

2020

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### Recommended Citation

Thompson, M. S. (2020). Milk and the Motherland? Colonial Legacies of Taste and the Law in the Anglophone Caribbean. *Journal of Food Law & Policy*, 16(1). Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/jflp/vol16/iss1/9>

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—Journal of—  
FOOD & LAW  
—POLICY—

Volume Sixteen

Number One

Spring 2020

MILK AND THE MOTHERLAND?  
COLONIAL LEGACIES OF TASTE AND THE LAW  
IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN  
*Merisa S. Thompson*

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS SCHOOL OF LAW

## **Milk and the Motherland? Colonial Legacies of Taste and the Law in the Anglophone Caribbean**

Merisa S. Thompson\*

### **Abstract**

This paper tells a story of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism through the lens of “milk” and “the law” in the Caribbean. Despite high levels of lactose intolerance amongst its population, milk is a regular part of many Caribbean diets and features prominently in its foodscapes. This represents a distinctive colonial inheritance that is the result of centuries of ongoing colonial violence and displacement. Taking a feminist and intersectional approach, the paper draws on analysis of key pieces of colonial legislation at significant historical junctures and secondary literature to do three things. Firstly, it examines how law aided the colonisation of peoples, lands and nature in the Caribbean, and how the introduction of draught animals and livestock played a key role in this story. Secondly, it shows how the colonial desire for tastes from the “motherland” resulted in the importation and consumption of bovine milk where there had previously been none, but also how this story of straight colonial imposition is complicated by the arrival of indentured Indian labourers after emancipation who brought with them their own dairy cultures of production and consumption. Thirdly, it examines how the colonial administration, at different points in time, used the law to manage and control the conditions of both human and bovine milk production, and demonstrates the ways in which this is linked to the commercialisation of bovine milk for human consumption. Ultimately, the paper shows how animals, peoples and nature were manipulated for colonial and capitalist ends and how laws relating to animals and milk produced change at specific historical junctures in tandem with shifts in colonial and post-colonial relations and new constellations of gender, race, class and animality.

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## I. Introduction

This paper tells a story of the relationship between colonialism and capitalism through the lens of “milk” and “the law” in the Caribbean. Despite appearing to be a mundane, everyday commodity that we generally take for granted, milk, and the development of laws governing it, can actually tell us a huge amount about the evolution of colonialism and capitalism. In many ways the story is one of ongoing violence and displacement. However, in the Caribbean it is not always one of straight colonial imposition as it is also a tale complicated by hybridity and the mixing of cultures. The discussion focuses on the twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago, but also draws on examples from across the Anglophone Caribbean. Trinidad and Tobago is a particularly interesting case study: despite high levels of lactose intolerance amongst its population, cow’s milk, and to a much lesser extent that of goats and water buffalo, and the dairy produce that derives from it, feature prominently in its modern foodscape and diet. In 2013, the average annual per capita consumption of milk by Trinbagonians was 103kg, which, although lower than North America (248kg) and Europe (215kg) is above the global average of 90kg, and also at the upper end of Anglophone Caribbean consumption, which ranges from 80kg (Belize) to 124kg (Antigua and Barbuda).<sup>1</sup> Bovine milk, however, is not indigenous to the region. Cattle and the taste for milk were rather imported via various waves of colonization by the Spanish, Dutch, French and British. The production and consumption of cow’s milk, therefore, represents a distinctive colonial inheritance. Moreover, the imposition of cattle and milk on colonized landscapes played a central role in the colonial project itself. As Cohen argues, “lactating animals” were “integral parts of colonial and neo-colonial projects” both as apparatuses of “agro-expansionism” and tools of “human population planning.”<sup>2</sup>

Trinidad and Tobago is also interesting because of the diversity of cultures and cosmologies that make-up the islands’ population. Prior to colonisation, the indigenous inhabitants had no connection to cattle, milk or the idea of animals as property. These ideologies were instead imposed by European colonisers. In the colonial period, the territories swapped hands several times between the Spanish, Dutch, French and British, with Trinidad finally ceded

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<sup>1</sup> FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS, FOOD SUPPLY–LIVESTOCK AND PIMARY EQUIVALENT, <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/CL> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Mathilde Cohen, *Animal Colonialism: The Case of Milk*, 111 AJIL UNBOUND 267, 267–271 (2017).

to Britain in 1802 and Tobago in 1814. In 1889, Trinidad and Tobago were unified and eventually gained independence from Britain in 1962. As a nation, the country is particularly unique in terms of ethnic diversity. With a population of around 1.3 million, it is thought that only around 12,000 indigenous people of Amerindian descent remain on the islands. Its two largest ethnic groups descend from 44,002 enslaved Africans who were forcibly taken to the islands before emancipation and 144,000 Indian indentured labourers who arrived after the abolition of slavery, each comprising roughly 35 percent of the contemporary population.<sup>3</sup> Of the remaining third, approximately 15 percent identify as “mixed,” 8 percent as “doula,”<sup>4</sup> and the remaining 8 percent is composed of a mix of European, Chinese, indigenous Amerindian, Syrian, Lebanese, Portuguese and undeclared.<sup>5</sup> The complexity of cultural difference, and diverse ontologies of animals, nature and milk on these islands therefore makes them worth studying because it illuminates the ways in which certain ideologies and knowledge systems come to take precedence over others.

Colonial conquest and settlement displaced indigenous peoples, nature and plants alike, as the “civilising mission” of colonisers strove to improve distant lands by carving them up into plantations and importing cattle and peoples to enable this process. This paper explores how cattle and milk—or as Cohen calls it “the white revolution”—came to play a crucial role in this story.<sup>6</sup> It examines how law creates and regulates the boundaries of political, economic and social life. By tracing the history of milk and the law in the Caribbean we can see how cattle and the substance of milk itself—both animal and human—and discourses surrounding it have been transformed and manipulated over time to suit the changing needs of capital and the state. The first part of this paper outlines the importance of a feminist political economy and intersectional approach,<sup>7</sup> which is sensitive to the project of interspecies intersectionality and the importance of the human/animal divide to

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<sup>3</sup> CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE (CSO), TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO 2011 POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT 2 (2011).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Doula’ is a term used locally to denote a person of mixed Afro-Trinidadian and Indo-Trinidadian origin. *DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH/CREOLE OF TRINIDAD & TOBAGO* 311 (Lise Winer ed., McGill-Queen University Press 2008).

<sup>5</sup> CSO, *supra* note 3, at 15.

<sup>6</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2, at 270.

