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ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN MODERN COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:

This article explores the concept of anthropomorphism and its pervasive role in modern communication, highlighting its impact across various fields such as advertising, technology, media, and entertainment. Anthropomorphism, the attribution of human characteristics to non-human entities, facilitates emotional engagement, relatability, and stronger connections between users and products, characters, or systems. The article concludes that anthropomorphism continues to shape how we interact with both the digital and physical world, offering a bridge between human experience and non-human entities. It emphasizes the growing significance of anthropomorphism as technology evolves, offering a more personalized, empathetic, and engaging communication experience in our increasingly digital and mediated lives.

Keywords

Anthropomorphism, advertising, media, artificial intelligence, entertainment, technology, emotional connection.

Introduction

In modern world, anthropomorphism is widely utilized in modern communication, particularly in advertising, media, and technology. It serves to make messages more engaging, relatable, and memorable by giving human qualities to non-human entities, making them easier for audiences to connect with.

Anthropomorphism plays a significant role in branding and advertising, where companies often use personified characters or mascots to appeal to consumers. These mascots are given human-like traits to build a connection with the audience, making the brand feel more approachable. A well-known example is the *Geico Gecko*, which has a human-like personality, engaging with viewers through humor and relatability. Another example is *M&M's*, where each candy is given its own distinctive human personality, creating a playful and relatable brand identity. In media, anthropomorphizing animals, objects, or abstract concepts (e.g., in movies like *Zootopia* or *Cars*) enhances storytelling by making the characters more relatable and their experiences more meaningful to human audiences. By giving non-human entities human-like emotions, motivations, and behaviors, these stories invite viewers to connect with characters in a way that would be impossible with purely inanimate or animal figures.

In *Zootopia*, for example, animals are given human roles in a modern city, with their own societal dynamics, challenges, and personal aspirations. This not only allows for a more engaging narrative but also serves as an effective metaphor for human issues like prejudice, stereotypes, and social justice. The audience is drawn into a world where they can easily project human emotions onto the animals, creating empathy for their struggles and triumphs.

Similarly, in *Cars*, anthropomorphizing vehicles transforms them from simple objects into fully developed characters with unique personalities and emotional arcs. The car characters experience love, rivalry, growth, and friendship, providing viewers with universal themes of personal development and community. These human qualities make the story more accessible and enjoyable for all ages, as the audience is able to identify with the cars' struggles and achievements.

Furthermore, anthropomorphism allows for more dynamic and creative storytelling. It gives storytellers the freedom to explore themes of identity, belonging, and morality in unique settings, where animals or objects are not bound by the limitations of the human experience. By humanizing non-human characters, filmmakers create opportunities to delve into complex, often abstract issues in ways that resonate emotionally with audiences, making the content both entertaining and thought-provoking. This is a key reason why anthropomorphism is such a powerful tool in modern media – it makes stories more engaging and helps audiences connect with ideas and characters on a deeper level.

In the age of digital technology, anthropomorphism is also prominent in social media and virtual assistants. Voice-enabled devices such as Amazon's *Alexa*, Apple's *Siri*, or *Google Assistant* are designed to communicate in a conversational manner, using human-like voices and expressions. This humanization allows users to interact with them as though they were speaking to another person, which reduces the intimidation factor often associated with technology and enhances the overall user experience.

The anthropomorphic design of these devices – through voice, tone, and even personality traits – makes them more approachable and user-friendly. Users feel as though they are interacting with a helpful, almost human-like entity, which enhances their overall experience and engagement with the technology.

In the field of artificial intelligence and robotics, anthropomorphism helps bridge the gap between human users and machines. In the field of artificial intelligence and robotics, anthropomorphism helps bridge the gap between human users and machines by making interactions more intuitive and emotionally engaging. When robots and AI systems are designed with human-like features – such as facial expressions, body language, or conversational abilities – users are more likely to feel comfortable and connected to them. This humanization reduces the perceived distance between humans and technology, fostering trust and ease in communication.

For example, humanoid robots like *Sophia* have been designed with human-like faces and the ability to express emotions such as happiness or surprise. This makes the robot appear

less mechanical and more approachable, encouraging people to engage with it in a social and natural manner. When users see the robot smiling or responding empathetically, they are more inclined to view it as a companion or assistant, rather than just a machine.

