

HST 201: History of United States F17 (Escobar Meta 20887 23004)

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Creatures of Empire



Forum 1

Creatures of Empire

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Creatures of Empire

by Joe Escobar - Friday, October 6, 2017, 11:09 AM

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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Different Cultures's View On Animals

by Kerianne Guza - Saturday, October 7, 2017, 1:20 PM

The main problem that arose with the introduction of European animals had to be the cultural difference between how the settlers viewed them versus how the natives did. The idea of animals being seen as property was foreign to the indigenous people and resulted in a multitude of problems based on how to deal with them. Just as DeJohn Anderson mentioned, out textbook (Liberty, Equality, Power) also addresses that the "free-running hogs and cows wrecked the Indian's cornfields" which played part in quarrels such as Metacom's War. These disputes just increased the tension between the groups and exposed their cultural and religious differences.

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Re: Different Cultures's View On Animals

by Raleigh Emerson - Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 4:53 PM

Another quote from the video that really summed up why there was such discord between the two parties. "The Indigenous people believed the animals to be non human persons co inhabiting the world with them." If your culture was based around the idea that all life is sacred, the sight of people barging onto your land and use these animals as tools could be haunting.

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Creatures of Empire

by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Sunday, October 8, 2017, 1:17 PM

In the podcast of Creatures of Empire, DeJohn Anderson talks about how some of the animals brought by Europeans destroyed areas that Native Americans relied on for hunting and fishing because the Europeans had no control of their animal's behavior (3:18 – 4:00).

Europeans believed animals as their property and Natives believe living animals as no one's property (1:50 – 2:00). Anderson goes on to talk about how Natives believe animals are living beings, and believed to have spiritual power and be protectors. Their beliefs are totally different, Europeans use animals for their own advantage and label them as property, while Natives belief animals are meant to live their life and they have a path to walk.

I myself do believe animals have a spiritual energy. My parents and also their Indigenous knowledge passed down to me is that everything is connected on this Earth, if we destroy one ecosystem then another one depended on that one also disappears. Animals and plants know what they are doing, this summer I took a biology class and in that class, we talked about how plants and animals are able to communicate in many ways. One way is through hormones released by plants to alert animals they need help. So yes, I believe they have a spiritual conscious and mindset.

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Undomesticated Cattle Were Confusing And Annoying To Natives

by Nicholas LaMonica - Sunday, October 8, 2017, 7:34 PM

DeJohn Anderson suggests that the main problem of introducing European creatures into North America was that animals such as pigs and cows were difficult to domesticate at first; this lead to animals roaming through pastures and destroying Native American crops, which lead to arguments. Referring to the audio clip narrated by Anderson, religious differences played a key role in that Native Americans had a more spiritual resonation with animals, and didn't think of themselves higher in status. King Phillip's outcry that Native Americans keep

their planting yards even thirty miles away from their boundary lines, to protect themselves from colonists' animals trespassing and destroying crops, is an outrageous statement to make especially when you think of how much of our Constitution is based on owning property.

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Garrett Warner's Response to Creatures of Empire

by Garrett Warner - Monday, October 9, 2017, 5:03 PM

I agree with Anderson's opinion on creatures of empire. Let's say next week all of the farm-animals disappear forever; I really doubt most civilized cultures would thrive. Farming made food much more available through breeding animals for slaughter instead of going out and tracking down an animal to kill for food. Also, when the European settlers came with their animals and displaced the native animals which made hunting for the Native People much more difficult. Anderson discussed the rules and regulations about domestic animals as well that was foreign to the Natives; for example, if a domestic animal was killed by a trap the person(s) who made the trap could be jailed for their offense they were not aware of. This caused much conflict between settlers and Native peoples.

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What were the differences in culture in relation to animals? Do you look at animals the same way?

by Raleigh Emerson - Monday, October 9, 2017, 6:48 PM

What does DeJohn Anderson suggest the main problem was, concerning these new animals and their relation to the Indians (and Europeans) and do you look at animals that way?

As soon as Europeans made contact there was a disconnect between them and the indigenous people regarding both the Europeans treatment and their relationship with the animals they had with them. The indigenous people didn't think of themselves as highly as these people; they believed animals to be non human persons sharing the world with them. "The problem between them was not the animals, but the ideas that the settlers had regarding them. Most significant was that they thought of the animals as property" -Virginia DeJohn Anderson. In modern culture it is hard to not look at animals at least somewhat like that with such gigantic food processing operations going on. With so many mouths to feed across the country I believe sadly it is a must. We have gotten past the point of no return when it comes to livestock such as chicken or cow.

