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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.

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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 Andres Ibarra - Saturday, October 8, 2016, 4:33 PM

DeJohn Anderson suggest that Indians looked at these animals as just other living beings sharing the earth with them, and some believed that these animals also had spiritual protectors. On the other hand the Europeans looked at these animals only as property.

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European "property" vs Indian property

by Judith Pohl - Saturday, October 8, 2016, 10:17 PM

I found the podcast interesting. I wasn't aware that the European animals were such a huge issue and was surprised to hear the issues carried on well into the 19th century. Virginia DeJohn Anderson referred to the animals as being more alien like than the Europeans were to the Indians upon settlement. She also mentioned the animals were viewed by the Europeans as part of their property. I now see why it was such an issue between the Indians and their frustration with trying to protect their crops and the Europeans viewing these animals as their property.

However, I have much more empathy for the Indians as I try to imagine how that would be handled now if the same thing were to happen with my yard/garden or much of the farm land and crops in the US. In class this past week it was mentioned that the Indians had a complex developed civilization that had began a thousand years ago. I can only imagine how they felt when the pigs and cattle came into their land, tearing up the crops and digging up shell fish along the coastline that they relied on.

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Religious Differences

by Garrett Richards - Sunday, October 9, 2016, 2:10 PM

Religion plays a big factor when taking a look at live stock through Europeans eyes and Native Americans eyes. The English perceived their live stock as property as in which Indians didn't believe living animals were anyones property (1:50). After hearing this from DeJohn Anderson I understood what she meant. After reading a couple chapters from our text book, you really get to see how Indians treated the animals that they killed/ate due to their beliefs and religion. The English looked at animals the way we look at animals today, property/pets. Another difference is that Indians believed that animals were living beings who were different then human beings but not necessary inferior to them (2:35). They also believed that certain animals had spiritual powers and the fact that they thought that baffled the English Christians. These are only a couple facts that allow me to believe that there was a lot of religious differences throughout Indians and The English people.

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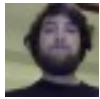
Re: Religious Differences

by Reed Hueter - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 12:46 PM

I like how you focused on religion so much. This is the most crucial part to the misunderstanding between the two cultures. The Native Americans viewed themselves as part of the natural world rather than distinct from so there was a greater appreciation towards animals. I think there would of been less issues between the two if the English didn't let the animals free roam. Once Natives saw animals, which like you said were linked to spiritual powers, being used for labor and domesticated it sparked a fire in them leading to King Phillips war.

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Perspectives on Animals, and Their Relevance in the New World

by Skye Lipson - Sunday, October 9, 2016, 5:11 PM

DeJohn suggests that because Europeans see animals as property and Native Americans saw them as “non-human persons”, Animals became a large source of conflict between those two generalized groups. My personal view of animals is actually closer to that of the Native American perspective, perhaps even the same minus the spirituality they were said to attribute to them. I believe that animals are not lower beings than humans, we are all beings, and there may even be argument that certain beings such as whales and trees are more grand than us. Being a human I of course would save another human's life over that of an animal's simply as a nurtured moral instinct that is a product of the culture I was raised in.

The different views between the cultures about animals start to become more clear when you take into account their different religions. In Christianity animals a deemed to be, not worse as beings, but less enlightened and further away from heaven. Humans are entrusted by God with the care and use of the innocent stupid beasts, therefore in Christian European culture animals being property makes sense. In Native American culture the spiritual view was that animals are unique beings each with a special spiritual significance, and therefore they were seen as equally relevant life-forms if not sometimes revered as something more. As I said in the earlier paragraph I do not necessarily hold that animals are spiritual beings, but I do imagine that they are conscious beings and deserve to be treated as such. So given that, it can be said that I don't exactly view animals from either the christian perspective or the native american perspective.

