The Linguistic Analysis of Differing Peculiarities between Anthropomorphism and Personification

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the study of anthropomorphism, and it analyzes the correlation and differing features between anthropomorphism and personifications. Just as there are similarities between anthropomorphism and personification, there are also some differences between them. An important peculiarity of anthropomorphism is that in some cases an anthropomorphism expresses human emotions to non-human entities while personification peculiarity of human characteristics to emotions.

Keywords: anthropomorphism, personification, attribution, difference, emotion, characteristics, tendency, concept, abstract, stereotype.

INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, there are various concepts that are difficult to differentiate but as there are two concepts, no matter how many similarities they have, their differences will surely be found. The notion of anthropomorphism is considered as the attribution of human characteristics or reaction to non-human entities. On the other hand, personification is the related attribution of human form and characteristics to abstract concepts such as nations, emotions, and natural forces, such as seasons and weather.

Noting similarities both notions have ancient roots as storytelling and artistic devices, and most cultures have traditional fables with anthropomorphized animals as characters. People have also routinely attributed human emotions and behavioral traits to wild as well as domesticated animals.

Anthropomorphism, also referred to as personification, is a well established literary device from ancient times. The story of "The Hawk and the Nightingale" in Hesiod's Works and Days preceded Aesop's fables by centuries. Collections of linked fables from India, the Jataka Tales and Panchatratanta, also employ anthropomorphized animals to illustrate principles of life. Many of the stereotypes of animals that are recognized today, such as the wily fox and the proud lion, can be found in these collections.

MATERIALS AND ANALYSIS

The differing peculiarities can be seen in modern literature. Building on the popularity of fables and fairy tales, children’s literature began to emerge in the nineteenth century with works such as Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) by Lewis Carroll, The Adventures of Pinocchio (1883) by Carlo Colloidy and The Jungle Book (1894) by Rudyard Kipling, all employing anthropomorphic elements. This continued in the twentieth century with many of the most popular titles having anthropomorphic characters, examples being The Tale of Peter Rabbit (1901) and later books by Beatrix Potter; The Wing in The Willows by Kenneth Grahame (1908); Winnie-the-Pooh (1926) and The House at Pooh Corner (1928) by A. A. Milne; and The Lion, the Witch, The Wardrobe (1950) and the subsequent books in The Chronicles of Narnia series by C.S. Lewis.
In many of these stories the animals can be seen as representing facets of human personality and character. As John Rowe Townsend remarks, discussing The Jungle Book in which the boy Mowgli must rely on his new friends the bear Baloo and the Black Panther Bagheera, "The world of the jungle is in fact both itself and our world as well". A notable work aimed at an adult audience is George Orwell's Animal Farm, in which all the main characters are anthropomorphic animals. Non-animal examples include Rev. W. Awdry's children's stories of Thomas the Tank Engine and other anthropomorphic locomotives.

The fantasy genre developed from mythological, fairy tale, and Romance motifs sometimes have anthropomorphic animals as characters. The best-selling examples of the genre are The Hobbit (1937) and The Lord of the Rings (1954–1955), both by J. R. R. Tolkein, books peopled with talking creatures such as ravens, spiders, and the dragon Smaug and a multitude of anthropomorphic goblins and elves. John D. Rateliff calls this the "Doctor Do little Theme" in his book The History of the Hobbit and Tolkien saw this anthropomorphism as closely linked to the emergence of human language and myth: "...The first men to talk of 'trees and stars' saw things very differently, To them, the world was alive with mythological beings... To them the whole of creation was 'myth-woven and elf-patterned'." Richard Adams developed a distinctive take on anthropomorphic writing in the 1970s: his debut novel, Water ship down (1972), featured rabbits that could talk—with their own distinctive language (Lapine) and mythology—and included a police-state warren, Efraf. Despite this, Adams attempted to ensure his characters' behavior mirrored that of wild rabbits, engaging in fighting, copulating and defecating, drawing on Ronald Lockley's study The Private Life of the Rabbit as research. Adams returned to anthropomorphic storytelling in his later novels The Plague Dogs (1977) and Traveler (1988).

