

Polarization of Performers using Non-Humans: Personification of Ritual Items

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Abstract:

This study explores the use of non-human entities as central performative elements in live-action role-playing games (LARP), focusing on the personification of ritual items. LARP performers, in other terms players, act as improvised (improv) theatre performers that act according to the scenario changes. Through observational research of a LARP game featuring a quest to fulfill a ritual involving a mythological Titan named Od Han, the paper examines how performers anthropomorphize non-human decorations to complete the ritual. Through using non-human decorations that were given to the performers, they were able to use them as effective as the human performers. Drawing on theories of Actor-Network Theory by Bruno Latour and the role of anthropomorphism in human-agent interactions, the paper discusses the cognitive and social implications of this phenomenon. The findings suggest that the personification of ritual items can provide a space for performers to project their own narratives onto the decorations and improv theatre. Additionally, the findings and analysis has shown that how the personifications of these non-human improv theatre decorations become object of interest that influences the performers' actions and emotions.