

Between History and Fiction: On the Possibilities of Alternative History¹

Ondřej Sládek

To understand how it actually was, we therefore need to understand *how it actually wasn't* - but how, to contemporaries, it might have been.
(Ferguson 1999, 87)

Almost every historian must have been tempted to ask the question: "What would have happened, if.?" What would have happened if there had been no French Revolution of 1789? What if Napoleon had won the battle of Waterloo? Or vice versa: What if he had lost the battle of Austerlitz? What would European have history looked like? What would have happened if there was no American Revolutionary War? What would have happened had the Munich Agreement never been signed? What would have happened if. One may ask dozens, or hundreds of these and similar speculative questions. They may serve us to generate answers - histories that have never happened, although they could have.

Alternative history

Although this kind of thinking about history, which has come to be termed "counterfactual" or "virtual" history, is applied relatively often, it can hardly be regarded as a widely accepted approach and method in terms of standard historiographic research. Many critics of counterfactual scenarios regard them as mere uncommitted and useless playthings, a "parlor-game" (Carr 2001; see Doležel 2004, 111-112) for which there is no place in serious historiographic writing.² They regard them fundamentally as fiction since they describe something which has not happened, which is based neither in history, nor in genuine scholarly work. On the other hand, advocates of alternative thinking about history view counterfactual scenarios as an extension of a certain method the historian uses in every stage of their work. Their advocates believe counterfactual scenarios and models of possible history have various uses; one of the most important among them has to do with the fact that they are thought experiments pointing to the significance of certain facts of

1 A modified version of this study was published in Czech under the title: O historiografii a fikci. Událost, vyprávění a alternativní historie (Sládek 2007).

2 The principles of counterfactual thinking and its results are the matter of research in many disciplines at the present time, such as: psychology, sociology, philosophy, logic, economics etc. The most important books and articles are (selected): Lewis (1973); Lewis (1981); Slote (1978); Trevor-Roper (1980); Pollock (1981); Bennett (1981); Kwart (1986); Roese - Olson (1995); Tetlock - Belkin (1996).

history (events and situations) which *did not have to* happen as we have come to know them - in a single specific way.

But can worlds constructed by counterfactual narratives be treated on a par with worlds generated through historical narratives? Is counterfactual history a history at all, or is it pure fantasy, fiction, literature of no relevance as far as coming to understand certain past events is concerned? Which are, then, the potential uses of alternative history?

Robert Cowley, the editor of *What if? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been* (1999a),³ says in the introduction to this book on counterfactual history:

History is properly the literature of what did happen; but that should not diminish the importance of the counterfactual. What ifs can lead us to question long-held assumptions. What ifs can define true turning points. They can show that small accidents or split-second decisions are as likely to have major repercussions as large ones (the so-called 'firstorder' counterfactual. (Cowley 1999b, xi-xii)

Cowley expresses his opinion about the relation between history and fiction in a decidedly clear and radical way: "History is properly the literature of what did happen." What, however, he means by "history" and "literature" the editor of *What if?* does not specify. Moreover, the above-quoted statement does not explain whether there is any difference at all, between how history is treated by the historian and how it is treated by the writer.

Fictional worlds

My intention here is not to deal with the issues that have been widely addressed by a host of philosophers, historians and literary scholars as part of the discussion on the nature of mechanisms of historical accounts that has been running since the mid-1970s. Rather, I would like to attempt to present an analysis of the above-mentioned relation between fiction and history in the light of counterfactual history, not at the level of practical discourse, as has been the case in most literature on alternative history so far (see Ferguson 1997; Carr 2001; Huston 2005), but at the level of theoretical analysis of the structure of the corresponding (possible) worlds constituting the individual - fictional, historical and counterfactual - narratives. I owe the inspiration especially to writings on the semantics of fictional worlds by Lubomír Doležel (1988; 1998; 1999; 2002; 2004; 2008; 2010), Umberto Eco (1989; 1990; 1994; 1998), Thomas Pavel (1986), Ruth Ronen (1994) and Marie-Laura Ryan (1991).

