



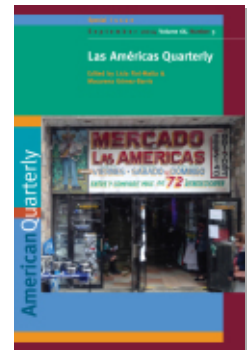
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Cockfight Nationalism: Blood Sport and the Moral Politics of American Empire and Nation Building

Janet M. Davis

On January 12, 1899, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) held its annual meeting at its headquarters in New York City. President John P. Haines announced that in the coming year, the ASPCA planned to spread its humane work to the “new possessions of the United States,” the territorial spoils of victory after the Spanish-American War (1898): “In Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, no such work as ours has ever yet been established. The duty of kindness to animals has hardly been thought of. . . . It will be our duty doubtless to endeavor to promote a better state of things wherever the authority of the Nation is established.”¹ Haines noted that a ban on blood sports, specifically cockfighting and bullfighting, would be essential to achieve the ASPCA’s goals, as similar legislation had done at home. Haines’s invocation of “duty,” “the state of things,” the “Nation,” and the timing of his announcement in the aftershocks of war highlighted the mutually constitutive relationship between animal advocacy, benevolence, and American identity formation, an ideological nexus, which had been central to the organized animal welfare movement in the United States since its genesis in 1866, less than a year after the Civil War.

This essay explores the symbiotic relationship between animal welfare and ideologies of American nation building during a series of struggles over cockfighting in the new US Empire in the early twentieth century. Specifically, these clashes erupted in the US Occupied Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, where the battle lines pitting American-sponsored animal protectionists against indigenous cockfight enthusiasts were drawn along competing charges of cruelty and claims of self-determination. American leaders unilaterally banned cockfighting in the new territories and enacted stiff fines as high as \$500 and prison terms from one to six months.² Specific political and cultural conditions catalyzed the cockfight conflicts in each country: in the Philippines, cockfighting disputes were tied to conflicts between Filipino businessmen, American

Occupation officials, and Protestant missionaries; in Cuba, a failed attempt to unseat the government sparked a cockfighting struggle; and in Puerto Rico, a coalition of indigenous entertainment interests clashed with American officials. Despite specific precipitating factors, struggles over the cockfight reveal consistent ideological similarities across these three countries borne out of the common experience of colonialism.

Although a variable cultural practice, the cockfight itself also contained common elements in these far-flung geographic settings, as well as in the United States. At the cockpit, the fight often took the form of a main (series of odd-numbered fights between two parties) or a derby (with multiple entrants, each participating in a series of round-robin matches): in each fight, two cocks were suitably “matched” by weight. Other physical considerations included the length of the roosters’ gaffs (their natural spurs or the metal razor spurs attached to their legs), the trimming of specific feathers (tail, wing, and saddle), and dubbing (clipping the wattle and combs). In the cockpit, handlers known as “pitters” held each rooster and “billed” (presented) them to each other for a few preliminary pecks. When the referee issued the call to “Pit,” the birds were released and the fight began; each pitter was required to remain at least six feet away from his rooster until the referee called “Handle,” an order to pick up the birds if one was hung or punctured by a gaff. With a call to “Rest,” the pitter would remove the gaff, keeping the opposing bird on the ground. “Rest” lasted twenty seconds, and then the match would resume. However, if a rooster could not fight, his pitter would say, “Count me”: the referee would count in sets of ten and then a set of twenty. If a bird still refused to fight, or ran away, it lost. If both birds refused to fight, the match was declared a draw; if both ran away, then both lost. In any scenario, the death of a rooster meant defeat.³

These elements structured the rhythm and flow of cockfights across the Philippines, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Yet this form of fraternal leisure was also highly political. In this essay I argue that battles over the cockfight were a form of animal nationalism. Supporters and opponents alike mapped gendered, raced, and classed ideologies of nation and sovereignty onto the bodies of fighting cocks to stake their divergent political and cultural claims about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and national belonging. Cockfighting enthusiasts were cultural nationalists—indeed, cockfight nationalists—who defended their right to fight as a right to preserve their cultural heritage and a right to citizenship and self-determination. Similarly, anticockfighting activists implemented their own culturally inflected ideals of proper assimilability and nation building to create an empire of benevolence and animal kindness,

which, in turn, bolstered exceptionalist ideologies of the United States as a republic, not a traditional empire like Spain. In contrast to a formal empire built on military conquest and colonial domination, this exceptionalist ideal envisioned an empire of free markets, republican governments, democratic elections, and republican values of civic virtue, benevolence, sobriety, and moral uplift.⁴ American officials enacted new animal welfare laws in the empire, which reinforced these exceptionalist values of benevolent stewardship—even though subject people often viewed such legislation as imperialism by another name. Correspondingly, US Empire builders treated indigenous reception to such legislation as a bellwether for the potential assimilability of imperial subjects. The Insular Cases (1901–1904) determined that the Constitution did not have to follow the US flag, which therefore carried no promise of future citizenship to the United States’ imperial subjects. In this milieu, indigenous compliance to American animal welfare laws became a litmus test of fitness for citizenship.

Speciesism and Historical Analysis

The roosters in my essay are elusive historical subjects, even though their physicality, behavior, and interactions with people shaped the social and cultural experience of the cockfight. The written historical record is fundamentally speciesist because it privileges human thought and human agency. The history of animals is virtually synonymous with acts of human representation because animal lives are mediated through human documents—written, photographic, painterly, and aural.⁵ The animal studies historian Erica Fudge acknowledges this methodological predicament as a problem of ontology and epistemology: “I continue to use the term ‘history of animals’ as if it were, as Derrida has proposed, *sur rature*—under erasure: it is both indispensable and impossible. It sums up an area of study, but cannot define it.”⁶ Additionally, most human actors in colonial cockfighting struggles believed in biblical dominion from the book of Genesis (1:6), which codifies speciesism as a Christian imperative by granting humanity control over all creatures. Nonetheless, animal protectionists also fully embraced the concept of biblical stewardship, which subtly undermined the purely speciesist credo of dominion, for they fervently believed that human beings had a direct moral responsibility to protect animals.

One must be mindful that a history of animals can simply become a history of people with animals in it.⁷ Thus a consideration of the roosters’ physicality, behavior, and their interactions with people is essential to understanding the cockfight’s cultural power and why it was such a flashpoint in the empire, even though other blood sports were banned without incident. While animal

advocates were equally dedicated to banning bullfighting *and* cockfighting, these blood sports were hardly interchangeable. Each animal and each cultural practice carried its own historical circumstances and meanings. In contrast to cockfighting, Filipinos, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans raised few objections to American bans on bullfighting because they considered the *plaza de toros* to be a detestable symbol of Spanish colonialism. The Cuban poet and exiled nationalist José Martí characterized bullfighting as “a futile bloody spectacle . . . and against Cuban sentiment for being intimately linked with our colonial past.”⁸ While the bullfight remained an enduring metaphor for Spanish brutality and decadence in a cultural imaginary of American exceptionalism, cockfights escaped such colonial associations.

