

Summary

The doctoral dissertation focuses on the literary and artistic representation of animals and interspecies relationships, analyzing various attempts to convey the animal experience. Writers face the challenge of depicting the world of animals from a non-human perspective, avoiding anthropomorphizing animals, which allows for a deeper understanding of their subjective experiences. Both literary and artistic elements are considered in the work, highlighting animals as central subjects of the narrative.

The dissertation identifies several key research problems: 1) The lack of a common communicative code: The first research challenge is the inability to find a shared communication system between humans and animals, which is examined in the context of literature and its limitations in conveying the experiences of other species. 2) The limitations of human language: Another issue is how the limited communication system of human language can convey the rich, different experiences of other subjects, particularly animals, who perceive the world in ways different from humans (the concepts of *Umwelt* and *Innenwelt*). 3) The subjectivity of animal protagonists: A crucial problem is studying the subjectivity of animal protagonists in literature, their experiences, and the narrative techniques used to present them. Literary studies focus on the differences in how humans and animals experience the world and the attempts to translate these experiences through literary expressions. 4) The social role of literature: Literature often tackles difficult social issues, with animal protagonists becoming carriers of social change. These studies also explore the connection between literature and fields such as neurobiology, neuropsychology, and other sciences to reveal the complexity of animal experiences. 5) The shift in the approach to animals: Another objective is to investigate the change in how animals are approached in literature, which points to the need for a shift from an anthropocentric paradigm to a more altruistic model. These changes also affect the understanding of the role of humans as beings in relationships with other organisms, rather than as separate, isolated entities.

The first chapter discusses the novel *When I Sing, Mountains Dance* by Irene Sola, in which animals, plants, and humans coexist in a biocentric vision, replacing anthropocentrism with a broader, multispecies perspective. The second chapter analyzes the novels of Olga Tokarczuk and John Maxwell Coetzee, where the protagonists, Janina Duszejko and Elizabeth Costello, fight for animal rights and form deep bonds with animals. The third chapter focuses on language as a tool for conveying the sensory and experiential world of animals, while the fourth chapter considers contemporary artistic practices in which animals serve as bearers of

messages about human-animal relationships. The fifth chapter centers on insects and their representations in literature, highlighting the difficulties in forming connections with them due to the lack of common communicative codes. The final chapter examines changes in the anthropological image of humans, portraying them as symbionts, part of multispecies biological relationships that dominate over individual egoism. The work aims to expand the understanding of animals as subjects, who, although different from humans, co-create shared worlds of experience in both literature and art.

The methodology of the doctoral dissertation is divided into two main areas. The first includes texts from neuroscience, such as neurobiology and neurocognitive science, and from cognitive ethology. The second area encompasses works from the humanities, including ecocriticism, literary animal studies, affective criticism, post-anthropocentrism, cultural studies, and the philosophy of art. A comparative method is employed in the dissertation, and each chapter has a dedicated methodology tailored to the specific issue, which is thoroughly discussed in the relevant sections of the work.