<sup>7</sup> M.S. Thompson, *Cultivating ‘New’ Gendered Food Producers: Intersections of Power and Identity in the Postcolonial Nation of Trinidad*, *REV. OF INT’L POL. ECON.* (2019).

the question of milk.<sup>8</sup> The second section introduces the process by which law aided the colonization of peoples and lands in the Caribbean. This lays the foundation for the next section which explores the centrality of animals to this process. It shows how livestock was first brought to the Caribbean, not with the intention of providing milk for its inhabitants, but instead as part of the colonial project of improvement of landscapes and peoples and to hasten the development of the plantation economy the sole goal of which was to grow cash crops for profit. The fourth section examines the impact of the colonial inheritance of the taste and desire for bovine milk. The final two sections analyse the increasing desire of the colonial administration to control both human and animal milk production respectively and the ways in which this links into the increasing commercialization of bovine milk for human consumption. Ultimately, the paper shows how animals, nature and peoples were manipulated for imperialist ends and how laws relating to animals and milk produced change at specific historical junctures in tandem with shifts in colonial and post-colonial relations and new constellations of gender, race, class and animality.

## **II. Intersectional and Interspecies Analyses: Centering Difference to Colonial Power**

In order to understand the dynamics of colonial power in the area of milk, we must not only advance a critical feminist analysis of the gendered nature of processes of ‘milk colonialism’, but also one that pays attention to animals and interspecies intersections too. This paper draws on a methodology and epistemology of a feminist situated approach of exploring what is happening in the world. It draws on analysis of secondary literature, historical texts, laws and legal documents relating to the governance of land, peoples, animals and food and on ethnographic notes gathered from spending extensive periods in the field in Trinidad and Tobago. The result is a mapping of the changing landscape of milk and the relationship between colonialism, capitalism and law. The analysis predominantly draws on a feminist political economy and intersectional approach.<sup>9</sup> A feminist analysis is central to understanding how law shapes milk – both animal and human. Feminist studies have shed important light on the distinctiveness of non-human labour in dairy, in that it relies on both productive *and*

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<sup>8</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2, at 271; See generally Maneesha Deckha, *Intersectionality and Posthumanist Visions of Equality*, 23 WIS. J.L. GENDER & SOC. 249–68 (2008).

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, *supra* note 7.

reproductive labour.<sup>10</sup> They have also shown that the reproduction of life and the submission of the reproductive cycle of female mammals are explicitly central to the enterprise of dairy which has been conceptualised variously as “gendered commodification” and “sexualised violence.”<sup>11</sup> This is important, not only because the logic of the dairy system is fundamentally organised around reproduction, but it means that milk is fundamentally a feminist issue. A feminist political economy lens is useful because it understands social difference to be “integral to the functioning of political-economic systems and knowledge production processes” and “foregrounds the ways in which capitalism is reproduced through logics and practices that create and marshal difference into its categories of value.”<sup>12</sup> Therefore, an analysis of the changing dynamics of dairy and milk would be incomplete without attention to the gendered, raced and class ideologies that underpin these processes and practices.

However, we can only truly shed full light on this by going *beyond* what, despite its radicalism, is still a human-centric analysis towards a post-human, interspecies analysis. Or, rather, we should try to fruitfully combine the two: in recent years, feminist animal studies scholars have argued that we need to take into account an interspecies understanding *of* intersectionality.<sup>13</sup> Deckha, for example, argues that “our identities and experiences are not just gendered or racialized, but are also determined by our species status and the fact that we are culturally marked as human.”<sup>14</sup> In the case of milk specifically, Cohen argues that this “is a quintessentially intersectional issue, cutting across the human/animal divide.”<sup>15</sup> Crucially, our “experiences of gender, race, sexuality, ability etc., are often based on and take shape through speciesist ideas of humanness vis-à-vis animality.”<sup>16</sup> “Species as a site of exploitation” is therefore an important locus for feminist analysis.<sup>17</sup> Deckha further explores

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<sup>10</sup> See DONNA J. HARAWAY, *WHEN SPECIES MEET* 53 (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press 2008); See generally KENDRA COULTER, *ANIMALS, WORK AND THE PROMISE OF INTER-SPECIES SOLIDARITY* (London: Palgrave MacMillan 2017); Maan Barua, *Animating Capital: Work, Commodities, Circulation*, 43 *PROGRESS IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY* 4, 650 (2019).

<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Gillespie, *Sexualised Violence and the Gendered Commodification of the Animal Body in Pacific Northwest US Dairy Production*, 21 *GENDER PLACE & CULTURE: J. OF FEMINIST GEOGRAPHY* 1321, 1321–37 (2014).

<sup>12</sup> Marion Werner et al., *Feminist political economy in geography: why now, what is different, and what for?*, 79 *GEOFORUM* 1–4, 2 (2017).

<sup>13</sup> Deckha, *supra* note 8; Alice J. Hovorka, *Women/Chickens vs. Men/Cattle: Insights on Gender Species Intersectionality*, 43 *GEOFORUM* 875–884 (2012).

<sup>14</sup> Deckha, *supra* note 8, at 249.

<sup>15</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2, at 271.

<sup>16</sup> Deckha, *supra* note 8, at 249.

<sup>17</sup> Deckha, *supra* note 8, at 250.

how multiple institutionalised dimensions of intersectionality such as (but not limited to) racism, sexism, homophobia and ageism “stems from the residue of imperial discourses” and, in particular, “social Darwinist views about the value of different cultures, faces, and human beings.”<sup>18</sup> Drawing on the work of Raymond Corbey, she argues that Darwin’s theories of human continuity with animals (apes specifically) essentially challenged the fictive human-animal divide in Western thought causing human anxiety over species boundaries, which manifested itself in deepening attempts to reify hierarchies between what was perceived to be civilised and what was perceived to be bestial and primitive. Colonial discourses, in this sense, were deeply immersed in hierarchies of gender, race and animality.<sup>19</sup> As Elder, Wolch and Emel show, animal practices and bodies were used to both construct and reinforce imperial notions of cultural and racial difference and hierarchy, and to devalue groups such as subaltern peoples and women.<sup>20</sup>

A feminist political economy analysis that accounts for intersectional and interspecies dimensions, therefore, requires a framework for analysis that takes into account the ways in which both different animals and humans are materially and ideologically constructed and positioned in specific cultural and historical contexts, and how the intersectional dimensions of their positioning interact with broader structures of social, economic and political power. Integral to what Quijano calls the “coloniality of power” is “the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of ‘race’”—and to which we might add animality—and “the constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its resources and products.”<sup>21</sup> In the remainder of the paper, then, we consequently examine both hierarchies of domination—human *and* animal—and the restructuring and control of milk production and milk via the law in order to show how both intersectional and interspecies difference played a powerful role in the colonial project.

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<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 250.

<sup>19</sup> Deckha, *supra* note 8, at 250; See generally RAYMOND CORBEY, *THE METAPHYSICS OF APES: NEGOTIATING THE ANIMAL-HUMAN BOUNDARY* (2005).

<sup>20</sup> See generally Glen Elder, Jennifer Wolch & Jody Emel, *Race, Place, and the Bounds of Humanity* 1, 6 *SOC'Y & ANIMALS* 183–202 (1998).