Unlike the bullfight, cockfighting was a long-standing form of leisure in virtually all societies with domestic fowl. Indigenous fighting cocks originated in India and Southeast Asia and traveled with human commerce and military activity around the globe. The Italian diarist Antonio Pigafetta observed cockfighting in Butuan, Philippines, during Magellan’s circumnavigation voyage (1519–1522), decades before Spanish colonization.⁹ Polynesian travelers brought the earliest chickens to the Americas on oceanic canoes between 1304 and 1424 according to DNA evidence found on chicken bones buried on the Arauco Peninsula in south-central Chile.¹⁰ Chickens—and probably cockfighting—traveled to other parts of the Americas thereafter. The incredible range of geographically specific gamecock breeds or strains, such as the Asil (South Asian), Malay, Japanese, Wisconsin Shuffler, Kentucky Warhorse, Red Cuban, Pyles Old English, Irish Gilders, Persian, and French, attest to the transnational reach of the cockfight.¹¹

In addition to the cockfight’s geographic ubiquity, cockers (practitioners) came from all social classes: chickens were widely accessible and affordable (although some champion strains fetched high prices). Roosters were adaptable, sociable, fecund, and hardy, and could be kept for little cost. They fought freely among themselves, and the cockpit was infinitely transportable: a fight could occur virtually anywhere, from a circle etched in the dirt to a fancy permanent building. The traditional Spanish bullfight, by contrast, required considerable capital investment. Since the eighteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church and the landed nobility had sponsored bullfights in Spain, providing expansive pasturelands for raising prize cows and elaborate, looming stadium-like arenas for the fights.¹² Cockers in myriad transnational settings characterized their blood sport as a populist expression of indigenous culture—free from the colonial baggage of the Spanish bullfight and its expensive pageantry of *picadors*,

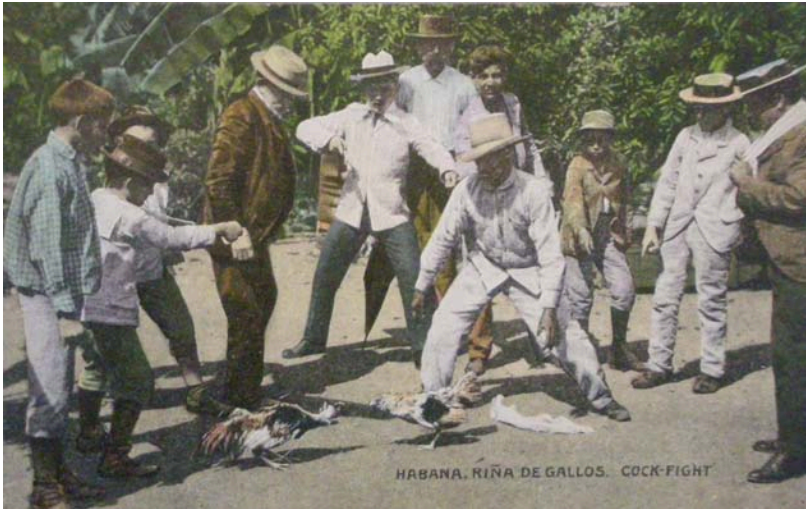


Figure 1.

The cockfight is a transnational, intergenerational form of fraternal leisure that can take place virtually anywhere. This postcard from Havana attests to the blood sport's commercial popularity in the early twentieth century. "Habana. Riña De Gallos. Cock-Fight," Postcard, Havana, Cuba, 1912, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

banderilleros, and *espadas*. This held true even in those Latin American countries where Spanish conquistadors likely introduced cockfighting. Owing to its simplicity and accessibility, the cockfight remained an indigenous practice, regardless of its past colonial associations.

American Animal Protection: A Short Historical Summary

When John Haines announced the overseas empire as the latest field for American animal advocacy, his activist agenda was essentially the same abroad as it was at home. The ASPCA's founder and first president, Henry Bergh, underscored the connections between animal mercy and nation building when he successfully introduced the first comprehensive state animal anticruelty bill to the New York legislature on April 19, 1866, which made the act of beating, overloading, or neglecting an animal a punishable offense. The incorporation of the ASPCA gave the organization's officers the powers of arrest. Bergh was pleased that the bill's submission date was the ninety-first anniversary of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and "was to be equally as significant in the cause of animal protection as was that famous skirmish of American patriots

in their struggle for human liberty.”¹³ Linking human liberty and the birth of the nation to new laws mandating kindness to animals, Bergh forged the foundation for a sweeping animal nationalism that quickly spread across the country and overseas. By 1900 all forty-seven states had passed anticruelty laws modeled on the first New York statute, which also was the blueprint for animal welfare legislation in the empire.¹⁴ Bergh and his colleagues attacked cockfighting head-on in 1867 with an amendment to the original statewide anticruelty statute that banned blood sports and made audience members and hosts of such fights subject to prosecution. This legislation, too, was a boilerplate for subsequent statutes in other states, as well as overseas territories.¹⁵ At the turn of the twentieth century, cockfighting was illegal in forty states.¹⁶

Taken together, these new animal protection laws marked a significant departure from a speciesist legal system. The historian Susan Pearson shows that the older common law tradition defined animals purely as personal property. Cruelty to an animal, therefore, was a crime solely against the property owner, not the animal. (Women and children were likewise defined as household dependents under coverture.) In 1866 New York State’s anticruelty statute represented a major transformation because it legally recognized the rights of animals to protection from pain and neglect, rather than simply defending the property interests of the owner.¹⁷ Although the terminology of *speciesism* and *nonspeciesism* would have been alien to Gilded Age animal protectionists, these statutes represent a historical watershed in recognizing animal sentience and the right to avoid suffering. Immediate areas of activism included protecting laboring animals, and banning blood sports, unsanitary dairying practices, and the transportation of animals to market without sufficient food and water. Antivivisection represented an exceptionally vigorous activist field.

The humane movement’s convergence of liberty, kindness to animals, and nation building gave ideological form to its immediate historical antecedents in antebellum social reform, emancipation during the Civil War, and the ratification of the Reconstruction Amendments to the Constitution. The historian Diane Beers demonstrates the deep genealogical ties between animal protection and other contemporary social justice movements, most notably abolitionism, child welfare, prison reform, women’s rights, and the movement to prevent domestic violence.¹⁸ The legal scholar Elizabeth Clark likewise shows that antebellum abolitionist writers created a compelling literary genre that Clark calls the “cruelty narrative.”¹⁹ Animal protectionists adopted this abolitionist language in nonracist ways to demonstrate their shared commitment to these social justice movements against cruelty.²⁰ The Massachusetts SPCA (MSPCA)

regularly denounced American racist violence in its monthly magazine, *Our Dumb Animals*: “The United States must bow its head in shame. Three lynchings in almost as many days. Is the rest of the world to think of us as savages? This magazine goes to every country of the globe.”²¹ Turning the racist language of “savagery” on its head to condemn white supremacy, the MSPCA was a steady critic of the patriotic language of benevolence in a violent society.