Similarly, in AI-driven customer service, chatbots that use human-like language and tone are able to create a more comfortable environment for customers. These chatbots often adopt a conversational style, making them feel more personable and less robotic. When the AI understands and responds to emotional cues – such as recognizing frustration or excitement in a user's query – it helps humanize the experience and improve satisfaction.

Anthropomorphism in AI and robotics also plays a crucial role in applications like healthcare, where robots with human-like features can interact with patients in a way that feels less clinical. For example, companion robots designed for elderly care can simulate human-like emotions and interactions, providing comfort and reducing feelings of loneliness. These robots are often perceived as more empathetic, making the care experience feel warmer and more personalized.

By incorporating human-like characteristics into machines, anthropomorphism makes technology more relatable and easier to use, enhancing both functionality and emotional connections. It encourages users to treat these technologies as tools that are not only efficient but also capable of understanding and responding to human needs, making the digital and physical worlds more seamlessly connected.

Anthropomorphism is prevalent in movies, TV shows, and cartoons, where animals, objects, and even abstract concepts are given human qualities. These anthropomorphic portrayals enhance storytelling by making characters more relatable, allowing audiences to form emotional connections with beings that would otherwise be distant or difficult to relate to. Classic examples of this include animated films like *Toy Story* and *Zootopia*.

In *Toy Story*, inanimate objects, such as toys, are given human-like traits and personalities, experiencing emotions like fear, joy, and jealousy. The toys' decision-making and struggles with their identity – particularly in relation to their human owner – mirror human experiences, making it easy for viewers to empathize with them. The portrayal of toys having secret lives when humans aren't around creates a deeper layer of emotional engagement, as audiences imagine what it would be like if their own possessions had thoughts and feelings.

Similarly, in *Zootopia*, anthropomorphized animals live in a bustling, human-like city, where they hold jobs, have relationships, and navigate societal challenges. By assigning human-like emotions and behaviors to the animals, the film explores complex themes such as prejudice, stereotypes, and self-empowerment. Viewers can easily relate to the struggles of the characters – like Judy Hopps, a rabbit who faces doubt and bias in her pursuit of becoming a police officer – even though she is not human. The animal characters provide a unique lens through which real-world issues are examined, making the story accessible and meaningful.

Here will be considered several examples of television productions in which anthropomorphism is employed as a narrative and stylistic device. In these works, non-human entities – whether animals, artificial intelligences, or inanimate objects – are described human characteristics, emotions, and behaviors. This anthropomorphic representation serves not only to facilitate the suspension of disbelief but also to enhance the audience's emotional engagement and cognitive processing. By attributing human-like qualities to non-human characters, these productions create a bridge between the viewer's experiential reality and the constructed fictional world, thereby fostering a sense of relatability and empathy that transcends the human/non-human divide.

Name of TV production	Shape & Effect
Robots in Retirement	a short-animated series where anthropomorphized robots, who have retired, start living a normal life: relaxing, arguing, and sharing emotions. Although they are robots, the characters exhibit human-like traits and personalities, making them relatable to the audience.
Moana	**a** great example of anthropomorphism in film, where characters like the demigod *Maui* or even the ocean itself act like living beings with distinct personalities. The sea has human-like traits, creating a deeper connection with the protagonist and emphasizing the theme of nature being alive.
Despicable Me	the Minions in this animated series are quintessential examples of anthropomorphism. Despite being small, yellow, non-human creatures, they are endowed with human-like behavior, social interaction, and emotional responses. Their ability to exhibit joy, frustration, and loyalty contributes to the film's comedic appeal and emotional depth.
The Lion King	a classic example of anthropomorphism, where animals take on human roles and experience emotions like love, friendship, jealousy, grief, and triumph. The human-like behavior of the animals helps the audience relate to their struggles and growth.
The Simpsons	an iconic animated serial, many non-human characters, such as animals or inanimate objects, behave like humans. For example, *Plopper*, the pet pig, and the talking characters from various episodes show human-like behavior, making them more relatable to the audience.
Finding Dory	an animated movie where, fish, octopuses, and other sea creatures have human-like qualities such as curiosity, friendliness, sadness, and joy. These anthropomorphic traits allow viewers to empathize with the characters and understand their emotional journeys.
Toy story	in the film, toys are anthropomorphized by exhibiting human emotions such as jealousy, love, fear, and friendship. Characters like *Woody* and *Buzz Lightyear* have distinct personalities and react to situations like humans would, making their struggles and relationships relatable to the audience.
Shrek	an animated fairytale creatures in the film, such as *Donkey* and *Dragon*, display human-like traits including humor, loyalty, fear, and affection. These anthropomorphized characters not only enhance the comedy but also allow for emotional connections with viewers, challenging traditional perceptions of fairytale beings.

