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"The Elks Are Our Horses": Animals and Domestication in the New France Borderlands

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Abstract
Historians have long overlooked the role played by domesticated animals in the European expansion into the Americas. Yet domesticated animals - and the social practices that accompanied them - were central both to the 'civilizing mission' of colonizers and to indigenous American resistance. This paper examines these themes within the context of the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi region between 1670 and 1730. Drawing evidence from Algonquian and Iroquoian languages and cultural practices as well as from the accounts of French missionaries and voyageurs, I show that the indigenous peoples of the Pays d'en Haut rejected the positive connotations that domestication held for Europeans, and instead equated domestication with enslavement. The resulting conflicts between conceptions of nature, ownership and tameness had an enduring influence on European-Indian relations. Although this study examines specific patterns of interaction on the New French frontier, it also raises broad questions relating to environmental history and European-indigenous interactions throughout the New World.

Keywords
New France; domesticated animals; Algonquians; Iroquoians; colonization; Pays d'en Haut; Environmental history; frontier

In the spring of 1684, a war party of 300 Frenchmen and some 500 Potawatomis assembled at the strategic redoubt of Michilimackinac, a narrow strait linking Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. The force's commanders, the Sieur Dulhut and Nicholas Perrot, hoped to recruit local Ottawas and Hurons and continue on their eastward march toward Iroquois territory, where they would rendezvous with a larger force and mount the most ambitious raid against the Five Nations in over a decade.[1] Events did not go

[1] See Yves F. Zoltvany, "Daniel Greysolon Dulhut", in David M. Hayne (ed.), *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* [**ONLINE VERSION? HOW MANY VOLUMES? WE NEED THE**

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according to plan. No sooner had the French arrived at the tiny fort they maintained on the strait than they received news of an approaching party of Englishmen "who were coming to Michilimakinak to seize the commerce". The English "had brought a great amount of brandy, persuaded that this was the greatest attraction for gaining the esteem of the Savages".[2] With the introduction of this new variable, recruitment of the local Indian tribes would now be no easy task. The better part of the Hurons at the strait immediately defected to the English camp. Faced with the prospect of mass desertion, Dulhut and Perrot assembled their allies and implored them to resist the English liquor, which "fetters the strength of men, rendering them spiritless and unable to act" and instead to obey "the voice of your father *Onontio* [the governor of New France] that exhorts you to war with the Iroquois, who wish to destroy you".[3]

A second assembly gathered the next day. This time, an Ottawa chief delivered the following address:

> We are all brothers, who should form one body, and possess the same spirit. The French invite us to go to war against the Iroquois. They want to use us to make us their Slaves. After we have contributed to [the Iroquois'] destruction, the French will do to us what they do to their cattle, which they force to plow and labor on the land. Let us leave them to act alone.

Only by rejecting the French and their way of life, he concluded, would his audience retain "the means for being always our own masters".[4] The speaker then offered a keg of English brandy to his audience.

The context for this speech suggests many potential lines of analysis. One could deconstruct the rhetorical strategies of the Ottawa chief and his

COMPLETE CITATION] (Toronto: NAME OF PUBLISHER, 1966–), 2:262, for an account of Dulhut's role in the campaign, which ended in failure.

[2] "Ils avoient apporté beaucoup d'eau de vie, persuadé que c'étoit le plus grand atrrait pour gagner l'estime des Sauvages", Claude-Charles Le Roy, Bacqueville de la Potherie, *Histoire de l'Amerique septentrionale* (Paris, 1722), [**HOW MANY VOLUMES?**] 2:201. Potherie's account drew from the diaries of Nicholas Perrot, now lost. Are the translations those of the author? The article should say one way or the other.

[3] "Ne pas boire d'eau de vie, elle empêche la force de l'homme, elle le rend sans esprit & incapable d'agir". They also hinted that the alcohol could be poison: "L'anglois est le pere de l'Iroquois, cette boison est peut-être empoisonée". Potherie, *Histoire*, 2, pp. 203-4.

[4] "Nous sommes tous freres, qui ne devons faire qu'un corps & n'avoir qu'un même esprit, les François nous invitent d'aller à la guerre contre l'Iroquois, ils veulent se servir de nous pour nous faire leurs Esclaves: quand nous aurons contribué à les détruire ils nouse seront comme ils sont à leurs boeufs qui mettent à charuë & leur sont labourer la terre; laissons les agir seuls.... e'est le moyen d'être toûjours maîtres de nous: voila un baril d'eau de vie pour vous". Potherie, *Histoire*, 2, p. 204.

French opponents, investigate the prominence of alcohol, or examine how this act reflected the particular role of the Ottawa within the internal dynamics of Great Lakes societies. Brett Rushforth has offered an especially insightful interpretation of the events at Michilimackinac by connecting them to the divergence between European and Indian concepts of enslavement.[5] Rushforth sees the Ottawa opposition to the French as a delayed response to the faux pas previously committed by Dulhut when he refused an offer of captives as compensation for the murder of two Frenchmen on Lake Superior. Dulhut's decision to execute the murderers rather than accept slaves as a just replacement for his men, Rushforth argues, revealed a critical ignorance of Indian customs and generated lingering distrust among the Ottawa.[6] "Ironically", Rushforth concludes, "Dulhut's refusal to accept a gift of slaves … instilled the fear of enslavement in New France's Indian allies".[7]

The following study builds upon this insight by connecting it to another, related set of questions. What happened when Europeans introduced Old World domesticated animals – and the modes of thought and behavior that accompanied them – into American societies that did not possess corresponding concepts of ownership and tameness? How did European and Native understandings of the relationship between humans and animals structure their relationships between one another? Although Virginia DeJohn Anderson has explored similar themes in the context of colonial New England and the Chesapeake, little work has been done on the role of domestication along the borderlands of early America.[8] Nor, for the most part, have historians questioned how this important aspect of the Columbian Exchange affected ecosystems and indigenous societies outside the British sphere of influence.[9] As this paper will demonstrate, animals

[5] Brett Rushforth, "'A Little Flesh We Offer You:' The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 60:4 (October 2003), pp. 777-808, and Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), Ch. 1 and pp. 143-5.

[6] See also Richard White's discussion of this episode in *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* ([**PLACE OF PUBLICATION PLEASE**]: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 77-80.

[7] Rushforth, "A Little Flesh", p. 23.

[8] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domesticated Animals Transformed Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[9] Two exceptions are Elinor Melville, *A Plague of Sheep: Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), which examines the role of "ungulate eruptions" in central Mexico, and some general

and domestication played an important and complex role at the interstices between European and Indian worlds.[10]

When the Ottawa chief warned that "the French will do with us what they do with their cattle", he explicitly linked animal husbandry to human captivity. In doing so, he drew upon a deep-seated association between the two concepts so fundamental that it was embedded in the structure of his language. In Ottawa, as in other Algonquian and Iroquoian tongues, the words for "tamed creature/pet" and "captive/slave" were linked.[11] To ally with the French, the chief argued, was to willingly become an animal in their service – and the state of being a tame animal shaded into native conceptions of human bondage. In protesting this specific alliance, the Ottawa chief was thus also rejecting one of the most fundamental structuring principles of European society: a hierarchical social order that regarded mastery over domesticated animals as integral to improvement, commerce, and "civility".