The MSPCA’s founder and first president George Angell condemned US militarism overseas as a glaring contradiction of a patriotic rhetoric of uplift and kindness. Angell evoked President William McKinley’s “Benevolent Assimilation” proclamation of December 21, 1898, when he reprinted Bertrand Shadwell’s anti-imperialist poem, “Malevolent Assimilation,” at the height of the Philippine-American War (1899–1902), when as many as four hundred thousand Filipinos died from the same kind of wartime atrocities that prompted international condemnation of Spanish colonial brutality during the 1890s: *reconcentrados* (concentration camps), forced labor, shoot-on-sight orders, torture, starvation, guerrilla warfare, and burning entire villages.²² Angell readily evoked the American Revolution and the nation’s ideal of self-determination when he argued that Filipino nationalists had a right to fight the United States for their sovereignty, “just as American boys would have done under similar circumstances.”²³ Formal empire building destroyed the bedrock principles of benevolent American nation building.

Angell denounced racial violence, militarism, and formal imperialism as part of his nonspeciesist commitment to kindness for all creatures. Still, he embraced informal empire building. Like virtually all American humane advocates, Angell believed in conquering hearts and minds with the peaceable global spread of American democratic institutions, free trade, industrial development, and Protestant evangelism. Animal humanitarians often tacitly embraced notions of the white man’s burden as part of their call to educate and enlighten their brethren of color abroad with a gospel of kindness. Put another way, they shared the goals of Protestant missionaries and international temperance reformers, groups that the historian Ian Tyrrell calls the architects of America’s “moral empire.”²⁴ Together, they promulgated a universalizing ethic of kindness and uplift—sometimes with little regard to culturally specific local practices, which, in turn, led to conflict. For moral empire builders, the colonial cockpit was a spectacle of homosocial alterity and ruin: flush with strong drink, gambling, certain violence to the roosters, and possible bloodshed for its human participants. In short, the foes of the cockfight collapsed an entire moral universe into the bodies of fighting roosters and men.

Deep Play Revisited

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz captured the symbolic merging of birds and men in his famous essay “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight,” based on his Balinese fieldwork in 1958. The cockfight constituted “deep” play through its “deep” matches of equally talented combatants; bettors placed the largest wagers on contests with evenly matched roosters because the outcome was unpredictable. As such, the cockfight performed high-stakes cultural work by enacting status relations within Balinese society, as “a story they tell about themselves.”²⁵

The physical intimacy between male cockers and their roosters signified another kind of “deep play.” The elaborate care of prize birds generated deep fraternal affection for the cockfight writ large, thereby amplifying its cultural and political power. Roosters did not enter the fighting pit until the age of two—long after most chickens had been slaughtered. The birds received a special diet; cockers conditioned roosters with rigorous exercise; they also cradled and stroked their birds daily as a bonding exercise—the Filipino cocker Angel Lansang confirms this deep bond between bird and cocker: “The cock is handled and petted by his master and consequently all his physical and mental assets are well known and minutely observed.”²⁶ During cockfights, pitters believed that human saliva was a restorative balm. Accounts from Cuba, Georgia (US), Bali, Venezuela, and other countries described pitters licking the rooster’s head wounds or momentarily submerging the battered head inside their mouths to warm and revive the bird—thus giving etymological form to the term *cocksucker*.²⁷ Other accounts from England and Belgium include pitters who urinated on the injured birds to “sterilize” the wounds.²⁸

In all cases such physical proximity of cocks and men, coupled with the mingling of bodily fluids, created a volatile crucible of homosocial familiarity, blood, sex, affection, and violence. The folklorist Alan Dundes analyzes this paradoxical relationship using a psychological and sexual poetics, or as he puts it, “the Gallus as phallus.”²⁹ The intimacy and violence of the cockfight seemingly broke down the human and animal divide, if only to reify it with the animal’s death. But the shared, fraternal spilling of male bodies across socioeconomic groups made the cockfight a particularly intoxicating and accessible form of human and animal interaction that erupted, when threatened, into a populist form of cultural nationalism worth fighting for.

The Philippines

The cockfight's intimate resonances embodied myriad ideological meanings for diverse historical actors in the US Occupied Philippines (1899–1946). For the US military, it was a dangerous obstacle to wartime strategy. For some Filipino nationalists, it represented cultural degradation. For other Filipino nationalists, it was a patriotic institution. For American Occupation leaders, it triggered confrontations with American missionaries, who, in turn, used cockfighting to condemn Catholicism and Occupation governance. Brigadier General J. F. Bell banned cockfighting by military order during the Philippine-American War to stanch the flow of enemy intelligence, gambling revenues, and fraternal morale building among Philippine nationalist forces.³⁰ Manila's first municipal animal cruelty ordinance banned cockfighting outright as a means of practical civil management and social control in 1902.³¹

Like elsewhere, the Philippine cockfight was a dominant physical space for leisure and political resistance. It was also a significant anticolonial metaphor. Dr. José Rizal, the scholarly martyr of the Philippine independence movement who was executed by the Spanish in 1896, described the cockfight as a site of social leveling in his nationalistic novel, *Noli Me Tangere* (*Touch Me Not*). In one scene, rich and poor sit cheek and jowl at a Sunday cockfight, and an underdog rooster defeats a larger foe: "A savage shouting greets this judgment. . . . Whoever hears it from afar knows then that the underdog has won. . . . This is what happens among nations. When a small one defeats a big one, they relate the tale for centuries and centuries."³² In reading the cockfight as a metaphor for the nation, Rizal underscored the cross-class composition of the spectators to highlight the depth and range of the Philippine nationalist movement. Yet while Rizal's literary uses of the cockfight showcase its popularity and potency as a nationalist symbol, he still loathed the sport.

Certainly, cockfighting conflicts in the Philippines were hardly reducible to a showdown between a unified front of native nationalist cockers of color and foreign Euro-American empire builders. While the sport was a major masculine pastime across the Islands, Filipino independence leaders were hardly in lockstep with their countrymen. Despite depicting cockfighting as an idiom of resistance, *Noli Me Tangere* also characterized the sport as enervating and parasitic—sapping men of their money and judgment: "Cockfighting . . . is one of the people's vices, even more transcendental than opium among the Chinese. The poor man goes there to risk what he has, wishing to get money without working. The rich man goes as a distraction, using the money left over

from his feasting and the purchase of masses. But the fortune he wagers is his own, the gamecock is brought up with great care, perhaps with greater care than his own son, who succeeds his father in the cockpit.”³³ Rizal characterized the cockfight as an emasculating addiction using the transnational racist trope of Chinese “opium eating” to emphasize its craven thrills—made all the more compulsive because of the sustained, intimate relationship between the cockfighter and his bird, which might receive better care than one’s own child, during the delicate process of husbandry, training, and attention in the cockpit.