<sup>21</sup> Anibal Quijano, *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America*, 1 *NEPLANTLA: VIEWS FROM SOUTH* 3, 533, 533–34 (2000).



### III. Colonisation of Peoples and Land Via the Law

The islands of the Caribbean were first settled by Amerindian groups originating from South and Central America over 5000 years ago. The earliest to be settled is thought to have been Trinidad (known to the Amerindians as *Caeri* or *Iëre*) around 5000 BC, which at the time was still part of the mainland.<sup>22</sup> The two main groups that migrated to Trinidad, from the Orinoco River area in South America, were the Arawaks (Taino) and the Caribs (Kalinago), whilst Tobago (known as *Urupaina* and *Aloubaéra* by the Amerindians) was settled by the Caribs and the Galibi.<sup>23</sup> In these Pre-Colombian times, there was much movement and exchange in terms of peoples, plants, knowledge, spiritual ideologies and even animals (such as guinea pigs, agouti, opossum, armadillos, peccaries and dogs) across the islands of the Antilles.<sup>24</sup> Amerindian groups sourced their food from a combination of cultivated plants, sea and land foraging, including the consumption of small animals. When Columbus arrived in Trinidad, approximately 40,000 Amerindians resided there. His arrival, and that of the Europeans that followed, displaced these indigenous “first peoples.” Yet colonial violence did not only displace and decimate peoples—the usual focus of analysis—but nature, plants and animals too.

Many things subsequently changed. Columbus renamed each island: in the presence of their indigenous inhabitants, “with appropriate words and ceremony,” proclaimed the “discovered” islands the “lawful property of the Catholic sovereigns of Spain,” essentially “claiming each island” for the “Spanish Crown.”<sup>25</sup> European colonisation largely sought to displace indigenous peoples—rather than subjugating and coexisting with them as often happened elsewhere—to entirely replace one culture with another, and to “exercise self-determining rights over the same territory and resources.”<sup>26</sup> By determining indigenous peoples as barbaric and in

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<sup>22</sup> Laurence, K.M., *Notes of Iere, The Amerindian Name For Trinidad*, 13 CARIBBEAN Q. 45, 45–51 (1967).

<sup>23</sup> Arie Boomert, *Names for Tobago*, 87 J. DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES AMÉRICANISTES 339–349 (2001). First it is recorded that the Cariban-speaking Kalina Indians, called it Urupaina (a Kalina word meaning large snail). *Id.* at 343. Secondly, Kalingo (Island Caribs) called the island Aloubaéra (thought to be named after a giant jewelled snake that was part of their mythology). *Id.* at 344.

<sup>24</sup> See generally Scott M. Fitzpatrick, *The Pre-Columbian Caribbean: Colonization, Population Dispersal, and Island Adaptations*, 1 PALEOAMERICA 305–331 (2015).

<sup>25</sup> Robert A. Williams, *Columbus’s Legacy: Law as an Instrument of Racial Discrimination Against Indigenous Peoples’ Rights of Self-Determination*, 8 ARIZ. J. INT’L & COMP. L. 51, 63–64 (1991).

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 54.

need of civilising, the “European-derived law of colonization” was “inescapably and irredeemably racist in its discriminatory application” to “indigenous peoples and their tribal systems of self-government.”<sup>27</sup> European colonization and exploitation, therefore, “entailed a form of racial discrimination denying equal rights of self-determination to those different peoples colonized by the colonizer.”<sup>28</sup> Moreover, law “served as an instrument of racial discrimination against Indigenous Peoples’ human rights of self-determination” in terms of their ability to control their own destiny and the formation of systems of government to support this goal.<sup>29</sup>

The islands of Trinidad and Tobago each have distinctive histories. In the early colonial period, Trinidad was conquered by the Spanish, largely settled by the French, and eventually became a British territory, while Tobago changed hands multiple times between the French, Spanish, Dutch and British, each leaving their own cultural and legal imprint upon the islands. The Spanish were the first to forcibly acquire Trinidad, and for most of this period, it was they who ruled the island and who practically eradicated Trinidad’s first peoples. The Spanish did little with Trinidad at the outset. Population levels remained low, and only started to increase with the issue of a *Cédula de Población* by the King of Spain in 1783—an official order for the formation of a system of colonisation and trade—which encouraged mass immigration of French islanders and their slaves in order to facilitate “development.” According to Campbell, the Cedula was “the most important document governing the distribution of land between 1783 and 1797” which was “designed both to organise trade as to encourage colonization.”<sup>30</sup> The focus was to establish new settlers as farmers, and to help them to develop livestock industries by subsidising the price of livestock shipped from Spain.<sup>31</sup> By 1797, the population had increased to 17,718 which included 2,151 Europeans, 4,476 “free blacks and people of colour”; 10,009 enslaved people and 1,082 Amerindians.<sup>32</sup> As part of this drive, non-indigenous mammals, such as cattle, were also introduced to the islands. Interestingly, the Cedula entitled “free black and free coloured settlers” to “half the entitlement of land given to whites.”<sup>33</sup> Therefore, whilst they were still discriminated against

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<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 52.

<sup>28</sup> *Id.* at 54.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.* at 51.

<sup>30</sup> Carl Campbell, *The Rise of a Free Coloured Plantocracy in Trinidad 1783-1813*, BOLETÍN DE ESTUDIOS LATINOAMERICANOS Y DEL CARIBE 33–53, 34 (1980).

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* at 36.

<sup>32</sup> BRIDGET BRERETON, *A HISTORY OF MODERN TRINIDAD 1783-1962*, at 16 (Heinemann Educ. Books Ltd. 1981).

<sup>33</sup> Campbell, *supra* note 30, at 36.

in relation to whites, they were also elevated above the status of the unfree black population. In this case, the broader imperial project and economic interests, therefore, trumped racist ideology. This was challenged, however, when the British conquered Trinidad in 1797 and attempted to re-implement anti-coloured rule and the granting of land to free people of colour largely ceased.

The arrival of the British brought a more sustained engagement with the slave trade. Between 1797 and 1806 the number of enslaved people double from 10,009 to 20,761.<sup>34</sup> Enslaved Africans came from a variety of ethnic and tribal groups hailing from West and Central Africa (mostly within 200 miles of the coast). The 1813 Census of Trinidad included slaves from Senegambia, Upper Guinea, Windward Coast, Gold Coast, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra and West Central Africa.<sup>35</sup> The Atlantic slave trade, however, ceased under the Slave Trade Act 1807 passed by the British Parliament. This caused a marked decline in the number of African-born slaves.<sup>36</sup> Slavery itself, however, remained legal in British colonies until it was abolished under the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833 (taking effect in 1834). Abolition left Trinidad with a “labour problem,” so in 1844 the British government facilitated the immigration of indentured labourers from India. From 1845 to 1917, 143,989 Indians migrated to Trinidad.<sup>37</sup> They mostly came from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the North East of India, with a lesser number also coming from Bengal and further south. Most came from the agricultural and labouring classes, and around 85 percent were thought to have been Hindu and nearly 15 percent Muslim.<sup>38</sup> These labourers were required to work under the indentureship system for a total of 10 years in order to qualify for a free return to India, however, on completion of their contract, around 90 percent ultimately decided to remain in Trinidad.<sup>39</sup> The colonisation of Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, involved a huge on-going displacement and supplantation of peoples, animals, nature and law.