Fictional worlds of literature are "a special kind of possible worlds; they are aesthetic artifacts constructed, preserved, and circulating in the medium of fictional texts" (Doležel 1998, 16). A fictional possible world - a fictional world - may be

3 Robert Cowley is the editor of other books on counterfactual history: Cowley (2001; 2003).

regarded as a frame of reference for all entities constructed by the fictional text. A fictional world is a macrostructure consisting of entities (characters, objects and places) and relations between them. It is however subjected to certain restrictions shaping its nature in a crucial way: (a) fictional worlds are worlds existing only by virtue of the semantic energy of the text; in other words: a fictional world is accessible through semiotic channels only (reinstated in the act of reading); (b) fictional worlds and their individual components have the status of unused possibilities; (c) fictional worlds are "small worlds" (see Eco 1989; 1990, 64-81); (d) fictional worlds inevitably contain gaps as they are constructed by finite texts (which themselves contain many a gap); (e) these gaps arise in the act of creation of the fictional world and their nature is therefore primarily ontological.

Historical worlds

Let us now examine an example of another possible world, a historical one - a world constructed by a historical narrative (historiographical text). A historical world is a macrostructure which is, like a fictional world, filled with places, objects, characters and relations between and among them. The most significant difference we find when comparing a historical narrative with a fictional one is that it seeks to "tell the true story" (Ricoeur 1983-1985; see esp. Ricoeur 1984, 12). In this sense, the emphasis on truthfulness, verifiability and comprehensibility are the most prominent features of any historical fiction. Unlike fiction, which may contain even imaginary events, characters and beings, historical narrative is fully subjected to the authority of reference to the factual/actual world.

The continuous process of verification, completion, but even expunging of specific historical facts and rewriting of historical narratives evidences the fact that the historical world presented is *incomplete* and *full of gaps* - just like fiction. The nature of these gaps is however entirely different in kind; the gaps arise from the fact that we do not have - and cannot possibly have - access to many a fact. Their nature is therefore epistemological (cf. Doležel 2002, 353). If the gaps are being filled in in any other way but one based on historiographic research, for example by adding some imaginary elements, the world is not a possible world of history, but a possible world of *historical fiction* (such as novels by W. Scott, V. Hugo, A. Dumas etc.).

History is an aggregate of individual narratives which are more or less *feasible*. A historical text, or a reconstructed story of history, is however *feasible* not because the narrator uses facts which can be verified and for which there is evidence, but by virtue of using inductive and deductive sequences of steps, termed "abductions" by Ch. S. Peirce, which are best understood as *hypothesis* formation.⁴ In this sense,

⁴ These issues were explored especially by Umberto Eco, who has also systematized them. He writes in *The Limits of Interpretation*: "There are three levels of Abduction. On the first level, the Result is strange and unexplainable, but the Rule already exists somewhere, perhaps inside the same field of problems, and one just must find it, and find it to be the most probable. On the second level, the

reconstructing history is feasible only if the historian applies hypothesis formation, using one of the three different falsifiable abductions - or s/he wholly embraces imagination.

Lean Leduc in his *Les Historiens et le Temps* (1999) says, that there is no unbridgeable gap between 'real' history and 'unreal' fiction. History and fiction cooperate; historians often exploit fiction - for reconstruction of the past (Leduc 1999). The idea has been developed by Paul Ricoeur, who stresses that historiography must always involve *controlled* fiction and delusion (see Ricoeur 1985, 338).

Having said that historical narrative texts are motivated by efforts to understand *the reality* that has taken place in the past, what can be said of events that might have happened? To put it in other words, what can we say about alternative history, i.e. counterfactual thinking? The historian searches for plots and stories which are more or less *likely* to have happened the way the particular historian presents them in his/her narrative. Alternative histories, on the other hand, make use of a much broader concept of the *likelihood* - bordering dangerously on fiction.

Worlds of counterfactual history

Let us now make an attempt at presenting a brief description of a possible world of history/historiography. Like fictional and historical worlds, counterfactual worlds are incomplete, too; they contain gaps whose nature is primarily epistemological (we do not and cannot know all events and facts of the past). This nevertheless does not prevent us from using these gaps to fill them in with other more or less likely (possible) facts or events. A few examples: Napoleon wins the battle of Waterloo, there is no French Revolution, Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union succeeds etc.

Statement 1: Counterfactual history is a thought experiment focused on the analysis of what could have happened rather than what did happen.

The structure of worlds constituted in this way is in no significant way different from that of fictional worlds, whose gaps are, however, of ontological character. Creation of counterfactual history takes both certain knowledge and understanding - *noiesis* - and the act of creation as such - *poiesis* (cf. Doležel 2002, 362). We may thus claim:

Statement 2: The nature of gaps in counterfactual worlds is both epistemological and ontological.