The nationalist leader Emilio Aguinaldo also believed that the cockfight threatened the nation’s manly vitality. He hated any form of gambling and closed the cockpits during his brief tenure as president of the First Philippine Republic (1899–1901): “Gambling more than anything else in the Philippines is the mother of crime.”³⁴ Imbued with republican ideals of self-restraint and civic duty that would be familiar to any student of the American Revolution, Rizal and Aguinaldo envisioned an independent Philippine republic founded on moral virtue. (In fact, in 1774 the American Continental Congress banned cockfighting, horseracing, traveling shows, and “every species of extravagance and dissipation” that might threaten the republican purity and solemnity of the future nation.)³⁵ For Rizal, Aguinaldo, and other republicans, cockfighting and its association with gambling made it a synonym for effeminizing dependency, antithetical to sober, manly self-determination.

American Protestant missionaries in the Philippines similarly condemned the cockfight as an immoral and profligate form of vice. They freely quoted Rizal and Aguinaldo to support their own platform of purity reform.³⁶ But unlike the nationalist critiques of the cockfight, missionaries used the gendered and racist language of the “white man’s burden” to argue that cockfighting was a litmus test of assimilability. Arthur Judson Brown, an American Presbyterian missionary leader, reduced the enormous ethnic diversity of the Philippines Islands to a lazy, fatalistic, barely dressed racial “type” who gambled everything on the cockfight: “The unwillingness of the Filipino to work is a serious problem in the development of the Islands. He does not lead ‘the strenuous life.’ Rich soil, perpetual summer, and simple wants are not conducive to hard labor. . . . At Escalante, I found a disgusted contractor who could not induce men to load a *lorcha* (sailboat) at any price because they had won enough for their immediate necessities at the Sunday cockfight, and they would not work till the money was spent.”³⁷ Deploying a common racist critique of “tropical” labor, Brown argued that the warm climate, coupled with the lure of easy money at the cockpit, made the Filipino unfit for self-government or future US citizenship.

To American evangelists, the capricious, slothful, barely clad Philippine cockfight enthusiast was a stark contrast to industrious, middle-class, white, Euro-American manly ideals. Brown's reference to Theodore Roosevelt's iteration of disciplined, athletic manliness from *The Strenuous Life: Essays and Addresses* (1902) illustrates the transnational reach of this cultural precept and its relationship to synergistic ideologies concerning racial difference, gender, class, and empire. Because "he [did] not live the strenuous life," the cocker rejected manly thrift and capital accumulation in favor of drunkenly gambling his livelihood on a violent, profligate game of chance in which his fate was tied to his rooster's success. In other words, his seeming dependency on blood sport made him unfit for independence, and certainly inassimilable as a candidate for future US citizenship. But he was potentially redeemable. Just as liberal Protestants posited that the souls of "uncivilized" people were savable, they also believed that a combined gospel of Christianity, kindness, and physical vigor could uplift and improve Filipino men into budding citizens.

US Occupation authorities treated the cockfight as a barometer of cultural degradation and catalyst for moral reform. Although American leaders officially maintained the separation of church and state in Philippine public institutions, they freely promoted evangelical Protestant ideologies of human improvement. In the nondenominational setting of the public schools, the Philippine Bureau of Education instituted an athletic curriculum to provide physically wholesome alternatives to the cockpit.³⁸ This program attracted roughly 80 percent of the public school student body by 1914 to build the "spirit of fair play and sportsmanship, hitherto lacking" on the Islands. The zoologist and Philippine Commission member Dean Worcester reported that baseball was building future citizens as a consequence of successfully combating the lure of the cockpit: "Baseball not only strengthens the muscles of the players, it sharpens their wits. Furthermore it empties the cockpits to such an extent that their beneficiaries have attempted to secure legislation restricting the time which it may be played. It has done more toward abolishing cockfighting than have the laws of the commission and the efforts of the Moral Progress League combined."³⁹ As a sober way to develop a muscular male body in a fraternal setting, baseball represented a wholesome contrast to the boozy, bodily violence to man and bird at the cockfight.

Protestant missionaries and their supporters used the cockfight to indict Catholicism and Spanish colonialism. They argued that Filipino men had little semblance of manly moral free agency when bound to a church that mediated human affairs through a corrupt papal intermediary and an extractive system of friars that encouraged men to gorge themselves during innumerable Catho-

lic festivals and feasts, and then bet everything on a cockfight. The Spanish government also profited handsomely because it levied heavy taxes on the fights.⁴⁰ Charles W. Briggs, a Presbyterian missionary in Panay and Negros from 1900 to 1910, took these associations even further, making sweeping connections between “fatalist” friars, the atrocities of the Philippine-American War, Catholic ritual, and the profitable cockfight as an interconnected demonstration of cruelty: “The shocking brutalities of the insurgent officers in the late war were not mere incidents. They were true children of the friar system. . . . The Church promoted questionable pleasures and became entangled with the vices of the country. . . . Cockfighting and gambling occupy the part of Sunday remaining after early mass.”⁴¹ Missionaries also treated the elaborate care of gamecocks as another “decadent” Catholic ritual in which cockers gave their birds Communion to fortify them for battle—a collapsing of human and animal that contradicted their rigid credo of biblical dominion.⁴²

In viewing the cockfight as a metonym for Catholicism, Protestant missionaries deemed Filipino Catholics to be just as animalized, inassimilable, and “savage” as the polytheistic tribal peoples they proselytized in other mission fields. In so doing, these missionaries participated in a long American tradition of anti-Catholic sentiment, such as the nativist “Know Nothing” movement of the 1840s and 1850s, whose Protestant members feared that Irish Catholic refugees of the potato famine would place their loyalty with Rome, rather than the United States.

American missionaries in the Philippines were livid when the Occupation government lifted the ban on cockfighting in 1902 in favor of regulation. (With the brutal pacification of the Philippine opposition, Occupation leaders deemed the cockfight to be less threatening.)⁴³ Nonetheless, American missionaries described the move from prohibition to regulation as a reincarnation of Spanish rule.⁴⁴ An American missionary field secretary denounced US complicity in the cockpits in a newspaper editorial: “Cockfighting is the gambling passion of the Filipinos, and the Catholic Church as well as the Government has worked it for what is in it. It is very offensive: It shows the subtle clutch the Catholics have on our politics there. . . . Can it be accounted for except on his religion and his subservience to the dulcet notes of his priests?”⁴⁵ Protestant missionaries treated Catholicism and the cockfight as complementary forms of dependency, emasculation, and “savagery”—in which wine and blood comingled in a “pagan” credo of transubstantiation.