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<sup>34</sup> Campbell, *supra* note 30, at 49.

<sup>35</sup> B. W. HIGMAN, *SLAVE POPULATIONS OF THE BRITISH CARIBBEAN, 1807-1834* 127 (1995).

<sup>36</sup> Barry Higman, *Population and Labor in the British Caribbean in the Early Nineteenth Century*, in *LONG-TERM FACTORS IN AMERICAN ECONOMIC GROWTH 605–640* (Stanley L. Engerman & Gallman, Robert E. eds., 1986).

<sup>37</sup> Sherry-Ann Singh, *The Experience of Indian Indenture in Trinidad: Arrival and Settlement*, *CARIBBEAN ATLAS*, <http://www.caribbean-atlas.com/en/themes/waves-of-colonization-and-control-in-the-caribbean/waves-of-colonization/the-experience-of-indian-indenture-in-trinidad-arrival-and-settlement.html> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020).

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

It also introduced a complex new range of cultural and social dynamics to the islands.

#### IV. Animals and the Law: The Importance of Cattle to the Colonial Project

So, how did these colonial-legal and cultural shifts shape animal relations, and the arrival of cattle and milk, on the islands? As DeJohn Anderson argues, “All Europeans, not just the English, enlisted livestock as partners in colonization” and this began as early as Christopher Columbus’s second voyage in 1493 when he “first transported horses, cattle, swine, sheep, and goats to Caribbean islands.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, “[w]herever Spanish conquistadores went thereafter, European domestic animals followed.”<sup>41</sup> European colonialism therefore saw the spread of dairying and livestock farming globally, but also “the accompanying migration of ideas concerning the legal status of animals.”<sup>42</sup> As Cohen suggests, the focus of this old global colonial animal law was “imperialist ends” rather than “the well-being of animals, colonized people, and ecosystems.”<sup>43</sup>

One of the ways that Europeans professed their right to conquest and settlement was through the proliferation of the idea that unruly lands needed to be modernised and tamed through agricultural practices. As such, colonists saw indigenous landscapes as “untamed wilderness” that need to be “civilised through agriculture.”<sup>44</sup> This required the importation of animals, equipment and labour in order to transform the land into a productive resource. As Struthers Montford argues, the process of “domestication” itself, acts as a tool for domination seeking “to make something or someone intelligible and familiar” and altering “the subject in question to fit the framework of the more dominant party in a given situation.”<sup>45</sup> Of critical importance to colonists was the legitimation of their legal claim to the territory, something which the furnishing of lands with livestock populations assisted.<sup>46</sup> Lands were perceived by colonists as undeveloped and in need of improvement, and this provided a discursive rationale by which the process could be legitimated.

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<sup>40</sup> VIRGINIA DEJOHN ANDERSON, CREATURES OF EMPIRE: HOW DOMESTIC ANIMALS TRANSFORMED EARLY AMERICA 97 (2006).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 98.

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2, at 267.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> ANDERSON, *supra* note 40.

<sup>45</sup> Kelly Struthers Montford, *Milk in the Anthropocene: Colonialism’s Dietary Interventions*, 16 J. FOOD L. & POL’Y 55 (2020).

<sup>46</sup> ANDERSON, *supra* note 40.

Cattle was part of this vision both practically in terms of the production of meat and milk but also ideologically as a symbol of what constitutes a civilised life. For English colonists, the furnishing of landscapes with livestock was a critical part of building the ‘New World empire.’ Central to this process was, as DeJohn Anderson notes, the Roman legal concept of *res nullius*, which held that “‘empty things,’ including land, remained common property until they were put to use. With use came rights: by investing labor in the land, a person could stake a claim to private ownership.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore, farming “because it required the investment of labor and capital, clearly established legitimate claims.”<sup>48</sup> In this sense, “England’s empire would be an agricultural one.”<sup>49</sup> In the United States, for example, “[b]y erecting buildings and marking boundaries, [colonists] performed the duties they thought necessary to establish legal claims to empty territory.”<sup>50</sup> Fences erected to contain domestic animals also “established farmers’ property rights” of which animals were “private property themselves.”<sup>51</sup>

In Trinidad, the *Cedula de Poblacion 1783* governed the distribution of land. It declared that “[a]ll foreigners, natives of nations and states . . . who would wish to establish themselves, or are already settled” must “profess the Roman Catholic religion.”<sup>52</sup> Foreigners who meet this requirement may then be entitled to claim lands as follows: “To each white person, either sex, shall be granted four fanegas and two sevenths of land” and “half the above quantity for every negro of mulatto slave that such white person or persons shall import with them.”<sup>53</sup> Whilst “free negroes and mulattoes . . . shall have half the quantity of land granted to the whites, and if they bring with them slaves, being their own property, the quantity of land granted to them shall be increased in proportion to the number of said slaves.”<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, after five years, “foreign settlers” shall “have all the rights and privileges of naturalization granted to them.”<sup>55</sup> The distribution of land was therefore designated only for “foreigners” or “natives of nations and states,” thereby excluding indigenous peoples

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<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 79.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 76.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.* at 79.

<sup>50</sup> *Id.* at 81.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.* at 83.

<sup>52</sup> Gerard A. Besson, *The Royal Cedula of 1783*, THE CARIBBEAN HISTORY ARCHIVES (Dec. 20, 2007, 2:18 PM), <http://caribbeanhistoryarchives.blogspot.nl/2007/12/royal-cedula-of-1783.html>.

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

and slaves who were not deemed to meet this classification. Distribution was also graded by race.

Along with ontologies of the law, private property, ownership and rights, colonists also brought new understandings of relations between humans, animals and nature. For example, in North America, Native Americans had a very different understanding of relations with animals to colonists: whereas colonists saw them as property, indigenous peoples saw their relationship as more mutual with no word existing in the Indian language to separate “animals” from people.<sup>56</sup> Whereas according to Cohen, in both civil and common colonial law “animals were the personal property or chattel of their human owners and could not possess rights. They were a means to human ends.”<sup>57</sup> In the Caribbean, both domestic animals and slaves were seen as property by colonists. As Morgan argues, “slaves and livestock were inextricably linked in eighteenth-century British West Indies.”<sup>58</sup> With the value of land so low in the Caribbean in comparison to England, they were both considered to be highly valuable “assets” and “estate inventories consistently listed, first, the value of slaves and, second, that of livestock.”<sup>59</sup> John Pinney, a Nevis planter, stated that “slaves and stock . . . are the sinews of a plantation.”<sup>60</sup> An attorney further noted that “a Caribbean estate . . . was hardly worth the name unless ‘animated’” and that “[t]he primary sources of animation were human and animal labor.”<sup>61</sup> Enslaved peoples and animals were therefore codified together as property, assets and as necessary for commercial success. According to Morgan, Jamaica was “known more for its livestock than its slaves” in the seventeenth century and as one planter observed in 1671 there were “many ways to improvement . . . but a small stock of cattle is no bad beginning.”<sup>62</sup> This is reflective of Murray Li’s “will to improve” which refers to both colonial and modern ideologies of development that seek to improve upon landscapes and livelihoods in quest for progress.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> ANDERSON, *supra* note 40.

