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Creatures of Empire

by [Joe Escobar](#) – Friday, October 9, 2015, 11:13 PM

This forum thread is for Creatures of Empire posts and replies.

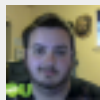
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Indians First Encounter with Domesticated Animals

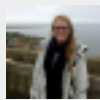
by [Jacob Rothaupt](#) – Sunday, October 11, 2015, 11:26 PM

DeJohn Anderson suggests that the main idea was that the Indians have never heard of the idea of domesticating animals and this led to the Indians being unsure about the animals and considering them to be strange. Interestingly enough, Anderson states that she is uncertain but suggests that the Indians might have first encountered these domesticated animals from Europe in the woods without a colonist. This led them to, as Anderson suggested, see them as a strange creature in the woods. I found this interesting as it would explain the uncertainty from the natives that Anderson described in the podcast. Anderson also suggested that while the Europeans had domesticated the animals, the Indians weren't sure what to think of the animals and they never thought of animals as being property like the Europeans did.

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"Other Than Humans Persons"

by [Taylor Knox](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 2:14 PM

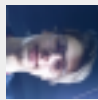
Dejohn Anderson says that she believes that European animals were considered more strange than that European humans in the eyes of the Native Americans. She says this is due to the fact that the Native Americans had encounters with the Europeans prior to actual settlement but also because she thinks that Native Americans first encounter with these animals were in the wild, away from the colonies and the Native Americans did not know how to react to them. I found this reasoning she gave and a little surprising and I would be curious to know what evidence lead her to believe that their encounters with animals were only isolated to those in the wild. I probably also bring in some bias as I know if I was looking at a sheep, which is an animal I am already familiar with, vs. a human with weapons that the human would come across as much more intimidating.

Anderson also brings up another issue with European animals was that they were perceived as property to the Europeans while the Native Americans saw their animals as “other than human persons”. I can see how this

difference in viewpoint can create some conflict. I thought she brings up a great point when she provides the example of a European animal coming onto Native American land and damaging their property. She says that the Native Americans were troubled with how to handle this because if it was a wild animal they could justify killing it, but the idea of the animal being someone's property made this a harder decision to make. I think this idea of property vs. something that is free is still an issue that is in our society today. I think that this can be seen with the current topic of abortions. I think you could argue that people that believe in pro-choice would believe in this idea of property. They would urge the idea that an unborn child or fetus is property of the pregnant women and she has control over it and can decide what to do with it. The opposing would be pro-life or more of the idea of freedom. I see this as the unborn child or fetus being the point of focus and that it should not be viewed as property but a free being. This connection to present day conflict might be stretch but I think it could bring up a good conversation between the idea of owning property versus the property being free.

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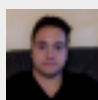
English Settlers' vs. Indians' view on animals

by [Drew Chappel](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 10:14 PM

In New England a, major source of conflict in the 1670's was the use of land in the new world. The colonists desired open pastures for their livestock to graze, and fences around their farms, but the indians required substantial amounts of forest in which they could hunt (pg 81.) The settlers' hogs and cattle that ran free on the land trampled indian cornfields and destroyed other agricultural features. This heightened tension between the settlers and the natives, and the problem comes not from how this is dealt with, DeJohn Anderson suggests, but the "package of ideas about animals" that the english brought with them. The English settlers believed that animals belonged to somebody, like a piece of property. The native indians, however, believed that there were spiritual properties associated with the animals, and that no one could simply own one. The domestic animals would run loose from English control, and trample or dig up crops that the indians have planted. Naturally, as a way to deal with a troublesome animal, an indian would simply kill it without thinking about if it belongs to anybody or not. The English saw this as destruction of property which lead to growing differences that eventually sparked war. Personally, I believe that all living things have feelings, and are capable of sentient thought, so I would side with the native's point of view. I feel a spiritual connection between nature and myself, and I feel that is one important thing that a lot of people, including the English settlers, are missing. Today, livestock animals are held in dark, cramped, crowded animal factories and often don't see daylight. I believe that the animals should be able to run free outdoors and live a happy life before getting turned into a delicious meal.