The dominant European perspective regarding animals has passed through the centuries and still affects our society today. Although I can not cite a specific constitutional amendment or law regarding animals, I can say that there has been

much debate about our treatment of animals for the food industry. For instance overcrowding chickens that are too fat to stand, crammed in warehouses, and knee deep in manure, or cows whose tails have been cut off so that a mechanical milking device can be attached to their nipples, or even hanging live livestock by the hind legs on a slaughter machine. The extent that our food systems take advantage of and torture animals would seemingly be less likely to happen if we did not view animals as only being here for our pleasure and therefore as our property.

I certainly agree with the phrase “creatures of empire”, such domesticated animals as chickens, pigs, cows and horses were an important part of imperial expansion. Without the domestication of animals in Asia, Africa, and Europe, it would have been much more difficult for the Europeans to conquer the new land which was already settled by vast empires such as the mound builders, the Aztecs, and the Incas, as well as the Powhatans, Iriquois, Hurons, and many other factions of natives. Because of the European's livestock which had shared germs with the Europeans over time leading to sicknesses such as smallpox the europeans had cultivated germs that would be the downfall of the new world.

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Living with Livestock

by Reed Hueter - Monday, October 10, 2016, 7:58 PM

Reed Hueter

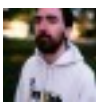
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Native Americans had lived their whole lives within the same culture and when cattle and pigs suddenly showed up a problem arose. This problem grew because these animals kept destroying precious resources that the Indians relied on and they had never been around domesticated animals. As it said in the audio clip Indians didn't think of animals as being owned but rather they were living beings sharing the earth. Deer were thought to have spiritual protectors which was super important to the religious aspect of the Natives every day life. I don't personally believe what the Natives do but have a great appreciation for wildlife and the outdoors and agree that there is a religious vibe to nature. Like me however, the English did not agree religiously with the Indians and this is linked to many conflicts eventually leading to King Phillips war. I agree with the "Creatures of Empire" concept because these animals were so crucial in expanding the west and being able to do heavy labor allowed populations to thrive under farming. Without these animals America would not of reached what we are today or in the time table that settling was accomplished.

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Property or not?



by Dylan Mandoli - Monday, October 10, 2016, 10:13 PM

Professor DeJohn Anderson presents the opinion that differences in expectations regarding animals directly lead to political turmoil in early colonial New England, as well as other colonies. Domestication was rare in the Americas, which lead to them seeing animals as wild game rather than property. For the most part, Native settlements did not have anything akin to sheep, pigs, or cattle living close to their settlements. So, when europeans came with their domesticated livestock which they saw as personal property, that idea naturally was not well understood by the Indians.

When two polities have legal expectations that don't align, it can cause serious problems when those laws are broken. To the indians, killing a wandering cow isn't a crime, the very notion doesn't make sense to them. It's a cow, and it's out in the wild, why wouldn't they be able to shoot it? Such misunderstandings lead to conflicts such as King Phillip's war. These issues remind me of the recent Malheur Wildlife Refuge occupation, which began in part over ranchers' cattle grazing on government land.

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Re: Property or not?

by Judith Pohl - Thursday, October 13, 2016, 9:03 AM

Good point, Dylan. In the Indians mind they weren't doing anything wrong or out of the norm to kill a wandering cow that is tearing apart their land. For the Europeans and Indians not understanding each other's cultures and beliefs is what led to a lot of conflict. Not sure if the Europeans really understood why the Indians were killing their "property" maybe they thought it was retaliation which led to even greater conflict.

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Addressing all questions

by Jaclyn Bahn - Monday, October 10, 2016, 11:15 PM

The main problem that DeJohn Anderson states is the difference of view that Indian and Europeans had on animals and livestock. While Indians views animals as “sharing the earth” and not being inferior to humans, Europeans saw them as property. This cause problems when it came to Indians killing the animals which was seen as them killing European property.

The religious differences causes a problem due to the fact that Indians viewed animals as more sacred and saw them as being equal to humans and as individual entities, while Europeans religiously viewed animals as being made for humans in

order to eat. Therefore, being their property. I see myself identifying more with Europeans where animals were made for us to eat but I believe that they should be treated respectfully and the fact that we have them should not be taken for granted, it is to be seen as a gift. Which I can see as being more spiritual.