<sup>57</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2 at 268; Cohen here draws on the work of: FRANCIONE, GARY L., *ANIMALS, PROPERTY AND THE LAW* (1995).

<sup>58</sup> Philip D. Morgan, *Slaves and Livestock in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica: Vineyard Pen, 1750-1751*, 52 *WILLIAM AND MARY Q.* 47, 47-76, (1995).

<sup>59</sup> *Id.* at 47.

<sup>60</sup> *Id.* at 47.

<sup>61</sup> *Id.* at 47. Original quotes from Douglas Hall, “Slaves and Slavery in the British West Indies,” *Social and Economic Studies*, XI (1962), 305-06.

<sup>62</sup> *Id.* at 47.

<sup>63</sup> See generally TANIA MURRAY LI, *THE WILL TO IMPROVE: GOVERNMENTALITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE PRACTICE OF POLITICS* (2007).

### V. The Taste and Desire for Milk

Since those early colonial times, cattle have played a critical role in the development of the plantation economy in which everything is centred around the production of cash crops—such as sugar, cocoa and tobacco—for profit.<sup>64</sup> Yet the importance of cattle has often been overlooked due to a preoccupation with plants, both by colonisers and the academy.<sup>65</sup> The Spanish first brought cattle to the Caribbean for use on agricultural lands and plantations: they were heavily relied upon throughout the colonial period for ploughing and fertilising the fields, for transport and haulage, and to a lesser extent for their meat and milk. However, despite their presence in Trinidad at the end of the eighteenth century, most were draught animals rather than livestock.<sup>66</sup> Local food production, remained a subsidiary activity, and animal husbandry and milk production happened on the side-lines of estate production. Therefore, meat was in short supply and had to be imported.<sup>67</sup> This is partly because the population of both islands was relatively low, but also because of the planter mentality of focusing on agriculture for export and profit.

As Eric Williams, Trinidad's first post-independence Prime Minister (but also a celebrated historian) put it: "his [massa's] economic programme was to grow sugar and nothing but sugar."<sup>68</sup> Therefore, staple foods such as wheat, cheese and butter were imported, as were slave rations which were mostly salted beef, pork and fish. It is thought that few slaves, not even those higher in the slave hierarchy, consumed any dairy produce or milk. In the early 1700s, the main source of beef and butter in the West Indies was Ireland.<sup>69</sup> Irish imports of cheese and butter items found a "ready market" in the West Indies planter who "retained the diet of the

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<sup>64</sup> For a discussion of the plantation economy and Caribbean development theory, see Matthew Louis Bishop & Thompson, Merisa S., *The IPE of Caribbean Development*, in THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF IPE (Ernesto Vivares ed., forthcoming).

<sup>65</sup> Rita Pemberton, *Animal Disease and Veterinary Administration in Trinidad and Tobago, 1879-1962*, in HEALING THE HERDS: DISEASE, LIVESTOCK ECONOMIES, AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF VETERINARY MEDICINE 163, 163–179 (Karen Brown & Daniel Gilfoyle eds., 2010).

<sup>66</sup> JOHN A. MEREDITH, THE PLANTATION SLAVES OF TRINIDAD, 1783-1816: A MATHEMATICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC ENQUIRY 16 (1988).

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 16.

<sup>68</sup> Eric Williams, *Massa Day Done (Public Lecture at Woodford Square, 22 March 1961)*, 20 CALLALOO, 726, 725-730 (1997).

<sup>69</sup> RAYMOND GILLESPIE, SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND (2006).

mother country.”<sup>70</sup> This reliance on the importation of various types of animal protein continued throughout this period and to this day. The desire for milk, therefore, was linked to colonial tastes from “home” and also colonial trading policies and routes. Moreover, due to the peculiarities of the plantation system’s focus on producing crops for profit and export, the taste and desire was for foods imported from the metropole—including dairy produce—which were regarded as higher in class and status, and also more modern (which could be read as less dirty and backward).

By the 1790s, around a thousand cattle grazed on the savannahs of Trinidad, yet a beef industry never successfully flourished and its price remained high.<sup>71</sup> This is most likely due to both the prevalence of cheap imported beef and other meats, and also the fact that imported meat cattle do not fatten very well in the tropics. After Trinidad was ceded to the British by the Spanish Governor in 1797, it was largely governed from the metropole for the subsequent 83 years. Therefore, metropolitan officials were strongly influenced by changes at home. It was during this time that the colonial government gradually paid more attention to the diet and health of its slave populations (due to a combination of rising abolitionist movement, amelioration and economic interests). Between 1802 and 1831, the local Governor who ruled Trinidad had no law-making powers. However, in 1832, a Crown Colony Government was appointed by Britain—which shifted a significant amount of legislative power from Britain to local administrator—dramatically changing the shape of colonial rule by increasing the interest of colony government representatives in the administration of domestic affairs, including the production and distribution of food.<sup>72</sup> These represent the early seeds of an interest in a local livestock industry to produce meat and milk.

With the arrival of indentured Indian labourers in the 1840s came new methods of animal husbandry and new cultural codes in terms of the significance of cows and milk. Not only did Indians bring new skills, they also brought distinctive cultural and religious practices around food. India has a long history of dairying, with

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<sup>70</sup> Thomas Bartlett, “*This Famous Island Set in a Virginian Sea*”: Ireland in the British Empire 1690-1801, in *THE OXFORD HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE: VOLUME II: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY* 253, 256 (P. J. Marshall ed., 1998).

<sup>71</sup> MEREDITH, *supra* note 66, at 17.

