

Between You and Me: Fractured humanities in Kafka's "Jackals and Arabs"

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Franz Kafka's short story *Jackals and Arabs* (1917) stages an unsettling encounter in which a pack of jackals appeals to a visiting European traveller to help them slaughter the Arabs they live alongside, denouncing the latter as unclean, uncivilized, and unworthy of moral consideration. Read through a post humanist lens, the story does more than allegorize ethnic or colonial hatred: it exposes the rhetorical machinery by which one group manufactures another's expulsion from the category of "the human" altogether. This paper argues that Kafka's animal fable dramatizes extremism not as an aberration of human reason but as a structural effect of humanism itself, a system that has always required an excluded, animalized 'Other' against which the "properly human" can be defined. By voicing this exclusionary logic through jackals rather than humans, Kafka defamiliarizes violence so often naturalized in human speech, forcing readers to recognize dehumanizing rhetoric as a recurring technology of power rather than a metaphorical extremity. The story's triangulated structure, jackal, Arab, and the passive European witness, further implicates the detached observer, complicating any reading that locates extremism solely in the speaking subject. This paper contends that "*Jackals and Arabs*" anticipates a central post humanist insight: that the boundary between human and nonhuman is never a neutral biological fact but a contested, weaponizable fiction, one whose fracturing has historically underwritten some of humanity's most extreme violence against other humans.

