
Human Science Fictionalized: A Novel, a Visual Narrative, and an Indie Film

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In studies of science popularization, the focus is usually on nonfiction. But what about fictionalized portraits of science? This symposium looks at three attempts to bring the human and neuro sciences to the public through fiction. Among the questions explored are: How is the fact/fiction boundary negotiated? How do a “fact writer” and a “fiction writer” think about popularization differently? What are the different relationships that they have to their sources, or that they envision with their audiences? Our presenters: **Andromeda Romano-Lax** is a successful novelist whose most recent work, *Behave* (2016), dramatizes the life and career of Rosalie Rayner, wife and former student of behaviorist John Watson. **Matteo Farinella** is an illustrator and artist with a doctorate in neuroscience. His visual narrative, *Neurocomic* (2013, coauthored with Hana Roz), portrays the history of neuroscience through a young man’s voyage of discovery in a land of giant neurons and encounters with famous scientists. **Gina Perry** is an Australian journalist who used her investigative and narrative skills to write a *Behind the Shock Machine* (2013), a history of Stanley Milgram’s obedience studies. Now a doctoral student in psychology, she will review *Experimenter*, Michael Almereyda’s 2016 film about Milgram and his work. Our commentator is **Nadine Weidman**, a historian of science at Harvard University known for her work on public controversy and popularization in the 20th-century human sciences. Our Chair is **John Carson**, a historian at the University of Michigan and Director of Undergraduate Studies for its Program in Science, Technology, and Society. Organizer: **Ben Harris**, University of New Hampshire.

Developing Resources

Cajal Institute Seeks UNESCO Recognition to Establish a Museum for the Anatomist’s Legacy¹

Shawn P. Gallagher, Millersville University of Pennsylvania

Spain was on the periphery of European science and medicine in 1887 when Santiago

Ramón y Cajal saw a demonstration of Camillo Golgi’s method for staining individual nerve cells. He was not necessarily a neuroanatomist at the time, but he was a skilled histologist with a passion for illustration. The Golgi technique revealed the beauty and diversity of neurons and Cajal found the forms—and their implications—irresistible. Within 2 years, he had a collection of slides and meticulous illustrations that allowed him to cross language barriers in a way that few scientific discoveries could. The images told stories of neural development, homology, and, of course, solidified the neuron doctrine in the minds of most of his peers. Cajal and Golgi shared the 1906 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine and, in 1920, King Alfonso XIII of Spain signed a Royal Decree establishing the Cajal Institute, a research facility focused on Biology, Experimental Physiology, and Histology.

When he died in 1934, Cajal left the institution with his collection of laboratory instruments and over 4,000 photographs and illustrations: a treasure trove that, like no other, shows how an individual with the perspective of artist and scientist used form to illuminate function. For more than eight decades, the Cajal institute has carefully stored and maintained these materials, but, as a research institution, it does not have the resources or the mandate to create an exhibit or make the materials easily accessible to researchers. Therefore, the institute aims to have the Cajal Legacy recognized as a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage treasure. Such recognition would facilitate the establishment of a museum to display the archives and make them, along with items like notebooks and correspondence, readily available for research and educational programs. The institute asks its international colleagues to support its petition. More information can be found at <http://www.cajal.csic.es/ingles/legado.html>.

Correspondence should be addressed to Shawn P. Gallagher, Department of Psychology, 111 Byerly Hall, Millersville University, P.O. Box 1002 (1 S. George Street), Millersville, PA 17551. E-mail: Shawn.Gallagher@Millersville.edu

¹ The author would like to offer congratulations to Maria Ángeles Langa as she completes more than 45 years of dedicated service to the Cajal Legacy.