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An Analytic Survey of the Roles of Animals in Siswati Proverbs

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ABSTRACT This is an analytic survey of Siswati proverbs that employ animals to bring about their meanings. The characteristics and functions of the animals play a role in the formation of the proverbs. This is a qualitative study on thematic explications and stylistic observations. The analysis looks at the thematic classification, form and functionalistic perspective of proverbs. The theme considers humanness, good disposition, conceit, uncertainty, hardship, enmity, good fortune, misfortune, threats and obstinacy. The proverbs are singled out from other oral literature aspects such as riddles, idioms, folktales and praises. This is because of proverbs' unique characteristics of being rich in vocabulary, fixed, figurative, pithy and packed with wisdom of the ages. Proverbs are basic oral expressions of culture, social life, skills of verbal coercion effective means of communication and art of rational discourse. They enrich Siswati language because they are poetic in nature, loaded with symbols and metaphors. Their language is characterized by a wide use of figures of speech.