

HST 201: ONLINE U.S. History F18 (Escobar)

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Creatures of Empire

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Creatures of Empire

by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, October 6, 2018, 5:29 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 one of the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Creatures of Empire

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Re: Creatures of Empire: Attitudes towards Animals in the American Frontier

by [ZACH](#) - Monday, October 8, 2018, 12:40 AM

In some ways I am inclined to agree and disagree in the distinction of an animal’s purpose with the Native Americans and Europeans. This is most likely due to my contemporary lifestyle intervening with some older practices that I still hold on to.

In “Backstory with the American History Guys” a podcast featuring Professor Virginia DeJohn Anderson, they delve into the meaning behind animals in the perception held by two vastly different cultures around the 17th and 18th century in the American territory. In it, she describes that the native population thinks of animals as carrying more spiritual weight and are not unlike human beings. I believe in aspects of the old tradition of hunting; I was taught by my family to always look for a quick and painless kill, and to give appreciation as ritual to the animal for its sacrifice. I also always believed that animals were never an inherent right of mine, but an organism that experience the same realm I exist in. This puts the animal and I on a level of equality.

I also do not solely rely on this tradition to feed myself as I have many other responsibilities in my life, which limits me to buying my food that has been prepared by machines and distributed to a local market. This removes me from a certain spiritual aspect, to a more modern diet. This is not to say that the English were wrong to think contrary to the natives. I am certain livestock was revered by their culture in some ways as a source of food for the settler’s family. In her book “Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002”, Anderson explains, “They were prudent and well-organized, following rigorous daily and seasonal routines dictated by climate, habit, economic goals, and their livestock’s needs” (pg.89). Another differentiating train of thought from colonials were, “animals were property over which they had a biblically ordained right to assert dominion”. I disagree that animals are a divine right to us as human beings, however, with the way society is currently, I would not be able to transition to a system more accommodating to animal populations.

Seeing as both traditions are still practiced, it means something to American culture as a whole. This topic can be a controversial one, given that the NRA (National Rifle Association) and PETA (People for Ethical Treatment of Animals) don't exactly see eye to eye when it comes to the treatment of animals, but it's an interesting concept that both sides of the coin influence America today just as they had done hundreds of years ago.

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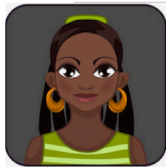
Re: Creatures of Empire: Attitudes towards Animals in the American Frontier

by [MARY](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 6:26 PM

I would say that both traditions still greatly influence us today. I didn't think of them as the NRA and PETA but the connection makes sense.

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Re: Creatures of Empire: concept of domestic animals

by [SUSAN](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 12:22 PM

De John Anderson suggests the main problem concerning these new animals and their relation to Indians and Europeans was the ideas the Europeans packaged with their animals. You see Europeans' thought of domestic animals as living property. Now animals to the natives are thought to be sacred or even spiritual. This caused a lot of issues between the Europeans and the Indians. The Indians don't understand that the animals are not free game and the Europeans don't understand that owning animals is a foreign concept to the Indians. In today's society that's not very different from how we all see animals. I see animals the same as the Europeans some animals are kept as pets and technically we own them. I also see the other side too like deer are not meant to be kept as pets they provide things for the land and to the people but I don't see it very spiritually.

Podcast interview with De John Anderson: Time 1:36-3mins

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Re: Creatures of Empire: concept of domestic animals

by [CARLA](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 1:53 AM

I agree that fundamental differences in how native Americans and European settlers regarded animals caused a lot of problems between the two populations. My personal philosophy on animals is much more aligned with the native Americans' practices. I don't think it is moral for a living being to own any other living being, so I do not believe that I can own any human or animal. In my mind, they are no better or worse than me. For me, "owning" an animal or treating it as personal property is no better than "owning" a human slave.

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Control of Animals Causing Major Riff

by [KATE](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 1:40 PM

Professor DeJohn Anderson suggests a few main problems in regards to the relationship between the English animals and the Indian people, some of the suggestions are the idea that animals were property in the mind of the English and the Indians had never thought of animals as property, and the fact that the English didn't have control over their animals' behavior.

The Indians as stated in the audio file thought of animals as "different than human but not inferior" (2:34) The synopsis of the book states that "The cow... symbolized English agricultural superiority" (Par 4) I had never thought about this, but the ability to control an animal, feed them, and use them for their bi-product does in a way portray to others that you are in control of that animal and do see them as inferior to yourself. So for them to come across people who thought of animals in such a different way I'm sure caused conflict in their day to day life. I know personally when someone introduces a new thought into my world it makes me think of things differently so although this may have caused physical conflict between the Indians and the English I believe it would also cause conflict internally with thoughts about who was 'right' and why the English seemed to think of goats, cattle, etc. as property but not the deer and other animals that were already in America.

