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Abstract:

We conducted three studies on the use of nonhuman animals as metaphors (zoomorphs) for human personality characteristics. In Study 1 ($n = 51$) university students rated gender, age, and favorableness of 36 mammal names when applied metaphorically to a person. In Study 2, we searched 14 dictionaries of colloquial English and three dictionaries of animal phrases to locate zoomorphic use of these 36 animal species in describing human personality. In Study 3 ($n = 28$), students rated zoomorphic use of non-mammalian species. Most animal metaphors for human personality are uncomplimentary, reinforcing the perceived distance between humans and nonhuman animal species. Zoomorphs tend to be male and refer to healthy adult individuals, with little usage referring to disability or infirmity. There is greater zoomorphy for mammal names than for bird, insect or fish names.

Keywords: [ANIMAL METAPHOR](#); [ANIMAL PERSONALITY](#); [ZOOMORPHY](#)

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