I feel that any constitutional issue where there is religious backing for or against it would connect back to this. Abortion could be an example where one side of the argument is very religiously base, similar to the Europeans direct religious view of animals.

I agree that cattle and pigs were seen as the “Creatures of Empire” due to that fact that the friction caused between Indians and Europeans by the animals promoted exploration and settlement to the west.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by Cameron McCord - Wednesday, October 12, 2016, 10:35 PM

I don't find this very strange, considering Native Americans see other Native Americans all the time so seeing another human, with maybe a slight alteration to color or hair isn't very exciting. Although seeing an entirely different breed, and species of animal, and the way that would change how they live would be shocking indeed.

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Symbiosis vs colonialism

by Cassady Gruelle - Friday, October 14, 2016, 3:43 PM

In the audio clip featuring Dejohn Anderson, she explains that English settlers' and Indians' perspectives on the relationship between animals differed greatly. The natives' view saw animals not as inferiors but as complex beings inhabiting the same environment as humans. The settlers saw animals more as a means to an end: beings to be ruled for greater benefit and prosperity of the people. This could have stemmed from Judeo-Christian interpretation of holy text that saw humans as holding dominion over the natural world. Although a less extreme interpretation of the text could be construed to declare humans as caretakers or stewards of the earthly realm, this view doesn't seem to have been very popular throughout the European colonies.

Personally, I side more with the natives on this issue. When you look at the way organisms in healthy and dense ecosystems (like a rainforest for example) interact, you see an incredible amount of symbiotic relationships. (A symbiotic relationship is a cooperation between two or more species that benefits both parties somewhat equally.) Sure, one could see the simple relationship between an early american

farmer and his small number of livestock as being somewhat mutually beneficial. Despite the fact that the animal was removed from its natural environment, it can be argued that the animal was afforded more comfort and food than it could have gotten in its niche in the wild. But today, our relationship with domesticated animals can hardly be called mutually beneficial at all. With the industrialist mindset, we have become more like parasites of our livestock. We breed animals in massive numbers to extract their resources while often providing for them the minimum in living conditions, food, and empathetic care. There is a complete lack of respect not only for the organism, but for the niche it filled in its old environment. This creates practical problems that we still see today. When a species of domesticated animal is brought to a new land, it can sometimes cause immense damage to the ecosystem there. This is what I see in the interaction between the English animals and the ecosystem of the New World. Although I don't disagree as much with the old English treatment of animals as I do with our treatment of animals today, I still see the damage caused to the inhabitants of the New World as problematic.

This is not to say that the Natives' treatment of animals was without flaw. There are plenty of examples of tribes overhunting animals or misusing land and causing damage to ecosystems. However, it seems to me that the Natives' treatment their environment was, overall, more respectful and less damaging than the English'. They attempted to see land as not their land, but instead as 'the' land. The goal was to create a society that didn't disrupt those complex processes of nature, but instead attempted to participate in those processes. This allowed room for both parties (the peoples and the ecosystem) to benefit. This is what I have heard called a 'transactional' relationship between humans and nature, which quite neatly reflects the Natives' enthusiasm for barter and trade.

I not only see the English as having had the opposite paradigm, but I see it reflected in their animals as well. Their animals, as Dejohn said, disrupted the environment, just like the English themselves had a habit of doing. This must have been troubling to the natives for obvious reasons. Sure, the settlers had strange ways, but their animals did too? How poetically tragic, especially for a culture who saw animals as having sacred or spiritual power. I wonder how the natives viewed this. Did they see the English as spiritually poisoning these animals with their influence, or did it start to shatter native paradigms of animals altogether?

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Re: Symbiosis vs colonialism

by Judith Pohl - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 10:33 AM

I completely agree with Cassady in pointing out the fact that it's much of how the animals are still treated. The treatment of animals since the English treated them as property to now is so much worse. It's become a matter of greed rather than quality of life for the animals now. How many chickens can we pack into a factory? Not even enough room for them to move and it's accepted by most. I feel in many ways the English's ways has progressed to what it is today.