European and Native Conceptions of the Human-Animal Relationship

The Ottawa chief and his audience inhabited a world that was in many ways both physically and symbolically centered on animals. Although most Algonquians and Iroquoians practiced extensive agriculture, harsh winters necessitated a substantial seasonal reliance upon game hunting. Animal products not only supplied food, but also furnished critical materials for clothing, housing, and tools.[12] The most prominent creatures inhabiting the North American woods (such as turtles, elk, eagles, lynxes, and bears) also played an important role in mythology as sentient beings with complex motivations and powers.[13] Materials from such "other-than-human

observations in Alfred Crosby's *Ecological Imperialism: the Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (place of publication: Cambridge University Press, 3rd ed., 2004).

[10] On the Mississippi, Arkansas and Illinois River valleys as the indigenous "heart" of North America see Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 3-11.

[11] See William Starna and Ralph Watkins, "Northern Iroquoian Slavery" *Ethnohistory* 38:1 (Winter 1991), p. 48, and Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (publication place: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), p. 152. For further discussion of this linguistic association see below, this manuscript citation will be unhelpful when the article is printed.

[12] William Engelbrecht, *Iroquoia: the Development of a Native World* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2003), pp. 3-22.

[13] Roger M. Carpenter, *The Renewed, the Destroyed and the Remade: the Three Thought Worlds of the Iroquois and the Huron, 1609-1650* (Michigan State?? , 2004), pp. 78-90; Calvin

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persons" were central to Native American religiosity and to the closely related realms of medicine and bodily practice.[14]

Perhaps the most important symbolic role of animals was as markers of individual and group identities. Among the Anishinaabeg (a culture group including the Ottawa and the Ojibwe), Heidi Bohaker has identified 108 discrete pictorial identities used by native signatories in treaties and petitions throughout the colonial period, the vast majority of which were animals.[15] In a 1701 treaty, for instance, 30 out of 38 different indigenous nations represented themselves with animal pictographs ranging from bears, eagles, and foxes to beavers, cranes, frogs, turtles, and catfish.[16] John Tanner, an Ojibwe captive at the end of the eighteenth century, likewise described an animal-based symbolic writing that "was in common use among the Indians" as a method of communicating information about oneself and close kin.[17]

The sense of divine order that informed these conceptions of the animal-human relationship was exemplified by the Algonquian concept of *manitou*, described by Daniel Richter as "the impersonal force that permeated the world, observable in anything marvelous, beautiful, or dangerous".[18] Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region typically viewed their subsistence hunting as a part of this balanced cosmos, and strove to keep things in order by propitiating the *manitous* of the animals they killed.[19]

Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships in the Fur Trade* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Cal.: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 106-9, 118-9, and *passim*.

[14] On 'other-than-human persons' see A. Irving Hallowell, "Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior, and World View", *Teachings from the American Earth*, Dennis and Barbara Tedlock (eds.), (NY New York City?: Liveright, 1975), pp. 141-79.

[15] Heidi Bohaker, "Reading Anishinaabe Identities: Meaning and Metaphor in Nindoodem Pictographs", *Ethnohistory* 57:1 (Winter 2010), pp. 11-33.

[16] See the signature pages of the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal reproduced as Fig. 1 in Bohaker, "Reading Ashinaabe Identities", p. 12.

[17] Carved into a tree, Tanner found "the mark of a rattle snake with a knife, the handle touching the snake, and the point sticking into a bear… near the rattle-snake was the mark of a beaver, one of its dugs, it being a female, touching the snake". Tanner interpreted these pictographs as a message involving the death of one of his adopted brothers. Such messages, he wrote, were rendered comprehensible because "the men of the same tribe are extensively acquainted with the totem [animals] which belong to each". John Tanner, *A narrative of the captivity and adventures of John Tanner*, Edwin James (ed.) (New York, 1830), pp. 165-7.

[18] Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 83; Dennis Mathew, *Cultivating a Landscape of Peace: Iroquois-European Encounters in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 13.

[19] On "reciprocality" toward animals see Bruce M. White, "The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade" in *Ethnohistory* 46:1 (Winter 1999), full citation please p. 111.

These 'boss spirits' or 'keepers of the game' figured in dreams, stories, and myths as beautiful, *manit*-infused versions of the animals they represented.[20]

In his travels with the Sieur Dulhut from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi, the missionary Louis Hennepin observed that the people he encountered uniformly "believe that several kinds of Animals have a reasonable Soul" capable of "com[ing] back into the World to see how they treat their Bodies, and give notice accordingly to the rest of the Beasts both

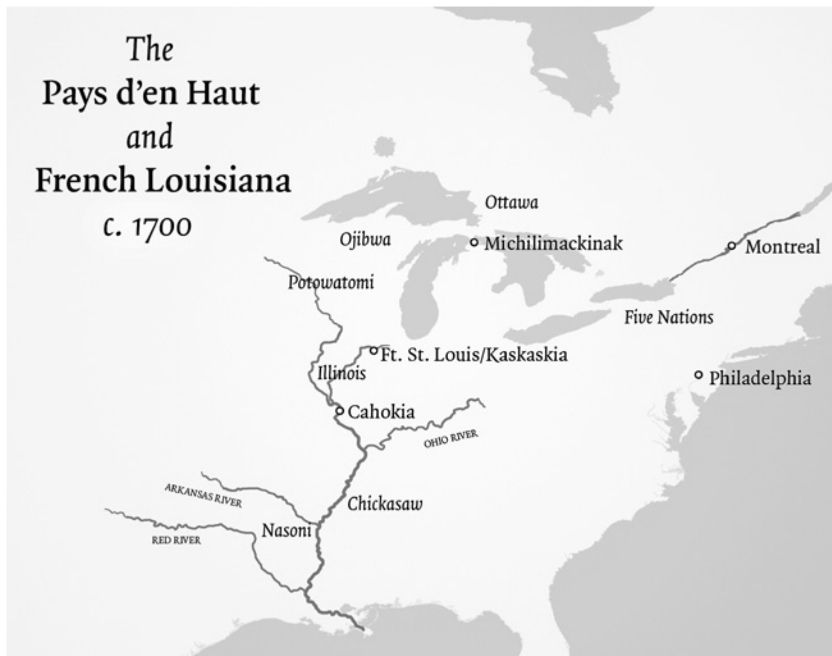

Fig. 1 The North American interior circa 1700, with places, cities and indigenous cultural groups mentioned in the text labeled. Map by the author.