By the 21st century, the children's picture book market had expanded massively. Perhaps a majority of picture books have some kind of anthropomorphism, with popular examples being The Very Hungry Caterpillar (1969) by Eric Carle and The Gruffalo (1999) by Julia Donaldson.

Anthropomorphism in literature and other media led to a sub-culture known as furry fandom, which promotes and creates stories and artwork involving anthropomorphic animals, and the examination and interpretation of humanity through anthropomorphism. This can often be shortened in searches as "anthro", used by some as an alternative term to "furry".

Anthropomorphic characters have also been a staple of the comic book genre. The most prominent one was Neil Gaiman's the Sandman which had a huge impact on how characters that are physical embodiments are written in the fantasy genre. Other examples also include the mature Hellblazer (personified political and moral ideas), Fables and its spin-off series Jack of Fables, which was unique for having anthropomorphic representation of literary techniques and genres. Various Japanese magma and anime have used anthropomorphism as the basis of their story. Examples include Squid Girl (anthropomorphized squid), Hetalia: Axis Powers (personified countries),

Upotte!! (personified guns), Arpeggio of Blue Steel and Kancolle (personified ships).

Here is given examples of anthropomorphic features from films. Some of the most notable examples are the Walt Disney characters the Magic carpet from Disney's Aladdin franchise, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Goofy, and Oswald the Lucky Rabbit; the Looney Tunes characters Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Porky Pig; and an array of others from the 1920s to present day.

In the Disney/Pixar franchises Cars and Planes, all the characters are anthropomorphic vehicles, while in Toy Story, they are anthropomorphic toys. Other Pixar franchises like Monsters, Inc. features anthropomorphic monsters, and Finding Nemo features anthropomorphic marine life creatures (like fish, sharks, and whales).
Discussing anthropomorphic animals from Dream Works franchise Madagascar, Laurie suggests that "social differences based on conflict and contradiction are naturalized and made less 'contestable' through the classificatory matrix of human and nonhuman relations". Other DreamWorks franchises like Shrek features fairy tale characters, and Blue Sky Studios of 20th Century Fox franchises like Ice Age features anthropomorphic extinct animals.

All of the characters in Walt Disney Animation Studios’ Zootopia (2016) are anthropomorphic animals that are an entirely nonhuman civilization.

The live-action/computer-animated franchise Alvin and the Chipmunks by 20th Century Fox centers around anthropomorphic talkative and singing chipmunks. The female singing chipmunks called The Chipettes are also centered in some of the franchise's films.

Since the 1960s, anthropomorphism has also been represented in various animated television shows such as Biker Mice from Mars (1993–1996) and SWAT Kats: The Radical Squadron (1993–1995). Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, first aired in 1987, features four pizza-loving anthropomorphic turtles with a great knowledge of ninjutsu, led by their anthropomorphic rat sensei, Master Splinter. Nickelodeon's longest running animated TV series SpongeBob SquarePants (1999–present), revolves around SpongeBob, a yellow sea sponge, living in the underwater town of Bikini Bottom with his anthropomorphic marine life friends. Cartoon Network's animated series The Amazing World of Gumball (2011–2019) are about anthropomorphic animals and inanimate objects. All of the characters in Hasbro Studios' TV series My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic (2010–2019) are anthropomorphic fantasy creatures, with most of them being ponies living in the pony-inhabited land of Equestria. The Netflix original series Centaur world focuses on a warhorse who gets transported to a Dr. Seuss-like world full of centaurs who possess the bottom half of any animal, as opposed to the traditional horse.

In the American animated TV series Family Guy, one of the show's main characters, Brian, is a dog. Brian shows many human characteristics – he walks upright, talks, smokes, and drinks Martinis – but also acts like a normal dog in other ways; for example he cannot resist chasing a ball and barks at the mailman, believing him to be a threat.

