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An Automatized Heider-Simmel Story Generation Tool

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Abstract: The social psychologists Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel have shown in the 1950s that movies about very simple object interactions are typically interpreted in a very social manner, quickly perceiving motivations and emotions. We have developed a tool to generate Heider-Simmel-like videos. In contrast to the Heider-Simmel Interactive Theater project by Andrew Gordon and colleagues, though, our tool enables the generation of story-lines. The user is offered a manifold of individual object behaviors, such as approaching, avoiding, or circling around another object, and a manifold of perceptual events, such as the detection of another object, the touch of another object, etc. Behavior-event complexes can be chosen and concatenated by an intuitive user interface. The resulting story lines are then played-out by the tool in different scenarios, yielding different videos about socially similar interactions. The tool may be very useful for conducting future social- and object-interaction-related cognitive science projects.