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[20] Martin, *Keepers of the Game*, pp. 71-4, and David J. Silverman, "'We Chuse to Be Bounded': Native American Animal Husbandry in Colonial New England" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 60 (July 2003), p. 518. Silverman argues that Algonquians who adopted domestication in New England viewed their tamed animals as fundamentally different from wild ones: they lacked "boss spirits" and thus were devoid of "the *manit*, or abstract power and uniqueness, that infused forest creatures".

dead and living".[21] Although Hennepin and other French travelers held such beliefs in contempt, Europeans also envisioned animals as co-existing with humans according to a universal cosmic order. These beliefs had an Old Testament pedigree which established humans as the most exalted mortals on the "great chain of being": the rest of the world's creatures existed for and because of them, and it was the duty of man to shape nature to his will.[22] In common with other early modern Christians, French travellers in the New World thus believed that man's "divinely ordained role was to change and control [nature] by his arts and his technology".[23]

On the ground, these generalized views acquired a distinctly Baroque French flavor.[24] In his recent work on animals and the "civilizing process" in absolutist France, Peter Sahlins has argued that the symbolic meanings of animals in elite French culture changed markedly during the seventeenth century. Whereas sixteenth-century nobles prized bloody animal combat and exotic beasts, by the 1660s, Louis XIV and his court had adopted a "language of the animal world" in which well-ordered, tamed menageries became "a living metaphor of royal authority and aristocratic civility".[25]

These evolving attitudes toward animals and animality[**CORRECT?**] shaped the foreign policies of Colbert and other leaders who sought to domesticate, tame, and "Frenchify" (*franciser*) a "wild" landscape.[26]

[21] Louis Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America*, 2 vols. (London, 1698), 2, p. 62. Quotes used in this essay are from this English translation, an expanded edition combining his *Nouvelle découverte d'un très grand pays situé dans l'Amérique, entre le Nouveau Mexique et la mer glaciale* (Utrecht, 1697) and his *Description de la Louisiane nouvellement decouverte au Sud'Ouest de la Nouvelle France* (Paris, 1683) along with new material.

[22] King James Bible, Genesis 1:28. Edward Topsell's *The Historie of Fovre-Footed Beastes* (London, 1607, reprinted 1658) offers a vivid explication of these ideas, also showcasing the vast number of magical beliefs that suffused early modern European thinking about animals.

[23] Cornelius Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 191. On *artes* as a trope in colonization see Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500–1676* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[24] On the Baroque characteristics of material culture in the New France borderlands, see Marcel Moussette, "An Encounter in the Baroque Age: French and Amerindians in North America", *Historical Archaeology* Vol. 37, No. 4 (2003), pp. 29-39.

[25] Peter Sahlins, "The Royal Menageries of Louis XIV and the Civilizing Process Revisited", *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring 2012), p. 239. For an interesting and rather sad survey of sixteenth-century exotic animal combat (including the famous battle between a rhinoceros and elephant at the behest of King Manuel I of Portugal in 1515), see Donald Frederick Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe, Vol. 2* (University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 134-66.

[26] Sophie White, *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), ch. 1-3. On Colbert's "almost

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However, Colbert's objectives were frequently counterbalanced by what François-Xavier Charlevoix called the "libertine habits" of young fur traders in the interior, who he blamed for "the Arts being neglected" and "many good Lands left uncultivated".[27] Fur traders were hostile to both the Jesuits and the French government, since any attempt to force native peoples into permanent settlements would necessarily disrupt existing commercial networks built upon territorial ranging. Long-distance trade in animal pelts and hides across the North American interior had a deep Pre-Columbian history, but by the seventeenth century this trade had also tapped into a globalized mercantile system that offered an alternative, mobile, hunting-based model for French commercial expansion.[28] Conflicts about *franciza-tion*[**? ITALICS CORRECT?**] of societies on the outer edge of French imperial control were thus, at the largest level, part of a debate about the nature of commerce and society itself: was it possible to be "civilized" yet unsettled? Could land usage patterns based around hunting form the basis for a successful commercial society?[29] The language of animals played an important role in these debates: the missionary Jacques Marquette was expressing a common sentiment when he likened the inhabitants of the Illinois country to "lost sheep, that must be sought for among the thickets and woods" in order to be civilized.[30]

The goal of *la francisation* was thus to transform both American landscapes and the humans and animals who inhabited them into not only

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utopian" vision of acculturating Indians in the American interior, see Robert Michael Morrissey, "Kaskaskia Social Network: Kinship and Assimilation in the French-Illinois Borderlands, 1695–1735", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (January 2013), p. 110. See also Robert Michael Morrissey, "The Terms of Encounter: Language and Contested Visions of French Colonization in the Illinois Country, 1673-1702" in *French and Indians in the Heart of North America*, Robert Englebert and Guillaume Teasdale (eds.), (Michigan State University Press, 2013), pp. 53-77, and Cécile Vidal, "Francité et situation colonial: Nation, empire, et race en Louisiane française (1699–1769)", *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales 64, no. 5* (Sept.–Oct. 2009), pp. 1019–50.

[27] "Une partie de la Jeunesse … ne laisse pas d'y prendre une habitude de libertinage … De-là vient que les Arts ont été lontems négligés, que quantité de bonnes Terres sont encore incultes", Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale*, Pierre Berthiaume (ed.), (University of Montreal Press, 1994), p. 250.

[28] On the persistence of Hopewell, Mississippian, Pueblo and other trade networks in the North American interior see Kathleen DuVal, *The Native Ground*, Ch. 1.

[29] The steady revenues produced by agriculture and husbandry offered both a means of pacifying 'savages' and a commercial alternative to the mineral-extraction model of Spanish America and the hunting-based model of the *voyageurs*.

[30] Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed. and trans.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Company 1896-1901) [henceforth *JR*], 54, p. 186.

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societal, but also *ecological* and *environmental* analogs of France. Indians were to find fixed habitations, to cease to "keep things in common", and to adopt Old World patterns of resource management, husbandry, and agriculture. One of the first steps toward achieving these goals was the abandonment of long-held attitudes toward animals and the embrace of European models of animal possession.

Possessing Beasts: Henri de Tonti in the Mississippi Valley

In the spring of 1684, the Franco-Sicilian adventurer Henri de Tonti gazed from a rocky plateau above the broad expanse of the Illinois River valley. At his back was Fort St. Louis, a new outpost entrusted to de Tonti by his commanding officer, the Sieur de la Salle. Immediately across the river stood the longhouses of Kaskaskia, a large settlement belonging to the Illini federation.[31]

De Tonti, who had spent his youth amid the ordered gardens and menageries of Louis XIV's court, found the vista heartening. Or, at least, he claimed to do so. Recalling the scene in print thirteen years later, he celebrated the "beauty of the country … the fruitfulness of the lands, the convenience of a highly navigable river; the nearness of a hundred different nations, and of those little lakes, or rather little seas that open trade to all of North America".[32] Above all, he was impressed by the animal life in "these vast forests", which sheltered "animals of every type: buffalo [boeufs], moose, common wolves, lynxes, wild asses, deer, goats, sheep, foxes, hares, beavers, otters, large and small dogs, with an infinite abundance of all sorts of game".[33] For de Tonti, it was all potentially a vast French menagerie: "all of this is at the mercy of those who have the strength or will to make

[31] On Kaskaskia see Gilles Havard, *Empire et Metissages: Indiens et Français dans le Pays d'en Haut, 1660-1715* (Paris: Presses de'l Universite de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), pp. 89-90.

[32] "La beauté du païs, la fecondité des terres, la commodité d'une riviere tres-marchande, le voisinage de cent Nations differentes, la proximité de ces étangs, ou plutôt de ces petites mers, qui ouvrent le commerce à toute l'Amerique Septentrionale". Henri de Tonti, *Dernieres Decouvertes dans L'Amerique Septentrionale de M. de la Sale*, (Paris, 1697), p. 207. For an English edition see Henri de Tonti, *An account of Monsieur de La Salle's last expedition and discoveries in North America* (London, 1698), reprinted in *The Collections of the New York State Historical Society for the Year 1814* (New York, 1814), 2, p. 285. De Tonti at one point disclaimed authorship of this work, but the text's provenance and reliability is outlined by Richard M. Kolbet, "Narratives of North American Exploration", *Books at Iowa* 6 (University of Iowa, April 1967).