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modern day hunting and farmer

by [Caleb Caughell](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 10:40 PM

After listening the the audio clip about The Creatures of Empire, I feel like it is kind of the same as today with hunting and farming. Hunters go out like the Indians, they don't own their food, but in faming they do. If a famers cow gets out of the field and goes and breaks something on someones property then the famers is held responsible. In modern day the farmer wouldn't be held as a criminal as they say in the video clip.

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The Real Alien to the New World

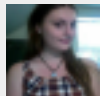
by [Cloyne Welch](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 10:44 PM

DeJohn Anderson suggests in this short audio clip that the new animals introduced to the New World by the Europeans were more of a revelation to the Native Americans than the Europeans themselves.I would have to agree with Anderson based on the fact that these two civilizations viewed animals in two different lights.

Native Americans viewed animals to be equal with themselves. They were spiritually and religiously incorporated into their lives whereas Europeans had a complete opposite outlook. Animals to them were a source of food, used for domestication, and were not considered equal to the Europeans. Not only was the first sight of these new creatures a great shock for the Natives, but so was the way the Europeans interacted with "their" animals.

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Foreign Ecology and Cultural Erosion

by [Paul Young](#) – Monday, October 12, 2015, 10:52 PM

The Columbian Exchange brought about one of the greatest ecological shifts in human history. In some cases it increased diversification, while also disturbing sensitive ecological niches. One example of this can be found in the text, in which British settlers "marveled at the lush Kentucky bluegrass" (Liberty Equality Power, 35), failing to realize that it was actually "an accidental European import that had conquered the landscape even faster than they had." (Liberty Equality Power, 35) Another more harmful example was the transfer of European Pathogens to the American continents. These continents were for the most part free of human disease before the 15th century, credited to the fact the original American migrants had arrived there by crossing the Bering Strait which "had destroyed many of the pathogens they might have carried" (Liberty Equality Power, 3). This paved the way for European diseases to adversely affect the unprepared Native American's immune systems. These are just a few of many examples in which native European ecology went on to dominate, replace and infect native American ecology. This, in my opinion, translates into the erosion of native American culture. Slowly but surely, as European plants, animals, and pathogens began to dominate the landscape, Native Americans found it increasingly difficult to live as they had for generations. This opinion is also voiced by Professor Virginia DeJohn Anderson, writer of *Creatures of Empire*, whom believes that animals played a larger part in North American colonialism than historians typically recognize. She argues that European animals persistently ate and destroyed Native American food sources, creating significant problems. This made it harder for Native Americans to eat, especially since extermination of these animals meant persecution by the European settlers. These issues are still relatable to contemporary society, with many plants and animals being barred from certain areas to protect from ecological destruction. Ever since I was young, my mom always pointed out the fact that the most prominent animals weren't native even native to the continent. This is appalling, especially when you consider the fact that many of the hallmark Native American animals are at risk of extinction, such as wolves, grizzly bears, and bison. Overall, it's important that we protect ecological niches from the sort of foreign contaminations which took place during the Columbian Exchange.

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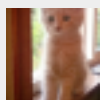
for property rights

by [Parker Maidlow](#) – Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 4:53 PM

Property rights seem to foster economic and social stability (<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-482es.html>) ... it seems that the domestication of animals might require such property rights, seeing as how they are domesticated by people and cared for by people and at least often have economic value.

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Indians Have the Right to Kill English Animals

by [Madison Hunter](#) – Tuesday, October 13, 2015, 10:08 PM

DeJohn Anderson is suggesting that the Indians did not know about the animals that the English brought over. The Indians way of thinking about animals was that they were not their property but that they were just different from human beings and are just sharing the earth, that they may even have spiritual powers. The English did not have full control of their animals so there are some instances where English animals trespassed on Indian land. This might have caused damage to the land. Also since Indians used traps to hunt some of the English animals got caught in those traps and that was technically destroying English property. I think that I look at animals as your property, but if something is your property you need to keep it on your own land. The Indians had the right to go ahead and kill the animals that got trapped in their traps because the animals were on Indian property. The English needed to control their animals. Why was it fine for the English property, animals, to destroy Indian property but the Indians not aloud to destroy English property?

