

Prague residents and their pet dogs at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

The authors focus on phenomenon of coexistence of animals and humans in City of Prague. One of the examined topics is the transformation of a working animal into a pet. Dog is the best animal on which this topic can be presented due to existence of „dog´s register“. The key period for the transformation of the coexistence of the dogs inhabitants and humans in City of Prague is the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The dog - human relationship underwent a major qualitative and quantitative transformation in this period. In order to prevent the spread of rabies and to improve sanitary conditions, the city administration tried to limit the number of dogs kept in the city by introducing the so-called dog tax, yet the number of dogs kept as pets was still rising. However, the quality of the relationship between people and dogs was also changing, thanks to the activities of the Society for the Protection of Animals fighting for the sensitive treatment of pulling dogs and the improvement of their living conditions. In the context of the growing interest in the pet phenomenon, veterinary care, the breeding of companion breeds and the first canine societies were developing slowly.

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Blurred Lines: The Animal-Human Divide in the Imagination of the Habsburg Bourgeoisie

During the nineteenth century, a growing sense of empathy toward non-human animals emerged within the Habsburg Empire. While no comprehensive study exists, it is evident that, as in other parts of Europe, Central Europe saw a surge in animal protection efforts during the second half of the century. Passionate men and women formed animal welfare associations within which they published books and bulletins, organized international conferences, and actively campaigned for the integration of their moral principles into the sphere of politics.

Through archival research of voluntary associations and contemporary print, the promotion of animal welfare as the latest moral acquisition reveals itself as a bourgeois agenda that had little to do with the lives of the animals themselves. Nevertheless, this changing relationship between humans and animals offers a fascinating insight into the bourgeois imagination of society, which was simplistically divided into those who treated animals (understood by the bourgeoisie merely as mammals) as beloved family members, and those who were supposedly too barbaric to do so and resorted to aggression. The dichotomy naturally aligns with the class division between the supposedly sophisticated bourgeoisie and aristocracy on the one hand, and the untamed working classes and peasants on the other. The discourse goes so far as to accuse the latter of being animals themselves, thus blurring the divide between where human ends and animal begins. Drawing on sources about Trieste's *Società Zoofila* (est. 1856) and its peer associations, the paper will shed a light on the ever-changing divide between the cultural categories of 'human' and 'animal' and its political consequences.

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2. Proposal

Paper title: Readers, workers, beetles: human-nature relationships and literary fiction in/from the Bohemian Forest, 1867-1914

Abstract: The narratives we tell about nature are not merely reflections of environmental change and ecological relationships, but active participants in shaping how societies engage with the natural world. Yet, little is known of how past stories affected the actors they portrayed, be they nature or people. Such is the case with bilingual Czech-German author Karel Klostermann (1848-1923), whose writings continue to shape Czech debates surrounding the administration of the Bohemian Forest (Czech: Šumava, German: Böhmerwald) today. This interdisciplinary paper considers some of his Czech- and German-language works retelling more-than-human stories of modernisation, social change, and ecological disturbances, as a bark beetle outbreak irreversibly altered the woodlands. This paper proposes to contextualise Klostermann's work, and while it evaluates the truth-value of the text, it treats it primarily as constitutive of a historical reality, to find out what literary fiction can reveal about human-nature relationships at the time. Using a cultural- and social-historical approach, it also assesses the novel's direct and indirect impact on its two primary actors: the local population and the local landscape. More specifically, it combines a reading of the novel with the analysis of historical data related to land use, forest management, and tourism to evaluate how Klostermann's portrayal of the Bohemian Forest led to changes in the perception of its landscape, fauna, and local inhabitants, and the resulting material impact on the region in a period of environmental and economic transformation. By looking at the literary canonisation of the Bohemian Forest, this study seeks to illuminate nineteenth-century environmental communications, the connection between literary and historical narratives, and the ways that contemporary environmentalism involved and affected local populations.