The English on the other hand did not have control over their animals' behavior causing the animals to trample the Indians fields and eating food that the Indians relied on. (3:20) In the audio Professor DeJohn Anderson states that if the Indians set a trap for deer and a cow were to be caught in the trap they were held liable for that (4:00) which would infuriate the Indians I'm sure as the English were not liable for damages their animals caused to the Indians crops. In my neighborhood if a chicken gets loose and gets hit by a car, the driver is not liable for the dead chicken, the owner who didn't keep their animals under control is liable to buy themselves a new chicken.

I can absolutely see how the relationship between the Indians and the English animals would be infuriating and cause turmoil. I personally do see animals such as livestock and goats as property but mostly because that's what I have been taught my whole life. I was taught "if you didn't buy it you don't get to have it" so if a farmer paid for his cattle and sheep, why should I have free reign to kill or take possession of them? On the other hand, going back to the chicken example I gave earlier, it also isn't my fault if someone's goat walks into my cougar trap. I can see both sides of this conflict.

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Re: Control of Animals Causing Major Riff
by [ZACH](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 7:53 PM

1) That brings a good point in your third and fourth paragraph where you talk about the podcast around 3-4 minute mark about how aggravating it must have been to be the natives. I can imagine that a foreign group of people on my hunting grounds talking about ownership, and how they have spent many years cultivating animal domestication, meanwhile, their weird livestock are grazing everything away in the place where I get my food. Understandably the technology around that time period was what it was (i.e. Crude fences), but it didn't seem like the English could back up their own words about the importance of their way in securing these creatures. It kind of makes King Phillips argument (around the 5:00 minute) seem all the more valid. Although, I it is hard to cosign war, but it may have been the only option since the English were not going to see past their religious rights to their animals.

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Re: Control of Animals Causing Major Riff
by [ZACH](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 9:52 PM

(my apologies for the '1)' in my response. it would not allow me to edit)

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Re: Control of Animals Causing Major Riff
by [CARLA](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 1:59 AM

I understand what you are saying about "why should I have free reign to kill or take possession of" animals which natives did not buy but the truth is, native Americans philosophies around nature and life were so fundamentally different from European settlers that native Americans were not even able to conceive that they might be perceived as "stealing" imported livestock because they didn't understand that anyone "owned" the animals. At first, they didn't have any way to know that their actions of hunting animals in their own territory would be seen as offensive or criminal.

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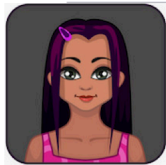
View on Animals
by [JANE](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 5:12 PM

The English brought new animals with them when they came as settlers, most of which the Indians had not seen before. So, to me it makes sense that they would be more confused when seeing these strange creatures rather than meeting another human. The main problem concerning the Native American with the new animals, according to DeJohn Anderson, was in the way the English kept them as property. Native Americans believed that animals were equals to humans and had a spiritual connection with them and the land. Whereas, the English domesticated animals and kept, sold or traded their animals. In the audio clip, DeJohn mentions that the animals being property of the English became a problem because they animals were not kept contained. The animals ended up roaming into the Indians territory and if they Indians were to kill the animals; the English would punish them.

How I look at animals depends on the type, I suppose. For house pet, I view them as a person's property that should be treated like a member of the family. With livestock, I also see them as the property as the farmer and, unfortunately, as food. But with wild animals, I don't think they should be anyone's property.

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views on animals

by [MARY](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 5:47 PM

I agree with what you are saying about how you view different types of animals. A dog or cat is viewed as a member of the family, while cattle are viewed as tools to help better the environment, and to eventually become food. The Indians were not familiar with the fact that you could own animals for those reasons. I don't believe that the Europeans owned any "wild" animals such as deer. One of the reasons the Indians had a problem with it was because they didn't even know about these types of animals, and the fact that they kept coming onto their land without being able to do anything about it with out being punished.

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Re: views on animals

by [CARLA](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 6:30 PM

I don't think it was so much that native Americans didn't know the "fact" that people could own animals. I think it's more of a paradigmatic difference in their moral beliefs regarding ownership rights over other living beings. Not only did they not understand this European system of ownership, but they were diametrically opposed it.

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The main problem

by [CARL](#) - Tuesday, October 9, 2018, 7:06 PM

Creatures of Empire

I felt that the points raised by Virginia DeJohn Anderson in this week's audio clip were informative and interesting. I had never thought about the fact that animals that today are considered common in the United States were once as foreign as the Europeans who brought them here. I also found the contrast between the Indian and European perspectives on animals intriguing. DeJohn Anderson tells us in the audio clip that the main problem essentially stemmed from the Europeans regarding their domesticated animals as property, whereas "Indians did not conceive of living animals as anyone's property," (Audio 1:54 minute mark). Before reviewing this material, I had never considered this angle in the history of conflict between these two groups. In the audio clip, DeJohn Anderson paints a picture of a native people working to live a subsistence lifestyle every day, and then along come the Europeans with these bizarre animals that had never been seen on this continent. As she explains "The English did not have full control over their animals' behavior," (Audio 3:15 minute mark). The animals enter a land without pens, fences, or barns, a land in which crops are already being grown as a subsistence practice for the Native Americans. The animals are naturally drawn to the Indian food sources and run amuck, "...creating real damage to the Indian's subsistence practices," (Audio 3:30 minute mark). A passage of the Murrin textbook echoes this problem by saying, "The colonists' growing settlements shrank the Indians' land base, and their free-running hogs and cows wrecked the Indians' cornfields," (Murrin textbook, page 81).