[33] "Vastes forêts errent des animaux de toute espece", De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, pp. 8-9.

themselves Masters over it".[34] By creating a foothold in what Kathleen du Val calls the "Native Ground" of the Mississippi and Arkansas river systems, de Tonti saw an opportunity to repeat the exploits of Pizarro and Cortés. Only this time, "mastery" would be obtained by inculcating civility, tameness, and a desire for French goods and French animals among indigenous societies. These hopes for a "settled way of life" initially appeared to be a success. Only two months after he had "invited all the neighboring nations to come to it", de Tonti claimed that his trading settlement harbored "five hundreds cabins" and "a marvelous concourse of all of the different nations [peuples]".[35]

De Tonti's hopes for the future of the settlement hinged on his desire to "humanize" (*humaniser*) and "tame" (*apprivoiser*) the locals, which were entangled with his conception of "civility" (*civilité*). After establishing the fertile nature of the land, its abundance of animals, and the interactions of multiple tribes, de Tonti argued that:

> By this one can easily understand with what ease we might humanize these savage Nations, if we might trouble ourselves to tame them by establishing small Colonies of Europeans, because even in a small number, they can establish among the Barbarians the cement of concord and of civil society.[36]

As the eldest son of a wealthy Neapolitan banker and financier of Louis XIV, de Tonti was intimately conscious of the connections between commerce and "civil society" (*société civile*).[37] The peoples surrounding the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley, he reasoned, would be "humanized" not by the Jesuit missions, but via commerce with men such as himself.[38]

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[34] "Tout cela à la merci de ceux qui ont la force ou l'adresse de s'en rendres les maîtres". De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 9. On the relationship between *maîtrise* and *ménagerie* see Sahlins, "Royal Menagerie", p. 240 and p. 15 below again this ms. citation won't be helpful.

[35] "Cinq cent cabannes bâties sur ces bordes; & en moins de deux mois il y eut un concours merveilleux de tous ces peuples differens". De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, pp. 207-208. See Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (University of North Carolina Press, 1992) on patterns of native exchange and settlement in the Mississippi region.

[36] "Cela seul peut facilement faire comprendre avec quelle facilité l'on pourroit humaniser ces Nations sauvages, si l'on se donnoit la peine de les apprivoiser par de petites Colonies de nos Européans… ciment de la concorde & de la societé civile", De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 208.

[37] With the backing of Cardinal Mazarin and the French court, his father Lorenzo had pioneered an early form of life insurance, the *tontine*. See *DCB*, "De Tonti, Henri".

[38] De Tonti's use of *apprivoiser*, 'to tame' for the civilizing project he envisioned was also used by La Potherie, who wrote of the Huron that "le Commerce a apprivoisé ces Peuples". For a discussion of the rhetoric used see Havard, *Empire et Metissages*, pp. 565-7.

He was well aware that the region already enjoyed a substantial intertribal trade. Yet in the view of de Tonti and many of his contemporaries, European commerce was qualitatively different because it rested upon that most fundamental "cement … of civil Society": the notion of private ownership.[39]

De Tonti explicitly linked ownership with tameness in his account of an encounter further down the Illinois River. After presenting ritual gifts to an Illinois Indian chief – part of a formalized exchange of goods that were typically distributed throughout the tribe – he discretely slipped "a small case of tooled steel" containing a pair of silver scissors into the hand of the chief's wife who had "seemed to ask me for them". De Tonti took her excited response ("squeezing my hand" in surprise) as a heartening sign. "I came to think because of this", he recalled, "that *these women do not have such savage hearts*, and that they might easily be tamed by us".[40] De Tonti was disappointed when his other attempts to instill ownership were foiled by a chief who demanded all gifts. Travellers and missionaries like Louis Hennepin had long complained of Indian "covetousness" and "theft" of goods that the French regarded as individual belongings (see Figure 2). By expressing private enjoyment and ownership of a European-made good – and a luxury item at that – the woman had reassured De Tonti of both her ability to recognize property distinctions and, simultaneously, her potential for being "easily … tamed".[41]

[39] Early modern notions of property was complex and multilayered, as Michael Breen's recent survey of property claims and state formation in France makes clear (Michael P. Breen, "Law, Society, and the State in Early Modern France", *The Journal of Modern History* 83:2 (June 2011), pp. 346-86. Moreover, the specific term "propriété privé" is rarely if ever used in primary source accounts. Following Kathleen DuVal, however, I use "private property" and "ownership" as shorthands in my discussion of the French tendency to envision an opposition between their own notions of individual legal possession and Indian "common property". On this dichotomy see DuVal, *The Native Ground*, p. 7.

[40] "Je m'apperçus cependant qu'une de ses femmes maniant une paire de ciseaux, & en admirant la propreté, me sourioit de tems en tems, & sembloit m'en demander autant: Je pris mon tems pour m'approcher d'elle, & aïant tiré de ma poche un petit étui d'acier travaillé à jour, où il y avoit une paire de ciseaux, & un petit couteau d'écaille: & faisant semblant d'admirer la blancheur & la finesse de sa veste.... & me fit concevoir par-là, *que ces femmes n'ont pas tout-à-fait le coeur sauvage*, & qu'elles pourroient bien s'apprivoiser avec nous". Italics in original. De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, pp. 171-2.

[41] The practice of communal gift distribution proved to be among the most difficult elements of Indian culture for property-minded Europeans to assimilate. William Bartram (1739-1823), for instance, related the story of a trader who took a Creek Indian wife but expressed bafflement at her attitude toward private property, complaining bitterly that her insistence on distributing gifts "amongst her savage relations… drained him of all his possessions". William Bartram, *Travels of William Bartram*, Mark Van Doren (ed.), (New York, 1928 [PLACE?, 1791]), p. 110.

Fig. 2 A fight over the ownership of Father Louis Hennepin's possessions (rolls of Martinique tobacco, his chasuble, and his chalice) breaks out among Indians along the Upper Mississippi. Numerous animals including a "wild cow" (buffalo) are visible in the background. This engraving is from a Dutch translation of Hennepin's *Nouvelle decouverte* (Utrecht, 1697): *De gedenkwaardige West-Indise voyagien* (Pieter van der Aa: Leiden, 1704). Image courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Animals figured in this debate over private property, tameness and civility in both direct and indirect ways. In Huron country, the missionary Gabriel Sagard described how one Père Joseph had "given a cat to a great chief as a very rare gift, for they do not possess these animals". The feline soon exemplified a rift between European and Native notions of private versus communal animal ownership:

> It happened that a sick woman dreamed that if this cat had been given to her she would soon be cured. The chief was informed of this and immediately sent her his cat, although he adored it greatly, and his daughter even more so; and

> when the latter saw herself bereft of the animal, which she loved passionately, she fell sick and died of regret, being unable to vanquish and overcome her affection.[42]

In Sagard's interpretation of events, individual possession of an animal was here subsumed to the local practice of "keeping things in common" with disastrous consequences: the chief's daughter literally died of grief caused by her loss of ownership over the cat.[43] (It is interesting that both of these episodes involved women, perhaps suggesting a gendered component to French understandings of how the Indians of the interior might be "tamed" by ownership).