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Re: Creatures of Empire - Religion; Role of animals in expansion

by Jason Yeager - Monday, October 9, 2017, 7:14 PM

Creatures of Empire

I have not read "Creatures of Empire" by Virginia DeJohn Anderson, but enjoyed reading the summary by Dr. Matthew Ward on the Reviews in History website, as well as listening to DeJohn Anderson's interview on [Backstory with the American History Guys](#).

I hold animals in high regard, and the ideal held by European settlers that they "had a biblically ordained right to assert dominion" (Ward) over animals goes against my core beliefs. While I tend to see domesticated animals as property--a concept foreign to early Native Americans--I lean towards the Native American notion (however misplaced in today's consumerist society) that humans and animals coexist on an almost spiritual level. Despite the distasteful reality of meat consumption, I appreciate the sacrifice made by that animal so that I could have a juicy steak for dinner. I raise my kids to respect the animals they are eating as well. As in "You are going to eat the rest of that, because that chicken did not need to die just so you could throw it in the trash!"

One concept put forth by DeJohn Anderson that I found to be really interesting is that "the animals which colonists brought with them were the principal agents responsible for dispossessing the Indians of their homelands." (Ward) I had always assumed that this dispossession was the result of nothing more than a gluttonous land-grab by the technologically superior European settlers. But this idea makes total sense. As free-ranging animals roamed further in search of food, Native Americans would naturally migrate away from these areas, rather than defend against this encroachment and face the wrath of the settlers. As a result, settlers would expand into these now-vacant lands, bringing with them their livestock which would roam even further in search of food....quite the vicious cycle!

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Re: Creatures of Empire - Religion; Role of animals in expansion

by Kerianne Guza - Tuesday, October 10, 2017, 1:09 PM

Jason, you made a great point when you mentioned the never ending cycle of the settler's animals pushing the Indians further away. I've taken many U.S. History classes and hadn't given that any thought before. When we think about history our minds usually jump to humans, but fail to consider the impact that animals also have on our history. After listening to what DeJohn Anderson had to say, it has become clear that animals not only influenced boundaries in early American, but the conflicts between the Natives and colonist too. It makes you wonder, what would America look like if the colonist hadn't brought their animals with them?

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Re: Creatures of Empire - Religion; Role of animals in expansion

by Jason Yeager - Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 5:52 PM

Kerianne,

That is an interesting question. I had this idea as I was thinking about this topic that the introduction of European livestock to the Americas had to have had a positive impact on Native Americans in some way. As is noted in our textbook, through a combination of over-hunting and changing environmental conditions, "Most large animals of the Americas disappeared about 9,000 years ago." (pg. 5) I get the sense

that hunting the remaining large animals--primarily bison and moose--would have been challenging for Native Americans. Suddenly, here were these huge, lumbering, and somewhat sedentary beasts (I am thinking of cows here) that would have been much easier to harvest for meat than their wild brethren.

Because of different cultural and religious ideals, Native Americans had a hard time making the leap from hunting to animal husbandry. But at some point they did adopt at least some of the European practices. As Dr. Ward notes in his review of DeJohn Anderson's book, "by the mid seventeenth century many Indians were successfully raising herds of hogs." (Ward) What I found to be really interesting--almost comical--about this was that the Native Americans were selling the meat from these hogs back to the settlers. Just a little bit of irony there!

The Native Americans also benefitted from the European introduction of another animal. Thanks to various media, the image I have of a Native American is probably similar to most people--a strong and proud Brave, in full regalia with a spear or bow, astride his beautiful Palomino horse. As a result of conflicts in Mexico and other Spanish-held areas, the retreating Spanish forces had to leave some of their horses behind. Native Americans adopted these animals and developed a close bond with them. They would have aided in communication, load-bearing, hunting, and warring. The Native Americans were most likely a little more eager to incorporate these animals into their lifestyle because unlike cows and hogs, which were primarily raised for slaughter, horses and men can develop an almost spiritual connection to each other, which probably aligned a little closer with the Native American's views on animals.

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Re: Creatures of Empire - Religion; Role of animals in expansion

by Jesus Narvaez Santiago - Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 12:55 PM

Jason I couldn't agree more with your point we should have a value of the things we eat. And don't just throw it away. I think that is one of the things DeJohn was trying to get at when she mentions about Natives believing animals having a spirit, if they hunted and ate those animals it was out of respect to them and as well nature around them.