In a world where the Indians thrived on living in harmony with nature as they knew it, a new group of animals were introduced into their environment and turned their ecosystem on its head. When I heard this section of audio, I could not help but think about all the invasive species regulations that are in place today for much of the same reasons. The Europeans landed with this group of invasive species that literally changed the course of history in the Americas. Today, we think of the American cowboy on horseback herding cattle. We think of the American Indian on horseback in battle and on the hunt. "In the Great Plains, the Apaches developed a dynamic culture of horseback hunting and warfare and expanded their settlements at the expense of other native groups," (Murrin textbook, page 81). Although the Indians eventually found use for most, if not all, of these animals, these beasts caused a great deal of frustration at the outset. According to DeJohn Anderson, "King Philip" the Wampanoag Sachem, told John Easton of Rhode Island that "...even when the Indians move thirty miles away...they still can't keep their planting fields free from livestock," (Audio 6:24 minute mark). The phrase that really stuck with me from this audio was when DeJohn Anderson recalls "...Philip himself identifying trespassing animals as sort of this phenomenally *irritating* aspect," (Audio 6:44 minute mark). When I hear this audio, I cannot help but empathize with the Native Americans. Most of us have had neighbors with animals that annoy us, barking dogs, messing cats, whatever the case may be. I think that the annoyance reaches another level when that neighbors' animal is breaking into our own crops and destroying our way of life. This audio segment gave me another perspective on the conflict between Europeans and Indians, and I hope that my summary helped you gain perspective as well.

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Re: The main problem

by [JANE](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:49 AM

Thankfully there are now laws regarding invasive species. Took awhile for us to learn from our mistakes. I lived in Hawaii for a bit and learned about all the invasive species that were brought by the missionaries and how they are still fighting to restore some of the native animals and plants. The Europeans didn't know that they were doing something destructive. They were bringing their way of life into the New World, for themselves and also to a way to civilize the Indians (synopsis p.1). Obviously trying to "civilize" the natives was not going to work. Conflicts with the Indians still exist today.

I agree with your example of how we all have, or have had, neighbors with annoying animals and there isn't much we can do about it besides complain. This makes trying to relate to the way things were back then a bit easier.

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Invasive Species and Their Impact on the Colonial Frontier

by [GEORGE](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 11:21 AM

When I started to read the summary of Professor Anderson's book "Creatures of Empire," it struck a note on a personal level. The British colonists brought over herd animals to the colonies to sustain their needs for livestock. One of the most important animals was the cow. (Pg. 1 Summary) This led to a key issue however. Due to the free-roaming husbandry that the British were practicing, Indians suffered in the short and long run. Where it was normal to "deal with" or kill a trespassing animal in the eyes of the Indians, the British viewed it as an attack on their property. Even though it was the Indian's property that was originally damaged or assaulted, they were the ones who received the punishment for defending their crops and land. (Audio 4:32)

Where the heart of the issue lies is with the idea of ownership. As Dr Matthew Ward phrases it in his summary, "Ownership of animals was a concept completely alien to Native Americans." (Pg. 2 Summary) While it may have been normal for the British to own an animal who they could sell or trade away, the Indians viewed it as a spiritual matter. The Indians believed each animal, especially deer, all contained a form of spiritual power that should be respected. (Audio 2:50) This led to a great deal of conflicts, especially when land disputes were involved.

I appreciate that Professor Anderson is focused on this section, and I agree with many, if not all of her points that I have seen. The idea of bringing foreign livestock into an area without clear and concise control methods in place is never a good idea. This happened in my local area over 100 years ago with a type of plant. It has nearly wiped out the native species now and it continues to damage local property. While it may have been the human leaders who started the idea of colonization, one thing is for certain, the animals that the British colonists brought with them spurred on the conflicts caused by British expansion.

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Re: Invasive Species and Their Impact on the Colonial Frontier

by [ZACH](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 9:50 PM

I understand why you would agree with Anderson when on [page 3] of her article it is stated that, "Anderson's final, and almost certainly most important argument, is that the animals which colonists brought with them were the principal agents responsible for dispossessing the Indians of their homelands." However, I think it would be important to note that animals may not be the sole reason. In our text book "Liberty, Equality, Power. A History of the American People" (on page 106) it is said that another large component for expansion was the new found rejection of an English execution of one's estate. This means that according to the book, a patriarchal household would spread the ownership to multiple sons instead of just one. This led to further expansion into Indian

Territory and as it would seem, a human design of necessity, due to a limited area to enact this new concept. Of course, this would also include a spread of animal ownership, but to say that European animals are the root cause of conflict may overlook the human/cultural aspect of this issue.

