

Kafka's Creatures: Animals, Hybrids, and Other Fantastic Beings



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There are few literary authors in whose work animals and other creatures play as prominent a role as they do in Franz Kafka's. Exploring multiple dimensions of Kafka's incorporation of nonhuman creatures into his writing, this volume is the first collection in English of essays devoted to illuminating this important and ubiquitous dimension of his work. The chapters here are written by an array of international scholars from various fields, and represent a diversity of interpretive approaches. In the course of exploring the roles played by nonhuman animals and other creatures in Kafka's writing, they help make sense of the literary and philosophical significance of his preoccupation with animals, and make clear that careful investigation of those creatures illuminates his core concerns: the nature of power; the inescapability of history and guilt; the dangers, promise, and strangeness of the alienation endemic to modern life; the human propensity for cruelty and oppression; the limits and conditions of humanity and the risks of dehumanization; the nature of authenticity; family life; Jewishness; and the nature of language and art. Thus the essays in this volume enrich our understanding of Kafka's work as a whole. Especially striking is the extent to which the articles collected here bring into focus the ways in which Kafka anticipated many of the recent developments in contemporary thinking about nonhuman animals.

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