Evangelical criticism of the Occupation government’s cockfighting policies escalated in early 1908 when Manila’s municipal government granted a private American consortium, the Carnival Association, permission to hold

cockfights during the Manila Carnival. The Evangelical Union—a federation of evangelical Protestant churches working in the Philippines—was infuriated. Letters and telegrams of protest poured into the War Department and the White House from American evangelicals in the field, SPCA officials, and individual congregants in the United States. On February 23, 1908, the Episcopal bishop Mercer Johnston preached a sermon in Manila, “A Covenant with Death, an Agreement with Hell,” during a large protest meeting consisting of approximately 2,500 people, including members of the Philippine Teachers Association, over 600 Filipino high school and university students, and American Protestant women.⁴⁶ In fire-and-brimstone language, Johnston condemned the Occupation government for its complicity in the cockfight: “Yonder cock-pit is as a house swept and garnished, awaiting the evil spirits invited thither by the Carnival Association. . . . Yonder cock-pit is as a whited sepulcher, hungering for dead men’s bones and soon to be filled with all uncleanness.”⁴⁷ In characterizing the cockpit as a beckoning shrine filled with the bones of martyrs and saints, Johnston drew on a well-known Protestant speciesist discourse of Catholic animism.

Despite the energetic evangelical protest movement, American officials kept the cockpits open. Clarence Edwards, head of the federal Bureau of Insular Affairs, concluded that ordinary Filipinos—as well as many Americans on the Islands—overwhelmingly favored cockfighting, and that the “opposition [was] being fathered by a few ministers who desired to advertise themselves.”⁴⁸ The sport was so undeniably popular with Americans in the Philippines that US soldiers introduced a fierce strain of chicken known as the Texas, which soon became the most coveted fighting stock on the Islands. The Filipino cocker Angel J. Lansang described the Texas as indomitable: “Flaming spirit and deep-seated courage are the innate qualities of this specimen. It is said that hit and pierced right thru the heart, at times, with one last desperate thrust, this prodigious breed may still kill his foe.”⁴⁹ The rise of the Texas strain was a demonstration of the cockfight’s cross-cultural ubiquity in the Philippines, a living testament to cultural fraternization and exchange among colonizer and colonized.

Cuba

Ever since American mining and sugar enterprises established Cuban operations in the early nineteenth century, hordes of transient American businessmen, seamen, entertainers, fugitives, schemers, crooks, tourists, prostitutes, and deserters flocked to the island just ninety miles off the US coast in search

of profit and pleasure.⁵⁰ A rollicking vice economy catered to Americans; it ended only after Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement overthrew the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in 1959. Sixty years earlier, American missionaries had been eager to conquer this thriving vice economy after the Spanish-American War. Engaging in humanitarian relief, purity reform, and educational projects alongside their evangelism, American Protestant missionaries poured into Cuba so quickly that an interdenominational conference in Cienfuegos in 1902 hurriedly hashed out a comity plan organizing locations of the most prominent denominations into zones of influence.⁵¹

In the initial stages of US rule in Cuba, there was little dissent among American leaders, missionaries, and animal advocates. In 1900 two US military orders banned cockfighting outright, imposed prohibitive \$500 fines, and even punished spectators or anyone else who "aided" an animal fight with a fine of \$10 to \$500, or with a prison term of one to six months. Despite these draconian measures, the sport continued under open secrecy (like elsewhere), even with the closure of urban public cockpits. The fights simply moved to the countryside or to private grounds.⁵² Although members of the Cuban Congress had sponsored a lottery bill to repeal both bans in 1903, President Tomás Estrada Palma—a strong American ally—threatened a swift presidential veto. In his subsequent message to Congress, President Palma argued that blood sports and gambling were a "cruel, semi-barbarous and demoralizing spectacle," a retrograde expression of Spanish colonial bondage that would "injure the reputation of the Island."⁵³ Palma used the familiar teleological language of barbarism and cruelty to demonstrate his government's rejection of bloody Spanish rule, in favor of supporting the United States and its project of benevolent exceptionalism and nation building.

In 1907 the cockfight abruptly became a nationalist minefield. In the words of one high-ranking American official, the cockfight now assumed "the dignity of a presidential issue" as the center of a political power struggle that erupted out of the failed Cuban revolution in 1906.⁵⁴ This connection was hardly obvious in late September 1906, when General José Miguel Gómez and fellow members of the Republican Liberal Party rebelled against the reelection of President Palma, whom they dismissed as a US dupe. Palma appealed to US authorities for help; US troops quickly returned Cuba, per the terms of the Platt Amendment (1901), and two weeks later, on October 13, 1906, Charles E. Magoon was installed as US provisional governor. At the same time, the Rural Guard, a paramilitary Cuban arm of the American military, intensified its policing activities, taking special interest in enforcing the cockfight ban. In

a letter to Secretary of War William Howard Taft, Magoon himself acknowledged the Rural Guard's move as an act of revenge: "I am assured by many persons, and I think the assertion is in a measure true, that the Rural Guards are 'getting even' with the men of the insurgent forces."⁵⁵

Political unrest deepened in January 1907, when an American banker in Havana staged a large cocking main. Between two hundred and three hundred people attended, including American officers, as well as General Gómez, Major General Pino Guerra, and other leaders of the 1906 rebellion. Hearing the telltale shouts and squawks, two Rural Guardsmen rushed to the fight. Spectators on the main caught sight of the soldiers and scattered, except for Gómez, Guerra, and their friends, who seized the opportunity to stage a test case showdown against the Rural Guard and the Palma administration. They were promptly arrested for violating the ban and fined \$50 apiece. Gómez instantly demanded a repeal of the prohibition in his newspaper, *El Rebelde*, and a protest movement was born.

Using a discursive alchemy of self-determination, fraternal freedom, and yeoman leisure, the combustible movement exploded. Gómez and his allies orchestrated huge local parades, rallies, and generated petitions across the Island that year to denounce the Rural Guard and the US cockfight ban. The petition, an important tool of protest during the American Revolution whose symbolic importance was surely remembered in revolutionary Cuba, depicted the discontent as an exemplary display of republican virtue. Local mayors sent stacks of thick, signed testimony to Magoon, describing a "monstrous manifestation" of citizens taking to the streets, in some places "a distance of six squares," as thousands of cockfight supporters assembled in public spaces across Cuba. Magoon chronicled the predictable rhythm and structure of these protests in his correspondence with Taft: "The demonstrations in favor of repealing the law takes the form of a parade, which, after passing through the streets, stops in front of the Mayor's office and presents him with a request to advise me of the demonstration and ask me to issue the desired decree. This the Mayor does, either by telegram or letter."⁵⁶ In one such decree, Antonio Ruiz, the president of a pro-cockfighting committee in Cienfuegos, presented a "Manifest to the Public in General": "The time has come when all Cubans, lovers of their traditions, should combine in one solid mass, and as a one man work without rest to obtain the reestablishment of the cockfights."⁵⁷ Coalescing as "one man," the protesters transfigured the corporeal body of the rooster, cocker, and spectators into a single national body fused by a shared commitment to masculine leisure and self-determination.