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Indian Vs. European views (animals)

by [MARY](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 7:31 PM

One of the biggest problems concerning the animals that the Europeans brought over, was the way the animals were viewed. The Indians saw animals as being different from them, but not inferior. They would often call them "Other than human persons" (audio 2:28). The Europeans saw the animals as property and nothing more. I tend to see animals the same way as the Indians (for the most part). I agree when it comes to the smaller animals such as dogs. I believe dogs are not inferior to humans and deserve to be treated with respect (as do all animals). However, when it comes to live stock, I can see why they were viewed as property. They were used for the owners fit and that was it. If a Native American were to, for some reason, hurt or kill one of the Europeans live stock, then they could be held accountable.

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Were the Animals More Important Than the People?

by [KAREN t](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 8:45 PM

After listening to the podcast and reading the synopsis of Anderson's book, in my opinion, the animals were not more important than the humans in the history of the settlements and relationships between Native Americans and Europeans.

Although, I do agree with her that the English animals clearly did not help in the relations between the two peoples, I don't think that made them more important than the humans of that time.

For many reasons, the animals created conflict. Two of the reasons that the podcast mentions is that the animals would destroy Native American land, and that they would get killed in traps so the Native Americans would have to go to court to be held responsible.

So, it's clear that animals created conflict, but I think both groups could have overlooked this if there wasn't many other fundamental differences in the way the people lived. The Europeans came over and took the Native American lands, and would create contracts that would take more from the Native Americans than what they originally agreed upon. Europeans saw Native Americans as savages and inferior. I think those human thoughts and actions created the wars and the turmoil more than the conflict with the animals. I think people did a lot more damage than the animals.

Therefore, I don't believe the animals were more significant than the humans during this time.

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Re: Were the Animals More Important Than the People?

by [CARLA](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 3:18 PM

It is true that the extremely poor human relations established by European settlers with native Americans when they colonized North America are not any less significant than the stark contrast between the European and native American populations' beliefs and values surrounding animals. I think it is important to note that it all stems back to European disrespect of native values at the time of settlement; which all points to a human issue. The conflicts that occurred were caused by disagreements between European laws and expectations, and native customs. European settlers and all native American tribes they encountered when they got to North America had deeply embedded hunting traditions. The differences were the root of a lot of conflict at the time of colonization. Europeans, traditionally, had seen hunting as a sport for the upper echelon of society. Native American hunting tradition was not restricted to the elite or ruling class-- and it was done both for sustenance as well as a spiritual practice. European settlers viewed the natives they encountered as "savages" and their objection to native hunting on settled land was two-fold: certainly they saw them as low class and therefore not entitled to participate in what Europeans saw as a higher class sport, but also they viewed animals as their personal property and felt that natives were stealing their personal property when they hunted prey. From a native perspective, all they were doing was hunting for food on land they had hunted on for thousands and

thousands of years. So, while animals were a large point of contention between European settlers and the native tribes they displaced at the time of colonization, it was clearly caused by the human beliefs and behaviors around animals and their appropriate roles in society.

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Religious differences between Indians and Europeans

by [CARL](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 9:23 PM

The religious differences between the Indians and the Europeans caused a rift that was very difficult to overlook. On the one hand, we have the Native Americans who viewed animals as “Other than human persons,” (Audio 2:26). The Native Americans perception of animals was that they “...were living beings sharing the earth, who were different from human beings, but not necessarily inferior to them,” (Audio 2:30). In a culture that centered on man’s relationship with nature, this was a huge focal point. Animals were needed for survival, not only for their meat, but also their hides and bone. The hides were used to make clothing and shelter, the bones used to make tools and weapons. The Indians respected the animals as an equal and necessary part of life as they knew it. The Europeans, on the other hand, viewed animals as property to be bought and sold. Professor DeJohn Anderson tells us that “Indians did not conceive of living animals as anyone’s property,” (Audio 1:54). The Europeans came from a strong Judeo-Christian tradition in which God proclaimed that man should “...rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground,” (Genesis 1:26b, The Bible, new international version). To the Christian Europeans, this was a very clear proclamation of their absolute dominance over the earth and its animal inhabitants. There is no mention or inference to animals being equal to man. Later on, in Genesis 9:2-3, God expands on this point when addressing Noah and his family after the great flood, “The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands,” (The Bible, new international version). The Europeans had a clear and long-standing belief that they were masters of every other species on the earth. When this belief met the beliefs of the Indians, there was inevitable conflict. These two cultures each encountered a people who believed almost the exact opposite of what they had believed for as long as anyone could remember. Generations of families were brought into these various camps through storytelling, tradition, and religious doctrine. Each culture felt that theirs was absolutely the more civil and justified based on his understanding of the laws of nature.