Let us nevertheless dwell a little longer on the description of this kind of possible worlds. It is undisputable that our imagination is without limits as far as imagining

Rule is difficult to identify. It exists elsewhere, and one must bet that it could be extended to this field of phenomena [...]. On the third level, the Rule does not exist, and one must invent it [...]" (Eco 1990, 159).

what kinds of things might happen if... is concerned. If Alexander the Great had not died young and had an army equipped with contemporary technology; if Aristotle and Plato had had a computer etc. - these are speculations which rather than mediating *verification* of past events and determining historical factors, evidence the possibilities that have not come to happen; they are fictions without a cognitive end. Considering this fact, we might well leave these general remarks on counterfactual worlds in order to focus exclusively on worlds of counterfactual history.

Statement 3: Worlds of counterfactual history are physically feasible worlds.

While fictional worlds may be inhabited by physically (in both senses of the word) impossible entities such as supernatural or fantastic beings, worlds of counterfactual history are populated exclusively with historical figures' counterparts. Worlds of counterfactual history are thus subjected to another restriction: they must be conceivable. This means that the world must adhere to logical and epistemological conventions as we know them from the natural/actual world.

Statement 4: "Counterfactual history is a thought experiment: we are testing the importance of a particular factor in actual history [event] by its modification or elimination" (Doležel 2002, 361).

Worlds of counterfactual history are worlds which might have been actual worlds provided certain events had taken another course. What could have happened had the winter not been so cruel when Hitler's army marched towards Moscow? What if there had been no fog on the East River in 1776 and George Washington had been defeated and forced to capitulate?

Counterfactual historians can be said not only to consider the possible alternatives to specific events (e.g. it is a foggy day, the winter is mild etc.) that did not come to be the actual history, but also to examine the circumstances which shaped or which might have preceded these events. Let us now look in more detail at how counterfactual historians use the concept of *event*.

At the most general level, an event may be regarded as the "transformation of an initial state into an end state at a certain time" (Wright 1963, 27-28; see Doležel 1998, 55-56). From the point of view of a counterfactual historian, an event is a multifaceted fact which however is not or was not inevitable. According to counterfactual historians, each event may have two or more end states. Counterfactual historians tend to view these various other-than-actual end states of specific events as a challenge inviting one to construct alternative histories. Besides exploring possible events, they tend to focus on stimuli and causes that might have shaped these events in other ways. Comparing different scenarios of counterfactual histories, we discover out that the causes that can be found at the root of alternative courses of history most frequently include: (a) *intentional decisions* of specific persons - agents who perform or fail to perform certain action (e.g. decide not to launch a battle, sign a contract, capitulate etc.), or they are caused by (b) *non-intentional action* in which *natural events* (forces) or fortunate/misfortunate *accidents* play a crucial role.

Typology of worlds of counterfactual history

Analysing how counterfactual historians treat *events* in their alternative histories, we may outline a complete typology of these worlds. If alternative histories are any different at the level of structure at all, then this difference consists in the emphasis counterfactual historians put on the specific *events* which they transform (at the level of thought). Three basic types of worlds of counterfactual history may be distinguished. The categorization reflects the above-mentioned opposition of intentionality/non-intentionality of specific *events*.

- Worlds of counterfactual history: W_1

They are worlds where the resulting event is transformed in contrast to reality - as a consequence of differing *decisions* and *goals* (intentional acts). They include all such worlds of counterfactual history where a single actor (personal agent) may be identified who has affected the subsequent course of history in a significant way by having or not having performed a certain act or event. Examples include virtually any acts/events which may be conceived as having taken place in an entirely different way: Napoleon has emerged victorious from the battle of Waterloo; Caesar has not crossed the Rubicon.

- Worlds of counterfactual history: W_2

They are worlds where a specific event is transformed to a significant degree not by human action, but other circumstances (non-intentional acts) - *natural events* - shaping the development of things. Some counterfactual historians enjoy speculating about what would have happened if - for example if the Turkish sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had not been prevented by weather from invading Vienna in 1529? Or, what would the course of WWII have been without the very cruel winter of 1941 in Russia? The role of external, natural forces seems to be a relatively wide-spread topic in alternative histories.