<sup>72</sup> See GORDON K. LEWIS, *THE GROWTH OF THE MODERN WEST INDIES* (2004).



cows being central to the lives of early pastoralists.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, for the new arrivals, “animal husbandry, particularly cattle . . . had been a matter of course in their homeland” and “continued in Trinidad.”<sup>74</sup> Cows are venerated in the Hindu religion, with milk playing an important role in both diet and religious ceremonies in the form of Ghee, a clarified butter made from milk. The cow is seen to be “the mother of all civilisation, its milk nurturing the population.”<sup>75</sup> The bovine-goddess Kamadhenu—who is depicted as a white cow with a female head and breasts—is seen to be “the mother of cows,” therefore, all cows are in fact seen to be the embodiment of her, and hence sacred. This meant that significance and prevalence of dairying increased with the new arrivals. As Williams later proclaimed in 1961, Indian contract workers were central to the increased production of milk and meat (and also rice) in Trinidadian society.<sup>76</sup>

For much of the colonial period, domestic milk production remained largely at the subsistence level, with both small farmers and large estates mostly producing meat and milk for the consumption of their families and workers.<sup>77</sup> Whilst herds of cows and Zebus (a humped species of cattle from Africa or South Asia) were often found on larger estates, small farmers and peasants would often keep a range of pigs, sheep, goats and cattle tethered at the roadside. In 1906, water buffalo were introduced (primarily to replace the tuberculosis-prone Zebus). They were, as Pemberton suggests, “highly valued as draft animals, for the high butter content of their milk, and for their tender meat.”<sup>78</sup> However, despite these qualities, water buffalo were never ascribed the same meaning or interests as cows (perhaps because they were less venerated by both the Indian population and by the British colonial administration). Indigenous breeds (albeit from other colonised lands) much like indigenous peoples were therefore deemed inferior. The taste and reverence for milk in Trinidad and Tobago, therefore, came both from European colonists and indentured Indian contractors.

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<sup>73</sup> Andrea S. Wiley, *Milk for “Growth”: Global and Local Meanings of Milk Consumption in China, India, and the United States*, 19 *FOOD & FOODWAYS* 20, 11–33 (2011).

<sup>74</sup> Angelo Bissessarsingh, *The Milk Sellers of Port-of-Spain*, *THE TRINIDAD GUARDIAN NEWSPAPER* (May 21, 2016), <http://www.guardian.co.tt/lifestyle/2016-05-22/milk-sellers-port-spain>.

<sup>75</sup> Wiley, *supra* note 73, at 20.

<sup>76</sup> Williams, *supra* note 68, at 726.

<sup>77</sup> It is also worth noting that there were no commercial dairy processing operations in Trinidad until the emergence of Ramsaran Dairy and Nestle in the mid-1900s.

<sup>78</sup> Pemberton, *supra* note 65, at 167.

## VI. Amelioration, Population Growth, and Breastfeeding

In the early days of slavery, male slaves were preferred by colonists to female slaves, and before abolition the replacement of slaves rather than their reproduction was the favoured method of supplying the workforce. However, with emancipation looming towards the end of the eighteenth century, planters and colonists became interested in maintaining the health of those that they already owned. They also became increasingly concerned with the fertility of female slaves, pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding practices. For example, in 1798 the Slavery Amelioration Act was passed in the British Leeward Islands (which consisted of Antigua, Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Saint Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla and Dominica). The Act is often perceived as a statute that was primarily concerned with improving slave conditions. However, it also anticipated emancipation, which did indeed transpire in 1834. Aside from new rules that served to punish slave owners for the cruel treatment of slaves and those which prescribed that each slave was entitled to a certain amount of food rations, clothing and shelter, most likely in anticipation of the end of the slave trade, the Act also contained laws that focused on marriage, monogamy, childbirth and childcare.<sup>79</sup>

For example, Act No. 36 XXII decrees that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January every year, every “Owner and Director of any Slave” shall “assemble together the Slaves under his Direction, and inquire which of them have a Husband or Wife” and if “of more than one Husband or Wife” shall compel them “to elect some one Slave only as his or her Husband or Wife” and “at the same time extolling the good Behaviour of those who have been faithful to their Engagements, and reprobating the Misconduct of those who have acted to the contrary.”<sup>80</sup> The Act also introduced payments to “any Female Slave who shall have a Child while she preserves her Fidelity to such Engagement . . . six Weeks after the Birth of such Child . . . four Dollars, and the same Sum with one Dollar more for every other Child she shall bear and have under the same Circumstances.”<sup>81</sup> Via the law, colonists consequently began to intervene in conjugal relations, the birth of children and motherhood. Mothers of six children and pregnant slaves were also only to do “light Work,” and

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<sup>79</sup> See SAMUEL BAGSTER, *THE LAWS OF THE ISLAND OF ANTIGUA CONSISTING OF THE ACTS OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS 1690-1798, AND THE ACTS OF ANTIGUA 1668-1804* (1805).

<sup>80</sup> *Id.* at 31.

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*

those that were pregnant were also not to be punished other than by confinement.<sup>82</sup> Planters were also to pay a levy of “ten Shillings” for every Male imported “where the Number of Female Slaves in any of the Leeward Islands in which a Cargo of Slaves shall be imported, shall not exceed the Number of Males,” thereby placing a premium on enslaved females (who were able to produce children) and essentially a taxation on enslaved males (who could not).<sup>83</sup>

As Paton argues: “Before abolitionism, slaveholders showed little interest in women as mothers.”<sup>84</sup> They were willing “to pay more for men than for women, despite the fact that any children born to enslaved women would also be the slaveowners' property and would thus increase their wealth,” which suggests “that they preferred to buy new enslaved people from Africa rather than bear the costs of raising children.”<sup>85</sup> But with the prospect of abolition, slave imports increased and “slaveowners became increasingly concerned to extract as much labour from the enslaved people over whom they claimed ownership, while that ownership was still legally recognized.”<sup>86</sup> They also became more concerned about slave fertility in terms of population growth. Both of these concerns led to planters attempting to reduce breast-feeding times from what was normally around two to three years in West Africa to European and North American norms of one year.<sup>87</sup> This is because breastfeeding was both seen to impact fertility but also to prevent slave owners from extracting “the maximum amount of labour from a nursing mother.”<sup>88</sup> Yet, as Bush notes, this endeavour was not necessarily successful. For example, “Jamaican planters sought to place infants in ‘weaning houses’ out of the direct care of their mothers,” however, in practice female “slaves resisted enforced separation from their kin” and sought to prevent “the erosion of traditional African-derived practices of childrearing which were part of their cultural heritage.”<sup>89</sup> These examples illustrate the impact of how imperial economic logic attempted to reshape social and cultural norms around childrearing, maternity and breastfeeding in the service of efficiency and profit, but also how these attempts were often met with resistance.

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<sup>82</sup> *Id.* at 32, 36.

<sup>83</sup> *Id.* at 36.

<sup>84</sup> Diana Paton, *Enslaved Women and Slavery Before and After 1807*, HISTORY IN FOCUS 1–8, para. 6 (2012).

<sup>85</sup> *Id.* at para. 6.

<sup>86</sup> *Id.* at para. 12.

<sup>87</sup> See Rhoda E. Reddock, *Women and Slavery in the Caribbean: A Feminist Perspective*, 12 LATIN AMERICAN PERSP. 63–80 (1985); see also Paton, *supra* note 84.