In my own belief system, I am a follower of the Christian doctrine. I was raised to believe that the Bible is the perfect word of God. I understand the Native Americans viewpoint, and I certainly respect it, however my belief system does not allow me to believe that animals are to be treated with the same level of reverence as human beings. I believe that animals were put on earth to be used by human beings, and that we were commanded to be their masters. I certainly have a lot of respect for animals, and I am thankful for the fits that mankind draws from their resources, but in the end, I believe that man is superior. I know that this is not a popular opinion, but it is what I believe. I welcome any counter-arguments and I am certainly willing to discuss this with anyone as long as it is in a spirit of mutual respect for beliefs. I think that we are all here to learn from one another and I am open to anyone else’s interpretation.

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Re: Religious differences between Indians and Europeans

by [KATE](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 7:46 PM

Do you think that religion was the only reason for the disputes between the Native Americans and the English over this particular topic? Although I don’t necessarily completely disagree with your view point as I was raised Christian and with the same values, I don’t know if I believe that humans are superior to animals. As humans we use animals for everything under the sun and have for ages, we use them for food, scientific studies, some surgeries, clothes, and even as a way to keep our pastures cut. Shouldn’t we see them as a spiritual being? Something that is helping us move forward as a society? If we weren’t given these animals we wouldn’t have the ability to make medical advances in the ways we have been. “living beings sharing the earth, who were different from human beings, but not necessarily inferior to them” (2:30). Animals were given to us (according to some) by an almighty power so I think it is only appropriate to treat them as such, the natives having the idea that animals were sharing the planet with us and should be respected as such isn’t an opinion I disagree with either. “The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.” (Genesis 9:2-3) Even though the way this is stated in the bible makes it clear that the point of animals being put on this earth is for human gain, just as many people warship God or a higher power it seems as though the Native Americans had a similar view just in a different sense, they believe in the spiritual power of animals and I feel that is similar to the Judeo-Christian belief of using animals for gain.

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Re: Religious differences between Indians and Europeans

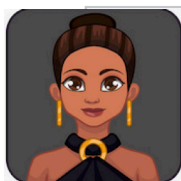
by [CARL](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 8:36 PM

I appreciate your response, and you make some very good points. I do not think that the conflicts that arose between these two groups over this topic were solely religious in origin. Although it is hard to ignore that religion or spirituality played a central role in these two cultures, I know that a lot of the friction came from livestock destroying the property and livelihood of Indians. In a culture where survival was the focus of each day, hunting and gathering were extremely important. When the Europeans arrived, introducing foreign animals that were hard to contain and often sought out the Indians food supplies, this undoubtedly led to conflict. Virginia DeJohn Anderson does a wonderful job of addressing the complaints that "King Philip" had against the Europeans in the audio clip "Creatures of Empire". She tells us that "Even when the Indians move thirty miles away... they still can't keep their planting fields free from livestock," (6:24). When I put myself in the place of the Indians and think about packing up and moving thirty miles to solve a conflict with a neighbor, only to have that conflict follow me, I can imagine a level of frustration that would insight violence. The Indians of course wanted to dispose of these animals that were a nuisance to their crops, only they did not understand that the Europeans regarded them as property. This view was of religious origin to the Europeans, but I don't think the Indians would have given this much thought initially. I think that the religious differences contributed to the friction between these two groups, but I don't think it was necessarily the catalyst.

I understand your point of view that animals have been very useful to mankind wince the beginning of time, and of course we should be grateful for that. I agree that if we weren't given these animals we wouldn't have the ability to make medical advances in the ways we have been, as you stated. The difference as I see it is that I am thankful to the *creator* and not the *created*. This becomes a matter of opinion and belief very much. If I am thankful for the food that is on my table, I thank the being that created it for my fit. I understand the perspective that one should be thankful to both the *creator* and the *created* for their sacrifice and my fit, and I do not totally disagree. The aspect that I would disagree with is if one were to pray to the *created* and thank it for its sacrifice. As I said, this becomes a matter of opinion and belief. It is different for everyone I think. This echoes your point that the Native Americans had a similar view just in a different sense. European settlers are often portrayed as being the "great white hunter" who set out to destroy every creature in his path and lay waste to the land. The Native Americans often gain a reputation as a preservationist people who used the land and the animals to their full potential and took only what was needed for survival. I think that in our consumerist culture this may be truer now than ever, but I can't help but think that when the European settlers landed in the Americas, their first thought was not about laying waste to this new land, but rather taking what they needed to survive. While there were undoubtedly religious differences between the two groups, I think that both were simply looking out for self interest in the best way that they thought possible.