- Worlds of counterfactual history: W_3

They are worlds where the factor determining a transformation of a specific event is a *coincidence*. For example the introduction to the study "The Death That Saved Europe" by Cecelia Holland (1999), whose author discusses what might have happened if Europe had been conquered by the Mongol hordes in the 13th century, says: "Never, probably, was the West, and the historical phenomenon it represented, in so much danger. At the last moment, blind luck spared Europe. History may be a matter of momentum, but we can never forget that the life - or death - of a single individual can still matter" (Holland 1999, 93-94). The emphasis on the role and significance of a specific event for the subsequent development of European history is quite evident. In this respect, however, a remark also pertaining to many other studies in counterfactual history, should be made. On the one hand, counterfactual thinking provides arguments against historical determinism, reinstating the role of accident and non-obligatory causation, while many alternative histories assume that

a single changed circumstance may (or should) affect the whole subsequent course of history. This is, naturally, a determinism not unlike the one criticised by counterfactual historians themselves.

Apart from making the process of creation of and the basis for the construal of alternative history by a historian more transparent, the above typology can be instructive in yet another respect. I have already mentioned the fact that counterfactual thinking helps us to appreciate the role of certain determining factors. Simultaneously, it helps us to consider the effect and role of natural events and accidents in history. Oxford historian Niall Ferguson writes in his introduction to *Virtual History*: "The events they [*historians*] try to infer from these sources were originally 'stochastic' - in other words, apparently chaotic - because the behaviour of the material world is governed by non-linear as well as linear equations" (Ferguson 1999, 89). What are, then, the other uses of counterfactual history? One could argue that discussing what might have, but did not happen is but a waste of time and efforts. The opposite is the truth: it is a deeper psychological activity performed in our daily lives on other occasions, too. Many concepts of the theory of action regard the creation of counterfactual histories as a step that is part of any action: "Every description of an action contains, in a concealed form, a counterfactual conditional statement" (Wright 1968, 43-44; see Doležel 1998, 56).

Statement 5: Counterfactual history is not arbitrary - it may be subjected to criticism (cf. Doležel 2002, 361).

To prevent counterfactual history from becoming a mere plaything of intellectuals and a result of uncontrolled imagination on the part of the historian, some basic methodological guidelines had to be specified. This task was undertaken by Niall Ferguson himself, who, apart from the emphasis on credibility and convincingness of individual alternative histories, stresses especially their feasibility. He writes in his introduction to *Virtual History*: "We should consider as plausible or probable *only those alternatives which we can show on the basis of contemporary evidence that contemporaries actually considered*" (Ferguson 1999, 86). The *likelihood* of the counterfactual thus depends significantly on and is constituted by *context* - the context of a specific actual and historical event. In other words: "the historian must place himself in the position of the contemporaries to whom the various possible alternatives were still available, for whom the selection was not closed by the actualization of one of them" (Doležel 2004, 117).

A historian and a counterfactual historian treat facts and events in the same way, or rather: *their inputs are the same while the outputs differ*. The key concept contrasting the two interpretations is the one of *event*. What we have in mind here is a real (actual) event which is at the root of differing courses of development and diverse interpretations. Niall Ferguson says: "A number of points emerge when we consider these [*alternatives*]. Firstly, what actually happened was often *not* the outcome which the majority of informed contemporaries saw as the most likely: the counterfactual

scenario was in that sense more 'real' to decisionmakers at the critical moment than the actual subsequent events. Secondly, we begin to see where determinist theories really do play a role in history: when people believe in them and believe themselves to be in their grip" (Ferguson 1999, 88).

Counterfactual histories and counterfactual historical fiction

But let us return now to Ferguson's methodological guidelines specifying how a historian should proceed when constructing counterfactual history. His method is based on three steps: (a) the convincingness and feasibility of a counterfactual history is a necessary condition; (b) the historian must possess a thorough knowledge of the context of the period or historical event in question; (c) only those alternatives that were regarded as feasible by people living in the given period should be considered. This very last requirement turns counterfactual analysis into a significant tool for the extraction of scholarly knowledge. Background material and historical documents are objectively researchable and each counterfactual history constructed may thus be checked and verified by other scholars. "Fergusonian counterfactual history is therefore primarily a study of decision-making by historical agents, based on documents such as government records, planning papers, diplomatic exchanges etc." (Doležel 2004, 118). They are thus exclusively worlds W_t , worlds of intentional action, from the point of view of the above-mentioned typology of worlds. Only these worlds are (historically) authentic and feasible.