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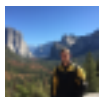
Domestication Today

by Reed Hueter - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 1:13 PM

When the Native Americans first saw domesticated animals they questioned this ideal, just as people are doing today with circus animals. Circus animals have to jump through rings of fire and balance on pedestals which is not natural and means that some type of reinforcement has to be given. This is where the questions comes in about the morality of this. Negative reinforcement includes abuse and this can violate the animal welfare act. When the Animal Welfare Act is imposed upon circuses the animal is not removed but a fine is given which is irritating to a lot of activists fighting against these circuses. In 2002, the head of the FBI domestic terrorism section ranked the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front as the top domestic terrorism threat after finding that the groups had collectively "committed more than 600 criminal acts in the United States since 1996, resulting in damages topping \$43 million" which most of these criminal acts were against circuses. The fight against domestic animals is still ongoing today and is something that will continue in our future based on different religious and political views.

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Why I think the Europeans were more strange

by Mitchell Olive - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 8:24 PM

Addressing the question of whether the Indians thought Europeans or their animals were more strange, especially the way that the question is worded, it seems clear to me that Indians thought that Europeans were more strange. Natives encountered all types of animals all the time, and they were all unpredictable in their own way, domesticated animals being the least unpredictable. And it seems that, even if the question to be addressed is the strangeness of interacting with the animals with the laws attached to them, it would still be much more strange to have to interact with a completely new culture, clothing, and abiding by a completely new religion that in some cases, you were forced to join. At 6 minutes and 40 seconds of the audio tape, the professor quotes King Phillip of the Indians saying that "The Indians had thought that, when the English bought land of them, they would have kept the livestock on

their own land." One would think that ignoring these animals, once finding out about them and the laws attached, would be less strange than trying to understand the culture of these people that you were forced to live with and cohabitate with, after not being in contact with other civilization for 13 thousand years to be more strange than these grazing animals themselves. Domesticated animals had been around for 7 thousand years in different societies that had developed separately from the Indians and was just a small part of the culture that they had to integrate with.

I think that, in terms of understanding the animals, it was much more a matter of the use and culture around these animals that were more strange to the Indians than the animals themselves. In chapter 3, on page 78, it states that "As the European presence magnified, more and more native societies had to either relocate or learn to live with the newcomers." It doesn't say that they had to learn to live with the domesticated animals. I think that the presence of the Europeans and trying to cohabitate with them and try to not go to war was a much more strange and uncovered ways than learning to live with the domesticated animals. That may be a small part of it, but it doesn't seem that it came even close to the strangeness of the new culture. Even if some of the coastal native societies had prior contact with Europeans, it seems that living amongst them and really learning about their culture and trying to understand it and not go to war with them was a much more pressing issue and more strange and foreign. People are capable of much more than domesticated animals, and it seems that the relationship among the Indians and Europeans went way past having to understand their use of domesticated animals.

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Spirituality and animals.

by Mitchell Olive - Saturday, October 15, 2016, 10:16 PM

I think religious differences played a role in perspective and definitely contributed to the amount of time it took for the Indians to understand the concept of domesticated animals. In the audio tape, at 2 minutes and 30 seconds, the professor states, talking of native American's view of animals, "that they were living beings sharing the earth who were different from human beings but not necessarily inferior to them." I can definitely relate to the Indians view of animals. While I don't necessarily see animals as inferior to humans, I do eat them. And I realize we are intellectually superior to them, but I don't think that necessarily means we are superior to them. I think there is an interconnectedness among all living beings that includes animals. Just like we eat them, they eat things and it seems odd to look at those animals as superior to the ones they eat. Some animals have been around a lot longer than us and haven't put a tole on the world we all live in. But I definitely think I draw energy from being in nature, and, as a wild land firefighter, try to keep it in tact, because we wouldn't be able to breath if it wasn't for it. I find peace and serenity in nature and I draw energy

from being around people. But it is an incredible place to feel alive and to look at your life from. I definitely can say that I feel more connected when I am in nature with people than when I am in a building with people.

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