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Re: Indians Have the Right to Kill English Animals

by [Parker Maidlow](#) – Thursday, October 15, 2015, 6:41 AM

would it have been economically feasible to keep them on their own land? (as a general question, not to any

specific person)

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Re: Indians Have the Right to Kill English Animals

by [Cloyne Welch](#) – Friday, October 16, 2015, 11:08 PM

Parker, I think you brought up a great question. I think this is a perfect example of the "greed" aspect we were talking about in class. Europeans were most likely in the mindset that it would be most beneficial for them to have the animals roaming free rather than crowded them in a small area. The Europeans most likely weren't thinking of the harm or impact it would have on the tribes in the surrounding areas. Greed played in the killing of the animals by Natives as well. They were worried about their land/tribes rather than the animals.

With that being said, I don't think the Natives necessarily had the right to kill the animals if they wandered on to their land. Especially when they looked at the animal population as more of an equal rather than prey.

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Re: Indians Have the Right to Kill English Animals

by [Drew Chappel](#) – Friday, October 16, 2015, 11:17 PM

I think that is a question that we ask ourselves about the entire past. Why was it fine for any of the first settlers to show up in America to pillage and claim indian land? I call it a double standard, when a situation is desirable for one group but deplorable for another. How the english got the idea of “Oh it’s fine if I let my cow run over to your corn field and trample your crops, but if you kill it, then that’s another story.” I think the problem truly does come from the idea of property, of owning something like land or a living thing. The English thought only of themselves when it came to the animals that they brought to America. They wanted to be able to farm and raise animals for their own improvement. They did not think of the repercussions that it might have on the ecosystem, the environment, or the civilizations that were already there. We find, that the animals of the English destroying indian land actually is not fine, it increased tension between the two peoples’ societies. That and the English’s efforts to convert the natives escalated the strain in differences between them, and eventually war broke out. In the end, who was actually the one that did something wrong? The settlers and their invasion, or the indians that provoked war?

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Re: Indians Have the Right to Kill English Animals

by [Taylor Knox](#) – Saturday, October 17, 2015, 5:10 PM

I think you brought up some really great points here. I agree with you that it does seem like a double standard between the settlers and the Native Americans. Dejohn Anderson doesn’t really comment on what the English's actual response was to the Indians killing their animals if they wandered on to their lands. She hints at the settlers not being pleased with this, as I would guess as well, but I wonder how much this really affected the settlers or if it was seen as part of the whole ‘settling process’.

I also think that how you said “they did not think of the repercussions that it might have on the ecosystem, the environment or the civilizations that were already there” ties perfectly into the idea of greed that was discussed above, and proves how large of a role it plays. I also think that quote accurately describes the root of almost all problems created by the settlers with the Indians, whether it was animals, land or even the Indians themselves the settlers seems to make most of their decisions without thinking of repercussions.

To answer the questions you proposed I think the settlers and their invasion were the ones in the wrong here. If they were perhaps more mindful and respectful to the Indians and their land I believe a lot of conflict could have been avoided.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [Parker Maidlow](#) – Thursday, October 15, 2015, 6:34 AM

the problems that resulted from settler animals roaming were that they ate native american's crops... and that when the natives killed them because of that (at least with traps) that they were held accountable for damages.

general questions raised on this topic – if the natives encountered settler animals up to 30 miles away (according King Phillip)

how would the settlers have known if it was killed? would the settlers have even gone after it, or would the animals even have made it back?

source:

https://media.lanecc.edu/users/escobarj/201/forums/1/201_Forum_1/Creatures_of_Empire.html

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [Madison Hunter](#) – Thursday, October 15, 2015, 4:31 PM

Along with the question that Parker asked, how do the settlers know which animals the Indians killed opposed to the animals that died of natural causes or of other animals killing and eating them? Did the settlers just blame the death of all the animals that did not come back on the Indians?

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [Taylor Knox](#) – Saturday, October 17, 2015, 5:13 PM

I think this is a great question and also probably a hard one to find concrete evidence or answers for. I feel that due to the time and the circumstances that were happening it was probably easy for the settlers to put a 'blanket statement' of blame on the Indians without truly knowing perhaps the whole story that was at play.