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Re: Religious differences between Indians and Europeans

by [KATE](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 8:32 AM

I don't know if I agree with your statement that the Indians "wanted to dispose of these animals" if the Indians truly thought of animals as spiritual I don't think they would want to kill them as their first response. As the audio states they had moved away to try and solve the problem which makes it seem as though they weren't trying to hurt the animals but rather they weren't sure what to do with them (6:24). If an animal I have never seen before comes to my home and starts to dismantle my garden I don't think my first reaction would be to get rid of it, but to figure out what it was and why it was here all of a sudden. I do agree that the animals were not the catalyst to the disputes between the Indians and English but I do think like you said it was a major factor.

Although I think survival was a big point for the English when they arrived I don't think that was their soul goal. In many ways their goal was westward expansion. Throughout history they pushed the natives further west into what is now Oklahoma for their expansion desires. Even though survival may have been a goal of theirs I don't think they were trying to preserve the state of the newly discovered land to the best of their abilities.

You have some amazing points!

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Re: Religious differences between Indians and Europeans

by [CARL](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 9:44 PM

I agree that the term "dispose" was not a wise choice in my post. Of course the Indians tried to relocate first in order to deescalate the situation. DeJohn Anderson clearly states that they first try to move away (6:24). However she also states that "...when they encounter an animal that's causing problems, an Indian might be tempted to deal with that animal as they would any wild animal, which is to say kill it," (4:27). I don't mean to portray the Native Americans as a people who were eager to kill the livestock that the Europeans introduced into their ecosystem. It is hard to imagine the Native Americans killing the livestock as a knee-jerk reaction to a problem. In a society that considered animals as "Other than human persons," (2:26), I am certain that the destruction of the animal would be considered a last resort.

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Conflicts Persist Between Native Americans & Colonizers re: Nature & Wildlife

by [CARLA](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 10:07 PM

As colonists settled and spread increasingly into Native American territories, the killing of livestock became a powerful means of retaliation against European settlers. Because animal husbandry and European farming practices didn't take hold among natives as the settlers had expected, the very different belief systems held by these populations caused significant disputes. Europeans saw animals as property. Conversely, Native Americans felt deep spiritual connections with all animals (Reviews in History: Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America, page 1).

Interestingly, this battle is ongoing even in modern American society. Native American tribes frequently find themselves in opposition with the United States government regarding issues including sustainable fishing practices, the effect of oil drilling and fracking on the environment and wildlife habitats, water quality on native lands, protection of national wildlife refuges and endangered species, etc. These issues all hark back to deeply held native beliefs that animals "possessed a spiritual power" and that hunting should be "reciprocal rather than exploitative". During American colonization, English settlers had "turned animals into commodities for trade" (Reviews in History: Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America, page 2). They saw animals as a form of property and wealth, but natives did not believe humans were superior to animals. Therefore they did not understand the concept of ownership and hunted imported livestock, causing increasing tensions between settlers and native tribes.

Another great modern-day example of this deep conflict is salmon fishing and the impact it has had on the southern resident Orca whales in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Washington state. Decades of overfishing of the Chinook Salmon off the coast of Washington by commercial fishing operations has contributed significantly to the decimation of southern resident Orca whale population. The pod's flight received a lot of national media coverage in spring and summer of 2018 due to the recent deaths of two whales and the pod's inability to birth a healthy calf in over three years-- in large part due to a lack of ample Chinook salmon to sustain the 75 or so whales in the pod. Local native tribes have been calling upon the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the United States government to ban or limit Chinook salmon fishing so that the Orca pod could get proper amount of nutrition and regain health.

In modern day America, it is these same fundamental differences in belief and levels of respect for wildlife which cause such passionate cultural clashes. One modern example is the Native American protests to the Dakota Access Pipeline near the Standing Rock Indian reservation. Popularly known as water protectors, the native activists protesting the oil pipeline have protested since 2016 and publicly voiced serious concerns over the dangers of a pipeline crossing dozens of rivers and streams. The main concerns were for the effect this would have on the quality of their drinking water, and the effect on fish and wildlife habitat in the region. As during colonization, natives are forward thinking to issues of sustainability of such practices.

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Re: Conflicts Persist Between Native Americans & Colonizers re: Nature & Wildlife

by [JANE](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 10:33 AM

You make a lot of great comparisons to the modern world vs the "new" world. Sometimes I forget that there is still a conflict with the Indians and the US government.

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by [CARLA](#) - Thursday, October 11, 2018, 3:22 PM

It really is poignant the amount of parallels that exist still to this day. The roots of problems incurred by native people when European settlers colonized North America run deep and are hundreds of years old, but many of the issues exist today with very little progress toward any reconciliation. There are countless examples of contrast and conflict because of European colonizers forcing their beliefs down the throats of native people-- from the time the first Europeans stepped foot on American soil clear up to the present, and sadly, I'm sure for many many years into the future.