Specifically, the petitions framed cockfighting as a right of independent Cuban citizenship. They described the orderly, brotherly, socioeconomic inclusiveness of these gatherings, “in which all classes of society are represented, as also all the towns and cities of the Island.” Like thousands of other petitioners, Narciso Lopez Quintana of Havana beseeched Magoon to lift the ban with keywords like “peaceful,” and “justice” to stress that the demonstrations were maintaining “the sociological moral order which we are all in duty bound to promote, in behalf of the reputation conceded to us by the civilized nations as a cultured people.”⁵⁸ Cuban petitioners proclaimed that cockfighting promoted an upright, virtuous Cuban yeomanry—a forceful rebuttal to charges that this blood sport sapped manly vitality. Using the intersectional language of race, class, and gender to articulate ideologies of heritage, liberty, nation, and culture, petitioners paid close attention to the hardworking laborers, whose right to preserve their indigenous traditions of male leisure and conviviality was especially critical in rural areas where little other amusement was available after long days of agricultural toil. Writing from Nueva Gerona in the Isle of Pines, D. M. Percy “and many others” described a moral, patriotic, and industrious people, using the same language of suffering and mercy that humane activists used to defend animals.

The cock-fight was not an imported sport bringing with it the pernicious vice of gambling. No, it appeared as a compensation to the hardworking country laborer. The people of Cuba who do not live in cities away from all business center and who limit themselves to the cultivation of the soil to earn their living, without the lenitive offered by the amusements to be found in all cities, felt the natural melancholy of those who suffer, and found in the diversion it now acclaims some relief to sustain its hope in the future. And the amusement . . . became a necessity which your kindness can gratify.⁵⁹

Percy’s emphasis on the cockfight’s precolonial origins amplified the protest’s nationalistic tenor. As an indigenous form of popular leisure, the cockfight bore no taint of Spanish colonialism—and its recent barbarous memories of General “Butcher” Weyler, *reconcentrados*, mass starvation, and political persecution—unlike the bullfight, which remained a hated symbol of the late Spanish empire. As a people who had suffered under Spanish rule, Cuban cockers used a language of cruelty and kindness to appeal to an American regime that fancied itself an empire of mercy—though the totalizing Platt Amendment (1901) demonstrated otherwise because it authorized US military and economic domination of Cuba for the next three decades. Cockers also directly challenged the morality of the American humane movement’s credo of kindness by pointedly suggesting that the suffering person was more important than the suffering rooster.

Although protecting the roosters was central to animal advocacy in Cuba, its movement language contained the same teleological references to nation building and dissolution as those of the cockfight petitioners. John L. Shortall, president of the Illinois Humane Society, announced that ending the prohibition would constitute “a serious backward step for Cuba, whereas should the law remain in force it would be a marked evidence of progress and would be uplifting in Cuba, and encouraging to those who are striving for better things.” The president of the ASPCA, Alfred Wagstaff, declared, “It was the fervent hope of the friends of humanity that whenever the flag of the United States was planted, the dumb animals might share in the benefits of an advancing civilization.”⁶⁰ The Cuban animal welfare activist Magdalena Peñarredonda wrote of her misgivings to Magoon: “I do not believe that an American Governor, who represents a country where the ideas of commiseration and pity towards the irrational animals are so thoroughly observed and practiced, will permit that a struggle between two unfortunate animals which tear themselves to pieces and bleed to death with horrible sufferings, should be the means of pleasure and gain in Cuba.”⁶¹ Animal advocates fused their dedication to the “least among us” to the nation’s ostensible moral purpose at home and abroad in a nonspeciesist belief that an injury to one was an injury to all, a proposition made all the more credible because cockfights were often sites of shared interspecies violence to birds and men.

Few animal advocates went so far as to use the humane movement’s ideologies of kindness to critique—rather than reinforce—American empire building. Yet George Angell, a steady critic of US military aggression overseas, strongly questioned America’s benevolent motives in Cuba: “We receive on this April 17th a circular from the Cuban Industrial Relief Fund stating that our flag waves over *three hundred thousand people who have neither food to eat, clothes to wear, nor homes to live in.*”⁶² Juxtaposing the American flag with mass starvation, Angell denounced a foreign policy that perpetuated foreign domination at the expense of humanitarian aid. Like other animal welfare leaders, he beseeched Magoon, “in behalf of the more than two millions of members of our American Bands of Mercy,” a demand to uphold the ban made all the more urgent because other aspects of American rule were antithetical to humanitarian ideals.⁶³

American sugar growers also wanted to preserve the ban, but for reasons that were purely economic: they argued that plantation laborers often skipped work for days after a cockfight, slowing production of a highly profitable crop that dominated the colonial economy.⁶⁴ A delegation of mill owners went a step farther, beseeching Magoon to preserve the ban alongside a plea for additional prohibitions on leisure during the cane harvest.⁶⁵ In recognition of such totalizing attempts to control Cuban labor and leisure, the narrator in

James Gould Cozzens's novel *The Son of Perdition* (1929) characterized the sugar planters as a "foreign fiefdom in the heart of the island."⁶⁶

By April 1907 the situation had become so heated that trains and other modes of public conveyance became theaters of conflict. Rural Guards roamed, snatching chickens and arresting the owners, including wealthy planters who happened to be caught traveling on trains with chickens, in defiance of US military orders.⁶⁷ In the face of an escalating national crisis, the political and economic power of American sugar growers and the moral sway of evangelicals and animal welfare activists could no longer carry the day, and American leaders changed course. On January 28, 1909, home rule returned to Cuba, and the leader of the repeal movement, General Gómez of the Liberal Party, was elected president. On July 3, 1909, the Cuban Congress repealed the US ban, in favor of letting each municipality legislate its own cockfighting laws—a model of governance based on Philippine legal precedent.⁶⁸ Colonel Frank E. McIntyre of the federal Bureau of Insular Affairs criticized the repeal as "the lie" that would keep "a back country Cuban family . . . in thatch-roofed huts" with American blessing—and permanently inassimilable.⁶⁹ Cockfighting enthusiasts, however, saw the repeal in their own nationalistic terms, a vindication of their struggles for cultural and political self-determination in a country under virtual US sovereignty.

Puerto Rico

Like the Philippines and Cuba, cockfighting conflicts in Puerto Rico started with a colonial ban. On March 10, 1904, the US civil government instituted by the federal Foraker Act (1900) banned bird and quadruped fights; guilty parties were subjected to a \$50 fine and/or a month in jail.⁷⁰ As elsewhere, Puerto Ricans ignored the ban, especially in rural areas distant from the metropolis. Animal advocates and American civil officials in Puerto Rico also used the colonial language of American civilization, uplift, dependency, and tutelage to justify the ban—and to argue that Puerto Ricans were unfit to manage their internal affairs. American officials read the cockfight as yet another expression of corruption in Puerto Rico rooted in Spanish colonial politics of collusion and patronage with local elites.⁷¹

US authorities reasoned that cockfighting was a signature of inassimilable alterity, a catalyst for idleness, permanent poverty, Catholic fatalism, and wholesale violence to birds and men. The American journalist William Dinwiddie noted that after a long, orderly cockfight, "the crowd moved from a cock-fight to a solemn Catholic ceremony," in a seamless symbiosis of the two cultural

worlds, both of which rendered Puerto Ricans completely passive to oppressive Spanish rule: “Verily only such a mercurial race could have stood the blighting abuses of a despotic government with complacency.”⁷²