In accounts from this period, the "wild" propensity to reject private goods is taken as a sign that Indians are animals in need of "humanization". In the carefully modulated language of the *Jesuit Relations of New France*, for instance, the Huron become "birds" and "sheep" preyed upon by Iroquois "wolves", "lions" and "hawks".[44] De Tonti introduced Native Americans in his chronicle by remarking, "This is a wild life, which they have in common with beasts".[45] Others found indigenous susceptibility to disease – or lack of appropriate *artes* to combat it – to be another bestial trait. An early Dutch rival to French expansion in the interior wrote that those Indians who lacked "herbs or leaves or roots, to cure their ailments" were left "to perish like cattle".[46] "All these barbarians have the law of wild asses",

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[42] Gabriel Sagard, *Le grand voyage au pays des Hurons* (Paris, 1632), ch. X, reprinted in George M. Wrong, *Sagard's long journey to the country of the Hurons* (Toronto: the Champlain Society, 1939), pp. 118-9. This incident is briefly discussed in William Howard Carter, "Chains of Consumption: the Iroquois and Consumer Goods, 1550-1800", (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2008), p. 254.

[43] However see Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, Appendix A, p. 387, which features a transcription of the word *nitaïa* from a c. 1690s "Dictionnaire Illinois-français" that the Francophone author glosses as meaning "mon animal domestique, mon chien, mon chat" as well as "mon esclave". This entry would seem to point to the ways that novel domesticated animals like cats had begun to overlay onto existing concepts of possession (and spread within indigenous societies) within a few decades of Sagard's account.

[44] For Jesuit associations of Indians with animals see for instance *JR* 7:171, 18:90, 50:265 [**CITATION CORRECT?**]. As DuVal and others have noted, the rhetoric of the *Jesuit Relations* was directly aimed at elite French audiences (and heavily influenced by biblical imagery) so they cannot be read as impartial accounts of events on the ground; for present purposes, however, the fact that Jesuits in New France *intended their French audience* to see native societies as animal-like is itself significant.

[45] "Se fait a cette vie sauvage, qui leur est commune avec les bêtes". De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 26.

[46] Nicolas Van Wassenaer, "Historisch Verhael", in J. Franklin Jameson (ed.) *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664* (New York, 1909), full citation please p. 72.

complained the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune. "They are born, live and die in a liberty without restraint; they do not know what is meant by bridle or bit".[47]

Awahkân and *Enaskwa*: Indigenous Perspectives on Animal Domestication

In an interesting parallel, indigenous American societies also regarded Europeans as sharing characteristics with animals. European body hair, for instance, was widely held to be a bestial trait. Among the men of many Algonquian and Iroquoian tribes, singeing or closely shaving body hair was considered not only a necessary hygienic practice but a symbol of social conformity and indeed of 'humanness'. James Axtell perceptively notes that it was the relatively hirsute nature of the Europeans, rather than their slight difference in skin tone, which struck Indian eyes as the greatest physical difference between the two peoples.[48] La Potherie reported, for instance, that the Potawatomi of Green Bay accounted the French "a different species from other men" because, like the fur-clad mammals they hunted, they were "covered with hair".[49] In Huron country, likewise, Louis Hennepin lamented the local Indian belief that "we had Tails like Beasts, [and] that the European Women … bear five or six Children at a time" in the manner of a wild animal.[50]

In order to begin to understand indigenous American conceptions of the strangely docile animals that these bestial newcomers consorted with, we must more closely examine the role that tame animals played in Pre-Columbian societies. Although most early modern European accounts assumed otherwise, many such societies practiced extensive animal husbandry. Full-fledged domestication of guinea pigs, llamas and alpacas existed in the Andes from a very early date (circa 5,000 BCE), while Mesoamericans domesticated the turkey and perhaps several other types of fowl by around 3,500 BCE.[51] By the sixteenth century at the latest, domesticated fowl had diffused up the Mississippi to the southern banks of the

[47] *JR* 12, p. 59.

[48] James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: the Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 9.

[49] Potherie, *Histoire*, 1, p. 311.

[50] Hennepin, *New Discovery*, 2, p. 84.

[51] Charles C. Mann's *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Knopf, 2005) offers a useful survey of recent literature on pre-Columbian animal domestication in the Americas.

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Great Lakes. Early French and Spanish accounts of the Illinois country make several references to the domestication of birds. A little-noted passage in de Tonti, for instance, lists several bird species that he observed being kept in "enclosures" by "all of the families" of the Nasoni people in present-day Arkansas.[52] Louis Hennepin, similarly, observed that the "Chikacha" [Chickasaw] "have tame Poultry, as Hens, Turkey-Cocks, and Bustards, which are as tame as our Geese".[53] It is unclear how far such practices extended, but we do know that virtually all North American indigenous peoples practiced canine domestication. Although Europeans disdained these dogs as half wild "wolfish" creatures lurking at the outskirts of the camps, most Indian societies fed and cared for their dogs and used them in tracking game.[54] In an echo of the courtly animal culture of early modern France, sources also attest to Algonquian groups practicing falconry.[55]

Such evidence must give us pause. Was the vast difference in European and Indian attitudes toward animals posited by surviving sources simply a reflection of European ignorance? Virginia Anderson has argued against such a conclusion.[56] She regards the fundamental difference between Indian and European attitudes toward domestication to lie in the concept of property. Indians "lack[ed] the notion that even tame animals could be property", she argues, and therefore did not conceptually their tamed dogs and birds with the domesticated cattle, cows, sheep, goats, and horses introduced from Afro-Eurasia.**[SENTENCE CORRECT?]**[57]

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[52] De Tonti reported encountering "dans toutes leures familles de gros chapons, des poules, des poulets, & de gros pigeons d'Inde". *Decouvertes*, p. 270. See also p. 274, p. 286.

[53] Hennepin, *New Discovery*, 1, p. 154.

[54] *The Diary and Adventures of John Tanner* offers several interesting glimpses into the use of dogs as hunting companions and as food by the Ojibwe; see for instance pp. 181 and 306. On dogs as a point of difference in New France see Denys Delâge, "Vos chiens ont plus d'esprit que les nôtres: histoire des chiens dans la rencontre des Français et des Amérindiens", *Les Cahiers des dix*, 59, 2005 **[PLEASE CORRECT CITATION]**.

[55] Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (1643), by John Teunissen (ed.) (Detroit, 1973), p. 166; Sahlins, "Royal Menagerie", p. 247.

[56] Anderson, *Creatures*, p. 38.

[57] Anderson, *Creatures*, pp. 38-9. David Silverman offers a somewhat different view, emphasizing the creation of hybrid native husbandry practices that, unlike European husbandry, did not necessarily conflict with the communal sharing of land and resources. Such arguments may be valid in the context of Massachusetts Indians, but the process he examines played out differently on the French-American frontier. Identifying the same circular process of "taming" Indians by causing them to adopt tame animals, Silverman concludes "it is unlikely that praying Indians saw themselves as metaphorical livestock" (p. 517). Praying Indians may not have – yet as this paper's opening shows, this metaphor was very much in the minds of those tribes, such as the Ottawa, who still sought to resist both Christianity and European lifeways.