Also your point about the animals roaming farther into Native territories is also a great point. Natives would get away from them I believe because those animals did not deserve to be killed, unless for food. But since those animals brought by Europeans did take a lot of resources such as eating the food supply of Natives, the people had to keep moving away to find other sources of food.

Native Americans had a lot of respect for animals life, and had an understanding of over hunting or killing. They I think would only do it for food supply when needed.

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Re: Creatures of Empire - Religion; Role of animals in expansion

by Raleigh Emerson - Thursday, October 12, 2017, 5:09 PM

This was the most interesting topic brought up in this short audio file. When the Native Americans were met by foreigners who went completely against the laws of their own culture not only did they accept their way of life, but instead moved farther away in order to give them space for their practices. This kindness was met with more disrespect as the livestock just continued to fill in the open space that the natives were leaving. Its interesting that the issue with the treatment of animals could have been a large cause in the strife between the two parties and possibly could have been avoided by just building fences.

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Re: Creatures of Empire; who knew Bacon tasted so good

by Katie Ohlsen - Monday, October 9, 2017, 9:04 PM

Virginia Dejohn Anderson suggests that the main problem with these new animals in the americas was the native people perspective of them. They thought of these animals as food and in some cases to have a spiritual protection said Virginia in the audio clip. Mrs. Anderson also states in the that "The english did not have full control over their animals behavior". So when the Native Americans were out hunting and came across one of these new animals they didn't know what to do. The native people had been brought up in a culture where animals where not one persons property, but instead the tribes property. On the other hand the europeans mentality of animals or live stock was that they were property. So the main problem lies with the cultural differences of the natives vs the Europeans and the Europeans expecting the native peoples to share their beliefs on the matter. The Europeans would get upset with the natives trapping and eating their live stock. Which to me seems a little absurd. I don't think if i were a native i would be to keen on these settlers coming over from a land that was unknown to me and expecting me to follow their rules or follow their beliefs. If i knew it would make them a little frustrated to catch their "property" for myself and my tribe. I would do it just to protest the colonization of the Europeans and to let them know that we wouldn't submit to their ways because they said so.

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Religious views of animals among colonists vs native americans

by Walter Bender - Monday, October 9, 2017, 11:50 PM

One of the points I found quite interesting in Professor Anderson's work was the spiritual question. The colonists viewed animals as "property over which they had a biblically ordained right to assert dominion..." (Dr Ward's review), suggesting a worldview more generally in line with conquest. This is also mentioned in Professor Anderson's interview, where she says "Persons other than human," with regard to the general native view of animals, and describes that view as "Heretical to the English Christians." This divide, I think, really adds another layer of conflict between the natives and the colonists, since ascribing supernatural or religious significance to animals would have been abhorrent or bizarre to the colonists, while keeping spiritual beings as property would be alien to the natives.

Insofar as my own feelings about the spiritual nature of animals, I tend to fall on the side of the native americans, in that I think of animals as having personalities and spiritual existences beyond what we understand.

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responce to Walter

by Garrett Warner - Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 3:46 PM

I found that interesting as well, Walter. I always knew Native Americans held spiritual significance with the animals of their lands; but I never thought about the conflict that would cause between them and the colonists. I don't think we will ever be able to understand the thinking behind the Native Americans' thought of the animals of their land. I think we can understand the capitalistic reasoning of "owning" farms and animals by the colonists. It is thoughtful to wonder how/what our nation would have come together if the animals were not brought over. Would they have learned the ways of the land and trap/hunt the animals like the Native Peoples? Or would they have starved and died off?

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Re: Religious views of animals among colonists vs native americans

by Nicholas LaMonica - Thursday, October 12, 2017, 7:12 PM

I agree with you in that there are spiritual existences beyond what we understand. To expand on your post a bit, I think it's worth noting that the Native Americans didn't have a word in their languages to differentiate the words human and animal; this adds on to how wildly different the settlers' and Natives' perceptions of animals were. According to the article, English colonists, "...had a biblically ordained right to assert dominion; [animals] were an economic resource to be manipulated and exploited." This is a pretty cold way to introduce animal domestication to a culture that is unfamiliar.

