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# Multiversionality: Considering multiple possibilities in the processing of narrative

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## Abstract

We propose a conceptual framework of multiversional narrative processing. Multiversional narrative processing is the consideration of multiple possible event sequences for an incomplete narrative during reception. It occurs naturally and is experienced in a wide range of cases, such as suspense, surprise, counterfactuals, and detective stories. Receiving a narrative, we propose, is characterized by the spontaneous creation of competing interpretive versions of the narrative that are then used to create predictions and projections for the narrative's future. These predictions serve as a mechanism for integrating incoming information and updating the narrative model through prediction error, without completely eliminating past versions. We define this process as having three aspects: (1) constrained expectations, (2) preference projection, and (3) causal extrapolation. Constrained expectations and preference projections respectively create the bounds and subjective desires for a narrative's progress, while causal extrapolation builds, reworks, and maintains the potential models for understanding the narrative.