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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?

by [MARTHA](#) - Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 10:37 PM

Virginia DeJohn Anderson states in the podcast interview, in Backstory with the American History Guy, (1:36) "The problem is not so much dealing with the animals themselves as with a package of ideas that the English settlers brought with them about their domestic animals." The English thought of their livestock as their property, where the Indians, did not think of livestock as any ones property because they were living animals. DeJohn Anderson explains, Indians thought of the animals as living beings sharing the same earth who were different from human beings but not inferior to them. To the Indians a lot of different kinds of animals such as deer were thought to be spiritual protectors.

Listening to Virginia DeJohn Anderson speak about the conflict that arose with the settlers and the Indians over the animals not only shed a new light for me about animals but that the role these animals had in history was important. She discussed the fact that the English did not have full control over their animals behavior and there were instances of the English animals encroaching and trespassing on Indian planting fields, destroying crops, and creating damage to the Indians subsistence practices.(3:20) Some of the other animals ate the same bark and grass, the pigs would dig up the shellfish , that the Indians relied on for food. Indians without a sense of property and animals on their side when they encounter an animal creating a problem they kill it and find it is not the same thing to kill a piece of property. I never would have thought about domesticated animals eating the park or grass that the natives gathered. I was raised to kill animals that were a hindrance similar to the Indians,however, on the other end of the spectrum, I was raised that domesticated livestock were property. The animals played an important role because Due to the English allowing the animals free range they encroached upon native land causing problems for the Indians that were forced to deal with it or move on.

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Property & the Criminal Justice System

by [CONNIE](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 9:57 AM

One of the biggest issues Anderson talks about in her podcast is the conflict between Indians and settlers, and how animals play a role in that conflict. The English think of livestock as property, while Indians don't have a claim on them. Indians didn't know what livestock was at first, but became more acquainted with them as they started destroying their crops. Anderson gives the example of an Indian setting a trap, and if a cow walks into it and happens to be killed or injured in any way, the Indian that set it is liable and could be prosecuted (audio 4:02-4:18). At times, Indians wanted to kill the settlers' animals, but as stated before, their property being destroyed means trouble for Indians.

In today's world, we can compare animals being property to the criminal justice system and the incarceration of black people. In 2014, African Americans made up 34% of the correctional population (NAACP). Oftentimes, they will be arrested for a minor offense and get a harsher sentence than white people. It is common for African Americans to go back into the prison system shortly after being released, due to the fact that they can't pay off debts for parole, can't find a job or housing within a short period of time, and many other factors. In this sense, the government has control over its prisoners, almost a sense of ownership and will prosecute people without a second thought.

This might be a very loose comparison but it made me think of the criminal justice system and how people are basically government property and thrown in without a second glance.

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Re: Property & the Criminal Justice System

by [MARTHA](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 7:10 PM

I see your point about animals not appearing to be more important than prevalent people i history. In my opinion, I agree with Virginia DeJohn Anderson in that the animals were important in our history. According to DeJohn Anderson, in *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*, the animals played very important roles in our history. In culture and society, animals were important to the lives of both Englishmen and Indians. DeJohn Anderson states,"Practices of animal husbandry dictated the rhythms of life in English villages and English towns. They were prudent and well-organised, following daily and seasoned routines, dependent on the climate, habitat, economic goals, and their livestock's needs." (pg2, 2nd paragraph) The animals were also important to the Indians lives as well, but in a different way. Hunting provided a source of food for the Indians. In Indian culture animals had a spiritual power in hunting rituals where animal spirits were honored and rewarded.

So I think that DeJohn Anderson is saying that all animals, not just Domesticated animals that the English brought, played important roles to both Englishmen and Indians on one level or another.

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Did animals really shape today's world?

by [CONNIE](#) - Friday, October 12, 2018, 10:25 AM

I don't agree with Anderson's argument about animals being more important than prevalent people in history. Sure, Indians were introduced to new creatures and livestock provided food, but I would consider them as more of the building blocks in our history due to the fact that they were there to help with work and provide sustenance, virtually. I partially agree with her "Creatures of Empire" concept. Livestock did create tension between settlers and Indians.

Taken from the online site, *Reviews in History*: "English livestock destroyed the habitats that supported native game and the plants that provided medicines and utensils. Hogs and cattle trampled on Indian cornfields and rooted out buried supplies of corn and other provisions. Perhaps most importantly, Indians and settlers clashed repeatedly over the ownership of animals that wandered all but wild in the forests" (pp. 4). Yes, the presence of animals did cause quite a rift between these two groups, but their overall dilemma appears to be more about religion and ideologies than mere livestock.

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Re: Did animals really shape today's world?

by [SUSAN](#) - Saturday, October 13, 2018, 9:44 PM

I'd have to say I agree with you. The conflicts were less about the live stock and more about ideology. I mean yes Indians didn't understand the concept of owning animals but. the English definitely could have been more understanding and explained the concept in a way that may have prevented them from unnecessary conflict.