<sup>88</sup> BARBARA BUSH, *SLAVE WOMEN IN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY, 1650-1838* 110 (1990).

<sup>89</sup> *Id.* at 110.

Nonetheless, as Cohen argues, lactating animals and colonialism did have a “disruptive effect on breastfeeding cultures.”<sup>90</sup> Cohen calls this process “animal colonialism” and for her it has two key aspects: “milk colonialism” and “breast-feeding colonialism.”<sup>91</sup> By the early twentieth century, she finds that “lactating animals were conscripted in a colonial reproductive politics aimed at reforming maternity” and that “improving or modernizing maternity meant replacing the human breast by cow’s milk.”<sup>92</sup> Colonialism therefore designated indigenous peoples, animals and native mothers as “inadequate” and in need of modernisation. In the imperialist project, “[I]ndigenous cows were disparaged as producing milk of inferior quality and in insufficient quantities” and “native women were accused of lacking maternal instinct and breastfeeding too long, yet producing mediocre milk.”<sup>93</sup> What eventually resulted was that the milk of cows was often, therefore, suggested as a superior alternative to black women’s milk. Cohen further argues that:

[T]he desire for a larger indigenous labor force and army underlied the declared public health goal of fighting “depopulation” and “improving” population health. Population growth was seen as a form of power and child rearing became a national duty. In this highly racialized populationist project, milk turned into a central nationalist and imperialist tool.<sup>94</sup>

This can be attested to by the establishment of national dairy industries, particularly in the larger nations, such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados which became central to discourses of creating modern, strong and successful nations.

## **VII. Controlling Production and Increasing Commercialisation**

This project is complicated in the Trinidad story by the presence of ex-Indian indentured labourers who brought their own culture around cow’s milk to the islands. As Indian men and women began to withdraw from estate labour in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a genuine Indian peasantry emerged that engaged

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<sup>90</sup> Cohen, *supra* note 2, at 267.

<sup>91</sup> *Id.* at 268.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* at 270.

<sup>93</sup> *Id.* at 270.

<sup>94</sup> *Id.* at 270.

in new forms of economic activity. One that was most commonly carried out by them, and women in particular, was the production and sale of milk. The 1891 Population Census records that 40 out of the 68 Indian milk sellers—known as “coolie milk sellers”—were women.<sup>95</sup> This provided an important and alternative means of independent economic income for such women. Personal narratives collected by Hussain evoke the daily routines of female milk farmers at that time (which are not that dissimilar from those of today):

We use to get up four o'clock in the mornin' and first thing we make some coffee . . . and then we go and milk the cow. Then we had to carry the milk - 7 o'clock was the latest we had to go and carry the milk to the Junction. When we come back then we eating breakfast . . . I had to cut grass . . . We use to have to go in the river for water . . . carry the cow and them in the river . . . Then we have to clean out the cow-pen. And in the evening we had to milk them again (Mrs W., personal interview, Rio Claro, Trinidad, 14 February 1997).<sup>96</sup>

Milk, therefore, was both a colonial project, but also one that Indian migrants brought with them, in particular Indian women. In the Caribbean—as in Latin America more broadly—women have traditionally played a key role in livestock production, with men focusing on the handling of larger animals, and women on milking, dairying, caring, and especially handling smaller animals such as chickens, pigs, sheep and goat.<sup>97</sup> A study of livestock in Tobago found that gender-specific duties for men included the “more laborious tasks such as land preparation for planting forage, grass cutting and construction of fens” whilst women played a key role in “record keeping, feeding of animals, cleaning of pens, care of sick and young animals.”<sup>98</sup> Up until the 1940s, female vendors carrying large milk pans on their heads could still be seen in Port of Spain.

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<sup>95</sup> Shaheeda Hussain, *Market and Field: The Workplace of the Indian Women in Trinidad, 1900-1940*, in *INDIAN DIASPORA IN THE CARIBBEAN: HISTORY, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY* 155, 156–57 (Rattan Lal Hangloo ed., 2012).

<sup>96</sup> *Id.* at 157.

<sup>97</sup> See FABIOLA CAMPILLO & MARIA ANGÉLICA FAUNÉ, *GENDER, WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT: A FRAMEWORK FOR IICA'S ACTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN* (1993); see also FAO, *THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE 2010-2011: WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE - CLOSING THE GENDER GAP FOR DEVELOPMENT* (2011).

<sup>98</sup> IICA, *TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: AN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR STUDY OF TOBAGO*, CEPPI, 46 (1994).

However, over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Britain, despite its mythical status as “the perfect food,” “milk had become an object of suspicion” in terms of the ease to which it could be manipulated and subjected to adulteration.<sup>99</sup> One of the big “problems” in Trinidad at this time was seen to be the adulteration of milk, as some vendors would add water to make it go further. Laws regarding testing were first put in place via the *Food and Drugs Ordinance*, 1895, which set out that “No person shall mix, colour, stain, or powder . . . any article of food with any ingredient or material so as to render the article injurious to health with intent that the same be sold in that state.”<sup>100</sup> Such a crime was punishable, “[i]n cases of Milk adulteration by added water forfeit and pay for every one per cent. Of added water of penalty of not less than Two Shillings for first offences, and not less than Four Shillings for second and subsequent offences.”<sup>101</sup> Fears about the health risks that this potentially unclean and contaminated water posed to consumers, therefore, facilitated the increased policing and regulation of the sale of milk. New ideas around public health and hygiene also increasingly brought the sale of milk under the purview of the law, which in turn, most likely had a detrimental impact on the livelihoods of Indian and female sellers, and preferences for commercially processed milk products took hold. It was in this time of increased domestic governance that the colonial administration also became more interested in the diversification of the agricultural economy and bringing local food production under its control with meat and dairy proving to be a particular focal point for these initiatives. One early scheme to intervene in the domestic production and supply of milk involved the establishment of the first Government Stock Farm in 1879, which aimed primarily to improve breeding stock, lower the price of milk and to increase its sanitary quality.<sup>102</sup> These changes were very much in line with those in Britain, where the commodification of “drinking milk” from 1850 saw a concern for sanitisation become the main emphasis between 1850 and 1950.

At the same time of government drives to curb adulteration and improve the sanitary quality of milk, in 1914, Nestlé set up a trading agency in Port of Spain “to distribute Nestlé-manufactured

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<sup>99</sup> PETER WILLIAM ATKINS, *LIQUID MATERIALITIES: A HISTORY OF MILK, SCIENCE AND THE LAW* xv (2010).

<sup>100</sup> No.32 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, *THE FOOD AND DRUGS ORDINANCE* 5–6 (1895), [laws.gov.tt/ttdll-web/revision/download/66655?type=amendment](http://laws.gov.tt/ttdll-web/revision/download/66655?type=amendment) (last visited Apr. 23, 2017).