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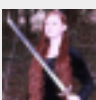
Re: Creatures of Empire

by [Madison Hunter](#) – Saturday, October 17, 2015, 8:26 PM

I agree with you on that it was almost impossible to know if it was the Indians who killed their animals or if it was other animals. I just think maybe it was unfair for the English to blame it all on the Indians and hold them accountable for it. Also even if it was the Indians who killed the animals why are they getting held accountable for destroying property? Couldnt the Indians make the same argument and say that English animals were destroying their property and make the settlers accountable for destroy it?

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Re: Strange animals: protectors, property, or one big nuisance?

by [Bethany Scott](#) – Friday, October 16, 2015, 2:50 PM

Strange animals: protectors, property, or one big nuisance?

"The animals get loose, and they're going on other people's property," said Chief Kevin Walsh. "The llama at one point was up to people's windows. And it's a shock. You don't normally see an animal like that looking at you in the window."

After listening to professor Anderson’s response as to why the immigrant animals in the new world may have been stranger than their human counterparts, my mind settled on a couple of Escobar’s questions. What view do I hold of animals, especially ones that invade my space and mess up my resources (yes the dog really HAS eaten my homework) and does this situation translate in a modern sense?

I know animals –especially those of the property type– still terrorize locals today. Take for instance the article above. I had to chuckle when I pictured a pig or a cow poking its head into the residence of a very surprised native American, or thought upon the case of Norman, a heifer in New York who evaded traps for three whole months, disturbing the public peace with her mooving display of rebellion. It’s less humorous coming back to the reality that these animals DO cause a lot of damage to property and the environment around them, especially gardens and plant life that would’ve otherwise been used by hungry humans for sustenance; as was the case for the natives, as Anderson brings up.

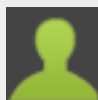
The only difference between then and now? There are serious legal repercussions for the perpetrators of negligence when it comes to letting your property wander off and damage someone else’s goods. The farmer above was faced with having his farming license revoked, fines are put out and sometimes fees instituted for even owning the animals. If you can’t control your property, current laws will not be in your favor. In Metacom’s day, it was the victims of negligence who were forced to pay or worse in court if they tried to better the situation by getting rid of the pesky animal or even worse, setting a trap for deer that some poor stupid cow wandered into.

Now, killing someone’s cattle or pet is a little extreme according to today’s regulations, where wandering animals must be reported to the local Sherriff, who then attempts to locate the owner of said cattle within 30 days before a public auction takes place to rehome it. (CitizensAdviceBureau.org). The natives didn’t have this option available, however. I’m sure fencing wasn’t as high quality in the young colonies, and having little to no experience with the animals, I’m sure it wasn’t the natives first reaction to lead the animals back into town and return them to their owners, repeatedly. What a pain!

I personally have always had a slightly closer view of animals to the natives. Yes, animals are, to public knowledge, less intelligent. This does not make them less valuable...but one of their great values is FOOD. My Cherokee mother always told me not to feel sorry for the animals we ate, because it was part of their place in existence, to give their “life energy” for the energy of another. If an animal came onto my property, wrecked my garden, and threatened my family, I would be very tempted to harvest the darned thing, should other attempts fail. I understand the native’s frustration, and can only imagine how much more magnified this frustration would be if the law was not only not on my side but sought to punish me for protecting what I need to survive. Yes, Betsy has great wisdom behind her big bovine eyes, provides good company and surely has many stories to tell...but when she wanders into my territory and threatens my resources, you can bet your boots I want her hooves out of my sight, and her “guardian to be held responsible. If I had to deal with these strange new creatures’ unwanted presence in addition to the other tensions brought by the settlers, I would indeed be a very restless and upset neighbor.

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Re: Creatures of Empire
by [Parker Maidlow](#) – Friday, October 16, 2015, 11:06 PM

the natives received some consideration by the courts, though the laws and the rulings were often burdensome to them, requiring animals to be transported by them often several miles back to settlers. Unfair requirements for something as a way of circumventing law may be seen today in the USA (link below).

Sources: http://helenair.com/news/national/injunction-to-get-birth-certificates-for-us-born-kids-denied/article_a62ef3b0-4e1a-591a-a4c8-075abb99e256.html

<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/471>

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