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Re: Did animals really shape today's world?

by [ZACH](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 3:17 PM

This is a good point that you bring up about requiring better explanation to natives about how the English view their animals. They should definitely explained things a bit better, however, communications were limited and I'm not so sure the English were capable of diplomacy towards the Native Americans during that time. at one point during the Metacom war (started by tension from animals and expansion) in our textbook on (pg. 83-84) states, "Terrified settlers demanded annihilation of all nearby Indian tribes". As a result and rejected any defensive strategy to spite Berkeley's ideals of refraining any open attacks and to set up forts. I think once the damage was done the settlers were beyond any reversal due to their fear. Another example is in Anderson's summary (on pg. 3)" Indians who killed livestock, even feral animals, in the woods were hauled before the courts and prosecuted", which in my opinion, kind of shows that the English were just looking for an excuse to be rid of their neighbors.

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Re: Did animals really shape today's world?

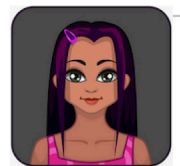
by [KATE](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 2:48 PM

I'm not sure I understand your first point about the animals being more important than people. DeJohn Anderson is asked "which would have been more alien to the Indians, the English or their animals they brought with them" (:30) and she says that the animals would be more of a shock to the Indians. I don't think she is saying the animals are more important than the people in any way. I think she is simply stating that the Indians had contact with the English prior to this time and the animals were just being brought over so they were new to the Indians whereas the concept of the English was not new. Please correct me if I missed your point about the importance of the animals over the people.

As for your second paragraph I think that like DeJohn Anderson states "the problem is not so much dealing with the animals themselves as with a package of ideas that the English settlers brought with them about their animals"(1:30) so even though I agree that it was about more than the animals themselves I do think the animals were a big point of tension. The Indians didn't have much knowledge of the animals before they met them and when they encountered them they had to figure out what they were and what they had to do with them. (1:19) I think it is just as much exploration on the part of the Indians as it is for the English exploring the new world.

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Re: Did animals really shape today's world?

by [MARY](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 5:56 PM

I also see the animals being more of a "building block" than being more important than the people in history. The animals were just one of the many subjects of disputes between the Indians and the settlers.

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Re: Did animals really shape today's world?

by [JANE](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 10:20 PM

Collen,

I agree with your first sentence, that animals **weren't** more important than the people. I think that the United States would have been perfectly fine without the animals the settlers brought over and we would have found a different way of life, therefore implying that the animals were not as important as they seem. That is not to say though that animals in and of themselves aren't important as every animal somehow helps the world we live in go round, but the people were definitely more important in my opinion than the animals.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [JANE](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 1:39 AM

- 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?

The Native American's views animals as other living beings that inhabited the earth and coexist with us. They weren't inferior to the native Americas and they had spirits which protected them. While I don't necessarily believe that animals are protected by spirits I do not think that they are inferior to us and humans. However, don't confuse that for me being a vegetarian or a vegan. I am very much a meat eater, but I do believe that animals inhabit this earth as co-existers. They are here too and they have a right to their habitats. A bear that is misplaced and wandering through town because its forests were cut down absolutely deserves a chance to make a home elsewhere. We as humans are trickling deeper and deeper into their habitats and because of that, we are hurting the ecosystem and the animals that live there. For instance, in Eugene and Springfield there was been quite a bit of cougar sightings in town, and while I understand the fear that people feel for this large cat, it also doesn't mean that this cougar isn't feeling fear itself. Why has it wandered into town? Why hasn't it stayed in the woods. There is something that has moved it, and I do not believe that killing an animal is the answer. Animals are co-inhabitants of this earth and deserve to be treated as such. They do not deserve to be abused and mistreated for our fits. If an animal is to be slaughtered then EVERY PIECE of that animal is to be used NONE is to go to waste.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [MARY](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 6:05 PM

I too believe that animals are here to co-exist and a right to their natural habitats. However, many of the bears and cougars that are appearing in towns, isn't due to logging, it is due to overpopulation of such animals. Bears and cougars numbers are growing making it harder to get food in their habitats since there are becoming more of them and less deer and elk, forcing them into town where they can have a new source of food (dogs and cats). So in those cases limiting their numbers (yes killing them) will help replenish their natural food source and give them space to spread out from each other without having to go into towns. IF an animal is to be slaughtered, I do agree 100% that every usable piece of the animal should be used.

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Re: Creatures of Empire

by [CARLA](#) - Sunday, October 14, 2018, 11:20 PM

I completely disagree. The reason wild animals such as bears, cougars, coyotes, et cetera come into towns is not because of species overpopulation. It is because humans have taken over their habitat areas and/or their habitats are not able to sustain them because of a lack of food sources. The lack of food sources are almost always the cause of global warming caused by humans, over fishing by humans, pollution by humans, human-made dams or land barriers such as highways, et cetera. The list goes on and on. Killing bears or cougars or orca whales in an effort to increase their populations would be ludicrous.

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