The PBS Kids animated series Lets Go Luna! Centers on an anthropomorphic female Moon who speaks, sings, and dances. She comes down out of the sky to serve as a tutor of international culture to the three main characters: a boy frog and wombat and a girl butterfly, who are supposed to be preschool children traveling a world populated by anthropomorphic animals with a circus run by their parents.

The French-Belgian animated series Mush-Mush & the Mushables takes place in a world inhabited by Mushables, which are anthropomorphic fungi, along with other critters such as beetles, snails, and frogs.

In science, the use of anthropomorphic language that suggests animals have intentions and emotions has traditionally been deprecated as indicating a lack of objectivity. Biologists have been warned to avoid assumptions that animals share any of the same mental, social, and emotional capacities of humans, and to rely instead on strictly observable evidence. In 1927 Ivan Pavlov wrote that animals should be considered "without any need to resort to fantastic speculations as to the existence of any possible subjective states". More recently, The Oxford companion to animal behaviour (1987) advised that "one is well advised to study the behavior rather than attempting to get at any underlying emotion". Some scientists, like William M Wheeler (writing apologetically of his use of anthropomorphism in 1911), have used anthropomorphic language in metaphor to make subjects more humanly comprehensible or memorable.
Despite the impact of Charles Darwin's ideas in The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals (Konrad Lorenz in 1965 called him a "patron saint" of ethnology) ethnology has generally focused on behavior, not on emotion in animals.

Even insects play together, as has been described by that excellent observer, P. Huber, who saw ants chasing and pretending to bite each other, like so many puppies.

— Charles Darwin, the Descent of Man

The study of great apes in their own environment and in captivity has changed attitudes to anthropomorphism. In the 1960s the three so-called "Leakey’s Angels", Jane Goodal studying chimpanzees, Dian Fossey studying gorillas and Birute Galdigas studying orangutans, were all accused of "that worst of ethological sins – anthropomorphism". The charge was brought about by their descriptions of the great apes in the field; it is now more widely accepted that empathy has an important part to play in research.

De Waal has written: "To endow animals with human emotions has long been a scientific taboo. But if we do not, we risk missing something fundamental, about both animals and us." Alongside this has come increasing awareness of the linguistic abilities of the great apes and the recognition that they are tool-makers and have individuality and culture.

Writing of cats in 1992, veterinarian Bruce Fogle points to the fact that "both humans and cats have identical petrochemicals and regions in the brain responsible for emotion" as evidence that "it is not anthropomorphic to credit cats with emotions such as jealousy".

In science fiction, an artificially-intelligent computer or robot, even though it has not been programmed with human emotions, often spontaneously experiences those emotions anyway: for example, Agent Smith in The Matrix was influenced by "disgust" toward humanity. This is an example of anthropomorphism: in reality, while an artificial intelligence could perhaps be deliberately programmed with human emotions, or could develop something similar to an emotion as a means to an ultimate goal if it is useful to do so, it would not spontaneously develop human emotions for no purpose whatsoever, as portrayed in fiction.

One example of anthropomorphism would be to believe that one's computer is angry at them because they insulted it; another would be to believe that an intelligent robot would naturally find a woman attractive and be driven to mate with her. Scholars sometimes disagree with each other about whether a particular prediction about an artificial intelligence's behavior is logical, or whether the prediction constitutes illogical anthropomorphism. An example that might initially be considered anthropomorphism, but is in fact a logical statement about an artificial intelligence's behavior, would be the Dario Floriano experiments where certain robots spontaneously evolved a crude capacity for "deception", and tricked other robots into eating "poison" and dying: here, a trait, "deception", ordinarily associated with people rather than with machines, spontaneously evolves in a type of convergent evolution.

