, truth and method**

*Orfeu Bertolami, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Faculty of Sciences, University of Porto, Portugal*

**Abstract.** How does fiction help to build a consensual narrative of the time we live? How necessary is this narrative and how close it should resemble the reality? Since its inception, fiction can state and frame ideas and concepts through the refutation of the established aesthetic, ethical, hermeneutical, ontological and political consensus. This inverted logics that Aristotle regarded so dangerous is in fact the ultimate capability of the fictional narrative to capture the reality in vivo and to describe it with its full colours. However, it is undeniable that this intrinsically disruptive strength can be particularly unsettling. The very imagination that turns Gregor Samsa into an insect and transforms David Kepesh into a huge breast can very well distort reality and pretend that a lost election have been rigged and won by a lot. How can one be sure that a culture is mature enough in exercising fact verification and in analysing reality with scientific tolls that it is shielded against ideological, political or religious fictions? How to ensure that society has means to deconstruct distortions and lies engendered by social agents with specific interests? We believe that just a blend of objective means of fact verification, scientific analysis and an uncommitted ethical bond with truth can ensure that society is not misled by lies and misrepresentations of reality.

Keywords: Fiction; Reality; Truth and Refutation; Culture and Science

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### Supplementary Material

**Literature, Text and Context: Insights regarding Alternative History, Humour, Zen and more (Supplementary Material English)**

**Chronicle of the First (and Last...) Multipunk Convention**

*João Ventura, Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon, Portugal (retired)*

**Literature, Text and Context: Insights regarding Alternative History, Humour, Zen and more (Supplementary Material Portuguese)**

**Crónica da Primeira (e Última...) Convenção Multipunk**

*João Ventura, Instituto Superior Técnico, University of Lisbon, Portugal (retired)*

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