For the settlers of New France, orderly private ownership of animals added both to the moral worth of the individual and to the overall civility of society. Indeed, the very word for a private collection of animals, *ménagerie*, had connotations of mastery over both animal and human affairs, even becoming a conscious model for Absolutist governance.[58] By contrast, many indigenous societies attached negative moral connotations to private ownership of tame animals because they associated it with enslavement. Linguistic evidence points to a close link between domesticate animals and slaves in Algonquian and Iroquoian languages. The Iroquoian word *enaskwa* signified both "human captive" and "tame animal". Moreover, this lack of differentiation been captive humans and tame animals is attested to not only in Iroquoian, but also in the linguistically unrelated dialects of the Western Algonquian: the Ojibwe word *awahkân* and Ashinaabe *awaakan* had identical dual meanings, "designating both 'captives' and 'animals kept as pets.'"[59] Though fragmentary, such evidence suggests a set of broad-based associations between captives and tamed dogs that pre-dated European incursion.[60] At some point, however, these terms appear to have been adapted to incorporate the new conceptual category of "domesticated animal" which Europeans introduced. The Iroquois probably initially applied *enaskwa* only to human captives and dogs, but the word later came to mean "domesticated animal" as well.[61]

The apparent contradiction that might result from Anderson's avowal that a society which practiced enslavement could not conceive of "owning" animals – and that this society nonetheless possessed words for "pet" and "tame animal" – is resolved when we consider the social basis of Indian slavery. Whereas Europeans typically envisioned slaves as a form of private property that was legally possessed by an individual, Indian slavery was rooted in the social units of the village and extended family. When a new

[58] Pierre Charron, *De la sagesse* (Bourdeaux, 1604) regarded the word "ménage" to involve "the vigilance and presence of the master… [to] fatten the horse and the land" as well as the household. Cited in Sahlins, "Royal Menagerie", p. 240, who notes that "the *ménage* became identified with a masculine expertise and practice" in this period. On *ménagement* as a "mode of governance" see Sahlins p. 241.

[59] See Starna and Watkins, "Iroquoian Slavery", p. 48, Rushforth, "A Little Flesh", p. 9, Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, ff. 28, and Frederic Baraga, *A Dictionary of the Ojibway Language* (St. Paul, Minn., 1992), 1, p. 232, 2, p. 56[**CITATION CORRECT?**].

[60] Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, p. 52.

[61] Starna and Watkins, "Iroquoian Slavery", p. 48. The discussion in Haefeli and Sweeney (*Captors and Captives*, p. 152) basically accords with their conclusions, although they note the distinction that *enaskwa* was the root word for "slave", which was usually constructed as *kenaskwa*.

slave such as a war captive was received into an Algonquian or Iroquoian village, he or she was typically forced to participate in a group ceremony and then ritually beaten by every member of the community. If the slave survived this ordeal, they were adopted into an extended family group. Their identity was not determined, as it would be in a Euro-American context, by their status as the legal property of an individual. Instead, identity derived from the tribal and familial lineage into which the slave had been adopted.[62]

When we take these factors into account, it becomes less surprising that indigenous North Americans often structured their oppositions to European society around themes of animals and domestication – or that they readily associated these actions with the threat of their own enslavement. Many indigenous commentators were particularly hostile to the idea that Europeans could impose ownership on wild as well as tame animals. An Oneida chief, for instance, complained that "you claim all the wild creatures, and will not let us come on your land to hunt after them ... The cattle you raise are your own, but those which are wild, are still ours, or should be common to both".[63] A Delaware voiced a similar idea when he said, "the Elks are our horses, the buffaloes are our cows, the deer are our sheep, and the whites shan't have them".[64] In short, the introduction of the *idea* of domesticated animals stood at the center of an emerging set of anxieties about the manner in which both indigenous societies and landscapes would be transformed – and perhaps subjugated – by alien European practices of ownership and possession.

In his interactions with Indian leaders in the Upper Mississippi, Henri de Tonti seems to have been well aware of these anxieties surrounding the concept of animal domestication, and quite consciously to have stressed that his intention was to engage in mutually beneficial commerce rather than to enslave. In his addresses to Illinois groups, De Tonti claimed that his intention was "not so much to subject them under a rigorous yoke" but:

> To maintain all the bounds of their possessions with our force of arms, and to share with them all of our finest Arts and our riches; less to rob them of their treasures... or to push them off their land, then to teach them

[62] The preceding description has been adapted from Engelbrecht, *Iroquoia*, pp. 161-2, Rushforth, "'A Little Flesh We Offer You'", pp. 2-5, and Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, pp. 17-20.

[63] Treaty minutes, Oct. 18, 1758, Samuel Hazard (ed.), *Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania ...* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1853), number of volumes? VIII, p. 199.

[64] *The Diary of David McClure*, p. 93.

> how to cultivate it well, and by navigation to open them up to commerce with us.[65]

Despite such attempts to draw a distinction between the "yoke" of mastery and the mutual benefits of commerce, De Tonti's audience may have interpreted the implications of this speech in a distinctly negative light.[66]

Changing Roles of Domesticated Animals in the American Interior

So far, we have framed the discourse of domestication as an exchange between Indians and Europeans. But a third group of actors existed: the animals themselves. The unpredictability of non-human creatures was an extremely powerful force for change along the interstices of empire. In the Great Lakes and Louisiana territory, this unpredictability became increasingly important as the seventeenth century drew to a close. Between 1690 and 1730, the peoples of this region began to engage with European domesticated animals not only as rhetorical tropes, but as living beings. Among the most striking and poorly understood aspects of this new phase of interaction was the role of feral domesticates: escaped livestock animals which began to reproduce in the zones beyond European settlement, often figuring as the first European animals with which indigenous peoples came into contact. This diffusion of feral domesticated animals complicated the ideas about domestication and possession articulated above.

When sixteenth-century Europeans had initially contemplated America, the image they conjured up in their mind's eye typically featured the familiar livestock animals of home. The earliest known European painting of America, by the Netherlandish artist Jan Mostaert, set the precedent: nestled between a fantastic landscape of rocky outcrops and a battle between naked Indians and armored Spaniards, Mostaert incongruously placed an edenic pastoral scene of grazing farm animals (Figure 3). By the seventeenth century, however, these uncritical assumptions of a commonality

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[65] "C'étoit moins pour les assujettir sous un joug rigorouex, que pour les maintenir tous par la force de nos armes, dans les bornes de leurs possessions, & pour leur fair part de nos plus beaux Arts …" De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 170.

[66] Likewise, in internal discussions between government officials, the distinction between the advancement of European-style commerce and the goal of "mastery" over the Indians was less than clear. Cadillac wrote of "…that irrefutable axiom which states that he who is master of commerce and the fur trade is also master of all the Indians", Cadillac to Anonymous, Quebec, Oct. 20, 1667, in Peyser, *Letters from New France*, p. 63.