Certain examples show how anthropomorphism is used in various TV and animated products to create deeper emotional connections with characters and worlds, making them more accessible and relatable to the audience.

These films utilize anthropomorphism to enhance the emotional depth of their narratives, allowing audiences to connect with characters that would otherwise be distant or unintelligible. By attributing human qualities to animals, objects, and abstract concepts, these stories become more engaging and impactful, creating a bridge between the fantastical and the human experience. This emotional connection is key to the success of these films, as viewers see reflections of themselves in characters that might not physically resemble them, but whose emotions, decisions, and experiences resonate on a deeper, more universal level.

In the realm of video games and virtual worlds, anthropomorphism plays a critical role by enhancing the gaming experience and deepening player engagement. Players often interact with characters that are humanized animals, robots, or even non-living objects, allowing them to connect with these figures in ways that make the game world feel more alive and relatable. By attributing human-like traits to these characters, games foster a sense of immersion and emotional investment, making the virtual world feel more engaging and interactive.

For instance, in *Animal Crossing*, players interact with anthropomorphized animals that talk, express emotions, and participate in human-like activities such as shopping, gardening, and celebrating holidays. These characters each have their own distinct personalities, relationships, and personal stories, creating a rich, dynamic world that mirrors real-life social interactions. The emotional connections players form with these animal villagers – through daily conversations or special events – make the game not just about completing tasks but about building relationships. This humanization of the characters helps to create a sense of belonging and attachment, making the game world feel more personal and meaningful.

Similarly, in *The Sims*, players control humanized characters called “Sims”, who lead lives full of social interactions, emotions, and personal aspirations. These virtual people have desires, conflicts, and goals, which players can shape and influence. The ability to guide Sims through various life events, such as building relationships, pursuing careers, and raising families, makes the game experience emotionally engaging. The human-like qualities of the Sims enhance immersion, as players are encouraged to invest in their virtual lives, seeing them as more than just characters but as entities with real emotional stakes.

The humanization of non-human characters in video games not only enhances immersion but also creates opportunities for players to explore complex emotions, relationships, and challenges in a safe, virtual environment. Whether interacting with anthropomorphized animals or humanized objects, these characters become extensions of the player’s own experience, allowing for deeper emotional involvement and a richer, more engaging gameplay experience. By bridging the gap between the real world and the virtual,

anthropomorphism in video games elevates the player's connection to the game world, making it more meaningful and emotionally resonant.

In conclusion, anthropomorphism plays a pivotal role in modern communication, acting as a bridge between the human experience and the non-human world. By attributing human-like qualities to animals, objects, technologies, and even abstract concepts, we create more relatable, approachable, and emotionally engaging experiences. Whether in advertising, artificial intelligence, entertainment, or virtual environments, anthropomorphism enhances the way we interact with brands, products, and digital systems. It transforms machines and inanimate objects into entities that feel more personal, humanized, and responsive to our needs and emotions.

The power of anthropomorphism lies in its ability to foster empathy and emotional connection. By projecting human traits onto non-human entities, we make the world around us seem less distant and more familiar. This emotional engagement strengthens brand loyalty, enhances user experience, and allows for deeper storytelling, making characters and technologies more meaningful and memorable.

As technology continues to evolve, anthropomorphism will likely play an even greater role in shaping our interactions with the digital world. It provides a framework for understanding and engaging with new technologies, making them more accessible and less intimidating. In our increasingly mediated lives, anthropomorphism offers a way to humanize the digital landscape, creating a more personalized and emotionally resonant experience.

Ultimately, by humanizing the non-human, anthropomorphism helps us forge stronger connections to the world around us, making our interactions with brands, technology, and media not only more engaging but also more human-centered. As we continue to integrate digital technologies into our daily lives, anthropomorphism will remain a key tool in bridging the gap between human emotions and the technological world, shaping the future of communication, interaction, and connection.

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