What if the historian fails to revise his/her research in the light of individual documents and pieces of evidence and starts to speculate as to whether a certain coincidence had occurred or natural forces had intervened in a different way? That is, if the historian develops the two remaining types of worlds W_2 and W_3 - worlds in which non-intentional action prevails? Are they still counterfactual history, or (according to Ferguson's selection criteria) rather *fiction* no historian should indulge in under any circumstances?

Statement 6: Counterfactual history can do without uncontrolled imagination; if it fails to do so, it becomes counterfactual historical fiction.

If a world constructed by a historical narrative is populated with characters and objects which cannot be regarded as historical under any circumstances, it is not a historical, but a fictional world. The same can be said of counterfactual history. If the counterfactual historian's primary considerations are informed by speculations about the possible intervention of natural forces (W_2) or unpredictable situations (W_3), which are, however, beyond historical evidence, what s/he produces is *counterfactual historical fiction*. One of the most typical features of counterfactual historical fiction is merging imaginary characters with factual/historical events and objects. This type of *literary fiction*, represented by authors such as R. Harris (*Fatherland*, 1992), K. Amis (*The Alternation*, 1976) etc., has shaped an independent and extremely popular genre. It would certainly be of interest to compare the worlds

of these individual novels with a view to describing the structure of fictional worlds constituted by this genre. The limited time assigned to my talk however does not permit me to attempt this task.

I will limit myself to stating three fundamental differences between counterfactual history (or historiography) and counterfactual historical fiction, which involve mainly the following: (a) a different use of abductions in the processing of historical facts (formation of hypotheses in counterfactual historical fiction is not limited to verifiable assumptions); (b) the different approach to and handling of reference (there are characters with no historical counterparts in fiction); (c) different handling of language and general construction of narrative, most evidently with respect to the position and role of the narrator. It is the very role of the narrator that is one of the significant criteria identified by Gérard Genette in his study of the relation between fictional and factual narrative. In counterfactual narratives, the role of the narrator is complicated by the fact that they are quite frequently not just purely factual or fictional narratives. This issue calls for more detailed study in the future.

Conclusions

Let us now sum up our findings in several steps:

The worlds of fiction, history and counterfactual history are fundamentally different. While fiction and history construct relatively independent and structurally distinct worlds, counterfactual narratives construct worlds that tend to border on either of these opposing alternatives.

All these worlds are *incomplete*, i.e. worlds constructed by specific narratives.

They are worlds which are *physically feasible*; fictional worlds only involve impossible worlds, too.

They are worlds filled in with *places, objects and beings* which may be historical *counterparts* of real historical figures or may be purely imaginary - fictitious. The rules of coexistence of these beings are specific to the individual worlds.

While gaps in fictional worlds are primarily of an *ontological* nature, they are *epistemological* in historical worlds. Both types of worlds can be identified only in the worlds of counterfactual history.

The points listed above can be summed up in the following table:

Characteristics	History	Counterfactual History		Fiction
		CFH – Historical	CFH – Fiction	
Incomplete	+	+	+	+
Physically feasible	+	+	+/-	+/-
Gaps	Epistem.	Epistem./ Ontologic.	Epistem./ Ontologic.	Ontologic.
Counterparts	Historical	Historical	Historical/ Fictional	Historical/ Fictional
Types of CFH Worlds	-	W ₁	W ₁ W ₂ W ₃	[W ₁] [W ₂] [W ₃]

Table 1.

CFH=Counterfactual history; W₁-W₃=types of worlds of counterfactual history; [W₁] – [W₃] = types of worlds of counterfactual history, which correspond to the fictional worlds; these types of worlds [W₁] – [W₃] represent only one of a lot of possibilities in/of fiction; square brackets want to demonstrate this circumstance.

It was not the goal of my paper to schematize all relations of narrative forms on the borderline between fiction and non-fiction. Had it been so, I would have had to extend my analysis to genres such as historical fiction or factual narrative. My aim was, however, less complex. My ambition was just to analyze and compare the structure of worlds constructed by fictional, historical and counterfactual narratives.

The logic of counterfactual thinking, which borders on the logic of fiction on the one hand and with the logic of history on the other, is a logic based on (preserving) the causality of historical development while relativizing hierarchies of historical events. And this may well be the most important contribution of this kind of thinking.

