

32/06 - "A review and analysis of conceptual frameworks in accounts of animal psi" – only abstract available

Instituição/*Institution*: Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool - UK

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Abstract: The objectives of the project were to undertake a critical review of theoretical and empirical accounts of animal psi (ANPSI) research, and to provide a conceptual metaphor analysis of academic and lay accounts of animal psi. The literature review highlighted the central importance of the human-animal relationship in animal psi research. This relationship structures both theoretical and methodological issues, including assumptions about the 'normal' perceptual and cognitive abilities of other species, the impact of the human-animal relationship on experimenter psi and the evidential value of spontaneous cases of psi. The evidence suggests that animal psi may function as an expression of relationship or 'resonance' between individuals, and indicates the necessity for embracing more relational models of psi, that can more readily incorporate its potentially inter-subjective nature. The conceptual metaphor analysis identified a number of assumptions, orienting and generative metaphors. The analysis revealed an expressed preference within academic accounts for evidence-oriented research emphasising the natural behaviour of animals, and the constraints upon this behaviour, which structure the search for ever more exact measurement of psi. In contrast to the more modern experimental parapsychological studies, older and lay theoretical accounts rely on quasi-spiritual concepts to account for ostensible ANPSI and frame these behaviours in a much more complex way. By contrasting these two sets of conceptual models, their underlying theoretical and philosophical assumptions become clearer, highlighting their epistemological context and the role of debate and rhetoric in their construction.

Publications:

Dutton, D. & Williams, C. (in press). Clever beasts and faithful pets: A critical review of animal psi research. *Journal of Parapsychology*.

Williams, C. & Dutton, D. (under review). What the animals have to say: Conceptual frameworks, commonalities and tensions in professional Animal Psi research and lay animal psychic communication. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*.

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