US governor H. M. Towner treated the ban as a form of public protection and uplift: “The fights of the cocks were nearly always the commencement of fights by the people. Drinking led to drunkenness and drunkenness led to quarrels and assaults, even to murder. . . . To be prepared for a cockfight in these days, as now, the *jibaro* (peasant) must have money, liquor, and a gun or knife. To hurt, to harm, to kill—that is the object lesson of cock fighting.”⁷³ Based on copious historical examples of sober and orderly cockfights, Towner’s description represented the exception, not the rule.⁷⁴ Still, the intimate circumstances of the matches—the proximity of fighting birds, men, strong drink, easy money, and bloodshed—potentially embodied a troubling moral collapse across the species divide. As such, human beings and animals both were victims of the cockfight. Owing to the ubiquity of cockfighting and other forms of animal abuse, Ella Payne, an American schoolteacher in Mayaguez, requested federal funding from the Bureau of Insular Affairs in 1913 to create a humane organization in her town: “Animals must be better protected. We are under the STARS AND STRIPES.”⁷⁵ Payne emphatically believed that a proactive animal protection movement was the linchpin to achieving America’s higher humanitarian purpose in its empire. As a manifestation of animal nationalism, Payne’s plea highlighted these interlocking ideologies of kindness, American exceptionalism, and empire building.

Puerto Ricans simultaneously deployed their own powerful brand of cockfight nationalism to defend their rights.⁷⁶ After the US Congress passed the Jones Act in 1917, which granted Puerto Ricans limited US citizenship, indigenous cockers framed their right to fight as an expression of their rights as American citizens. Even though they also made heavy references to the cockfight as a defining element of their Puerto Rican identity and heritage, they posited this right in cultural terms, rather than as a claim to sovereignty (like Cuba and the Philippines). Writing from Rio Piedras in 1920, Manuel Jiménez Santa urged the Puerto Rican Senate and US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby to repeal the law: “The fact is that here, though American citizens, we are persecuted by the police force, because of following a tradition. . . . Porto Rico, deprived of her traditional cockfights, is a Ruin.”⁷⁷ Jiménez warned that the United States’ international stature was now in jeopardy; he urged US authorities to respect local cultural autonomy in a manner befitting the nation’s support for Cuba *Libre* during the 1890s: “The United States of America, by its conduct in Porto Rico, is digging the grave for its prestige as a

colonizing nation in the opinion of the peoples of South America, who, with astonishment and terror, look upon these things done by a nation which sent its armies to fight for the democracy and freedom of the world.”⁷⁸

Jiménez evoked the same patriotic language of republican virtue to argue in favor of cockfighting that American officials and animal welfare activists used to denounce it. Although the ban remained during the 1920s, cockers received an unexpected boost in 1927 when prizefighting, another form of violent corporal spectacle, was legalized. A US government commission regulated boxing thereafter and took a healthy share of the profits from this lucrative sport. In the aftermath of legalization, boxing soared in popularity and fancy newfangled stadiums became a common sight.⁷⁹ Cockers saw this success as a clear sign to redouble their efforts to lift the ban because they had long allied themselves politically with boxing interests. Lobbying groups agreed, and in 1928 the Puerto Rican legislature voted to repeal the ban.

Yet Governor Towner privileged moral nation building over economic nation building and vetoed the bill. Alongside a swell of support from Protestant missionaries and local animal advocates, Towner used the well-trodden dialectic of barbarism and exceptionalism in his address to the Puerto Rican House of Representatives, calling the original ban a “wise and patriotic act . . . a great benefit to the country. . . . Such sports were common in a barbarous and cruel age, but are being abandoned in a more humane and kindly era.”⁸⁰ Similarly, journalists observed that Puerto Ricans (like other subject people in the US Empire) were abandoning the cockpit, in favor of wholesome American team sports like baseball: “Cockfighting has given way gradually to less bloody forms of sport.”⁸¹ Other critical editorials highlighted human victimization as a consequence of the cockfight: “The jibaro (peasant) pays no attention, saving his breath for the secret pit, the dashing fury of his little bird, the hot argument of epic narrative afterward.”⁸² The peasant cocker lived in the moment, addicted to the capricious excitement and “the dashing fury of his little bird”; possessing little interest in sober capital accumulation, he would remain forever incapable of self-government if cockfighting were legalized.

In the end, the desire to jumpstart a sluggish economy during the Great Depression trumped the moral imperative of protecting roosters and cockers. In 1933 the new US administration of Governor Robert H. Gore argued that legalization would make Puerto Rico’s tourist economy more attractive to American visitors through racialized nostalgic spectacles of authentic, native culture:⁸³ “We must create more lures for the tourist-minded man and woman. . . . We must have the recreation to satisfy the spirit that is ever seeking something new. And to gratify that, you can offer the oldest sport known to original man—a sport that I participated in as a boy in my Kentucky home.”⁸⁴

A coalition of animal protectionists, American officials, purity reformers, and missionaries denounced the repeal as a profit-minded repudiation of the United States' moral responsibilities abroad. The former secretary of state of Puerto Rico under President Woodrow Wilson, Martín Travieso, condemned the repeal as a retrograde move: "This is just a sample of what our new Governor is doing to demoralize our people, to expose us to the contempt and ridicule of other civilized communities and to destroy the wonderful work done by the people of this island during the thirty-five years of our life under the American flag."⁸⁵ In the end, the cockfight became a significant lure for American tourists seeking leisure and tropical otherness—the keystones of Puerto Rico's burgeoning tourist economy, which was developed and sustained, in part, with the bodies and blood of game fowl.⁸⁶ Today, Puerto Rico's official territorial Sports and Recreation Department runs eighty-six cockfighting clubs, drawing approximately one million spectators per year, and grossing roughly \$100 million in revenue in recent years.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In his annual address for 1899, ASPCA president John Haines observed presciently that the link between ideologies of animal kindness and nation building might prove to be the American humane movement's undoing in the empire if activists moved too fast or unilaterally. In other words, he cautioned humane societies against assuming the unbridled zealotry of a conquering army. He advocated "prudence" in building an animal protection movement abroad, given the potentially hazardous contingencies of culture and nation: "The peoples of those islands will be predisposed to resent what may seem to them to be an interference with their traditional customs, and they will be jealous of everything that implies an assumption of moral superiority on our part."⁸⁸ Indeed, the fractious history of the colonial cockfight demonstrates that men and their roosters immersed in "deep play" were flashpoints for cultural and political contestation. The cockfight was a crucible of American empire building and its discontents.