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between European and America fauna had changed. In many accounts, America was recast as a place of strange and exotic beasts – and as a potential corruptor of European bodies.[67]

Fig. 3 Jan Mostaert, *Landscape with an Episode from the Conquest of America* (detail), c. 1535, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. European domesticates graze peacefully alongside a scene of slaughter. For further discussion of this painting see Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: the Dutch Imagination in the New World* (Cambridge, 2001), 1-2.

[67] See Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "New World, New Stars: patriotic astrology and the invention of Indian and Creole bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650" in *American Historical Review* 104:1 (February 1999), pp. 33-68. Such anxieties are frequently attested in early narratives of New France. The *vogageur* Pierre-Esprit Radisson even attributed his brother's "falling sickness" to degeneration resulting from their "long stay in a newly discovered country… God gave him his health more by his courage than by any good medicine, for

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On the basis of such beliefs, Joyce Chaplin has argued that "the body remained the ultimate site of cultural identity and intercultural contention" in early colonial America. This was because "the human body was ... the basis of the most prejudiced comparison the English made between themselves and natives".[68] I argue that *animal* bodies were subject to many of the same concerns. They, too, became a point of comparison with the bodies of Indians. Moreover, the prospect of Old World domesticates "degenerating" or going feral in an American landscape reinforced European fears of their own bodily corruption. These anxieties only increased as French, British and Iberian travelers strayed further from the 'core' regions of colonial settlement.

Contested inland regions like the Pays d'en Haut and Louisiana country were especially central to these debates because they offered a wilderness refuge for feralized European domsticates. The fertile lands to the immediate south of Lake Michigan, in particular, appear to have sheltered populations of feral livestock from an early date. A few hardy descendants of the pigs, horses and cattle that accompanied De Soto may have reached the region from the 1540s onward.[69] More important (and well-documented) was the impact of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. During the twelve years that the Pueblo retained independence from New Spain, they engaged in an extensive trade in Spanish domesticates, especially horses, with societies on the Great Plains.[70] These horses, which spread both in the wild and under Indian care, probably diffused northward along the Mississippi at a fairly rapid pace and may have reached the southern boundaries of the Pays d'en Haut in a matter of years.[71]

The travel narratives of de Tonti (1698), La Potherie (1702), and the Baron de Lahonton (1703) offer first-hand accounts verifying that Native trade networks had carried Afro-Eurasian domesticates to the southern Great Lakes

our bodies are not like those of the wildmen", *The Voyages of Pierre-Esprit Radisson* (publication place?: Ross & Haines, 1961), full citation? pp. 97-8.

[68] Joyce Chaplin, *Subject Matter*, p. 270 and p. 242.

[69] For an overview description of this expedition with specific reference to de Soto's animal companions, see DuVal, *Native Ground*, pp. 29-47.

[70] Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures", in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Dec., 2003), pp. 836-7 and Francis Haines, "The Northward Spread of Horses among the Plains Indians" in *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 40 (Jul. - Sep., 1938), pp. 429-37.

[71] This conjecture is based on the ecological principle of the "ungulate irruption", in which grazing animals such as the cow, horse or sheep which are introduced to grassland ecosystems which lack similar niche species are known to reproduce at an extremely rapid rate. Melville, *A Plague of Sheep*, pp. 6-9.

region by the beginning of the eighteenth century. De Tonti, for instance, wrote that horses "are found among the Nations neighboring the Spaniards".[72] De Tonti also wrote of the Nasoni, who inhabited the Red River valley, maintaining "pastures which are filled with horse and oxen".[73]

Such accounts raise an important set of questions. How did possessing animals differ from possession of trade goods or land? And did these examples of indigenous adaptation to European domesticates take a qualitatively different form than pre-Columbian animal husbandry? These questions necessarily complicate any tendency to envision a simply binary between "hunter-gatherer" Indians and "pastoralist" or "agricultural" Europeans. Mississippian societies and their descendants in the seventeenth-century American interior domesticated birds and dogs and enforced notions of property, grazing rights, and land ownership. A 1690s Illinois-French grammar recently transcribed by Brett Rushforth, for instance, contains words for "my domestic animal" and for "privately owned animals".[74] Recent work by Allan Greer raises the possibility that late seventeenth-century Europeans encountering these regimes of animal and human ownership may have embedded them within pre-existing discourses of "the commons". As Greer notes, what was at stake here was actually different ways of thinking about how humans asserted control and ownership over ecosystems.[75] In both Europe and the Americas, European elites had begun to regard common pasturage and grazing lands as detrimental to state-building and to "civil" modes of life. Hence, native notions of domestication in the American interior (which had deep Pre-Columbian roots) became unwittingly entangled in debates that also stretched back to late medieval Europe.

Many European sources stressed the inability of native peoples to properly care for animals, portraying Indians as arbitrarily violent to the animals

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72 "Chez les Peuples voisins des Espagnols", De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 280.

73 "Pâturages y sont remplis de chevaux & de boeufs", De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 270. It is unclear from the context whether "boeufs" refers here to buffalo or to cows.

74 Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, Appendix 1, p. 389, p. 391. The words in question are *nitaïa* ("mon animal domestique, mon chien, mon chat, *it*[*em*] mon esclave") and *8iss8erim8eta* ("bestes privees").

75 Alan Greer, "Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America", *American Historical Review* 117 (April, 2012), pp. 365-86. For comparative perspectives, see the discussion of "indigenous commons" in Mesoamerica in Melville, *Plague of Sheep*, pp. 157-8 and Tim Ingold's tripartite division of land-usage in *Hunters, Pastoralists and Ranchers: Reindeer Economies and Their Transformations* (place of publication: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

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with which they coexisted.[76] Others feared that European animals might degenerate via association with savage American customs and climates. (As Sophie White notes, somewhat parallel fears of hybrid material cultures marked an early emergence of biological notions of race and ethnicity in the Louisiana colony in the same period.)[77] Taken together, these factors enforced a boundary Native and European regimes of animal possession which made it possible for political leaders, colonists, and traders to dismiss indigenous animal practices as savage, wild, and untamed.

Over time, the relationship between the societies of the American interior and horses emerged as an important exception to this discourse. De Tonti noted that four of his men deserted upon noticing horses in the lands to the south of the Illinois because "as soon as they had possession of a horse, they no longer believed themselves to be among the Savages".[78] The increased mobility allowed by horses (and the presence of nearby Europeans they implied) undoubtedly played a role in this desertion. But de Tonti's phrasing would suggest that the symbolic associations between the horse and civility played a role as well. In this instance the association of horses with civilized life seems to have outweighed any negative associations with their upbringing in the American wilderness. Even though they were, themselves, feral animals the horses may have been seen by these deserters as a civilizing force in a savage landscape.

Yet horses would also become vehicles of indigenous resistance to European-style forms of settlement. Once wild horses actually became a presence in Indian societies, it became apparent that horse pasturage did not necessarily a "settled" mode of life.**[SENTENCE CORRECT?]** Indeed, in some cases horses had precisely the reverse effect, improving mobility and allowing grassland tribes to more readily pursue large game animals like buffalo. The horse, the most valued of all Old World domesticates, ultimately became an aid to 'wildness' rather than a tool of 'tameness'.[79]

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76 De Tonti for instance wrote that Mississippi Valley societies "have such natural ferocity, that they wage war on the animals, when they cannot wage war on men". *Decouvertes*, p. 27.

