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Creatures of Empire

by Joe Escobar - Friday, October 7, 2016, 10:04 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Creatures of Empire topic.
To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes which question(s) you are addressing . Do NOT simply leave it RE: Creatures of Empire

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by Shelby Say - Sunday, October 9, 2016, 9:05 PM

During the audio file, DeJohn Anderson mentions the views that the Indians had on animals. The fact that the Indians didn't think of animals as property, but as “human persons sharing the earth” caught my attention. I feel a strong correlation with this view on animals because of my upbringing in the Hawaiian culture. There is a lot of similarities between the Native Americans and the Native Hawaiians in many aspects, and the treatment of the lands and animals being one of them. I can strongly relate to viewing animals as a type of human person rather than property because the way I was brought up was to not take advantage of the animals since they, in return, are beneficial to us. As stated in our textbook reading, “The extinction of these animal species probably led to a decline in human population as people struggled to cope with the diminished biodiversity and searched for new sources of food.” To me, this was justification for one of the reason why Native Americans treat animals more humane then those suggested by Europeans. DeJohn Anderson also mentions the spiritual presence that the Natives believe animals to posses. As part of the Hawaiian culture as well, I believe in the same spiritual being of animals as we call them “Aumakua”. So I believe that religion and/or culture plays a strong role in the perspective on how the Europeans and Natives viewed animals and why they might have had conflict over this subject.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by Miranda Marshall - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 7:42 PM

Shelby,

It is interesting to see a perspective from which this distinction between two different ways to treat animals is still being used today (in Hawaii). I think a lot of us would like to make the same proclamation that we view animals as equal beings and sometimes I, myself think that way too, but like you said we do used them as sources food and it's important to acknowledge both sides of the spectrum I think. On one side, in today's society we own pets and eat meat. There are also groups of people who choose not to eat meat or any animal byproducts which is helping to not contribute to the extinction of some species. It is refreshing to hear that there are still cultures viewing animals as spiritual beings because it sheds light into why the Natives were so appalled that the Europeans were treating the animals as inferior beings and something that they could “own” as property. Today, it is hard to imagine a world without animals being eaten/ owned as pets, so it is interesting to read about a time where that came as a shock to a culture.

-Miranda

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Superior Creatures

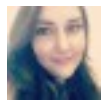
by Miranda Marshall - Monday, October 10, 2016, 7:22 PM

Dejohn Anderson suggests the main problem was the difference in views between the Europeans and the Indians. The Europeans viewed animals as property and as a possession of their own while the Indians viewed animals as an obvious difference from humans, but still believed them to be equal and didn't believe they were something that could be owned. I identify more so with the Indians, being a vegetarian plays a big role in the equality portion of things and I'd like to think I don't see animals as inferior beings; however, I don't think it's a strange thing to have a pet like a dog or cat mostly because that is the norm today. When it comes to animals like pigs or deer or anything of the sort, I think those are meant to roam freely and can understand more from the Indian's side confused by them being "owned". Indians believing that animals can hold more of a spiritual power is even something that I can resonate with because I definitely think they can represent things like healing where the Europeans couldn't see that aspect of livestock. In my opinion in the spiritual aspect, livestock are the superior creatures.

I know that dogs were some of the first pets and the only encounters Indians might have had with these "unfamiliar animals" was just running into them and not knowing anything about them or what they were. They were forced to make their own identifications and then were shocked and confused when the Europeans arrived owning them as their own pets.

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Re: Superior Creatures

by Heather Shepherd - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 2:03 PM

The natives actually did have domesticated dogs, according to our textbook. On page 5 of chapter 1 it says "Some Native Americans raised guinea pigs, turkeys and ducks, *but apart from dogs on both continents*, they domesticated no large animals..." So in my understanding, Prof. Anderson's interview was mainly concerned with "barnyard" animals, like pigs, cattle and sheep.

I think the concept of "pets" puts animals in somewhat of a gray area between property and equals. Some of us treat our pets like part of the family, while others tie them up outside and pay them little attention. Also it's hard to compare pets to livestock because pets are not specifically bred to produce meat, milk or hides - they're bred for companionship. And depending on who you ask, that might change the definition of the word "property."