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Animals as Companions

by Nallely Martinez - Tuesday, October 10, 2017, 7:06 PM

In her podcast, Professor Virginia DeJohn Anderson mentioned the vast difference between the European view and Native American view of animals. This sole distinction between the two cultures could be, and is for the most part, looked at as a major reason for such challenging relationships early on between colonial and Native American life. Upon European arrival, Anderson jokingly noted the surprise Indians might have had, not on the arrival of the European settlers, rather the strange animals they encountered once the colonies had settled. Not only did the settlers bring these new creatures with them, but they also brought along a new idea of "taming and domesticating animals. [European's felt] taming a wild animal gave [them] a degree of ownership over the animal... a concept completely alien to Native Americans" (paragraph 7). Native Americans had never seen any animal in a way that would make them inferior to humans, on the contrary, they saw them more as "living beings [who they were] sharing the earth [with]" (podcast). Along with the idea of holding animals to more of

an equal status, Native Americans also had a strong belief in those same animals having a spirit of protection, putting that much more value and meaning in the relationship they held with all animals.

Europeans arrived in the Americas with the idea of animals being objects to be owned and handled to their own benefit. Not only did the English own their animals but they would also participate in hunting for sport, an activity Indians looked to as unimaginable to participate in. Although the idea of enjoying the pursuit could still be present, Native Americans held the animals they were surrounded with as more of companions to be hunted for purposes of survival. With ideals of how animals should be dealt with, I would most closely identify with the Native American view of how animals should be treated. The life any creature holds should be viewed just as equal as the one humans hold. Of course, with the notion that hunting or killing would be done for essential purposes. Animals add enormous amounts of value to our natural worlds ecological system and to assume they were meant to only be controlled and dominated by humans would be incorrect.

One could ask if the Earth and its creatures would survive without the human race? If so, then how could the Europeans think they would be able to convince the Indians to act with that same mentality and treat the animals as inferiors?

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3



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Native American and European culture clash

by Jack Westphal - Friday, October 13, 2017, 3:10 PM

I really like the quotes that you used in your response, Nallely, they really tied together the main points that I took away from this podcast as well. The subtle conflict between European and Native American cultures in their dealings and relationships with animals may have been more disruptive between the communities than we understand. I also like what you discussed in your second paragraph, about hunting as a sport, and how Native Americans and Europeans completely differed on the subject. It made me think down the line in United States history about repeated patterns of culture clash between Native Americans and European Americans, and how the arrival of Europeans shaped the ecological landscape of the Midwest through their extreme, deliberate hunting of animals, i.e. the Bison. You asked a very good question at the end as well; could Earth survive without humans, and if so, how could the Europeans make the Indians think the same way as they did about animals? I think it highlights the ignorance of the European settlers to think that the Native People wanted to be culturally molded.

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Property v. People

by Jack Westphal - Thursday, October 12, 2017, 2:41 PM

What DeJohn Anderson is suggesting is that the treatment and attitudes towards animals by the Indians and the Europeans was vastly different and conflicting. Europeans viewed the animals as property, like land, as they were a commodity and resource to own. Indians viewed animals not as inferior to them, but as "other than human persons" (Audio clip, 2:15-2:30), and treated animals with less disdain than their European counterparts. I don't treat animals with disrespect like colonial Americans, but I don't necessarily hold animals in as high regard as

Native Americans did, though I do feel that I 'own' my pets, similar to property. I'm feel as though I'm more aligned with the European idea of domesticated animals, as I eat meat that comes from cattle that was raised on farms, and like I previously stated, I take care and look after the pets I feel that I 'own'.

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English Livestock Taking Over the Native Americans land

by Ezequiel Magana - Thursday, October 12, 2017, 11:11 PM

The main problem that Virginia Dejohn Anderson is suggesting in *Creatures of Empire* is that the livestock that the English settlers brought over to America was basically withdrawing from the Indians and their land. The Indians had no idea what an english hog or cow was when they encountered one in the woods. In *Creatures of Empire*, Virginia Anderson suggested that the Native Americans and the English settlers had different views on the livestock they each hunted or owned. **“Native Americans’ relationship with animals was largely reciprocal, reflecting the belief that many creatures possessed their own spiritual power or manitou. For English colonists, in contrast, animals were property over which they had a biblically ordained right to assert dominion; they were an economic resource to be manipulated and exploited.”** (Part 1. *Creatures of Empire*) Animals in general for the Indians were something more than just property or nourishment they believed they had spiritual power while the English settlers did not. They saw their livestock more as their own property. Depending on the animal, I look at them in different ways. Some are for nourishment and some are not. The reason for that being is because some animals are about to go extinct like the rhinos and pangolins, and some aren't at the moment. I strongly agree with the concept of “*Creatures of Empire*” because it's justifiable what Virginia Anderson is talking about how the English settlers came about to America with their own livestock and how they tried to coexist with the Native Americans and train them into herdsman. In retrospect there were some strongly disagreements which led to hunting one another's livestock and interfering with one another's land. They did however shape the course of events of early America.

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