References

- Amis, K. (1976): *The Alternation*. London: Cape.
- Bennett, J. (1981): Counterfactuals and Temporal Directions. *Philosophical Review* 93, 57-91.
- Bláhová, K. - Sládek, O. (eds.) (2007): *O psaní dejín. Teoretické a metodologické problémy literární historiografie*. Praha: Academia, 134-155.
- Carr, D. (2001): Place and Time: On the Interplay of Historical Point of View. *History and Theory, Theme Issue* 40, 153-167.
- Cowley, R. (ed.) (1999a): *What if? The World's Foremost Military Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*. New York: Putnam.
- Cowley, R. (1999b): Introduction. In: Cowley, R. (ed.) (1999a), xi-xiv.
- Cowley, R. (ed.) (2001): *What if 2: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*. New York: Putnam.
- Cowley, R. (ed.) (2003): *What ifs? of American History: Eminent Historians Imagine What Might Have Been*. New York: Putnam.
- Doležel, L. (1988): Mimesis and Possible Worlds. *Poetics Today* 9, 475-496.
- Doležel, L. (1998): *Heterocosmica. Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Baltimore - London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Doležel, L. (1999): Fictional and Historical Narrative: Meeting the Postmodernist Challenge. In: Herman, D. (ed.), *Narratologies: New Perspectives on Narrative Analysis*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 247-273.
- Doležel, L. (2002): Fikční a historický narativ: setkání s postmoderní výzvou. *Česká literatura* 50, No. 4, 341-370.
- Doležel, L. (2004): Narratives of Counterfactual History. In: Rossholm, G. (ed.): *Essays on Fiction and Perspective*. Bern: Peter Lang, 109-128.
- Doležel, L. (2008): *Fikce a historie v období postmoderny*. Praha: Academia.
- Doležel, L. (2010): *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History: The Postmodern Stage*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Eco, U. (1989): Small Worlds. *Versus* 52/53, 53-70.
- Eco, U. (1990): *The Limits of Interpretation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Eco, U. (1994): *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Eco, U. (1998): *Sugli specchi e altri saggi. Il segno, la rappresentazione, l'illusione, l'immagine*. Milano: Bompiani.
- Ferguson, N. (1999): Introduction. Virtual History: Towards a 'Chaotic' Theory of the Past. In: Ferguson, N. (ed.): *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*. New York: Basic Books, 1-90.
- Ferguson, N. (ed.) (1997): *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*. London: Picador.
- Harris, R. (1992): *Fatherland*. London: Hutchinson.

- Holland, C. (1999): The Death That Saved Europe. The Mongols Turn Back 1242. In: Cowley, R. (ed.) (1999a), 93-106.
- Huston, James L. (2005): Reconstruction as It Should Have Been: An Exercise in Counterfactual History. *Civil War History* 51(4), 358-363.
- Kvart, I. (1986): *A Theory of Counterfactuals*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Leduc, J. (1999): *Les Historiens et le temps. Conceptions, problématiques, écritures*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lewis, David K. (1973): *Counterfactuals*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, David K. (1981): Ordering Semantics and Premise Semantics for Counterfactuals. *Journal of Philosophical Logic* 10, 217-234.
- Pavel, Thomas G. (1986): *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pollock, J. (1981): A Refined Theory of Counterfactuals. *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, 10, 239-266.
- Ricoeur, P. (1983-1985): *Temps et récit I - III*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Ricoeur, P. (1984): *Temps et récit II*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Ricoeur, P. (1985): *Temps et récit III*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Roese, Neal J. - Olson, James M. (eds.) (1995): *What Might Have Been: The Social Psychology of Counterfactual Thinking*. Mahwah: Erlbaum.
- Ronen, R. (1994): *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure (1991): *Possible World, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Sládek, O. (2007): O historiografii a fikci. Událost, vyprávění a alternativní historie. In: Bláhová, K. - Sládek, O. (eds.) (2007): *O psaní dějin. Teoretické a metodologické problémy literární historiografie*. Praha: Academia, 134-155.
- Slote, M. (1978): Time in Counterfactuals. *Philosophical Review* 87, 3-27.
- Tetlock, Philip E. - Belkin, Aaron (eds.) (1996): *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Trevor-Roper, H. (1980): *History and Imagination*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wright, Georg H. von (1963): *Norm and Action*. London: Routledge - Kegan Paul.
- Wright, Georg H. von (1968): *An Essay in Deontic Logic and the General Theory of Action*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.