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Re: Superior Creatures



by Joshua Vieira - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 7:25 PM

After doing research about dogs in ancient America, it's easy to see the different mindset between the two cultures that had the same animal living with them. The English saw the dog as a pet that they owned. The dog was property to the English. They were their companions but also tools to be used such as herders, protectors and hunting partners. The Indians believed them to be a connection to the wild world around them, while others saw no use to them, and others saw them as a food crop. Even though the Indians used dogs as tools, they were more revered to the Indians than the English. Here is a transcript I found from an interesting book about the ideology of dogs to the ancient Indians Here is a small transcript

"A few themes emerge from the details of the dog's lot in America. First and foremost, the dog was an ambiguous animal. Native Americans understood that even though dogs resided in the human camp they had a close kinship with coyotes and wolves. Because of these relationships, dogs occupied and operated on several levels: they connected the wild and the tame, and they joined nature and culture. Even though dogs were seen as almost human, they were also known to be carnivores and, as such, were linked not only to wolves, coyotes, and foxes but also to bears and jaguars. On the one hand, dogs were esteemed as companions, hunters, and guards. On the other hand, they were associated with promiscuity and filth. Among some groups, eating dogs was strictly taboo, whereas other groups ate them with great relish. Some cultures relied on dogs for transportation and hauling. Others found them to be of no use at all. Dogs played key roles in the myths of some people; in other myths, dogs were scarcely mentioned. In addition, the numbers of dogs and their physical appearance varied widely from locality to locality and through time." Schwartz, M. (1997) *A history of dogs in the early Americas*. nytimes.com. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/s/schwartz-dog.html>

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Re: Superior Creatures

by Heather Shepherd - Friday, October 14, 2016, 10:56 AM

Wow that's interesting. I'm reading this with the assumption that dogs were domesticated in the Americas after the Berginia crossing (but I may be wrong about that - did they make the trek alongside man?). In either case the tribes

that saw no use for dogs were probably not descendants of those that originally domesticated them.

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Re: Superior Creatures

by Joshua Vieira - Friday, October 14, 2016, 12:03 PM

From my research the dogs were domesticated long before the Berginia crossing. They were part of the "pack" as man made his way across Europe, India and Asia. It was a mutual friendship between man and canine. The dogs would get food without having to work hard for it and man got a tribe protector and hunting partner. Dr. I. Leher Brisbin Jr. Senior Research Ecologist at University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Lab had rediscovered a descendant of these primitive dogs living in the swamps of Carolina. This breed named Carolina dingo has been accepted by the ARBA (American Rare Breed Association) as a primitive breed. The reason I know this is that I have an American Dingo named Chewy. The breed is still living in the swamps and forests of the Carolina and have not be crossed-bred by domesticated dogs.

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Re: Superior Creatures

by Benjamin McKenzie - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 11:52 PM

The concept of pets crossed my mind when I was trying to decide which side I was closer aligned with. Originally I thought that the idea of dogs as pets was brought over with the Europeans but it's interesting to know that Native Americans kept dogs as well, even with their belief that animals couldn't be owned. I liked that you referred to the Native Americans as having them as "companions" which seems to be the most accurate way to describe them, opposed to calling them "pets" which would imply ownership over an animal, a foreign concept to them.

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Ideology of animals towards the concept of property

by Joshua Vieira - Monday, October 10, 2016, 8:39 PM

The religious ideology of animals from different culture played a major role in the misunderstandings between the Native Americans and the English. Where the Indians view animals as a person of persons of a different nature, would have trouble

understanding how animals would be deemed property. The the Indians the animals are part of the land and themselves and are to be respected as such.

The English are taught through the bible that animals are to be seen as lessor beings than humans are to be used with complete disregard of respect to the animals. Two cultures with complete differences in attitude towards animals are bound to have misunderstandings when it comes to the premise of property.

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Animals as property or equals

by Heather Shepherd - Monday, October 10, 2016, 9:06 PM

I think Professor Anderson was suggesting that the biggest issue surrounding European livestock in the New World was the fundamental differences in how animals were viewed. On one side, you have the Europeans who kept livestock as property, and on the other side were the natives who considered animals and themselves as equal creatures of nature. I like the idea of treating animals this way – that their presence allows us to live and we should be grateful for it – but at the same time, I think it would be difficult to live in a non-hunting society and still hold these values without being branded a hypocrite. We eat animals just like the natives did, but the path our food takes from nature to our stomachs could not be more dissimilar.

These two views can also be explained through the religious differences between the settlers and the natives. In the book of Genesis, the bible states that man is to have dominion over the animals of the earth, while native religions consider them kindred spirits to be revered. Our textbook indicated that this cultural divide was the spark that ignited Virginia's Indian War. A planter refused to pay his debts to the Doegs, and they responded by running off some of his livestock. Maybe they thought it was a joke? An insult? A slap on the wrist? But I think it's quite possible that the natives couldn't even comprehend that settlers would consider it an offense punishable by death. Looking at this conflict through their religious lens, the natives most likely considered the settlers' reaction to be incredibly heinous, unreasonable and cruel.