Nonetheless, cockfighting has remained legal ever since the bans were overturned in the Philippines (1902), Cuba (1909), and Puerto Rico (1933).⁸⁹ Cockers retain the full-throated fraternal language of cockfight nationalism—itsself a product of the colonial clashes that Haines warned against in 1899. The Filipino cocker Lansang has written that the cockfight allowed his countrymen "to assert and preserve our dignity as a free and independent country. After all, cockfighting is a precious heritage handed down to us by our brave ancestors and its traditions have been written in blood. Let us make of our national

sport a symbol of our country.”⁹⁰ Similarly, in October 2010, Puerto Rico’s territorial legislature passed a resolution to protect cockfights as “an integral part of the island’s folklore and patrimony.”⁹¹ Although cockfighting has been illegal in all fifty US states since 2008, Hawaiian state legislative members of the committee on Tourism, Culture, and International Affairs also approved a nonbinding resolution in 2010 that recognized cockfighting as a “cultural activity.”⁹²

Perhaps the most consistent feature of this troubled transnational history of cockfight nationalism has been the persistent erasure of the roosters in a speciesist historical record. Still, two prevailing modes of experiential representation have endured since the dawning of the US Empire: enthusiasts insistently stress the cocks’ “natural” desire to fight, while animal protectionists emphasize the gamecock’s inevitable suffering and certain death.⁹³ Despite this acknowledgment of bodily cruelty, early twentieth-century SPCA advocates unwittingly helped the roosters disappear as historical subjects because they folded the suffering chicken into a wholesale moral condemnation of the cocker. Because animal protectionists relentlessly targeted human depravity, colonized cockers saw cockfighting bans as an intrusive way for American imperialists to control colonial bodies—human and animal alike. Consequently, cockfighting prohibitions in the empire were ephemeral, and cockfight nationalism bore the stamp of cultural nationalism. To be sure, the violent circumstances of American empire building may have precluded other outcomes, yet a sustained nonspeciesist focus on the roosters themselves through culturally sensitive humane education programs might have fostered more ethical protection measures with less internal resistance than outright cockfight bans. But the American nation-state has long favored public funding for punitive, rather than educational measures, a political reality that bedevils animal advocacy to this day.

Notes

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56. *Ibid.*, 8.
57. Antonio Ruiz, "Manifest to the Public in General," January 20, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
58. Letter from Narciso Lopez Quintana, et al. to Charles E. Magoon, Havana, February 24, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
59. Letter from D. M. Percy et al. to Charles E. Magoon, Nueva Gerona, February 17, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
60. Letter from John L. Shortall to Magoon, Chicago, February 16, 1907; Letter from Alfred Wagstaff to Magoon, February 18, 1907; all from Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
61. Letter from Magdalena Peñarredonda to Charles E. Magoon, Yaguajay, Cuba, 16, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
62. George Angell, "Our Flag in Cuba," *Our Dumb Animals* 31.11 (1899): 146.
63. Letter from George Angell to Governor Charles E. Magoon, Boston, February 12, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
64. Letter from Edwin F. Atkins to Charles E. Magoon, Cienfuegos, Cuba, March 2, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
65. Letter from Charles E. Magoon to William Howard Taft, February 25, 1907, 7–8.
66. James Gould Cozzens, *The Son of Perdition* (1929), quoted in Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 237.
67. Telegram from Charles E. Magoon to William Howard Taft, Havana, April 23, 1907, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
68. Letter from Charles E. Magoon to William Howard Taft, February 25, 1907, 11–12; "Inclosure to Dispatch No. 992: An Act Legalizing Cock-Fighting," translated from the Official Gazette, July 3, 1909, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Cockfighting prohibition (Cuba), Box 213, File Marker 1660, 350:150:56:8:6, NARA II.
69. Letter from Colonel Frank E. McIntyre to Gus J. Karger, Washington, D.C., May 23, 1910.
70. No. 33: "An Act to Amend Section 5."
71. Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*, 84–90.
72. William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico: Its Conditions and Possibilities* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), 179.
73. "Bill to Legalize Cock Fighting Vetoed by Governor H. M. Towner," *San Juan (Puerto Rico) Times*, May 16, 1928, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
74. Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico*, 179.
75. Letter from Ella E. Payne to Bureau of Insular Affairs, Mayaguez, Porto Rico, August 12, 1913, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5A (1898–1913), Animal Cruelty (Puerto Rico), Box 151, File Marker 971, 350:150:56:7:3, NARA II.
76. Puerto Rico's own political, geographic, and cultural history shaped the tenor of local protests against the cockfighting law, as in other colonial settings. Puerto Rico became a US territory fairly peacefully in 1898; the majority of the Island's elites supported eventual US statehood with autonomous internal governance, or strong advantageous trade (coffee and sugar) and tax privileges as a territory, rather than outright independence. See Go, *American Empire and the Politics of Meaning*.
77. Letter from Manuel Jiménez Santa to US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby, Rio Piedras, June 18, 1920; see also letter from Jiménez to Colby, Rio Piedras, June 8, 1920; letter from Santa to Antonio

- R. Barceló, Presidente del Senado, Rio Piedras, June 8, 1920; all in Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
78. Letter from Manuel Jiménez Santa to US Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby, Rio Piedras, June 18, 1920.
 79. “Cock of the Walk No More,” (Manila) *Philippines Herald*, September 16, 1928, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
 80. Harwood Hull, Cockfighting Bill Fails in Porto Rico,” *New York Times*, June 3, 1928; “Bill to Legalize Cock Fighting Vetoed by Governor H. M. Towner,” *San Juan (Puerto Rico) Times*, May 16, 1928.
 81. “Cock of the Walk No More.”
 82. *Indianapolis News*, June 11, 1928, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
 83. No. 33, “An Act to Amend Section 5 of an Act Entitled ‘An Act to Prevent Cruelty to Animals.’” First Special Session of the Thirteenth Legislature, Puerto Rico, May 4, 1933, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
 84. Martín Travieso, “Puerto Rico Cockfighting,” *New York Herald Tribune*, October 22, 1933, Record Group 350, General Classified Files, Entry 5B (1914–1945), Cockfighting (Puerto Rico), Box 1074, File Marker 26484, 350:150:57:11:2, NARA II.
 85. *Ibid.*
 86. See Dennis Merrill, *Negotiating Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Twentieth-Century Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
 87. Danica Coto, “Puerto Rico Cockfighting: Legal Cockfights in Danger in U.S. Territory,” *Huffington Post*, July 24, 2012, www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/22/puerto-rico-cockfighting_n_1693362.html.
 88. “May Stop Bullfighting,” *New York Times*, January 14, 1899.
 89. Betting, however, is banned in Cuba. See Amanda Erickson, “Cockfighting in Cuba,” *The Atlantic Cities*, July 3, 2012, www.theatlanticcities.com/arts-and-lifestyle/2012/07/cockfighting-cuba/2462/.
 90. Lansang, *Cockfighting in the Philippines*, 20.
 91. Coto, “Puerto Rico Cockfighting.”
 92. Tim Sakahara, “Committee Supports Cockfighting as a Cultural Activity,” *Hawaii News Now*, March 29, 2010, www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/12224788/committee-supports-cockfighting-as-a-cultural-activity?redirected=true.
 93. For enthusiast accounts, see Pridgen, *Courage*; and Lansang, *Cockfighting in the Philippines*.