<sup>101</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>102</sup> Harry Metivier, *Trinidad and Tobago*, in *A HISTORY OF THE OVERSEAS VETERINARY SERVICES*, PART TWO 327–337 (Geoffrey Philip West ed., 1973).

products” such as sweetened condensed milk and chocolates, for which there was already a “growing demand.”<sup>103</sup> As in Asia, with the advent of pasteurisation and tinned condensed milk, its aggressive marketing techniques, and new ideas about hygiene, the arrival can be correlated with the decline of traditional modes of dairying and milk selling in Trinidad.<sup>104</sup> It also signals the introduction of new ways of valuing and ascribing meanings to milk. Nestlé’s marketing and advertising campaigns strongly focused on the nutritional and health benefits of consuming cow’s milk, as consumed through its own products. In particular, it aggressively “marketed motherhood” by targeting women as mothers.<sup>105</sup> The company’s adverts persistently depicted mothers and babies’ in nursing scenarios and positioned “Nestlé’s Milk Food for Infants” as “the only perfect supplement and substitute for mother’s milk” and frequently advertised it as sanctioned and recommended by “the Highest Medical Authorities in England” thereby mobilising discourses of science and expertise, over traditional and maternal knowledge.<sup>106</sup> Capitalising on concerns about adulteration and impure milk, one British advert depicts Henri Nestlé himself pointing and wagging his finger at a mother, informing her of “just two words—Nestlé’s Milk for yourself and Baby” and warning her not to “experiment with ‘foods’ of unknown composition” and proclaimed that “Milk is Nature’s food for infants.”<sup>107</sup>

### VIII. Conclusion

Colonial law facilitated the displacing of indigenous peoples, nature and animals in the Caribbean by encouraging settlement by foreign peoples, distributing lands to them, and the extending use rights on this basis. The importation of livestock caused only to further this exploitative aim, by encouraging the building of fences and demarcation, and introducing new ontologies of animals as property. In Trinidad and Tobago, the *Cedula of*

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<sup>103</sup> *Nestlé in Anglo-Dutch Caribbean*, NESTLÉ TT (2016), <https://www.nestle.tt/aboutus/history> (last visited Apr. 7, 2016).

<sup>104</sup> Natasha Pairaudeau, *Coming with the Milk: Indian Migrant Dairywomen in Colonial Southeast Asia* (2015).

<sup>105</sup> Erich de Wald, *Marketing Motherhood: Advertising and Consuming Condensed Milk in the Late-Colonial Dutch East Indies and French Indochina* (2015).

<sup>106</sup> 1885 Advert for Nestlé’s Baby Milk, THE WORLD HISTORY ARCHIVE, <https://www.alamy.com/19th-century-advert-for-nestls-baby-milk-1885-image235029494.html> (last visited Apr. 7, 2020).

<sup>107</sup> 1890s Nestlé Magazine Advert, THE ADVERTISING ARCHIVES, [https://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/en/asset/show\\_zoom\\_window\\_popup.html?asset=38162&location=grid&asset\\_list=38162,23810,23779&basket\\_item\\_id=undefined](https://www.advertisingarchives.co.uk/en/asset/show_zoom_window_popup.html?asset=38162&location=grid&asset_list=38162,23810,23779&basket_item_id=undefined) (last visited Apr. 7, 2020).

*Poblacion* provides one of the first key legal documents to propagate this imposition. And from this influx of peoples and animals, the plantation economy begins to emerge, along with the imported European ideologies around milk and dairy consumption. With the impending abolition of slavery, via the *Slavery Amelioration Act*, we see increasing colonial and planter interest in intervening in fertility via governance of conjugal relations and attempted interventions in breastfeeding practices of female slaves, and through promulgation of the idea of cow's milk as superior to milk of dominated populations. We therefore see how changing codifications of gender, sexuality and race intersect with these new constellations of colonial violence throughout the Caribbean. In Trinidad and Tobago specifically, the arrival of indentured Indian labourers complicates this straight story of colonial imposition, as they arrived with their own cultures of bovine husbandry, veneration of and taste for bovine milk as part of the Hindu religion, and where producing and selling milk was a common occupation for Indian women in particular. Therefore, the arrival of the Indians can be seen to strengthen milk culture but at the same time increased sanitation laws caused to demote peasant production in favour of modernisation. The commercialisation of milk and rising concerns about sanitation, therefore, can be seen to slowly erode these milk traditions. Yet, colonial legacies of milk production and consumption remain. Both the milk of humans and milk from animals is increasingly manipulated for economic means, with the latter increasingly coming under the purview of the law. The confluence of many factors is the commercialisation of milk and the commercialisation of cow's milk for babies.

Many tensions exist between the production and consumption of milk in Trinidad, where dairying is a colonial construction made out of the vagaries of empire and structured by divisions of gender, race, class and nation, and increasingly shaped by imperial constructions of taste, purity, motherhood, nutrition and development. British colonialism brought with it the idea that milk constituted a part of healthy diets and healthy workforces, and as discourses about the importance of milk have increased, milk as an object has become increasingly commoditised and globalised. The freedom of milk sellers to sell their milk door to door or in town centres was chipped away at by the introduction of sanitary and health legislation, which enables the state and processors to accumulate greater space for control and regulation. Milk and dairy therefore went from being typified by local, homemade products to global and manufactured ones. With the reality of high production costs, and the implementation of free trade policies, local producers have struggled



to keep up with rising costs and cheap imports have flooded the market. The tension between “cheap” and “local” food is therefore exacerbated.<sup>108</sup> Ideas about what constitutes health and wellbeing have become increasingly globalised and corporatized, intensified by a merging of development agendas and those of global food corporations that promote themselves as providing “health” and “wellness” through fortified processed foods.

More importantly perhaps, this story shows how animals, nature and peoples were manipulated for imperialist ends. And reveals of complex nature of the coloniality of power whereby “race”—but also animality—is “the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers.”<sup>109</sup> Systems of hierarchies are infused with racialised, classed, gendered, sexualised and ethnic categorisations, and systems of knowledge and culture came together to ascribe different species, groups and societies different value. Therefore, in this context, even feminist intersectional analysis increasingly needs to go beyond humans to take non-human populations seriously. The law is a key tool for enabling these processes ultimately to the benefit of capitalist development and the disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples. Bringing a feminist, intersectional and interspecies lens to this process illuminates the complex ways in the law produced, reproduced and bolstered systems of hierarchy and control of peoples, animals and labour. It also shows that in the case of milk this story is complicated by history of Indian indentureship and also the resistance of female slaves to the changing of breastfeeding practices.

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<sup>108</sup> Thompson, *supra* note 7; Merisa S. Thompson, *Still Searching for (Food) Sovereignty: Why are Radical Discourses Only Partially Mobilised in the Independent Anglo-Caribbean?*, 101 GEOFORUM 90–99 (2019).

<sup>109</sup> Aníbal Quijano, *Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality*, 21 CULTURAL STUD. 168, 171 (2007).