77 White, *Wild Frenchmen*, p. 12.

78 "Depuis qu'ils se virent en possession d'un cheval, ils ne crurent plus être parmi les Sauvages". De Tonti, *Decouvertes*, p. 272.

79 On the Indian transition to horse-riding see Pekka Hämäläinen, "Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures" and Loretta Fowler, "The Great Plains from the arrival of the horse to 1885", in Bruce Trigger (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Native Peoples*, full citation? Vol. 1, Pt. 2, pp. 1-56. James Taylor Carson explores many of the themes raised here in the context of the Choctaw Indians of what is now Missouri in "Horses and the Economy and Culture of the Choctaw Indians, 1690-1840", *Ethnohistory* 42:3 (Summer 1995), pp. 495-513.

Conclusion: Animals and Humans in the Early Modern World

How does the story of domesticated animals on the New French frontier relate to larger historical questions? Scholars have typically studied the introduction of domesticated animals into non-Western societies within the framework of the Columbian Exchange and "ecological imperialism".[80] While this big-picture view has proven useful in establishing broad patterns of change, it can be complemented by studies that emphasize localized cultural, political, and environmental contingencies. The societies of the Great Lakes and Louisiana country enshrined, in their culture and language, a connection between captivity and tameness that shaped Indian reactions toward European domesticates. Meanwhile, settlers and explorers tried to impose ideals of settled life, private property and "managed" animals, which had distinctive origins in the emerging culture of *civilité* in absolutist France and its colonies. Yet owing in part to the unpredictable nature of domesticated animals in regions beyond state control, the intentions of all parties rarely achieved their expected result. This paper has argued that local contingencies and environments must be central to our understanding of the process by which European individuals (and animals) confronted their indigenous American counterparts.

On the other hand, an emphasis on local contexts should not blind us to larger patterns. The regional phenomena studied here mirrored changes that were occurring outside New France. Recent scholarship suggests that conflicts arising from the disjuncture between Indian and European attitudes toward domesticated animals were widespread, and involved a similar set of tensions over ideas of property and possession. Among the Creek Indians of Georgia, Claudio Saunt notes that European cattle represented "a new … kind of private property" which transformed their communal, largely possession-free social order and thus "threatened the very identity of Creeks".[81] Likewise, Tom Hatley writes that domesticated cattle "became

[80] See Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (publication place: Greenwood Press, 1972) and *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (publication place: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[81] Saunt, p. 47. Echoing the sentiments of the Ottawa chief quoted in this essay's introduction, Saunt's Creek Indians actively protested against European animal husbandry and associate the keeping of animals with enslavement, while Georgia's leaders mirrored De Tonti and Charlevoix in their belief that "fixing the idea of property" in Indians via the adoption of domesticates "would have a tendency not only of attaching them to our interest… but would also be a means of civilizing them". Ibid., p. 32 and p. 50, quoting a 5 July 1776 proposal of the Council of Safety in revolutionary Georgia.

critical to Cherokee identity" in the eighteenth century, inspiring a "biocultural" conception of difference between Europeans and Indians that, in some cases, led to the self-conscious rejection of European domesticates in favor of "a return to simpler traditional ways and clarity in human-animal relationships".[82] Virginia Anderson's work on Indian and European anxieties over livestock, feralization and property in the backcountry of Virginia has revealed similar trends.[83]

The present study has built upon the questions posed by these scholars. Yet it also offers a caveat: the role of domesticated animals in the Thirteen Colonies was not necessarily reflective of their role in the Americas as a whole. Indeed, the Great Lakes and Louisiana territory varied significantly from the core regions of British settlement that have inspired the bulk of current research. In New France, as in many other regions of North and South America, plantation or settler economies were not established on a large scale, and trade in local resources (in this case fur and hides) remained the principal engine of European expansion. This made the role of domesticated animals very different than in agricultural regions such as Virginia or New England. On the French frontier, domesticated animals played a role that was more symbolic more material. Moreover, Native attitudes toward the new concepts of ownership and tameness which livestock introduced were strongly influenced by regional cultural and linguistic patterns that connected domestication to enslavement. Finally, those domesticates which did enter the region often did so as feral animals, while others became "nativized" and incorporated into Indian society in novel ways. Because current research into the role of animals in colonial America is skewed toward the coastal settler regions of British America, these aspects of their diffusion into the inland frontiers of settlement have yet to be explored. By moving beyond the paradigm of the British Atlantic, we can complicate and contrast the arguments about the role of animals in early America that have already been advanced.[84]

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[82] Tom Hatley, *The Dividing Paths: Cherokee and South Carolinians through the Era of Revolution* (place: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 213-4. This emphasis on proto-biological reasoning finds an echo in Sophie White's claims about the material basis for emerging notions of racial difference in *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians*.

[83] See Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, pp. 107-41, and "Animals into the Wilderness: The Development of Livestock Husbandry in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 59:2 (April 2002), pp. 377-408.

[84] For an alternative perspective on these themes see Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 67:2 (April 2010), pp. 173-208.

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Studying the role of animals in the many "middle grounds" of the colonial Americas can also forge new connections with broader historiographies. An important analog, for instance, may be found in the recent work of Sophie White on bodily adornment and material culture as markers of difference in the Louisiana colony. White argues that the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries witnessed a shift from malleable identities to proto-biological conceptions of racial difference. Throughout this period of change, material objects acquired a deep significance as cultural, racial and social identifiers: to wear a buffalo skin robe, or to wash one's body in a certain way, or to inscribe it with a tattoo, became an especially charged symbolic act.[85] "French-Indian notions of ethnicity", White writes, "were (literally) embodied in cultural practices" and in these bodily displays of material goods.[86] White's great contribution is to highlight the fluid nature of these displays of bodily difference: contested regions like the Illinois Country were spaces where individuals not only used material objects as symbols to *display* their identities, but to *perform* and *create* them in ways that were fluid and shifted according to context.

Animals are left out of this account, but I would argue that they played a profound role in precisely these fluid demarcations of difference. And here, too, French and indigenous American ways of "thinking with animals" cannot be rendered as a simple binary. The relationship between Indian and animal bodies was constantly being assessed and redefined both by indigenous societies themselves and by successive waves of traders and colonists. By the same token, the French relationship to the animal world was being transformed by an emerging emphasis on ordered animal bodies (such as in the menagerie at Versailles) and by imperial schemes that deemphasized hunting and resource extraction in favor of agricultural settlement and colonization. At the broadest level, animal histories can help to shift our gaze away from the more familiar narratives of interaction, exchange, conflict and dispossession in early America, and toward narratives and frames of analysis that include environment, ecology, and an awareness of the ever-present roles of non-human actors in the human past.

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[85] On the symbolic role of tattoos and bodily marks in this period, see Mairin Odle, "Stories Written on the Body: Cross-Cultural Markings in the North American Atlantic, 1600-1830" (NYU, Ph.D., dissertation in progress) and on scalping and ethnicity see Cameron Strang, "Violence, Ethnicity, and Human Remains during the Second Seminole War", *Journal of American History* (forthcoming, 2014)[**CORRECT?**].

[86] White, *Wild Frenchmen*, p. 19.