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Are animals property

by Benjamin McKenzie - Monday, October 10, 2016, 10:17 PM

In DeJohn Anderson's interview about her book *Creatures of Empire*, Anderson explains the conflicts that were created by the way that the English and Native Americans dealt with their animals. The two cultures viewed animals in entirely different ways, the biggest difference being that the English viewed them as property while Native Americans did not.

The Native Americans did not believe in the ownership of any living being and Anderson describes them viewing animals as “other than human persons”. Anderson goes on to explain that they thought some animals held spiritual powers which went against what the English Christians believed, creating conflict as well. Since the English believed that they owned animals, Native Americans were sometimes punished for killing an English owned animal that found its way onto their land.

I would say that I fall somewhere between these two viewpoints on animals. Animal ownership is so ingrained into today's society I believe that it's okay's to own certain animals but I am also drawn to and agree with the Native American viewpoint that animals are not inferior to humans and can not/should not always be owned.

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Horses

by Samuel Gibson - Monday, October 10, 2016, 10:34 PM

I was a little surprised that she didn't talk about horses. Once many native american tribes got a hold of horses and learned how to use them they became much stronger. The Apache, Navajo, Lakota, and many other tribes were changed considerably by their introduction. The Apache and Lakota, in particular, became a military force to be reckoned with after adapting to a life on horse-back. By the time of the Indian Wars in the late 1800's, after the civil war, these mounted tribes were the strongest holdouts and were the last to be forcefully subdued.

I find it interesting how so many native american tribes adopted European technology into their lives. Guns and horses are definitely two of the big ones. Colonization was not a quick process and lasted many generations and involved countless different cultures all being transformed one after the other. Some of my favorite sci-fi concepts are imagining if contact with aliens would mirror the way colonization occurred, as a gradual and mutually transformative process.

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The way of thinking of animals

by Moe Uetake - Monday, October 10, 2016, 11:54 PM

Dejohn Anderson suggests the main problem was that the English perceived their animals as property. On the other hand, Indians didn't conceive of living animals as anyone's property. They thought animals were living things other than human, but they were not inferior to human. Moreover, Native Americans thought a lot of animals especially some of the major prey animals have spiritual power or spiritual protectors.

I don't look at animals that they have spiritual power or spiritual protections, but I agree with the idea of animals are living beings other than human. I know we're also an animal, but I don't often use the word animal to human when talking. I disagree with English because I don't think animals as my property. I have a cat in my country, and I think we live together. I don't think I own him.

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Re: Problems with foreign animals

by Gabe Sorber - Tuesday, October 11, 2016, 12:14 AM

In the interview with Virginia DeJohn Anderson, Anderson suggests that the main problem with foreign animals (Pigs, Cattle, Sheep, etc.) in the Americas was the differences in culture between the settlers and the Indians. Anderson starts by jokingly saying that the animals were more alien than the settlers themselves, due to the fact that the Indians had encountered settlers long before they saw the animals. Then she moves on by saying the settlers treated the animals as property whereas the Indians believed that living animals shared the earth. She then went on saying that some animals were even spiritual figures or symbols. Anderson actually believes that animals played a much bigger role in the start of King Phillips war than what most historians thought. She backs this up by stating that the foreign animals would sometimes trespass and damage Indian land and crops. Anderson also states that when these animals did damage Indian land that they would treat the animals as any other and kill them. These actions that the Indians took were seen as crimes to the settlers and would often have to be "Paid Back". So in order to stop the damaging of land owned by the Indians, they moved thirty or so miles away, but still had problems with the settlers animals.

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Ownership of animals a issue?

by Justin Stewart - Friday, October 14, 2016, 11:20 AM

I have always thought of the Indian people as people who are at one with nature and very in touch with animals as well. I find it very interesting to listen to this podcast and be presented with the thought that the Indian people would have more of an issue with the way the English treated their animals more than the English themselves. I do understand that the Indian people are close to nature but I would have thought that the people themselves would pose more of an issue to them than animal treatment. I also never considered that English people have animals as possessions whereas the Indians did not. I do not know that I fully agree with that logic presents, though. If we look at an animal like a dog for example that could be considered a possession, something used for hunting for example. But didn't the Indian people also use horses as a means of travel? Wouldn't that mean that the

horses they used were possessions of theirs and if so why would they have an issue with the ownership in which the English speak of. I am curious people's thoughts on this because maybe it is just me but it seems like there kind of the same thing, so I find it hard to believe in this podcast fully.

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