The conscious use of anthropomorphic metaphor is not intrinsically unwise; ascribing mental processes to the computer, under the proper circumstances, may serve the same purpose as it does when humans do it to other people: it may help persons to understand what the computer will do, how their actions will affect the computer, how to compare computers with humans, and conceivably how to design computer programs. However, inappropriate use of anthropomorphic metaphors can result in false beliefs about the behavior of computers, for example by causing people to overestimate how "flexible" computers are. According to Paul R. Cohen and Edward Feigenbaum, in order to differentiate between anthropomorphization and logical prediction of AI behavior, "the trick is to know enough about how humans and computers think to say exactly what they have in common, and, when we lack this knowledge, to use the comparison to suggest theories of human thinking or computer thinking."

Computers overturn the childhood hierarchical taxonomy of "stones (non-living) → plants (living) → animals (conscious) → humans (rational)", by introducing a non-human "actor" that
appears to regularly behave rationally. Much of computing terminology derives from anthropomorphic metaphors: computers can "read", "write", or "catch a virus". Information technology presents no clear correspondence with any other entities in the world besides humans; the options are either to leverage an emotional, imprecise human metaphor, or to reject imprecise metaphor and make use of more precise, domain-specific technical terms.

People often grant an unnecessary social role to computers during interactions. The underlying causes are debated; Youngme Moon and Clifford Nass propose that humans are emotionally, intellectually and physiologically biased toward social activity, and so when presented with even tiny social cues, deeply-infused social responses are triggered automatically. This may allow incorporation of anthropomorphic features into computers/robots to enable more familiar "social" interactions, making them easier to use.

In psychology, the first empirical study of anthropomorphism was conducted in 1944 by Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel. In the first part of this experiment, the researchers showed a 2-and-a-half minute long animation of several shapes moving around on the screen in varying directions at various speeds. When subjects were asked to describe what they saw, they gave detailed accounts of the intentions and personalities of the shapes. For instance, the large triangle was characterized as a bully, chasing the other two shapes until they could trick the large triangle and escape. The researchers concluded that when people see objects making motions for which there is no obvious cause, they view these objects as intentional agents.

Nowadays, psychologists generally characterize the notion of anthropomorphism as a cognitive bias. That is, anthropomorphism is a cognitive process by which people use their schemas about other humans as a basis for inferring the properties of non-human entities in order to make efficient judgements about the environment, even if those inferences are not always accurate. Schemas about humans are used as the basis because this knowledge is acquired early in life, is more detailed than knowledge about non-human entities, and is more readily accessible in memory. Anthropomorphism can also function as a strategy to cope with loneliness when other human connections are not available.

Since making inferences requires cognitive effort, anthropomorphism is likely to be triggered only when certain aspects about a person and their environment are true. Psychologist Adam Waytz and his colleagues created a three-factor theory of anthropomorphism to describe these aspects and predict when people are most likely to anthropomorphize. The three factors are:

- Elicited agent knowledge, or the amount of prior knowledge held about an object and the extent to which that knowledge is called to mind.
- Reflectance or the drive to interact with and understand one's environment.
- Sociality, the need to establish social connections.

When elicited agent knowledge is low and reflectance and sociality are high, people are more likely to anthropomorphize. Various dispositional, situational, developmental, and cultural variables can affect these three factors, such as need for cognition, social disconnection, cultural ideologies, uncertainty avoidance, etc.

Children appear to anthropomorphize and use egocentric reasoning from an early age and use it more frequently than adults. Examples of this are describing a storm cloud as "angry" or drawing flowers with faces. This penchant for anthropomorphism is likely because children have acquired vast amounts of socialization, but not as much experience with specific non-human entities, so thus they have less developed alternative schemas for their environment. In contrast, autistic children tend to describe anthropomorphized objects in purely mechanical terms (that is, in terms of what they do) because they have difficulties with theory of mind.
CONCLUSION

The term Anthropomorphism can be used to assist learning. Specifically, anthropomorphized words and describing scientific concepts with intentionality can boost later recall of these concepts.

In people with depression, social anxiety, or other mental illnesses, emotional support animals are a useful component of treatment partially because anthropomorphism of these animals can satisfy the patients' need for social connection.

References: