From a "Contagious" to a "Poisonous Yellow Peril"?:
Japanese and Japanese Americans in Public Health and Agriculture, 1890s – 1950

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Donna Gabaccia, Co-Advisor
Ann Waltner, Co-Advisor

May 2009

Acknowledgements

The act of writing this dissertation was not a solitary endeavor. There have been many, many individuals who have helped me along the way. I am deeply grateful to my dissertation committee: Donna Gabaccia, Ann Waltner, Rose Brewer, Kale Fajardo, and Malinda Alaine Lindquist. My co-advisors, Donna Gabaccia and Ann Waltner, deserve a great deal of gratitude since they shepherded this project from start to finish. Specifically, this study benefited from Ann Waltner's expertise in East Asian history and Donna Gabaccia's knowledge of Asian immigration and global history.

I had the opportunity to work with a number of talented scholars during my undergraduate and early graduate training who have greatly influenced my intellectual formation. During the earliest stages of my undergraduate education at La Sierra University, my senior honors thesis mentor, Rennie B. Schoepflin, encouraged me in field of the history of medicine. Special thanks also to Cheryl Koos and the late Clark Davis for their support while at La Sierra. I have been fortunate to have had Marjorie Kagawa-Singer, Valerie Matsumoto, and Rachel Lee on my master's thesis committee while at UCLA's Asian American Studies Center. The guidance of Valerie Matsumoto in particular has been foundational in shaping my sense of professionalism and intellectual growth in more ways than she will ever know.

I would also like to acknowledge the generous funding I have received while researching and writing this dissertation. I wish to thank the Historical Society of Southern California/John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation, The Huntington Library for the Evelyn S. Nation Fellowship in the History of Medicine, the University

of Minnesota for the Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant, the Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment & the Life Sciences, and the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota for the Diversity of Views and Experiences (DOVE) Summer Fellowship to assist me in completion of my research. Along the way, I also had the opportunity to conduct archival research at a number of different archives and would like to thank the following individuals for their assistance: William Greene at the National Archives in San Bruno, Marie Masumoto at the Japanese American National Museum, Tab Lewis at the National Archives in College Park, Paul Wormser at the National Archives in Laguna Niguel, Jessica Holada at the California State University, Northridge's Special Collections and Archives, and Marilyn Crane at the Loma Linda University Archives. The people who have assisted me at the Huntington Library are too numerous to list here, but they among them are: Christopher Adde, Peter Blodgett, Alan Jutzi, Dan Lewis, Juan Gomez, Meredith Berbée, Catherine Wehrey, and Kate Henningsen. I was also privileged to have met Eliott Gorn, Michelle Nickerson, Lauri Ramey, Sianne Ngai, Cindy I-Fen Cheng, Danielle Coriale, Liz Hutter, and Kariann Yokota while in residence at the Huntington Library. Special thanks to Liz Hutter, who eventually became my dissertation partner and cheerleader at the University of Minnesota.

I presented an early version of what is now chapter one at the annual American Association for the History of Medicine in Montreal and I would like to express my gratitude to Marta Hanson, Stephen Pemberton, and Karen Kruse Thomas for their support and critical feedback. An early version of chapter two was also presented at the

Association for Asian American Studies in Atlanta, and I am grateful for the encouragement of my fellow co-panelists, in particular Eiichiro Azuma.

I was also especially fortunate to have been mentored by a number of exceptional scholars over the years, including Noro Andriamanalina, Rose Brewer, Cindy Cheng, William Deverell, Rod Ferguson, Susan D. Jones, Troy Kaji, Valerie Matsumoto, Don Nakanishi, Jeani O'Brien, Jane Sato, Irene Suico Soriano, and Devra Weber. I would like to acknowledge the support of MJ Maynes during her tenure as chair of the History Department at the University of Minnesota. For their archival assistance during the very early stages of my dissertation research, I would like to express special thanks to Nayan Shah and Natalia Molina. Finally, this dissertation was written when sadly, Philip J. Pauly, passed away. However, I had the opportunity to meet Pauly at the History of Science Society's annual conference and would like to acknowledge the encouragement and suggestions he made shortly before his passing.

While at the University of Minnesota, I was blessed to have met wonderful colleagues, including Kelly Condit, M-Y Hsieh, Magnus Helgason, Anne Huebel, Mechelle Karels, Emily Murai, the Pierre-Louis Family, Johanna Leinonen, Amanda Nelson, Kim Park Nelson, Chantal Norrgard, Juliana Hu Pegues, Chanida Noy Phaengdara, Fang Qin, Mike Ryan, Mary Strasma, Jenny Tone-Pah-Hote, Andy Urban, Nancy Vang, Florence Mae Waldron, Catie Watson, Zhiguo Ye, and Liz Zanoni. Additionally, this dissertation was written while I was an active member of Más(s) Color. Writing this dissertation was also very much about community activism and I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Catie Watson for helping create safe spaces for graduate students of color.

My family and friends helped sustain me during those long, arduous days and nights of reading and writing well before and during my study at the University of Minnesota. They include Ann Chao, the Hamamura Family, Cathy Horinouchi, the Sato Family, and Katie and Peter Seheult. Ann Chao, Fang Qin, Sandi K. Hamamura, and Jane Sato went above and beyond by letting me bounce off ideas and providing me with an audience. I would also like to thank my family for their support of my education. My mother in particular helped provide crucial funding during the long years it took for me to obtain my doctorate.

And of course, I would like to acknowledge the support my Japanese American Seventh-Day Adventist community has provided me with all these years—spiritually, physically, and otherwise. Last, but not least, I thank God.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents
and my community for their enduring support.

Abstract

In the late nineteenth century, increasing agricultural trade and mass Asian migration facilitated the transpacific exchanges of Japanese insect, plant, and human immigrants. This dissertation, "From a 'Contagious' to a 'Poisonous Yellow Peril'?: Japanese and Japanese Americans in Public Health and Agriculture, 1890s – 1950," challenges the nation-bound paradigm within the history of American public health and agriculture by examining how the "contagious and poisonous yellow peril" image applied first to Chinese immigrants was also imposed on plants, insects, bodies, and pathogens from Japan in the late nineteenth century. As Japanese and Japanese Americans in California resisted this stigmatization, early views of Japanese and Japanese American plants, insects, fishermen, and farmers as a "contagious yellow peril" evolved into a "poisonous yellow peril," leading to their "quarantine" in the form of incarceration during World War II.

Beginning at the turn of the twentieth century, this study examines the emergence of "biological nativism" and its correlative, "a contagious yellow peril" which soon expanded to include Japanese immigrants. Linking fears of diseased bodies to that of injurious insects from Japan, these earliest biotic exchanges occurred within a larger transpacific dialogue between health officials and agriculturalists. Throughout the 1910s, government officials increasingly monitored environmental dangers from East Asia and Mexico, as well as "infected" produce sold by Japanese fishermen and farmers within their borders. Fears of perils from Mexico and Japan led to a heightened awareness of biological attacks on "native" plants and bodies and the implementation of

federal plant quarantine legislation. During the 1920s and 1930s, fears of a "contagious yellow peril" transformed into a "poisonous" menace in the form of the Japanese beetle pest and a rising second-generation Japanese American population. By World War II, government officers enacted a host of regulatory mechanisms in order to eradicate or at least control the beetle pest and prevent the sale of "poisoned" Japanese produce. Quarantine in the form of internment and the medical treatment of Japanese American prisoners helped transform them into viable citizen-subjects worthy of conservation. Yet health officials' changing views of Japanese Americans was determined in relationship to their American Indian and Mexican counterparts. In weaving together stories that are often told separately—including American history, Asian history, public health history, environmental history, and Asian American studies—this study reveals how racial and state formation unfolded across larger transpacific exchanges during American empire-building. Examining the lives of Japanese and Japanese Americans through the lens of public health and agriculture reveals how some species can be included while others could not.

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Introduction

"Yellow Peril" and Heterogeneity:

Japanese Insect, Plant, and Human Immigrants

> We anticipate it will become increasingly difficult to write the history of modern public health without asking many more questions about environment, ecology, and place. By the same token, histories of modern environments a few years hence may seem incomplete if they ignore a place's health implications, uncertainties, and impacts.
>
> --Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers[1]

"Things that were supposed to have been quarantined—they accused me of bringing in camellia petal blight from the Orient," a Japanese American nurseryman, Toichi Domoto, declared in an oral interview. However, he insisted,

> I'm almost certain I didn't [bring it in]. But anyways, they found it in most quantity in my nursery first . . . I had brought some plants in from Japan, new varieties. Before it originated in my nursery, at least maybe five, six hundred yards away in another lath house . . . I still think that the camellia petal blight is a form of the apricot brown rot. The petals, the flowers, get rotten. I could never prove it, but where the petal blight first started in my lath house was right next to an apricot orchard. The year when we had a really bad season of apricot

[1] Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, Christopher Sellers, "Introduction: A Cloud Over History," *Osiris*, 2nd Series, vol. 19 (2004): 16-17.

brown rot, there in even the few trees I had around my place, that was where the blight showed up in the flowers.[2]

He added that the small plants he had imported from Japan only had a few flowers and that he "couldn't see how the disease could have come in unless in the bud itself."[3] Domoto's observation illustrates how agricultural officials routinely suspected Japanese and Japanese American agriculturalists of importing and then spreading contagious diseases. What do environmental concerns have to do with perceptions of Japanese Americans as a medical menace?

This dissertation originally began as an exploration of Japanese Americans in the history of medicine. As research took me to numerous archives, however, I realized this story is about Japanese and Japanese Americans in relationship to their environment and to the larger ecology of the Pacific. As I explored this broader geography as it related to Japanese Americans I repeatedly encountered sources on Mexican insects and plants, and I realized that in order to fully examine the dynamic processes of racial formation, including other minority groups was in fact a necessity. To have excluded any of these—the environment, racialized Asiatic bodies, Mexicans, Indians—would have meant telling only part of a multidimensional narrative. As the review of the literature that follows shall demonstrate, writing histories of modern public health and

[2] Toichi Domoto, "A Japanese-American Nurseryman's Life in California: Floriculture and Family, 1883-1992," an oral history conducted in 1992 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, 148-149.

[3] Ibid., 149.

the environment not only tells a more complete tale than a history of Japanese Americans in the history of medicine, it also tells a timely tale.

A 2004 publication by historians Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers depict the history of health and the environment as dynamic, vibrant, and relevant to current issues within a global context. They begin with the August 2002 "Asian haze" incident that overshadowed the southern Indian Ocean and later, the United Nation's World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The executive director for the United Nations Environment Program, stated that

> initial findings clearly indicate that this growing cocktail of soot, particles, aerosols and other pollutants [is] becoming a major environmental hazard for Asia. There are also global implications, not least because a pollution parcel like this, which stretches three kilometers high, can travel half way around the globe in a week.[4]

Biological hazards from Asia have *not* dissipated in the twenty-first century. The "Asian Brown Cloud" incident potently symbolizes a fundamental revision of environmental and public health histories. Long seen as separate fields of inquiry, the "Asian Brown Cloud" widens the discussion in terms on scale—that is, it is an example of transnational material flows that spans across global, regional, local, and molecular scales.[5] This dissertation is in conversation with the works of Mitman et al. in that it

[4] Mitman, Murphy, and Sellers, "Introduction: A Cloud Over History": 1.

[5] Ibid., 5.

examines the Japanese American agriculturalists and agriculture through various scale, focusing on potential invasive species.

In this dissertation, I move beyond the nation-bound paradigms more commonly used in writing the history of American public health and agriculture by examining how the "contagious yellow peril" image that applied to Chinese immigrants was also imposed on plants, insects, bodies, and pathogens from Japan in the late nineteenth century. I do this by first tracing the early response of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Public Health officials to insect invasions and bubonic plague. I then turn to diseases that menaced native plants and white Americans during the 1910s, drawing parallels between fears of Japanese agricultural products and of Japanese agriculturalists. In the 1920s and 1930s, an increasing Japanese American population, along with modernization efforts within agriculture, symbolizes growing and larger concerns about a menacing and now "poisonous yellow peril." As Japanese and Japanese Americans in California resisted this stigmatization, early views of Japanese and Japanese American agricultural products, fishermen, and farmers as a "contagious yellow peril" evolved into a "poisonous yellow peril," leading to their "quarantine" in the form of incarceration during World War II.

Historical Context and Literature Review

In *Dodonæus in Japan: Translation and the Scientific Mind in the Tokugawa Period* (2001), W. F. Vande Walle sees similarities between the development of the sciences in Japan and Europe. It is interesting that he does not attempt to explore a possible connection between the nativist movement in Japan and the birth of race (and

racism) in early modern Europe. Moreover, while Walle and others in his edited volume do directly link medicine to the natural sciences, they focus primarily on the impact of the Western herbal tradition in Japan.[6] The research published by Walle et al. may provide the impetus for other scholars to more evenly explore how European perceptions of Japanese peoples, nature, and science changed with these intellectual exchanges. Likewise, how did changing views of nature in Japan influence views of humans (and vice versa)? Specifically, Walle asserts that the Swedish naturalist Carl Peter Thunberg based his *Flora Japonica* upon Carl Linnaeus' taxonomy, but we know more about how Linnaeus' highly influential *Systema Naturae* (1735) laid the foundation for the categorization and ranking of the human "species" in Europe and North America and less about how it may have influenced racial formation across multidirectional transpacific exchanges.[7] Since race has been explored primarily in terms of a black/white paradigm in the history of medicine and science, and the study of race has gained importance in Asian history only more recently, this narrative fills an important lacuna by explicitly elucidating racial formation at these intersections.

Due in large part to scholars such as Alfred Crosby and William Cronon, as well as more recent publications by Philip J. Pauly and Peter Coates, our historical understandings of racial formation as it relates to the intersection of nature *and* humans in the Atlantic on the east coast has been better documented and analyzed than it has

[6] W. F. Vande Walle, ed., *Dodonæus in Japan: Translation and the Scientific Mind in the Tokugawa Period* (Kyoto, Japan: Leuven University Press, 2001), 23.

[7] Ibid., 18. See also Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 63.

been in Japan, the Pacific or the American west. Cronon, Crosby, Pauly and Coates all place the ecology—whether it be horticulture, agriculture, and human migration—center stage in their narratives. And while none of these works focus primarily on Asian immigrants or the Pacific, these works have brought together human and natural forces in ways that much previous scholarship has overlooked.[8] Equally important, these books provide fertile ground on which future race scholars can cultivate more insights into the processes of racial formation across larger transpacific exchanges during the early modern and modern periods.

Cronon's *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983) still remains one of the most influential works in the field of environmental studies. In *Changes in the Land,* Cronon clearly writes that his "purpose throughout is to explain why New England habitats changed as they did during the colonial period."[9] Cronon's ecological history of New England during the colonial period moves beyond what had been previously been defined as "human institutions"—including gender, class and economies, and political organizations—to that of natural ecosystems. Reflecting on *Changes in the Land* on its twentieth anniversary, one of the first environmental historians, Dan Flores, wrote that despite the new work that has come out, it still feels "quite modern" with respect to agricultural and environmental

[8] Gregg Mitman writes that Crosby owed an intellectual debt to the Australian parasitologist F. Macfarlane Burnet and American bacteriologist Rene Dubos (see Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers, eds., *Landscapes of Exposure: Knowledge and Illness in Modern Environments* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004], 9).

[9] William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), viii.

histories.[10] In his last chapter, Cronon concludes that ultimately English property systems "encouraged" these colonists to view the land as commodities—both the land itself and the products it produced. Cronon stresses that "Capitalism and environmental degradation went hand in hand." Yet at the same time, the devastation of Indian populations by epidemics they had not been previously exposed to cannot be reduced to something purely economic. Here, Asian Americanists and other race scholars can begin to see larger Pacific and west coast patterns by paying attention to Cronon's observations. He writes that disease proved instrumental in dismantling Indian status systems, leading them to participate in the fur trade, as well as literally clear the land of these indigenous inhabitants and facilitating conquest of both Indians and the land: "If Europeans were responsible for bringing diseases to America, it is no less true that those diseases in turn helped promote European expansion. They were as much a socioeconomic fact as an ecological one."[11] Three years after *Changes*, Alfred Crosby further advanced his arguments about the centrality of the ecology in *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (1986) arguing that European domination of the New World depended not so much on their technology as much as did on introduced diseases, plants, and other pests.

As the historian Kariann Yokota's research on the early modern period points out, following the Revolution, Americans teetered between the possibility of a "glorious future" as an independent nation and a "culture of insecurity" which reflected their

[10] Dan Flores, "Twenty Years On: Thoughts on *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England,*" *Agricultural History*, Vol. 78, No. 4, (Autumn, 2004): 495.

[11] Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 161-162.

subordinate status as former colonies.[12] Although Yokota does not examine what I would call a "(horti)culture of insecurity," her main arguments about material culture across transatlantic exchanges offers new insights into how these European Americans viewed themselves and their environment. Pauly, for example, has noted that colonists' early attempts to establish European vinifera repeatedly failed. While these growers acknowledged that perhaps these failures were due to inappropriate or inadequate culture—including the ignorance on the part of Americans—they also feared that "depressingly though unspecifically" that the American environments were often destructive to refined European plants.[13] Moreover, unlike the objects of material culture, such as dried specimens shipped across the Atlantic Ocean, the humans, animals, and other living organisms that made up the surrounding New World ecology possessed reproductive capabilities and presented the possibility of hybridity.[14] Not surprisingly, fears of a degenerative New World environment also extended to the colonists themselves. An historical narrative on American independence—and other key themes in American history relating to nationalism, colonialism, and empire—cannot be disentangled from its horticultural independence.[15] Placing the ecology at the center of one's narrative can not only sharpen an analysis of a "(horti)culture of insecurity," but also complicate a racial analysis based primarily upon material culture.

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[12] Kariann Yokota, "Post-Colonial America: Transatlantic Networks of Exchange in the Early National Period" (Ph. D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2002), xvi.

[13] Philip J. Pauly, *Fruits and Plains: The Horticultural Transformation of America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 73.

[14] Philip Pauly pointed out at the 2007 History of Science Society Annual Meeting at Washington D. C. that unlike antiquities, flora and fauna had reproductive capabilities.

[15] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains*, 3.

The research of ethnic studies scholars like Yokota, along with the work of environmental historians, provide a sophisticated framework for future historians to utilize and rework in order to trace how an early "(horti)culture of insecurity," as well as other biotic anxieties, steered the course in empire building, migration policy, racial formation across transoceanic exchanges, citizenship, and the struggle over land in western America.

Previous scholarship on the westward movement across the Americas has included the interactive relationship between humans and the environment, some of which have focused on California. These scholars have explored what Carolyn Merchant refers to as the "multicultural" experiences in California during the Gold Rush, such as the environmental impact mining had upon the land.[16] Merchant links these narratives of "[s]tories of decline" that emphasized large-scale agriculture, ranching, and mining to the changing racial demographics along the western frontier and also seeks to offer "[a]lternative stories [that] challenge these two linear plots" by "inserting the complexities" of Mexicans, Chinese, blacks, women, and buffalo into these narratives.[17] Although Merchant does not explicitly underline the unique contribution that environmental histories of the American West can make, race scholars such as Sucheng Chan have made important contributions in helping historians and environmental studies scholars understand how unlike the East, the West has been historically a place where the process of racial formation represented the United States' national identity. The American West was a meeting place or contact zones that

[16] Carolyn Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 80.

[17] Ibid., 98.

symbolized a superficially homogenized "American multi(horti)culturalism" even as it suppressed real heterogeneity among and within various racial and ethnic minorities.

In *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (1986), Sucheng Chan adds to the literature on Chinese immigrants in environmental history by shifting the focus away from miners, merchants, and railroad laborers to that of Chinese agriculturalists, such as truck gardeners, fruit pickers, tree pruners, and shepherds.[18] She challenges the assumption that "cheap" Chinese labor paved the path for land monopoly and corporate agribusinesses in California. She also refutes assertions that Chinese farmers depleted the land and soil.[19] Instead, the Chinese, many of whom were "suburban agriculturalists," were directly and intimately involved at every stage of land reclamation and potato cultivation in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region.[20] Understanding the history of the largest group of early Asian agriculturalists in the United States—the Chinese—sheds light on both the similarities and differences of subsequent waves of Japanese immigrant agriculturalists and their experiences. *This Bittersweet Soil* also uncovers the central role Chinese agriculturalists played in developing the American West during a period of expansion. Chan asserts that "without them the Delta would have taken decades longer to develop into one of

[18] Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 2.

[19] See for example, Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil,* 155. In fact, Chan points out that Chinese truck gardeners oftentimes practiced crop diversification, growing potatoes, onions, beans, cereal, and tree fruit (122).

[20] Ibid., 87, 170.

the richest agricultural areas in the world."[21] Building upon and complicating Chan's pioneering work, this dissertation constructs a narrative where the fluidity and interchangeability within and between racial categories shaped not only western agricultural expansion but also western settlement and larger biotic transpacific exchanges.

Social and cultural historians have more recently begun to address issues such as the inter-imperial circulation of knowledge, bringing discussions of empire back to the center. Historian Jean Kim has argued that the agricultural sciences, industrial medicine, and international public health networks constitute additional fields for "fleshing out of an American colonial culture centered on racial and developmental distinctions and notions of national exceptionalism."[22] Kim's placement of not only international public health networks, but, I would add here, also the international exchanges amongst agriculturalists points to the centrality of public health and the environment as pivotal in empire building.

If European expansion in the New World and elsewhere can be attributed primarily to ecological factors, how did this early history shape European Americans' interactions with subsequent ecological "invasions" in the form of Asian immigrants? The pioneering work that Cronon and Crosby have already done can help current and future historians to realize that fears of an invading population that bring disease and devastation, decimate the "native" population, and take over the land has not been a

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[21] Sucheng Chan, "This Bittersweet Soil," *Green Versus Gold: Sources in California's Environmental History*, Carolyn Merchant, ed. (Covelo, California: Island Press, 1998): 275.

[22] Jean Kim, "Empire at the Crossroads of Modernity: Plantations, Medicine, and the Biopolitics of Life in Hawai'i, 1898-1948" (Ph. D. diss., Cornell University, 2005), xxvii.

new one but has repeated itself over time and across space during U.S. expansion. At the same time, such early works highlight the necessity of narratives that examine other populations in addition to European Americans and American Indians. Since the two largest minority populations in the United States today are Mexican and Asian Americans, it is timely to write narratives that center on these populations.

This study of Japanese immigrant agriculturalists continues this larger narrative of plant and animal introductions and ecological expansion. Since acknowledging that Indians actively participated in a complex ecological system runs the risk of reifying essentialist perceptions of them as part of the natural landscape, placing them alongside later Asian and Mexican immigrants highlights the long trajectory of humanized insects and plants, as well as naturalized humans. For if Cronon's and Crosby's Indians were early modern ecological participants—which they certainly have continued to be well into the twenty-first century—then Japanese immigrant agriculturalists became modern ecological participants. Regardless of the extent to which European Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were cognizant of these historic connections, the central role that the ecology played in European expansion and control of lands, as well as determining nationality and citizenship, is striking and should not be dismissed.

This dissertation begins chronologically where the works of Cronon and Crosby ended—the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively—and covers a long history of exchanges and reactions that culminated in the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. This study has been strongly influenced by the research of Philip Pauly, who in turn was influenced greatly by Cronon and particularly

Crosby. Pauly's article on the Japanese cherry trees opened an important area of inquiry in this research.[23] *Fruits and Plains: The Horticultural Transformation of America* (2007) was published during the tail end of this dissertation writing process, and it remains his last and arguably best work. Throughout his research, such as *Fruits and Plains*, Pauly stresses that the history of American horticulture is not simply a frivolous, ornamental subject.[24] According to *Fruits and Plains,* the world is our garden and the ecology can tell us much about the alien, naturalized, and natives. Pauly's nuanced analysis carefully balances desire for exotics, conservation of natives, and fears of alien enemies, tying these themes together with human attitudes toward both natives and aliens. Pauly emphasizes that fears of alien enemies often—but not always—triumphed over desire for exotics. One of Pauly's most potent examples of how these fears played out include the original Japanese cherry trees that USDA officials destroyed in 1910. Pauly points out that the planting of the cherry trees not only affirmed that Tokyo and Washington D. C. were "sister cities," but also symbolized "nature that would embody all that Plymouth Rock, all that the Declaration of Independence, all that the Emancipation Proclamation means, of liberty, patriotism, union." Put in another way, it represented the planting of the "symbol of the very soul of the manhood of Japan" in the United States capital.[25] While in *Fruits and Plains,* Pauly does not focus solely or even primarily on Asian plant and insect immigrants, he

[23] See Philip J. Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees: Conflicting Visions of American Ecological Independence," *Isis*, vol. 87, no. 1 (March 1996): 51-73.

[24] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains*, 1.

[25] Ibid., 148-149.

is perhaps the only scholar to have compared Asian insect, plant, and human immigrants in great length.

It is significant that few scholars aside from Pauly have explicitly sought to connect Japanese plant and insect immigrants to that of their human counterparts.[26] This is especially noteworthy considering that the Japanese immigrant or issei's ethnic economy centered primarily on agriculture beginning at the turn of the century and continued well into the 1940s. Moreover, even current materialist historiography, Asian Americanist Colleen Lye has pointed out, has failed to recognize the extent to which economic capitalism has been so intimately linked with Japanese Americans and the "yellow peril": "The underdevelopment of materialist historiography of internment stands in curious contrast to the fact that the Japanese peril and anti-Japaneseness have primarily found expression through an economic modality."[27] An analysis of injurious plant and insect immigrants, just like Japanese immigrants themselves, cannot be easily disentangled from monopoly capitalism, economic efficiency, and economic exploitation. Pauly's research, along with a small handful of other scholars, has provided important stepping stones that have enabled me to better explore the human and insect realm of the issei, while also filling in the gap in the materialist historiography that Lye has pointed to.

To the best of my knowledge, *Fruits and Plains* and Peter Coates' *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (2006) are the only two book-length works that compare insect, plant, and human immigrants from the

[26] Certainly, Pauly's observations and analyses move beyond the "obvious."

[27] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 102.

late nineteenth century to the present.[28] *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species* directly engages with *Fruits and Plains*. Yet unlike Pauly, Coates does not see a strong correlation between human and plant migration. Coates instead believes that floral and faunal migration which coincided with human migration was just a coincidence: " . . . open doors for people does not automatically mean open doors for floral and faunal immigrants, more of which have entered in packing crates, shipping containers, and ballast water than in suitcases or stuck to the soles of shoes."[29] Not only does he *not* see a necessary connection between plant and human migration, he also believes that "[w]e . . . have a far keener awareness of how the variables of race, class, and gender molded the dialogue between people and the rest of nature."[30] While he believes that our awareness of how the variables of race, class, and gender shaped the discourse between humans and nature is a well-informed one, he does not cite any works to support this claim. Therefore, this dissertation assesses the differing interpretation of Coates and Pauly on the basis of an examination of Japanese floral, faunal, and human immigrants.

Coates questions whether Pauly "overstates the extent to which scientists as well as lay persons were affected by racial neurosis and ethnic bias."[31] Coates argues that figures such as Charles Marlatt, chief of the Bureau of Entomology in the USDA,

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[28] *Fruits and Plains,* however, begins in the late eighteenth century and examines the invasion of the Hessian fly and how it coincided with the American Revolution.

[29] Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 5.

[30] Ibid., 3

[31] Ibid., 99.

objected to the importation of certain plants such as the Japanese cherry trees on the basis of "practical objections." The age and size of the cherry trees, for example, increased the risk of importing dangerous insects and contagious plant diseases. Coates also claims that cosmopolitans oftentimes appreciated native species and even discriminated between "harmful nonnatives and other immigrant species," as well as the practical, or economic and environmental, grounds for the exclusion of nonnative species. Moreover, Coates takes issue with Pauly's assessment of the plant explorer David Fairchild as a "cosmopolitan" who enthusiastically promoted plant immigrants, particularly from Asia.[32] This research responds to Coates' criticism by drawing upon Pauly's claims while also reworking his ideas. Whereas Pauly's article on the Japanese cherry trees depicted employers for the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Bureau of Entomology as cosmopolitans and nativists, respectively, this dissertation instead explores the possibility of a third approach—that is of, USDA employers as "orientalists." Those agriculturalists who were orientalists could base their "practical" claims for exclusion on "practical objections." These same orientalists could also simultaneously appreciate and desire "oriental exotics" for their economic value and aesthetic beauty. Orientalists in a sense were a hybrid of *both* cosmopolitans and nativists—they openly received and welcomed plants with value (however subjective) while also attempting to bar those who potentially endangered natives.

This study, along with the recent works of Pauly and Coates, also seeks to fill the gap in the literature of the history of biological invasions after the Civil War,

[32] Ibid., 98-99, 108.

focusing on smaller creatures and trees.[33] However, this dissertation departs from works like Coates' *American Perceptions* in that it seeks not to become an apologist for the nativists. By situating Japanese plant, insect, and human immigrants as central within the histories of science and medicine and race in American history, this dissertation disrupts previous narratives that have marginalized Asians and Asian Americans in predominantly transatlantic-focused studies.

In her dissertation on Japanese American gardeners in southern California, Carla Tengan seeks to write Asian Americans back into environmental history.[34] "Most scholars of environmental history," Tengan notes, "literally write Asian Americans out of the narrative."[35] Unlike common stereotypes of Japanese Americans, including the subservient geisha and threatening wartime soldiers, the Japanese gardener rarely appeared in popular culture images. Whenever Japanese gardeners did appear in popular culture, at times writers depicted them as imperialists intent on taking over the land. Yet Tengan points out that their relative absence in popular culture offers a different perspective on the divergence between the "acceptance of human communities (i. e., Japanese American gardeners) and natural spaces (i. e., Japanese-style gardens) in mainstream society."[36] This dissertation acknowledges that while there has been some divergence between the acceptance of Japanese Americans and the natural spaces they inhabited in mainstream society, they have also converged and paralleled one another

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[33] Ibid., 6.

[34] Carla S. Tengan, "Cultivating Communities: Japanese American Gardeners in Southern California, 1910-1980" (Ph. D. diss., Brown University, 2006), 4-5.

[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] Ibid., 96.

throughout the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries in some informative and illuminating ways.

Unlike most historians of the environment, historians of public health have increasingly studied the relationship between medicine and racialized state formation and nation-building. Therefore, using public health and the natural sciences as focal points for this dissertation, I examine the interrelationship between the natural and human worlds with respect to Japanese and Japanese Americans. Such an examination reveals not only the ways in which humans and the ecology have influenced one another, but also illustrates an historical and concrete example of the mechanism of racial formation and state formation in the modern era. Studying Japanese plant, insect, and human migrants uncovers the process of racial formation by offering a comparative analysis with other minorities and equally important, demonstrating how the institutionalization of agriculture and ecology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries planted the seeds for their categorization and dehumanization. But as David Theo Goldberg has pointed out, "the modern state . . . is nothing less than a racial state."[37] Specifically and most relevant to this dissertation, Goldberg seeks to understand why modern state formation has "been predicated principally upon the artifice of homogeneity as an *idée fixe*."[38] Recentering Japanese flora, fauna, and insects alongside Japanese immigrants counters and belies this artifice of homogeneity

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[37] David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 239.

[37] Ibid., 2.

[38] Ibid., 239. *"Idée fixe"* can be defined as an idea that dominates one's mind for a long time period; an obsession.

that has been the hallmark of hegemonic modern state formation. In other words, examining the historical evolution of floral, faunal, and human aliens from Japan in a more concrete manner demonstrates how the modern and simultaneously racial state was built upon artifice of homogeneity and how persistence of these enemy aliens within the United States' borders subvert this artifice. This narrative brings us back to the very soil, rich with compost and manure, with which human actors interacted with—from officials who worked for departments of public health and agriculture to the very lives of Japanese agriculturalists.

A small but growing number of works have begun to address this relationship of public health and racialization, some more directly than others. Nayan Shah and Natalia Molina have made important contributions in ethnic studies and the history of medicine by focusing on Asian Americans. Shah's *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (2001) examines the transformation of Chinese immigrants from vile disease-breeders into "model citizens" by the mid-twentieth century. Shah uses the prism of public health in order to understand how formations of race have been legitimated even as they have coalesced, changed, and reconstituted in various societal strata.[39] Shah recognizes the power and influence of public health in transforming the lives of nineteenth and twentieth century Chinese immigrants by locating racial difference in the body, social morality, and living conditions.[40] At the end of his book, Shah offers an important critique of how Chinese American leaders

[39] Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 5.

[40] Ibid., 253.

turned to western medical science and stressed the heteronormative, nuclear family in order to be included as "American citizens."

Like Shah, in *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (2006), Molina shifts the focus from east coast-centered narratives in the history of medicine to that of the American West. Molina, however, adds to the literature by offering an explicitly and much-needed comparative racial and ethnic analysis. She argues that early dominant perceptions of Asian and Asian Americans as disease-breeders eventually shaped perceptions of Mexicans. Indeed, the very meaning of what it meant to be "Mexican" was defined in reference to these Asian and Asian American populations. Together, the works of Shah and Molina demolish notions of the sciences as value-free and objective.[41] But neither directly addresses the linkage of environment and health. This dissertation moves beyond human bodies as the sole sites of contestation—beyond contagion within bodies to include insects and plants, where the toxicity of poison also has much to say about modern agriculture and racialized state formation.

Works such as Susan Craddock's *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, Deviance in San Francisco* (2000) do not focus specifically on how racial categories are constructed and reconstructed through the lens of public health over time, yet have made noteworthy contributions to our understandings of race, space, and disease. As recently as 2000, works that highlighted the discursive representation of locations, signs, buildings, and of inhabitants, Craddock contends, still remained scarce. Such

[41] Other examples include Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2006); Jean Ju Kim, "Empire at the Crossroads of Modernity: Plantations, Medicine, and the Biopolitics of Life in Hawai'i, 1898-1948" (Ph. D. Diss., Cornell University, August 2005).

representations inscribed space with "symbolic meanings, a process that in turn shapes the parameters of social practice possible within that spatial arena."[42] *City of Plagues* hence redressed the absence of literature that revealed the importance of disease and spatial formation. *City of Plagues* and other works, such as Linda Nash's *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease and Knowledge* (2006), illustrate newer scholarship that situates bodies within a larger environment, whether it be socially constructed spaces such as Chinatown, or the ecology.

Inescapable Ecologies places bodies, including Mexican farmworkers, as central to understanding how toxic pesticides affected them. Nash criticizes the modern amnesia in accounts such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) that documented the effects of pesticides on the ecology, but neglected and made invisible porous bodies. Informed by the works of Pauly and Nash, this dissertation makes visible bodies and landscapes. By weaving together environmental history with Japanese bodies in one narrative, we see how certain former alien species can be naturalized or gain citizenship by birth, while others cannot.

Methodology

Nash has criticized how the institutionalization of concepts—and here I would add, fields—oftentimes segments off all too neatly different areas of study and narrows our vision. She argues that the "new public health" separated the body from the larger environment, choosing instead to focus on disease contained within bodies: "Their models seemingly, and conveniently, resolved the tension between modernization and

[42] Susan Craddock, *City of Plagues: Disease, Poverty, Deviance in San Francisco* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 8.

health by exonerating the landscape from any independent role in disease."[43] Nash's criticism mirrors the increasing concerns over the relationship between pollution, toxic chemicals, and disease. And as Mitman and others have pointed out, these concerns have become especially pressing as scientists have already begun to document the global movements of not only bodies, but pollutants and chemicals. Not only will it be increasingly difficult to write histories of public health without somehow engaging with environmental studies, but it will also be increasingly difficult to marginalize fields such as environmental studies and public health. With China and India as the most populous countries in the world, and with other rapidly industrializing nations in South and Southeast Asia, it will increasingly be difficult to ignore these global movements and migrations.

Although published more than twenty years ago, Cronon's interdisciplinary methodology in *Changes in the Land* marks it as a work far ahead of its time. Cronon wrote that "One of the delights (and sometimes irritations) of interdisciplinary work is the way it takes one to library call letters, library stack floors, and in fact entire libraries one has never visited before."[44] Similarly, I had the opportunity to visit numerous archives I have never visited before, such as the National Archives in College Park, Maryland and The Huntington Library in San Marino, California. Along the way, I met a number of other scholars from disciplines outside of history and many helpful archivists. This study is interdisciplinary in that it speaks to the history of medicine, environmental studies, the study of race (including racial theory and intersectionality),

[43] Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 6.

[44] Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, ix.

and Asian American and ethnic studies. As an interdisciplinary study, the primary sources used included USDA bulletins and other publications (including the Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine and Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes), newspaper articles(including the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, and *New York Times*), United States Public Health officials' correspondence and reports, annual Los Angeles County and City Health Reports, archival materials on the Japanese Hospital of Los Angeles, medical correspondence on Poston internment camp, Immigration and Naturalization Service Papers on a Japanese Peruvian family, and whenever possible, the publications, writings, and oral histories by Japanese and Japanese Americans themselves. Secondary sources ranged from scholarship in the areas of literature, cultural studies, public health history, and environmental history and studies.

Chapter Summaries and Periodization

This dissertation focuses on the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because it was during this period that nurseries in California began to import from Japan and the heaviest mass migration occurred from Japan.[45] Chapter one examines how new plant introductions from Japan occurred just as Japanese immigrants began entering the United States in mass numbers in the late nineteenth century. In this chapter, we see how the earliest seeds were planted in shaping racial formation. Here, the "contagious yellow peril" image in the form of injurious insects and pathogens took root at the turn of the century. Acknowledging that while at times, United States agricultural and public health officials distinguished between Japanese and Chinese

[45] Coates, *Strangers on the Land*, 76.

immigrants, they also began to make note of the dynamic interactions between these two countries and immigrant communities. At times, economics and perceptions of modernity frequently served to delineate Japanese immigrants from Chinese ones. Yet when questions arose as to the origins of the San José Scale, entomologists and other government agriculturalists remained uncertain, even if for a moment, as to whether or not it came from China or Japan. Public health officials responded even more aggressively when they sought to contain and forcibly vaccinate not only Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, but Japanese immigrants as well. The first chapter therefore traces the earliest stage of this evolution of Japanese "pests" into "enemy alien species."

Chapter two focuses on plant diseases imported from Japan and the correlative increasing concerns of how Japanese agriculturalists' business practices endangered the public's health. During the 1910s, we see how both the spread of chestnut blight and typhoid influenced dominant images of them as environmentally destructive and "cheap" Japanese agriculturalists that imperiled the nation's health. With the Asiatic racial form taking the shape of Japanese agricultural products and bodies, this chapter highlights Japanese immigrant fishermen and farmers. During this time period, discourse on Japanese plants and disease gradually became associated with "diseased" Japanese immigrants themselves. Recentering Japanese agriculturalists allows us to see how officials intensified their efforts to control those alien species within their borders.

In chapter three, Japanese beetles surface as the "yellow peril" and the concept of poisonous pesticides takes center stage during this period of modernization. Although fears of a Japanese immigrants as disseminators of disease did not fully

subside (as evidenced in the 1923-1924 Pneumonic and Bubonic Plague in Los Angeles), here fears of a "toxic yellow peril" materializes. Ranging from pesticides used to combat Japanese beetles to insecticides on produce grown by Japanese farmers and gardeners in the 1920s and 1930s, agriculture and public health officials often joined forces to wage war against this new peril that maliciously threatened natives. The 1920s and 1930s also marked the time period in which Japanese beetles and Japanese Americans multiplied in alarming numbers. Yet officials who worked for the Department of Agriculture and Public Health at the same time began to actively target the southern borders for another kind of "danger": the "brown peril" from Mexico. Such a comparative analysis begins to shed light on how minority groups are often juxtaposed with one another during defining historical moments, which in turn has implications for how racial formation functions and reenergizes.

In chapter four, I turn to the devastating and ultimately dehumanizing effects of targeting these so-called "national and natural enemies." Previous fears that Japanese growers "poisoned" their consumers reached a feverish, nationalist pitch during the Second World War. Yet in large part due to liberals, Japanese Americans also gradually became targets of conservationist efforts. This repackaging could also be attributed to the close associations between those Japanese Americans and American Indians and their shared physical spaces, including medical facilities. But while Japanese Americans could then be more easily accepted as "native" Americans, Mexican and Mexican Americans still endured the stigma of being "disease-breeders" that presumably overburdened the health care system. And unlike Japanese Americans

born in the United States, Japanese immigrants still remained an enemy alien species.[46] Moreover, the popularization of images of Japanese soldiers as insects helped play a decisive role in the historic decision to drop the atomic bombs. The implications for the "yellow peril" images reached well beyond the boundaries of the United States, most notably with the incarceration of Japanese Latin Americans during World War II.

Like many of the other key works that have preceded this dissertation—from Cronon to Pauly—I hope to stimulate debate about how understanding our environment helps us to understand the history of minorities. But the racial equality I write about here is not the same as the sort of utopian racelessness that has plagued our modern national consciousness and hegemonic historical narratives.[47] So ubiquitous and routinized has the concept of racelessness become that it appears "natural," just as the Japanese cherry trees that bloom in Washington D. C. year after year. Thus, in this dissertation I have written a tale that connects the lives of Japanese and Japanese Americans to plant and insect immigrants in order to demonstrate that while they struggled within an environment that sought to exclude, contain, and reshape them, at times they also resisted and asserted their difference.

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[46] See for example, Mae Ngai, "The World War II Internment of Japanese Americans and the Citizenship Renunciation Cases," *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004), 175-201.

[47] Goldberg, *The Racial State*, 258. Goldberg insightfully adds that "Racelessness is the effect (in part) of globalized migrations, movements, and mobilities, paradoxically perhaps their racial expression . . ." (261).

Chapter 1:

The "Contagious Yellow Peril" at America's Ecological and Medical Borders in the 1880s and 1890s

> As we keep out certain plants and animals lest they bring in physical disease, we are equally justified in excluding those who may bring in social disease . . . Our civilization is complicated enough and full enough of obscure pitfalls of misunderstandings to make us wary about introducing any more unassimilable elements than we can help.
>
> --Cornelia James Cannon[48]

What does plant quarantine have to do with the larger narrative of Japanese immigrants at America's medical borders? For North American scientists and policy-makers, the movement of bodies, food, and plants from Japan—and the insects and diseases that came with them—threatened native biota, including those plants and bodies scientists deemed to be "native."[49] This chapter constructs a narrative of how the movement of bodies from Japan helped fuel the emergence of a much larger "biological nativism" in the late nineteenth century. Philip J. Pauly's research on the USDA's interbureau rivalries offers key insights. Pauly compares the Bureau of Plant Industry's botanists who tended to be cooperative and sensitive, seeking to increase both the number and variety of useful flora and fauna in the United States. In contrast

[48] Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Native Species: Strangers on the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 88. Original sources were: Cornelia James Cannon, "American Misgivings," *Atlantic Monthly* 129 (February 1922): 145-157 and "Selecting Citizens," *North American Review* 218 (September 1923): 333. Cornelia Cannon was a commentator in *Harper's, Atlantic Monthly,* and *North American Review*. She also authored *Red Rust*, a story about a Swedish immigrant family in Minnesota. Her husband was the prominent experimental psychologist Walter Bradford Cannon.

[49] Ecological restorationists are not necessarily racists *per se*, as William O'Brien argues, but they do in fact draw upon the historical legacy of racism in the United States in order to justify their views (See William O'Brien, "Exotic Invasions, Nativism, and Ecological Restoration: On the Persistence of a Contentious Debate," *Ethics, Place and Environment*, vol. 9, no. 1 [March 2006]: 66-67).

to these ecological "cosmopolitans," zoologists in the Bureaus of Biological Survey and Entomology tended to be aggressively masculine, competitive, and careerist. These "biological nativists" worked not only to protect America's borders from foreign organisms they considered pests, but also to preserve the "distinctive biotic elements" within the United States.[50] Proponents of "biological nativism" thus sought to defend American borders from foreign intruders that could pose both a health menace and an ecological threat to native species. This chapter shows how the quarantine of a newly emerging "contagious yellow peril" in the form of "oriental" bubonic plague traveling with migrants set the stage for the eventual quarantine of plant immigrants from Japan. This newly emerging "contagious yellow peril" stemmed first from increasing concerns over bodies and disease, but soon included other biological dangers.

This narrative begins in the late nineteenth century when the concerns of public health officials still included broader biotic exchanges, including insects and the food grown from imported plants. At the same time the late nineteenth century also marks the professionalization and institutionalization of medicine, public health, and agriculture in the United States. With the growing acceptance of germ theory, new public health advocates began to sharply delineate the environment from human bodies. Previously, ideologies situated disease within the environment more broadly. Historian Linda Nash has written that "disease in the nineteenth century, even when acknowledged to be contagious, was not reducible to specific pathogenic agents or person-to-person contact. Contemporaries understood the causes of disease as spread

[50] Philip J. Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees, *Isis* 87:1 (March 1996): 53.

widely across both bodies and landscapes."[51] Medical practitioners saw germs everywhere and recognized the multiple ways they could penetrate the body. Nash has argued that over time the landscape was "exonerated" or removed from its role in promoting disease.[52]

The story of Japanese immigrant agriculturalists begins when medical practitioners still acknowledged the relationship between diseased bodies and the environment in which they moved. Clearly, entomologists who worked for the USDA were in conversation with United States and California health officials—indeed, they often borrowed each others' rhetorical language. The late nineteenth century serves as an important starting point for this chapter because it shows that Japanese movements and migration occurred during a time when practitioners still recognized the relationship between the environment and the body.

Public health emerged as a part of a regulatory mechanism of a growing American empire. Health officials at the federal, state, and local levels began to look to immigrants who increasingly sought to enter America's gates. Immigration restriction, in addition to public health and plant regulation, were key in shaping the process that transformed Japanese immigrants into a new "contagious yellow peril." Because of the close geographical proximity and the fluidity between Japanese and Chinese communities, public health officials increasingly saw Japanese immigrants as the "new yellow contagion" who could, like their Chinese counterparts, embody the plague. American health officials monitored these immigrants during the migration journey

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[51] Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 18.

[52] Ibid., 8, 12.

itself—including the passage of ships between China or Hong Kong to Kobe and Yokohama. They did so by placing health officials from the United States Marine Hospital Service at these ports. The authority of these American health officials abroad overrode Japanese and Chinese officials. Yet at times American officials did defer to the authority of an elite Japanese scientist in the diagnoses of plague. Although exchanges between officials in Japan and the U.S. formed a part of a larger international public health network that spanned the globe, chapter one examines how perceptions of class, sanitation, hygiene, and modernity in late nineteenth century Japan specifically shaped American health officials' treatment of Japanese immigrants.

This chapter also demonstrates the complexities of America's gatekeeping mechanism. Most cosmopolitan plant explorers who worked for the United States Department of Agriculture welcomed and encouraged the introduction of foreign plants, but many also held an orientalist view of "exotic" plants and bodies—where "oriental" plant immigrants were clearly inferior but also held the potential for economic profit.[53] By focusing on Japanese immigrants, environmental studies scholars can begin to see how immigrants' reception depended in part on their economic potential and perceptions of them as modern. Lye has most recently argued that the "yellow peril" and the "model minority" image" are two different faces of the same, "long-running racial form, a form whose most salient feature, whether it has been made the basis for

[53] Here I borrow from Philip Pauly's article on the Japanese cherry trees. Pauly defines "cosmopolitan" as those "botanists in the Bureau of Plant Industry, who were cooperative, sensitive, and sometimes diffident about their careers as bureaucrats." These cosmopolitans "sought to increase the number and variety of useful kinds of vegetation in the United States and were serene about the country's ability to prosper in a global biotic system. They can, appropriately, be described as ecological 'cosmopolitans'" (see "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees, *Isis* 87:1 [March 1996]: 53).

exclusion or assimilation, is the trope of economic efficiency."[54] By making this important historic connection, she thus links dominant perceptions of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans to concepts such as economic efficiency, universal modernity, and monopoly capitalism. Focusing on the human dimensions, as well as the environmental, highlights how assumptions about Japanese immigrants turned on views of them as economically profitable or as monopoly capitalists. By situating Japanese Americans within ecological history, we can better understand how their reception depended in large part on their perceived roles as economically exploited or as exploiters.

Earliest Plant Exchanges

As historian Gary Okihiro has pointed out, Asians had already entered into the historical consciousness of Americans well before the mid-nineteenth century, when Chinese mass migration to "Gold Mountain" began.[55] Instead, he places the emergence of this historical consciousness somewhere around either the fifth or fourth century B. C., when the "father of medicine" and Greek physician, Hippocrates articulated a scientific view of Asian peoples and Asia itself. Hippocrates attributed the "very wide" differences between Asia and Europe to the environment, which fundamentally "shaped the peoples' bodily conformations" and even their characters. The mild and uniform climate of Asia supported lush vegetations and bountiful harvests, but under these conditions "courage, endurance, industry and high spirit could not arise" and thus

[54] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5.

[55] Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 7.

"pleasure must be supreme." Hippocrates believed that Asians "reflected the seasons in their natures," and that they exhibited a "monotonous sameness" and even stagnation. Due to the differing environments of Asians and Europeans, Hippocrates came to the conclusion that Europeans had physical types of a greater variety and were more courageous and had more energy than Asians since ". . . uniformity engenders slackness, while variation fosters endurance in both body and soul; rest and slackness are food for cowardice, endurance and exertion for bravery."[56] Okihiro's analysis uncovers some of the earliest orientalist formations shaped by ecological factors that predate early modern biotic exchanges.

Material biotic exchanges between Japan and other western nations had been occurring since at least the early modern period. The earliest biotic exchanges between Japan and Europe occurred in the seventeenth century. During these exchanges, the Dutch East India Company, as well as scientists, naturalists, and other traders brought back information from Japan to Europe. Some of the most noted included George Meister (1653-1713), Engelbert Kaemphfer (1651-1716), Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828), and Philipp von Siebold (1796-1866). The Dutch East India Company had built Deshima Island in Nagasaki Bay after their expulsion from Japan in 1639, providing a place for foreigners (mostly Dutch) to live while examining the flora and fauna of Japan. After living in Japan from 1691 to 1692, Kaempfer published his findings in *Amoenitatum exoticarum* (1712). Kaempfer was also noteworthy because he became the first to describe the gingko tree. He eventually brought gingko trees with him to

[56] Ibid., 8.

Europe and introduced the soybean, touting its usefulness as a food plant. Thunberg, a student of Carl Linnaeus, also visited Deshima Island, where he was able to collect various plant specimens, eventually publishing *Flora japonica* (1784) based upon the island flora he observed.[57]

Such exchanges were not unidirectional, however. Throughout the seventeenth century, Deshima Island became the center for study of Western medicine and science. Not only were Japanese plants smuggled out of the country via Deshima, but Japanese scholars and samurai traveled there to learn Dutch and acquire knowledge of Dutch science and medicine. The Rangakusha, a group of specialists, emerged from Japanese scholars' desire to learn Western science.[58] One Rangakusha, Kanen Iwasaki (1786-1842), published *Honzo zufu*, one of the most important works exploring systematic botany during the Tokugawa period (1603-1867). Iwasaki was highly influenced by the "Japanese Linnaeus," Ono Ranzan.

During the Tokugawa era, scholars such as Hiraga Gennai ambitiously advanced a universal scientific ideology that included the West, Japan, and China. Some Japanese historians have argued that as this paradigm shift occurred in Tokugawa Japan, we can also see a transformation from the fields of pharmacopoeia to that of botany and then finally to horticulture.[59] Gennai also promoted the use of Dutch herbal knowledge—particularly the work of the Flemish physician Rembertus Dodonæus—

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[57] The New York Botanical Garden, *Plants of Japan in Illustrated Books and Prints, October 20, 2007-January 13, 2008* (Bronx, New York: 2007).

[58] Rangakusha means Dutch studies. Literally, "ran" is an abbreviation for Holland and "gakusha" means scholar.

[59] W. F. Vande Walle, ed., *Dodonæus in Japan: Translation and the Scientific Mind in the Tokugawa Period* (Kyoto, Japan: Leuven University Press, 2001), 25.

and the implementation of a natural history program in Japan. Thus, with the increasing emphasis on first-hand observation, herbalists and other scientists had to actually see such natural products. Another major shift involved the increasing reliance on empirical knowledge. Since the study of plants in their "natural habitats" and herborizing was time-consuming and costly, Gennai and Tamura Ransui began to organize scientific exhibitions in Edo.[60] Other herbalists, physicians, and scholars followed suit, organizing annual exhibitions in Edo and Nagoya. As Japanese science moved towards empiricism and away from the Chinese matrix, the Bakufu promoted a policy of indigenization alongside new Western knowledge. The kokugakusha, or the "nativists," wielded the power of indigenous nature to argue for the supposed superiority of Japanese "culture" over the Chinese. Scholars such as Walle have noted that during this time period, precise scientific knowledge from the West premised upon observation was introduced in Japan. And he also further noted that similar to Europe, Japanese views of nature shifted from a "strictly medicinal" perspective to a more "detached and encompassing view of nature."[61]

During this early modern period, biotic transpacific exchanges occurred primarily in the form of scientific knowledge, although historians have indicated that some agricultural products were brought on trade vessels. East Asian historians have already documented the extensive trade networks throughout the region, including European traders, since at least the sixteenth century. For example, William S. Atwell's

[60] Herborizing is the activity where one searches for a new species of plants with the intent to classify them.

[61] Walle, *Dodonæus in Japan*, 16-17.

research on international bullion flows have shown how between the 1530s until at least the 1570s, China obtained the bulk of their foreign silver from western Japan.[62] Sucheng Chan has also written on the Hokkien merchants who by the 1570s routinely traveled in junks with the monsoons, trading not only luxury goods between Manila and Acapulco, but also ordinary household goods, such as grain, vegetables, fruit, and other livestock.[63] Meanwhile, Chinese artisans found employment in Manila, where they could capitalize on their skilled craftsmanship and contribute to the building of the new Spanish colonial capital. By 1603, Chan estimates that about 20,000 Chinese—compared to only 1,000 Spanish—lived in Manila before the Spanish drove them out of the city through taxation or massacred them. However, despite restrictions and outright violence, Chinese immigrants brought and traded foodstuffs.

From 1842, the end of the Opium War, to the start of World War II, Chinese immigrants lived on every continent across the globe. These emigrants, an estimated two and a half million, went to the Americas, Hawaii, West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia, and Africa in search of economic opportunities in large part due to the discovery of gold and colonial development of these areas. The most numerous emigrants came from the Sze Yup district, and many of them owned retail fish stores, became truck gardeners and farmers throughout the rural areas in California, entered floriculture and the nursery business, and carved out a significant niche in large-scale tenant farming at the turn of the twentieth century in the Sacramento-San Joaquin

[62] William S. Atwell, "International Bullion Flows and the Chinese Economy circa 1530-1650," *Past and Present*, no. 95 (May 1982): 68-69.

[63] Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 13. Chan asserts that well before the Spanish appeared, the Chinese had already been traveling to the Philippines, but following Spanish conquest the Chinese traveled more often to engage in trade (13).

Delta.[64] Between 1867 and 1875, Chan documents some 124,000 Chinese migrating back and forth across the Pacific.[65] Many of these migrants became agriculturalists. Acknowledging that the term "agriculturalist" may include truck gardeners, fruit and vegetable peddlers and vendors, farmers, harvest laborers, Chan claims that approximately eighty to ninety percent of the Chinese community throughout California became agriculturalists in the late nineteenth century. Unlike in their previous destinations to places such as Southeast Asia, in the United States (as well as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and southern Africa), large numbers of Europeans eventually settled throughout the North American continent. Chan astutely points out that although collective action did give white laborers a more coherent voice and some power, this newly acquired power was always uncertain and that they hence remained vigilant against the supposed threat of alien or Asian labor. Whenever this perceived "invasion" of "alien" labor appeared to be imminent, they immediately rose up to expel it.[66] Chinese immigrant agriculturalists in California paved the path for later Asian immigrants. Their encounters with white agriculturalists and public health officials preceded other Asian communities who struggled to survive on this new, strange soil as strangers to the soil themselves. By the late nineteenth century the mass migration of Asian insects, plants, and strangers to American soil was well underway.

[64] Ibid., 18.

[65] Ibid., 28.

[66] Ibid., 31.

In the late nineteenth century plant and human immigrants from Asia increased in mass numbers, coinciding with the emergence of an historically specific "yellow peril" image that followed the mass migration of Asian laborers sojourning to various places around the Pacific Rim.[67] Having consolidated a global empire by the turn of the century, the United States began to eye Asia as a key source of transnational Asian migrant labor to supplant slavery. The United States also saw Asia as a new frontier for trade, investment, and other economic opportunities.[68] A significant but often-ignored dimension of transnational movements is the circulation of plants, insects, and pathogens, in addition to the more commonly studied flow of capital, bodies, ideas, and technology.[69] The movement of flora and fauna, as non-human but biological entities, forms a central part of this story.

Racializing Migratory Bodies

Just when deadly insects and plant diseases from Japan seemed to pose a threat to the native ecology, Japanese mass migration began in the 1880s, following the tens of thousands of Chinese immigrants who had traveled to California in the 1850s. Soon after the turn of the century, Indians, mostly Punjabi Sikhs, also immigrated to North America. At the same time, Asian exclusion leagues began to form. By 1900, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States had all passed legislation that

[67] Lye, *America's Asia*, 18. Lye points out that the "yellow peril" "has been a part of a Western image of China ever since Genghis Khan's invasion of Europe" (18).

[68] Ibid., 20.

[69] Gregg Mitman, Michelle Murphy, and Christopher Sellers, "Introduction: A Cloud over History," *Osiris*, 2nd series, vol. 19 (2004): 10. Mitman et al. call the ecological dimension the "sixth dimension" of global cultural flows, in addition to people, technology, ideas, media, and money (10).

restricted or prohibited the entry of non-whites.[70] They also discriminated against those Asians already residing in those countries.

Asian American historian Eiichiro Azuma has called one of the major currents of emigration "Japanese-style manifest destiny." But rather than forcibly taking American lands, this type of colonialism was more of a "peaceful expansionism" that included government sponsorship of overseas settlement in order to tie together the lands. The American West was thus called a "new Japan," "a new home," or even an "imperial beginning." Yet Azuma points out that this "peaceful expansionism" operated within an ascendant white racial regime. In the late 1890s, Azuma asserts that a pattern of domestic entrepreneurship began to emerge amongst the expansionistic issei intelligentsia.[71] They sought to incorporate common Japanese laborers in America into a newly forming class of issei labor contractors. They thus promoted Japanese labor migration and facilitated the growth of landed Japanese communities in rural farming districts.[72]

Between 1895 and 1908, a new kind of laborer, known as entrepreneurial laborers, went to the United States and Hawaii. Since these laborers could better negotiate the terms of their employment, approximately 130,000 Japanese went to the United States and Hawaii as "free immigrants" before the Gentlemen's Agreement went into effect in 1908. The ensuing influx of mass common laborers from Japan led to the rise of an anti-Japanese movement along the West coast. Azuma writes that this

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[70] Lye, *America's Asia*, 19.

[71] An "issei" is a first-generation Japanese immigrant.

[72] Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 22-23.

movement gained such quick political momentum and intensity that the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo suspended Japanese emigration to the United States in August 1900.[73] According to him, attempts to Sinify the Japanese again occurred in 1905: "Comparing the prior Chinese 'menace' to the present Japanese 'invasion,' the rationale for racial exclusion included unfair economic competition, cultural deficiency, and racial incompatibility."[74] The language that Azuma utilizes—one of a Japanese "invasion" and of "racial incompatibility"—soon echoed through the rhetoric of many entomologists and health officials. Like those government entomologists who divided plant immigrants into desirable and undesirable, health officials at Angel Island also sought to restrict Asian bodies, oftentimes viewing them as a virus in themselves. Was the imperative for plant quarantine and other exclusionary measures to keep out diseases and invasive insects comparable to efforts to guard the public's health by barring immigrants thought to be a "contagious yellow peril"?

Reports of epidemics and contagious diseases raging in Asia, as well as on ships carrying Asian immigrants and cargo, alarmed state and federal officials. By attempting to police the borders, these officials fought to prevent the infiltration of the "contagious yellow peril." Health officials thus monitored those Asian immigrants who managed to slip past the gates. On May 15, 1900, fearful of a plague epidemic on the verge of

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[73] Ibid., 30.

[74] Ibid., 41. Azuma defines "Sinification" as follows: "Just as the production of Sino-Japanese difference hinged on the transpacific exchange of ideas between the educated Japanese, the "Sinification" of *gumin* was part and parcel of a highly racialized notion of nationhood in prewar Japan. Intellectuals there generally separated the underclass from the rest of the nation, construing their material conditions as manifesting an "alien," not pure Japanese, nature . . ." (38). Azuma defined *gumin* as ignorant and backward laborers in the eyes of elite Japanese.

exploding, Wyman ordered that all Chinese in San Francisco be inoculated. Three days later, he then ordered that all Japanese must likewise be inoculated and that any Chinese or Japanese without a health certificate would not be permitted to leave San Francisco on any train.[75] These were the only two groups targeted by Walter Wyman, the Surgeon General of the United States.

. Elite Japanese immigrants in particular were shocked and angered that they would be grouped with "low-class" migrant laborers. According to Azuma, for these elite Japanese, their worst fears had become a reality. They would be subject to the pain and humiliation of forcible inoculation, "forcibly detained, violently pushed around and held down tight like an animal to get a needle stuck in the groin." One angry issei asked "How come we the Japanese have to suffer this when the scourge claimed a few Chinese—the people we have no business with?"[76] He went on to argue that the Chinese alone were accountable for the plague and so the subjects of the "Great Japanese Empire" should therefore receive dignity and respect.[77] The Japanese Ministries for Foreign Affairs issued a formal complaint, alleging the forced inoculation and restricted movements of Japanese immigrants, along with Chinese immigrants, to be one of discrimination. Yet like those outspoken elites, the Japanese Ministries criticized Wyman's failure to take into consideration "distinction between low and high class Japanese, the latter of whom under existing conditions might properly be

[75] Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 133.

[76] Azuma, *Between Two Empires,* 39.

[77] Ibid., 39-40.

considered immune."[78] Following reports of plague outbreaks in San Francisco's Chinatown, Colorado and Texas immediately barred the entrance of Asian immigrants at their state borders. In a letter to the Secretary of State John Hay, Colorado Governor Charles Thomas defended his quarantine against Chinese and Japanese traveling into his state, making no distinction amongst or within these two communities and arguing that *all* Japanese and Chinese had been exposed to the plague bacillus:

> It is true that the quarantine is declared against Chinese and Japanese, but this [sic] due to no deliberate purpose of confining the order to racial distinctions. The fact is that the Chinese and Japanese residents of the country have been more exposed to the ravages of the plague than any other people, and . . . have died or have been reported as infected with the plague have been of these nationalities . . .[79]

As the primary two racial groups presumably exposed to the plague, officials felt it "necessary to impose restrictions upon all Japanese travelers, no matter where they came from or whether they were going."[80] A few outraged Japanese immigrants took the matter to court.

Ten days after May 15, Kiugoro Obata, along with M. Uyeda and M. Negoro, decided to challenge the discriminatory measure that only targeted Japanese and

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[78] Letter to the Honorable John Hay, Secretary of State, from A. E. Buck, Washington D. C., July 3, 1900, p. 3, in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (State Dept. 1900) [1 of 2], National Archives, College Park (hereafter, NA).

[79] Letter to the Honorable John Hay, Secretary of State, from Governor Charles S. Thomas Washington, D. C., June 28, 1900, in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (State Dept. 1900) [1 of 2], NA.

[80] Letter to the Legation of Japan, from Secretary of State John Hay, Washington, July 12, 1900, in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (state Dept. 1900) [1 of 2], NA.

Chinese immigrants in the Bay Area. On May 25, 1900, Obata issued a legal challenge in the United States Ninth Circuit Court. On May 24, Negoro, Obata, and Uyeda, Japanese citizens and residents of San Francisco City, attempted to board the ferry at the foot of Market Street with the intent of going to Oakland. All of them were prevented from boarding the ferry, according to the legal documents, unless "they would permit themselves to be inoculated with a serum known as Haffkine Prophylactic; but not otherwise . . ." The Japanese immigrants, however, stated they were in good health, free of bubonic plague symptoms, "nor had they, or any of them, been in any manner exposed to the danger of contracting any contagious or infectious disease whatever."[81] These Japanese immigrants were also keenly aware of the potentially lethal effects of the Haffkine Prophylactic—that it "produces a severe reaction and causes great pain and distress at the point of entrance and great pain and distress generally, a sudden and great rise of temperature and great depression, which sometimes continues increasing in severity until it causes death."[82] They alleged that since the vaccine was still in its experimental stages without known or demonstrated effectiveness, it is of no use or advantage to them or to the public. In depriving them of the right to travel outside of city and county limits, such requirements also violated their personal liberties: "[It] is . . . purely arbitrary, unreasonable, unwarranted, wrongful and oppressive interference with [their] personal liberty . . . and other Japanese

[81] *Kiugoro Obata vs. John M. Williamson* et al., United States Circuit Court, Ninth Circuit, Northern District of California, May 25, 1900, in RG 21, Box 746A, Old Circuit Court, Commonwealth Law Case, 1865-1911, Folder 12938, National Archives, San Bruno (hereafter, NASB).

[82] Ibid., 4.

residents."[83] The Board of Health's restriction, they pointed out, "is directed solely and alone against the Japanese and Chinese residents of . . . San Francisco . . . and is not enforced against people . . . of other races or nationalities . . ."[84] Despite this legal challenge, health officials continued to monitor the movements of Chinese and Japanese immigrants.

By May 26, 1900, health officials both in San Francisco and Reno, Nevada exchanged reports tracking the movements of Chinese and Japanese immigrants. A report read as follows:

> May 25: Twenty eight Chinese passengers examined on east-bound train en route for Canada. No evidence of plague found . . . All of these Chinese had health certificates . . . Two Japanese from San Francisco, Cal. Both with health certificates. . . approved by Surgeon Kinyoun. Rise of temperature in one Japanese noted . . . probably result of serum injections . . .[85]

In another report dated May 30 to June 5, 1900, health officials compiled reports of the destination of Chinese and Japanese immigrants who left San Francisco.[86] These reports illuminate the extent to which officials regulated not only Chinese, but also Japanese immigrants within U.S. borders. As this process of racial formation revealed,

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[83] Ibid., 5.

[84] Ibid., 7.

[85] Letter to the Surgeon General, Marine Hospital Service, Washington D. C., May 26, 1900, in RG 90, Box 645, Folder (Misc. July-Dec. 1900) [2 of 2], NA.

[86] Destination of Chinese leaving San Francisco, May 30th to June 5th inclusive, 1900 and Destination of Japanese leaving San Francisco, May 30 to June 5th inclusive, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder: 1900 June—J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

these foreigners were in effect, "carrying the border with them."[87] Asian immigrants were required to carry health certificates stating they had been inoculated against the bubonic plague. On November 8, 1900 an article in the *Sacramento Bee* appeared, discussing the need for special inspections of the districts occupied by Chinese and Japanese in the city of San Francisco. The City Board of Health decided to conduct weekly inspections of "all premises occupied by Chinese and Japanese."[88]

With fears of the Japanese heightened, health officials tested every case of what might have been plague. On July 8, 1901, a bacteriologist in San Francisco, H. A. L. Ryfkogel, examined three feverish Japanese prostitutes in the Yoshiwara House on 845 Washington Street. There, he observed blood samples taken from Shina, Miya, and Ume. That same day, he wrote a letter to local physicians: "The samples of the blood of Shina, Miya and Ume each gave and immediate and characteristic agglutination reaction with a bouillon culture of the bacillus pestis . . . "[89] The following day, two of the infected prostitutes died in the brothel.[90] Rupert Blue, the Assistant Surgeon to the Marine Hospital Service, then sent an urgent telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, stating that he had examined the three women and that he would send an autopsy report later.[91] On July 16, Blue sent out another telegram to Wyman, stating that he had

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[87] I thank Donna Gabaccia for making this point.

[88] "Local Board of Health Alive to Plague's Existence," *Sacramento Evening Bee*, November 8, 1900, in RG 90, Box 633, Folder (A. A. Surgeon 1900-1912) [2 of 2], NA.

[89] Letter from H. A. L. Ryfkogel, M. D., San Francisco, California, July 8, 1901 in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, Kinyoun., NA.

[90] Deaths from Plague at San Francisco, California, From February 12th to July 12th, 1901 in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 3 of 3, NA.

[91] Rupert Blue, telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, July 9, 1901, in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 3 of 3, NA.

"[c]ompleted examination of case second Japanese prostitute, antemortem and postmortem blood shows bacillus pestis."[92] These health officials were convinced that in the Yoshiwara Brothel located in central Chinatown, three Japanese prostitutes had without doubt died of the dreaded bubonic plague. The death of the three Japanese prostitutes confirmed to city officials that although Chinese immigrants were highly susceptible to the plague, so too were Japanese immigrants.

When a second wave of the plague struck again, Japanese immigrants were once again singled out. Blue suspected that a twenty-six year old laborer, H. Sakadi, had died of the plague and telegrammed Wyman on August 29, 1903.[93] However, early the following month, Blue reported that it was not in fact plague.[94] On October 24, 1903, Blue again contacted the Surgeon General, writing that K. Imai, died at 505 Dupont Street, at a Japanese hospital:

> the patient was not seen clinically by us, but had been treated by a Dr. Nakabayashi, a Japanese surgeon, for a period of seven days before his death . . . A bacteriological examination completed on the 22nd shows that the death was due to pest infection.[95]

Introducing Quarantine of Food/Diseased Bodies

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[92] Rupert Blue, telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, July 16, 1901, in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 3 of 3, NA.

[93] Rupert Blue, telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, August 29, 1903, in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 1 of 2, NA.

[94] Rupert Blue, telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, September 3, 1903, in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 1 of 2, NA.

[95] Rupert Blue, telegram to Surgeon General Wyman, October 24, 1903, in RG 90, Box 616, Folder 1 of 2, NA.

The process of racial formation that eventually encompassed Japanese immigrants by the turn of the century involved public health and agricultural discourses about the importation of food, in addition to plants and insects from Asia. Officials who managed the nation's borders were not only concerned with diseased Asian bodies, but also the pathogens and foods that accompanied them. At stake was not only protecting the public's health from the "contagious yellow peril" that included the issei, or Japanese immigrants, but also foodstuffs and insects that could infiltrate the nation's agricultural and medical borders, jeopardizing the nation's ecological health and food supply.

Health officials had long suspected food of transporting contagious diseases. Hawaiian health officials believed that the bubonic plague outbreak in Kahului Hilo "originated from Chinese food stuffs."[96] Joseph Kinyoun, who became director of the Hygienic Laboratory of the Marine Hospital Service at Angel Island in 1899, corroborated this view before the State of California's Medical Society:

> Certain food products, which are held in high regard by Mongolians, are thought to have been the medium through which the disease was introduced into the Hawaiian Islands. Certainly it is reasonable to believe that it was carried from Honolulu to one of the adjacent islands by these Chinese food products . . . [97]

In response to fears of diseases imported from Asia, the 1893 National Quarantine Act was passed, giving the president the power to place Marine Hospital Service officers to

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[96] Telegram from J. J. Kinyoun, Angel Island, California, February 23, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, Kinyoun, NA.

[97] J. J. Kinyoun, *Bubonic Plague: Discussion* (San Francisco: April 1901): 5, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

U. S. consulates in ports abroad, including the Philippines, China, and Japan.[98] All vessels headed for the United States had to be inspected and obtain a "bill of health" which must be then be presented to the Collector of Customs upon arrival in an American port. Health officials, including the supervising surgeon general in Washington D. C., received routine reports about food products imported from China and Japan—and the possibility of rats and insects that traveled with them.[99]

Food products shipped from China and Japan commonly included yams, water chestnuts, sugar cane, green ginger, bamboo shoots, and taro, as well as lily bulbs.[100] Since insects and rodents traveled with food and agricultural products, health officials at the Marine Hospital Service checked shipments on a daily basis. When bubonic plague broke out in Hong Kong in 1894, they began to require special certificates for foods shipped from Asia. These vessels frequently left China, stopped by Kobe or Yokohama to refuel and load more shipments and passengers, and continued to Honolulu and then finally reaching its ultimate destination in San Francisco or Vancouver. The steamship *Peru*, owned by the Occidental & Oriental Company, brought news from Hong Kong, after being quarantined in Nagasaki, of the arrival of the plague. A Chinese passenger on the *Peru* was said to have died of the plague.[101]

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[98] Robert Barde, "Prelude to the Plague: Public Health and Politics at America's Pacific Gateway, 1899," *Journal of the History of Medicine,* vol. 58 (April 2003): 155.

[99] Telegram to Supervising Surgeon General, Angel Island, January 20, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, J. J. Kinyoun, NA

[100] Letter from J. J. Kinyoun to the Supervising Surgeon-General, U. S. Marine Hospital Service, Washington D. C., San Francisco Quarantine Station, Angel Island, California, December 29, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1900 June—J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

[101] *Bulletin,* June 5, 1900, California Scrapbook, Los Angeles County Medical Association Collection (LACMA), The Huntington Library.

When the *Coptic* left Hong Kong on May 13, 1900 little did its passengers know that it would be quarantined at Nagasaki. Japanese officials, already alarmed at the spread of the plague, became extremely anxious when a Chinese passenger was reported to be suffering from what may have been the plague. Two dead rats found under the Chinese passengers' bunks were said to have carried the plague.[102] They immediately quarantined the *Coptic.* Japanese officials discovered the ailing Chinese passenger and brought him to a hospital for observation. According to the *Bulletin*, a microscopic examination showed that the patient had plague.[103] Several days later, after undergoing quarantine several more times the *Coptic* "was so well fumigated that all traces of the disease were exterminated."[104] The *Coptic* incident is significant for at least two reasons. According to the *Report,* passengers claimed that plague precautions in China were not being carefully followed. It then publicized the high fatality rates in Hong Kong and Canton, which averaged 88.6 percent of all cases. The *Report* also noted that on board the *Coptic* were several distinguished Japanese passengers, including Hoshi Toru and his entourage. As the minister to Washington D.C., Toru held one of the most prominent political positions in Japan.

Although Toru and his entourage did eventually disembark, Dr. Kinyoun refused to release the cargo on the *Coptic*, which included a variety of food products, such as

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[102] Kinyoun, *Bubonic Plague*: 5, in RG 90, NA.

[103] "On the Coptic; A Case of Cholera Detains the Vessel," *Bulletin,* June 5, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

[104] "The Plague; Increasing in the Orient and the Mortality Very Heavy," *Report,* June 5, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

dried fish, salted eggs, dried ducks, sausages, water lily roots, yams, and seaweed.[105] Chinese merchants, whose goods on the *Coptic* exceeded a value of over two thousand dollars, were incensed. In *Wong Chung vs. J. J. Kinyoun and the Occidental & Oriental Steamship Company*, Chung alleged that he had demanded in a letter to Kinyoun to issue the Occidental & Oriental a pratique, or a health clearance, which would have released the goods from quarantine restriction:

> On behalf of Twing Yick Jam, Wing Chung Wo, Wing Fong & Co., Jung Chew Yuen & Co. and True Ching Wing Mon Kee & Co. . . . I hereby demand and require of you that as Quarantine Officer aforesaid, you issue of full and complete pratique to said steamship company as is your duty to do, in order that the said company shall be free to deliver to myself . . .[106]

Kinyoun refused to issue such a pratique. In a letter to the Supervising Surgeon-General of the United States Marine Hospital Service, Dr. Kinyoun noted that *Chung vs. Kinyoun* had "lost its place" as a special case and would therefore have to wait until the next available date on the ninth circuit court calendar. Kinyoun triumphantly wrote that

> As this case appears to be one involving a vital principle in quarantine procedures, it would appear to me that it should be fought to a finish, and it is imper[a]tively necessary that the Service win the suit. The delays which have now already occurred has been[sic] in many respects to the advantage of the

[105] List of Food Products on the *Coptic*, December 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

[106] Letter from Wing Chung to Dr. Kinyoun, U. S. Quarantine Officer, Angel Island, California, December 18, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

> Service . . . It goes without saying that the food products in litigation are now practically worthless from a commercial point of view . . .[107]

Health officials wary of Asian food products knew that unlike elite individuals such as Toru, many Asian passengers often came from a lower class:

> On the Coptic there are a number of articles belonging to the prohibited class . . . To prevent this stuff from entering the U. S. it is going to take the combined efforts of all the quarantine officers on that side added to everything I can do here and it is no use to attempt to pick out certain portions as probably safe as these things are collected by the lower classes where the large death rate occurs.[108]

Health officials did not fear elite Asian immigrants the way they feared those "lower classes" who presumably carried infectious diseases, including plague. Ships such as the *Coptic* moved in an age where globalization, although in its infancy, would increase trade and travel between Asia and America in particular.[109]

When reports of humiliating medical examinations conducted upon the esteemed passengers of the *Coptic* surfaced, the media mocked Kinyoun. The commander of the *Coptic*, John Rinder, criticized the manner in which the exams were conducted. He wrote that the men, who all stood in a line in the smoking room, were ordered to

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[107] Letter from J. J. Kinyoun to the Supervising Surgeon-General, U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, Washington D. C., April 15, 1901: 2, in RG 90, Box 627, NA.

[108] Letter from John W. Kerr to Surgeon J. J. Kinyoun, U. S. Marine-Hospital Service, San Francisco, Cal., November 20, 1900, in RG 90, Box 627, Folder 1901, J. J. Kinyoun, NA.

[109] "The Plague; Increasing in the Orient and the Mortality Very Heavy," *Report,* June 5, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

> take their trousers down and either remove their shirts and undershirts altogether or make easy and complete access to the arm pits available. The Dr. then passed his hands around the groin, under the armpits and around the neck, feeling . . . for swollen glands . . . [T]he smoking room door was wide open . . . so that any one passing . . . could not fail to see what was going on . . .[110]

Rinder asserted that the female passengers also endured the same exam from a female physician. Complaints filed by white passengers against the medical exams on the *Coptic* described the exams as "undignified," "brutal," and "disgusting." The *Chronicle* likewise reported that the "details of the revolting methods employed by Kinyoun cannot be printed, the transpacific passengers are loud in denouncing Kinyoun as a brutal ruffian . . . The examination of the male passengers on the Coptic was conducted in such a manner . . . as would have driven a steerage coolie into mutiny . . ."[111] In denouncing exams by stating that even a Chinese "coolie" would have mutinied, the *Chronicle* attempted to shock its audience in order to consider the economic implications of plague in San Francisco. The subtitle of the article, "Is Quarantine Officer Trying to Cripple The City[sic] Oriental Trade?" and its emphasis on testimonials from outraged businessmen traveling on the *Coptic* served as a reminder that the "latest outbreak of Kinyounism" could cost the city and region economically.[112]

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[110] Letter from John S. Rinder, Commander of the S. S. Coptic to Mr. Clayton Pickersgill, Esq., C. B., H. B. M. Consul General, San Francisco, December 19, 1900, in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (State Dept., Sept.-Dec. 1900 [1 of 3]), NA.

[111] Enclosure in Mr. Pickersgill's Dispatch, of October 12, 1900, San Francisco "Chronicle," October 3, 1900, "Indecencies of Kinyoun: Humiliation for the People on the Coptic," in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (State Dept., Sept.-Dec. 1900 [1 of 3]), NA.

[112] "Chronicle," October 3, 1900, "Indecencies of Kinyoun: Humiliation for the People on the Coptic," in RG 90, Box 639, Folder (State Dept., Sept.-Dec. 1900 [1 of 3]), NA.

Although health officials focused intently on Chinese immigrants, reports of epidemics in Japan greatly concerned them as well. Ships with Chinese passengers frequently passed through Japanese ports that reportedly had raging epidemics. Dr. Stuart Eldridge, the United States Sanitary Inspector in Yokohama, wrote in October of 1899 that Yokohama's geographic position made it the "sanitary gateway of the Far East":

> Through this port passes all the travel from China, that center of infection, where epidemics rage with little or no effort made for their control, where plague and cholera seem to have become endemic and small pox, ever present . . . Through it or from it go, too, all the Japanese passengers for United States ports in numbers already large and steadily increasing . . . [113]

On March 31, 1900, a Chinese passenger who boarded the *Gaelic* at Yokohama reportedly died of the plague the very next day after leaving port.[114] Dr. M. J. Rosenau, a United States Marine Hospital Service surgeon, immediately sent word to the California State Board of Health, to ensure that the *Gaelic* would be quarantined once it reached San Francisco. On April 9, the California Board of Health held a meeting to discuss the precautionary measures that would be taken on the *Gaelic* once it sailed in from Hawaii.[115] Reports in the *Chronicle* indicated that a Japanese passenger had also

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[113] Barde, "Prelude to the Plague": 155-156. Eldridge added that "It was, undoubtedly, a knowledge of these facts that induced you in 1894 to appoint a representative of the Bureau at this point" (156).

[114] "Plague on the Gaelic," *Call*, April 8, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

[115] "The Board of Health; a Special Meeting to fight the Asiatic Plague," *Post,* April 9, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

developed a "well-defined attack of variola" en route to Honolulu. The *Examiner* told a somewhat different story from that of the *Call*:

> Soon after the Gaelic left Hongkong it was discovered that a Chinese passenger had smallpox and he was put on shore at Yokahama[sic]. The following day he died in the Chinese hospital. The steamship was kept in quarantine at Yokahama[sic] until all the baggage had been thoroughly fumigated. Three days before Honolulu was reached a Japanese in the steerage was found to be suffering from the disease and the vessel was again placed in quarantine. The passengers were taken to quarantine island and the freight and baggage again fumigated. [116]

Unlike the *Call*, newspapers such as the *Examiner* appeared more willing to acknowledge that these cases may not have been bubonic plague but perhaps variola or smallpox. The differing coverage of such outbreaks at the turn of the century demonstrates that very little was known about the etiology of disease, as well as how to prevent and fight such diseases.

As outbreaks aboard these ships occurred, American medical officials' understandings of diseases and how to combat them were evolving. On July 7, 1899, the *Examiner* ran stories with titles such as "London Doctor Discovers the Germ of Cancer." This article claimed that a serum that would cure cancer would very soon be developed. Even some physicians questioned germ theory, arguing that they did "not

[116] "Guarding Against Oriental Plagues," *Chronicle*, April 20, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

believe in the germy theory of disease of any kind, cancer included."[117] Other articles published sensationalist stories about how Chinese patients carried to a Japanese medicine house would be

> stripped of all clothing and a big white cloth saturated with the most deadly of poisons was wrapped about them, causing slow death. The hearts of the dead were then cut out to make medicine for the Japanese, fifty being required to give the proper strength to be effective.[118]

Such accounts, which the public may have believed, exploited stereotypes about the Japanese as malicious and deadly. Moreover, it was in part because so little was known about the causes and cures for diseases that public debate about the bubonic plague and whether it inflicted primarily Asians was marked by ignorant assumptions. American health officials cited death statistics that supported their claim that this was in fact "oriental plague," a term they commonly employed in their health reports. Surgeon General Wyman wrote in 1900 that official reports in Hong Kong demonstrated that the death rates for Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and Europeans were 93.4, 77, 60, and 18.2 percent, respectively.[119] The ignorance and prejudice on the part of health officials themselves influenced decisions to more carefully screen ships traveling through or from Asia—and perhaps even hastily making claims of plague when it may not have been.

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[117] Barde, "Prelude to the Plague": 158.

[118] "The Plague Still Rages," *Chronicle*, January 9, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library. The source does not specify whether this "medicine house" was in Japan or in California.

[119] Walter Wyman, *The Bubonic Plague* (Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 11.

A small scholarly literature has focused primarily on the *Nippon Maru* incident in May of 1899. Historian Nayan Shah wrote that when the city bacteriologist immediately attributed the cause of death of a thirteen year-old Chinese boy to be plague, Dr. Kinyoun rejected the diagnosis, criticizing the bacteriologist for mistakenly diagnosing the case as plague when it had been pneumonia.[120] Robert Barde also highlights the *Nippon Maru*, likewise arguing that the Chinese boy may or may not have died of the plague. A discussion of further incidents similar to the *Nippon Maru* widens the scope and frequency of health officials' policing and declarations of quarantine upon ships carrying Asian immigrants.

In part, these officials' concerns were informed by what most historians today agree was the plague's modern existence in China by 1894.[121] Many white Americans, including health officials at all levels, believed that living conditions in Asia—specifically China—were conducive to diseases such as yellow fever, smallpox, cholera, and the bubonic plague. Kinyoun and other officials at the Marine Hospital Service commented on the "squalid," "dirty," and "filthy" living conditions of the Chinese—"unsanitary inhabitations" and "unhygienic conditions" which was a "potent factor in keeping alive the [plague] infection and the means of dissemination of the plague." In his April 1901 address to the Medical Society of the State of California, Kinyoun derided the Chinese as having "peculiar manners of living . . . antipathy to

[120] Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Race and Epidemics in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 127.

[121] See Carol Benedict, *Bubonic Plague in Nineteenth Century China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996). Benedict's account has been widely accepted by Chinese and medical historians.

Western civilization, and . . . dislike to everything which is considered by us proper."[122] To officials like Kinyoun, Chinese immigrants came from a "backward" country; they also hid their dead and eschewed mainstream American medicine—and even worse, did not have "modern" sanitation and hygienic practices.

> Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese embraced American and European medicine: Owing to the zeal with which the Japanese have applied themselves of the modern systems of medicine and sanitation and to the effectiveness of their boards of health, it is not likely that the plague at Yokohama will assume alarming proportions, but nevertheless there is quite as much need of watchfulness against its inroads at ports which are in communication with Yokohama as was the case with cholera during last summer's epidemic.[123]

As a country struggling to modernize and portray itself as a growing world power, elite Japanese physicians and scientists turned away from Chinese medical practices and began to look to Germany and the United States, going so far as to teach science and medical courses in German by the late nineteenth century.[124] Newspapers such as the *Chronicle* and many health officials further noted that Japanese physicians and scientists had made the "most advances" in ascertaining the cause of plague. As one of the leading scientists of his day, American health officials looked to Shibasuburo

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[122] Kinyoun, *Bubonic Plague*: 4, in RG 90, NA. In this address, Kinyoun did not distinguish between living conditions in China and in San Francisco's Chinatown.

[123] "The Black Plague," *Chronicle*, April 12, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

[124] See for example Yuki Terazawa, "Gender, Knowledge, and Power: Reproductive Medicine in Japan, 1790-1930" (Ph. D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2001).

Kitasato's findings on the plague bacillus. In 1894, both he and the French scientist, Alexandre Yersin, independently discovered the bacillus that caused the plague. Dr. Kinyoun wrote that

> Some interesting observations on [the rodent as a chief agent] are brought to our notice in the report of plague in Kobe and Osaka, recently published by Kitasato. This report presents some remarkable statements regarding the part the rat plays in the dissemination of the disease.[125]

Many prominent American health officials respected Kitasato as the "recognized authority on the subject of Plague."[126] The physicians of the San Francisco Board of Health deferred to his authority on how to properly diagnose plague.[127] When Professor Kitasato came out with a medical publication in German, Eldridge immediately forwarded a copy to Wyman.[128] Japanese sanitary authorities sent Dr. Kitasato, along with a Dr. Takagi, to diagnose a case in Osaka in mid-April 1900. When the doctors pronounced the case as bubonic plague, the sanitary inspector in Yokohama, Stuart

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[125] Kinyoun, *Bubonic Plague*: 4, in RG 90, NA.

[126] W. B. Coffey, M. D. and J. Henry Barbat, M. D., Health Department, City of San Francisco, to Dr. J. J. Kinyoun of the Marine Hospital Service, July 10, 1899, in RG 90, Box 633, Folder (A. A. Surgeon, 1900-1012) [2 of 2], NA.

[127] Ibid. Drs. Coffey and Barbat wrote that "With regard to the time taken by the Bacteriologists of this Board, we find that you were misinformed, he received the glands at 8:30 a. m., and made cultures within one half hour after; these were examined at 12 m. the next day. The growth was visible to the naked eye, and was grown on Glycerine Agar. Kitasato says: 'When cultivated on solid serum, the growth of the microbes is visible after an incubation of 15 to 24 hours . . .'"

[128] Letter from Stuart Eldridge, Acting Assistant Surgeon, M. H. S., to Walter Wyman, M. D., Supervising Surgeon General, M. H. S., Yokohama, Japan, July 25, 1900, in RG 90, Box 629, Folder [1 of 3], NA.

Eldridge, immediately sent word to Walter Wyman about its "official" reappearance in Osaka.[129]

Despite perceptions of Japan as a modern country, public health officials in the United States still carefully noted plague outbreaks in major Japanese ports where ships would often pass through before continuing their sojourn to Honolulu and San Francisco. The Surgeon General had received reports of plague outbreaks in Kobe as early as November 15, 1899.[130] J. Buckmill Fowler, stationed in Kobe as the Acting Assistant Surgeon for the United States Marine Hospital Service, sent routine reports to the Supervising Surgeon-General regarding epidemics. By April 15, 1900, Fowler reported one case of bubonic plague in Osaka.[131] The *Chronicle* declared that "We cannot understand why the [Japanese] Government, which in other respects is so progressive, is so lax in the matter of its health laws, nor why Japanese bacteriologists, who are particularly acute and learned, should be so unmindful of the popular need of hygienic reform . . ."[132] The *Chronicle* criticized the unsanitary practices of the common Japanese people, such as the consumption of half-ripened fruit and raw fish, which could predispose them to disease. The author of the article argued that "If Japan were a closed country these matters would be her own concern, but as the empire is

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[129] Letter from Stuart Eldridge to Walter Wyman, M. D., Supervising Surgeon General, M. H. S., April 21, 1900, in RG 90, Box 629, Folder [2 of 2], NA.

[130] From the Director General of Public Health, Ottawa, Canada to Surgeon General Wyman, Marine Hospital Service, Washington, D. C., November 15, 1899, in RG 90, Box 629, NA.

[131] Letter from J. Buckmill Fowler to the Supervising Surgeon-General, U. S. Marine Hospital Service, Kobe, Japan, April 15, 1900, in RG 90, Box 633, Folder (Health Officers, 1899-1902), NA.

[132] "Breeding Ground of Cholera," *Chronicle*, April 22, 1900, California Scrapbook, LACMA, The Huntington Library.

extending its trade to all parts of the world the sanitation of its people becomes a thing of international movement."[133] Fowler likewise stated that in Osaka, its "want of sanitation" left the city vulnerable to epidemics, which in turn made trade and travel more difficult. According to Fowler, between November 1899 and January 31, 1901, 223 cases of plague were reported in Japan, with the highest numbers occurring in Osaka, Hiogo, and Shizuoka, respectively.[134] In a letter to Surgeon General Wyman, Eldridge declared that

> With the constantly increasing traffic between the United States and the Far East, Yokohama remains . . . Sanitary Gateway of the Orient . . . I warn you that, should plague become severely epidemic in Japan, the precautions enjoined for the protection of the United States can not be carried out, under present conditions, in any other than a most slip-shod and unreliable manner . . .[135]

With the increasing movement of plants, bodies, and various goods to and from Japan, health officials, along with their "disinfection establishments" in Japan and the United States, worked at full capacity to protect the nation's borders.[136]

Well aware of these hegemonic perceptions, leaders in the Japanese immigrant community moved to issue a response. In 1908, Dr. Ichitaro Katsuki, a member of the

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Letter from J. Buckmill Fowler to the Supervising Surgeon-General, U. S. Marine Hospital Service, Kobe, Japan, January 7, 1900, in RG 90, Box 633, Folder (Health Officers, 1899-1902), NA.

[135] Letter from Stuart Eldridge, Sanitary Inspector, Yokohama, Japan, to Walter Wyman, M. D., Supervising Surgeon General, M. H. S., November 24, 1899, in RG 90, Box 629, Folder [2 of 3], NA.

[136] Letter from Stuart Eldridge, Acting Assistant Surgeon, M. H. S., Sanitary Inspector, to Walter Wyman, M. D., Supervising Surgeon General, M. H. S., April 21, 1900, in RG 90, Box 629, Folder [2 of 2], NA. "The number of Japanese emigrants now seeking United States and Canadian ports is now larger than ever before and our disinfection establishments bot[h] at Kobe and here are kept fully employed."

American Medical Association in Honolulu and an official correspondent of the San Francisco Board of Health, published an article about plague management in Japan.[137] Dr. Katsuki visited Japan sometime around 1907, where he met Dr. Kitasato and obtained information about the health conditions in Kobe, Osaka, and neighboring districts. Kobe was an important seaport, with a population of 350,000, and ships frequently came to and from India and China. The first bubonic plague outbreak occurred in Kobe on November 8, 1899. Following several more cases of plague in Kobe, health officials quickly investigated suspicious deaths until they were satisfied that it was not the plague. However, on November 18, 1899, a young school girl in Osaka contracted the bubonic plague and died on the 20th of November. Dr. Katsuki described Osaka's streets as "clean but very narrow," with a sewer system that is "very imperfect." Following the rapid spread of pneumonic plague—a highly contagious form of bubonic plague—the year 1899 "closed with one of the most dreadful epidemics in the history of the city of Osaka." The government moved quickly by encouraging the use of traps and poisons as a way to eradicate rodents, but Katsuki criticized those ignorant individuals who regarded rodents as a sacred messenger from a deity and hence refused to kill them. Yet Katsuki emphasized that the bubonic plague was not a disease specific to one or a few groups of people: "Plague is not only the enemy of the people of one locality or of one country . . . It is the disease that attacks not only the poor and ignorant, but the rich and intelligent as well . . . It attacks the

[137] See Ichitaro Katsuki, M. D., "The Management of Plague in Japan," *Transactions of the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the Hawaiian Territorial Medical Society, Held in Honolulu, November 23 and 25, 1907* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Star Print, 1908), Dr. Troy Kaji Papers, Japanese American National Museum: 54-72. Dr. Katsuki graduated from the University of California in 1896 and opened an office in San Francisco.

people of all nationalities, regardless of age, sex, or occupation."[138] Katsuki concluded with a plea for nations to cease quarreling among themselves "for selfish or aggressive purposes," so that they may combine their efforts to combat the disease and maintain a "common health and welfare" for all.[139] Although Dr. Katsuki did not specifically mention the racialized scapegoating of Asian immigrants as the cause for this "oriental plague," his statements directly challenged these dominant assumptions.

The policing and quarantine of Asian bodies and eventually came to include plants as well. The influx of Asian immigrants in large numbers greatly alarmed many government health officials and soon thereafter, agriculturalists. In gardening circles, publications such the weekly *Garden and Forest: A Journal of Horticulture, Landscape Art, and Forestry* almost always referenced issues concerning national origins during its decade-long run from 1888 to 1897. Just like their human counterparts, plants and insects were also racialized. A Texan contributor to *Garden and Forest* noted that "Among many distinguished tree foreigners who have taken out naturalization papers in the United States, some of whom are living in eastern Texas, is Paulownia imperialis."[140] The Paulownia imperialis, otherwise known as the princess or empress tree, was a native of Japan and China, serving as Japan's imperial tree symbol. The empress or princess tree had "quickly run wild" throughout the United States, and such "foreign plants, as well as foreign people, are rapidly taking possession of many parts of the country." And despite this writer's confession that "We are loath

[138] Ibid., 70.

[139] Ibid., 54; 60; 62-65; 70-71.

[140] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 115-116.

to admit the Chinaman, but we freely admit the China tree to naturalization," he also predicted that "the new forests of the south are likely to be of largely of Mongolian extraction." In fact, in 1894, Mary Treat, a woman from New Jersey, singled out the Japanese honeysuckle as an "aggressive foreign species [making itself] perfectly at home," and criticized the "direct attacks of foreign plants, which crowd them [native plants] and rob their roots of food and moisture." Treat bitterly attested that "no matter how insignificant the flower or straggling the growth of a plant may be, if it comes from Australia, New Zealand, Japan or China, it meets with a ready sale here, while plants like the beautiful native evergreen Blueberry cannot be found in any nurseryman's catalogue."[141] Thus, in the late nineteenth century, many white American agriculturalists began to express nativist sentiment in the form of Sinophobia and other forms of anti-Asian discrimination, yet plant and insect migration into the United States continued and even intensified, as Treat noted.

During this time period, troublesome animals still had a relatively low profile in the Americas partly because, as Coates asserts, of the relative absence of "unwanted plants" in the Western Hemisphere. He cites that in 1895, fifteen out of 108 foreign weeds coming from places such as Mexico were labeled injurious by officials.[142] However, very much like people, it was virtually impossible to restrict plants and insects to their geographical origins. Officials would soon realize this and attempt to confine what they perceived as an Asian biological menace to their "proper genetic

[141] Ibid., 116.

[142] Ibid., 101.

spheres."[143] Similar to health officials who permitted human migrants to pass through America's gates, government entomologists categorized immigrant plants and insects as either desirable or undesirable. Analogies that appeared in journals, newspapers, and even government reports blurred the boundaries between undesirable Asian bodies and pests.

Identifying Immigrant Insect Pests

Dangerous scales from Japan were not part of the desirable group of "newcomers." The battle with the cottony-cushion scale in 1889 and the hire of a quarantine officer and inspector for the state in California in 1890 spurred the rise of economic entomology—the need to classify dangerous insects, and appoint individuals who could guard the nation's ecological borders.[144] As early as 1891, Alexander Craw, the newly appointed state quarantine officer and inspector, discovered and destroyed two orange tree lots—or 325,000 trees—infested with the long scale on a shipment from Japan.[145] Craw condemned the trees as a public nuisance with the backing of the California Supreme Court.[146] He published a report recounting how he destroyed the "two lots of orange trees infested with [long scale] that arrived here from Japan."[147] He then warned growers that they should carefully examine any trees imported from Japan

[143] Ibid., 87.

[144] Richard C. Sawyer, *To Make a Spotless Orange: Biological Control in California* (Iowa State University Press, 1996), xviii, 24.

[145] Alexander Craw, California State Board of Horticulture, Division of Entomology, *Destructive Insects: Their Natural Enemies, Remedies and Recommendations* (Sacramento: A. J. Johnston, Supt. State Printing, 1891), 9. Craw was appointed state quarantine officer and inspector in 1890 and remained at that post for the next fourteen years (Sawyer, *To Make a Spotless Orange*, 24).

[146] Sawyer, *To Make a Spotless Orange*, 24.

[147] Craw, *Destructive Insects*, 9.

and that if the scale was found, "prompt measures should be taken to eradicate it before it attains a foothold in the orchard or on adjacent trees."[148] In this same report, Craw also wrote that "The most formidable of all insects that infest fruit trees in this State are those of the family Coccidae"—including the *Aspidiotus cirtrinus* of Japan. Craw warned that some of the coccidae could be "found upon indigenous trees," carried far distances by wind, bees, birds, or other insects—becoming very destructive in the "salubrious" California climate."[149] Although Craw wrote about other destructive insects in this publication, clearly Japanese insects posed a major threat to indigenous trees. Such battles with scale pests occurred within a broader movement that sought to exclude insects and even the plants with which they arrived.

Pauly describes the 1890s as a decade when American ecological nativists began to struggle with "cosmopolitans" over the introduction of foreign "exotics" into the United States—particularly those "noxious alien species."[150] Nativists, who tended to be those "zoologists in the Bureaus of Entomology and Biological Survey," according to him, were often "competitive, aggressively masculine, and careerist."[151] Botanists from the Bureau of Plant Industry, on the other hand, tended to work cooperatively and carefully to increase the variety and number of useful plants in order to enrich and strengthen America's participation in the global biotic system.[152] Pauly has called these

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[148] Ibid., 9.

[149] Ibid., 6.

[150] Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees": 56.

[151] Ibid., 53.

[152] Ibid., 53.

botanists ecological "cosmopolitans." According to him "[p]redominance . . . shifted from nativism in the 1890s, to cosmopolitanism in the following decade, and then back to the nativists in the 1910s."[153]

The establishment of the nursery industry helped facilitate the increasing numbers of plant and insect immigrants by the late nineteenth century. In 1882, the first nursery that specialized in exporting Japanese plants to Europe and North America was founded by Louis Boehmer, a German nurseryman.[154] Before the Japanese nursery industry had taken off in the late nineteenth century, plant auctions were held in London and New York, providing a way for collectors to purchase premium plant specimens, such as bonsai. In their 1903 catalogue, L. Boehmer and Company declared that "The growing demand for garden and houseplants from foreign residents of China, Korea, and Japan have induced us to present this condensed list of trees, shrubs, and other plants . . ."[155] Likewise, another export company, Suzuki and Iida, claimed in their 1899 catalogue that "The demand for Japanese bulbs, plants, and seeds is steadily increasing year by year, and our products have met with the highest approval by all who have bought them."[156] With the increasing demand for Japanese flora and fauna, however, came the increased risk of injurious insects and even fatal plant diseases. In

[153] Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life*, 74.

[154] The New York Botanical Garden, *Plants of Japan in Illustrated Books and Prints*.

[155] L. Boehmer and Company, *Wholesale Catalogue* (Yokohama, Japan, 1903), National Agricultural Library (NAL), Beltsville, MD: 1.

[156] Suzuki and Iida, *Trade List of Japanese Bulbs, Seeds and Plants* (New York and Yokohama: 1899 and 1900), NAL: 1.

the preface of their nursery catalogue, Suzuki and Iida reassured their customers by writing:

> **San Jose Scale** All of our nursery stock will be thoroughly fumigated in our own fumigator, which was built according to instructions on received from Mr. [Alexander] Craw, State Entomologist of California.[157]

Although government officials and entomologists did not seek to exclude plants specifically, it was virtually impossible to exclude injurious insects and deadly pathogens without excluding the plants they came with.

By the mid-1890s, the introduction of "exotic species" from Japan, as well as from China, concerned nativists who worked for the USDA.[158] Following a series of biological "invasions" ranging from gypsy moth to the "Mexican" boll weevil, the USDA began to focus on these introduced pests. The discovery of the (Asian) San José scale in 1893 on the east coast, along with the Mexican cotton boll weevil by 1894, alarmed the Chief of Entomology, Leland Howard, and the assistant chief, Charles Marlatt.[159] In a bulletin titled *Some Mexican and Japanese Injurious Insects Liable to Be Introduced into the United States* (1896), Howard emphasized that "Our danger from Mexico is fast becoming realized," and that resolutions were recently adopted by the

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[157] Suzuki and Iida, *Trade List of Japanese Bulbs . . .*, Preface, NAL.

[158] Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life*, 74.

[159] Leland Howard and Charles Marlatt, *San José Scale: Its Occurrences in U. S., with Full Account of Its Life History and Remedies to Be Used against It,* USDA Division of Entomology, Bulletin No. 17 (US. G. P. O., 1896) and Howard, *Some Mexican and Japanese Injurious Insects Liable to Be Introduced into the United States,* USDA Division of Entomology, Technical Bulletin No. 4 (U.S. G. P. O., 1896).

Board of Control of the New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station in order to place horticultural quarantine officers at southern ports, as well as appoint a specialist to conduct studies of injurious insects in Mexico and Central America. He then noted that while the danger of injurious insects from Japan and the Pacific Islands was not the same as it was from Mexico, this was due in large part to highly restrictive legislation previously passed by the California State Board of Horticulture.[160] However, Howard still felt it important that the officers of the State Board of Horticulture remain aware of those injurious insects that could potentially be imported from Japan and the Pacific, such as the Japanese gypsy moth, *Oeneria japonica,* which could devastate the native biota just as the European gypsy moth had done in Massachusetts. In order to learn more about lesser known injurious insects, Howard's predecessor, Professor C. V. Riley, had hired a Japanese entomologist by the name of Otoji Takahashi, who had been trained by Professor J. H. Comstock at Cornell University.[161] A colleague of Howard's, Theodore D. A. Cockerell, wrote up the following in a report that introduced a newly discovered subgenera, *Pulvinaria (Takahashia) japonica*:

> Mr. Takahashi must forgive me for saying that this is a truly Japanesque insect, and well deserves a subgenerie name which may recall not only its discoverer, but the land from whence come many quaint and beautiful things . . . [*Female:*]

[160] Howard, *Some Mexican and Japanese Injurious Insects Liable to Be Introduced into the United States,* USDA Division of Entomology, Technical Bulletin No. 4 (U.S. G. P. O., 1896): 5.

[161] Ibid., 5. Howard himself had received a small lot of Japanese insects sent by M. Matsumura, a scholar at Sapporo Agricultural College. The humanization of plants and insects would have significant implications when the Japanese cherry trees were attacked at the outbreak of World War II.

> Legs and antennae very small . . . Claw straight, a little hooked at end; the usual digitules of claw and tarsus present, but all very slender and small.[162]

In comparing Takahashi to the insect he identified, Cockerell's statement illustrates that the Asiatic racial form does not always take the shape of a human body.[163] Cockerell's observations, like many other American entomologists of his time, engaged in both orientalist anthropomorphism and naturalization by bestowing human traits onto insects and likewise endowing Takahashi with the physical attributes of the very pest he categorized.[164] These metaphors that humanized insects and plants and naturalized Japanese immigrants, however, had tangible implications that moved beyond the rhetorical.

California serves as an important site to examine these humanized insects and naturalized immigrants.[165] According to Pauly, California became a central site for scientists' intervention since it was a "novel environment where American settlers, European and Asian vegetation, and oriental insects had converged within a few years."[166] California formed a central agricultural region not only because of its climate and fertile soil, but also because of its position along the Pacific Ocean where a great deal of commerce occurred. Environmental historian Nash has noted California's

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[162] Ibid., 47.

[163] Lye, *America's Asia*, 7.

[164] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Native Species*, 16.

[165] While I focus on the Japanese in California, plant and immigration regulation shaped the lives of issei elsewhere throughout the United States—and other communities they created in places such as Latin America.

[166] Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life*, 77.

Central Valley has had a history that includes "the nearly unrestrained introduction of highly toxic pesticides and nonnative species."[167] In *To Make a Spotless Orange: Biological Control in California* (1996), Richard Sawyer wrote that ornamentals and other agricultural plants from nurseries

> constantly threatened the young state [of California] with new pests. Almost no native American insects attacked citrus, a foreign crop still expanding largely through the importation of nursery stock. With so much exotic plant material coming in, it was only natural for California to lead other states in enacting plant quarantine legislation . . .[168]

Plant quarantine, however, was no more "natural" than the racial stereotypes placed upon Chinese and Japanese immigrants as "disease-breeders" and the subsequent legislation that barred them at America's medical gates. Furthermore, although many elite entomologists who advocated plant quarantine appeared to do so for practical reasons, scholars such as Pauly and Coates have investigated the extent to which the exclusion of plants from places such as Asia were similar to the exclusion of Asian immigrants themselves. Linking together diseased plant immigrants to the Japanese "contagious yellow peril" that resided in Asian bodies not only blurs the boundaries between ecological and medical borders, but also tells a fuller and more multi-dimensional story of the exclusion of these so-called "invasive species."

One of these "invasive species" was the San José scale, which had already reportedly entered California in 1870 with flowering peach trees. In an historical

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[167] Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies*, 2.

[168] Sawyer, *To Make a Spotless Orange*, 23-24.

account published by the Bureau of Entomology, the scale first appeared in Charlottesville, Virginia in 1893, threatening all orchards in the East. In 1896 and 1897, investigations of the scale were carried out and thousands of circulars, bulletins, and monographs were issued.[169] In 1897, a technical series bulletin published by the USDA's Division of Entomology discussed the difference between the San José scale and other similar insects. In this report, T. D. A. Cockerell, the world's leading expert on bees and entomologist at the New Mexico Agricultural Experiment Station claimed that the San José scale originated in Japan: "It is now to be shown, for the first time, that *A. perniciosus* is, with little or no doubt, a native of Japan." Cockerell noted that in "Japan that there occur two varieties or subspecies of *perniciosus: andromelas* and *albopunctatus*." Although Cockerell acknowledged that Alexander Craw, the state quarantine officer and inspector, only once discovered *A. perniciosus,* or San José Scale, upon Japanese imported stock, Cockerell reasoned that "there are various Japanese scales which Mr. Craw has found only once, and several found by Mr. Takahashi on cultivated plants in Japan have not yet come into Mr. Craw's hands." [170] Cockerell added that if Japan is in fact the native country of the scale, its natural enemies would have kept it in check. Cockerell's assessment implied that in its country of origin, the San José scale could be controlled. However, in America, where this scale appeared to have no natural enemies, it could multiply, destroy valuable crops, and threaten the native ecology.

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[169] Gustavus A. Weber, *The Bureau of Entomology: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1930), 30.

[170] T. D. A. Cockerell, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Entomology, *The San José Scale and its Nearest Allies*, technical series no. 6 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1897), 14.

In 1896, Craw discovered in California "unhealthy" young fruit and ornamental trees from Japan covered with countless pests. This recent shipment from Yokohama included cherry trees, which contained a new insect species so robust that even the strongest pesticides failed to kill the majority of them. An article in the *Chronicle* ominously stated that "other pests unknown to this State were also found."[171] In his "list of scale insects found upon plants entering the port of San Francisco," Craw also listed the *Aspidiotus albopunctatus Ckll*, which was discovered upon some orange trees—a species established in California for over twenty years.[172] Craw, an aggressive quarantine officer who immediately eradicated new pests before they could spread, ordered two thousand trees from this recent shipment destroyed and all plant lots fumigated. The State Board then warned the Yokohama Nursery Company in Japan that their trees would no longer be "disinfected" in the future but simply destroyed.

Accounts written by American entomologists reached Japanese entomologists at the Imperial Agricultural Experiment Station in 1897. In 1904, S. I. Kuwana, S. Onuki, and S. Hori published a rebuttal to the claim that the San José scale originated in Japan. They pointed to the fact that the importation of American seeds, nursery stock, and grains to Japan did not begin until 1871. It was not until 1875 that the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco shipped a number of vines, lemon, and orange trees, among other fruit trees, to Japan: "Since then fruits, cuttings, roots and grafts of all kinds have been introduced constantly, chiefly coming from California through the port of San

[171] "Pests from Japan: Fruit Trees Covered with Scales are Destroyed in Quarantine," *Chronicle,* February 11, 1896, California Scrapbook, LACMA, Huntington Library.

[172] U. S. Department of Agriculture, Division of Entomology, *Some Mexican and Japanese Injurious Insects Liable to be Introduced into the United States,* technical series no. 4 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1896), 40.

Francisco."[173] According to Kuwana, American writers recognized the pest on California fruit trees by around 1873 and J. H. Comstock made note of it in 1880. Kuwana, Onuki, and Hori also pointed out that fruit, flowering, and ornamental trees from Japan had been shipped steadily throughout the west in "enormous quantities" for more than two centuries before Commodore Perry opened Japan's door in 1854.[174] During those two centuries, no scale was found on Japanese exports.

The Japanese entomologists then refuted Craw's claims that that the scale "conclusively" came from Japan by arguing his assessment was based upon "fragmentary facts" and that the investigations of Marlatt and Kuwana were not as thorough due to time limitations.[175] Kuwana and the other Japanese entomologists further sought to counter Professor Cockerell's statements that the scale is a native of the "elevated regions of Japan, not of the sea coast."[176] After launching special excursions that went deep into inland forests, Kuwana and his colleagues found the scale most abundant in the lower levels closer by the coast.[177] The Japanese scientists concluded their report with the following:

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[173] S. I. Kuwana, et al., Imperial Agricultural Experiment Station in Japan, *The San José Scale in Japan* (Nishigahara, Tokyo, 1904), 4.

[174] Ibid., 16.

[175] Ibid., 2. Kuwana apparently assisted Marlatt in his exploration of Japan regarding the scale.

[176] Ibid., 16, 18.

[177] Ibid., 18.

> Above all we must declare most decisively that there is not the slightest proof for the assertion that the scale is a native of Japan. The actual observations prove on the contrary that it is an imported pest.[178]

Why would these Japanese entomologists invest enormous time and energy to launch excursions that led them across several mountains and into deep valleys for many weeks in order to examine the flora and fauna for the scale? Certainly, the German Imperial ordinance against all plants, seeds, and fruit trees, with the exception of water plants and bulbs, from Japan on August 16, 1900 hurt the Japanese agricultural industry.[179] An American quarantine against Japanese imports would likewise have economic consequences. Yet perhaps the Japanese entomologists who undertook these excursions also understood that debates about the origins of insect pests and plant disease were interchangeable with—and linked to—debates about human immigration. For although a number of dangerous pests had entered the United States' borders other than the San José scale, this particular nuisance alarmed Leland Howard and others at the USDA of the "foreign-born" who could decimate "natives" who had not been previously exposed to and therefore highly susceptible to foreign dangers. Following the rapid eastward march of the scale in the 1890s, Vernon Kellogg, an entomologist from Stanford University, asserted that the San José scale, or *Aspidiotus perniciosus*, should be instead called "pernicious scale" or even "Oriental scale."[180] Stephen Forbes, an influential entomologist, wrote that the scale could be likened to a Japanese invasion "far more

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[178] Ibid., 33.

[179] Ibid., 2.

[180] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Native Species*, 93.

successful, and probably more destructive also, than any which Japan could possibly make by means of dreadnoughts and armies of little brown men."[181]

Bionativism in the 1880s & 1890s

The demand for and increasing plant imports shaped, and was shaped by, perceptions of the human immigrants who traveled with them. Historian Philip J. Pauly has argued that waves of ecological nativism were synchronous with anti-immigration legislation.[182] According to him, tracing the shift from nativism to cosmopolitanism and back reveals how migration policy was similarly shaped by a policy of biological selection for immigrants.[183] California fruit growers, for example, successfully pushed for a plant quarantine law at the state level in 1881.[184] Significantly, the following year, "native" Californians also succeeded in passing the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, ultimately guaranteeing a disempowered laboring class in the United States.[185]

Pauly sees a parallel between nativists and elite entomologists who expressed deep concern over the potential damage these so-called aliens might wreak upon American life:

> The paradigm of the nativist approach was the Chinese Exclusion Act, passed at the insistence of "native" California workingmen in 1882. . . It kept out all but a

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[181] Ibid., 94.

[182] Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees, *Isis*: 71. While the dichotomy between "nativist" and "cosmopolitans" is not so neatly drawn—some such as David Fairchild, were opposed to miscegenation (see Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Native Species: Strangers on the Land* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006], 86-87).

[183] Ibid., 71.

[184] Philip J. Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 77-78.

[185] Lye, *America's Asia*, 20.

> trickle of Chinese laborers, and by excluding women, it was designated to prevent the Chinese "race" from establishing itself permanently in North America.[186]

Even after the passage of the 1882 Exclusion Act, nativists continued to express concern over the dangerous potential of Chinese immigrants. In 1886, an article in *The California Farmer* compared the Chinese to "the deadly upas tree, their roots [having] taken a deep hold in our soil . . . their blight shadow . . . upon us."[187] The same article went on to note how "Kearney, Pacific, Powell, Mason and other streets once fair, clean and healthy, but now the very shadows of disease and death lurk in their dark corners . . . Portsmouth Square . . . has been the pest house tent spot for the leprous and small pox patients, the diseases brought to us by Chinese slaves . . ."[188] As the earliest Asian group to migrate in mass numbers to the United States, fears of the Chinese first established the foundation for "biological nativism."

Pauly has noted that prior to the 1890s, America's ecological borders still remained fairly permeable.[189] Advertisements for English, French, Chinese, Australian, and Japanese garden seeds frequently appeared in *California Farmer* throughout the 1880s. An article in the *California Farmer* also appeared on December 13, 1883,

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[186] Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees," *Isis*: 71.

[187] "The Chinese," *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences,* San Francisco, California (January 21, 1886): 5.

[188] Ibid., 5.

[189] Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life*, 74.

praising the large "class of [Japanese] *newcomers*" who apparently "have means and are well provided on arrival to start in life."[190] Japanese immigrants

> will prove a benefit to this country a thousand times better than the Chinese. We say, let the Chinese go back to China; and let the Japanese come and our country will be greatly the gainer—and let Europe *keep their Paupers at home*, and Americans take the means they otherwise have given for this class of immigrants, and bestow it upon our own American born citizens who needs all their spare change.[191]

Were these Japanese "newcomers" all in fact welcome? As we have seen in this chapter, only highly selective types of Japanese "newcomers" were welcome at America's gates.

Ascendant Bio-Cosmopolitans & Resistance

In *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (2006), Peter Coates challenges a portion of Pauly's argument about natives and cosmopolitans. Coates writes that his analysis of imported birds "serve to corroborate the general thrust of Pauly's claims . . . that the contemporary climate of opinion regarding immigrants influences public attitudes toward harmful exotics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[192] But Coates then goes on to question "how strongly attitudes to immigrants influenced responses to the likes of the English sparrow

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[190] "Japanese Immigrants," *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences,* vol. 52, no. 9, San Francisco, California, (December 13, 1883): 1.

[191] Ibid., 1.

[192] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 98.

and the Japanese beetle," which he thinks is "much harder to judge."[193] Coates points out that the plant explorer for the USDA, David Fairchild, held cosmopolitan views toward foreign flora and fauna that conflicted with his views toward immigrants.

Revisiting Fairchild's own writings demonstrates that he valued those Asian "exotics" that offered not only aesthetic beauty—however subjective—but especially economic gain. In a bulletin published for the USDA, as head of the Section for Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, Fairchild wrote in 1903 that American schoolboys prefer fishing poles made of bamboo over any other materials and that "several million" of these bamboo poles are shipped to the United States from Japan.[194] Noting that the bamboo is "among the most graceful forms of vegetable life that exist," Fairchild touted its multiple uses and that if a constant supply could be assured in the United States, could prove profitable.[195] Fairchild's enthusiasm for "exotics" also extended to mitsumata, a Japanese paper plant. He compared the "astonishingly cheap and durable" mitsumata, which were "light as gossamer," to paper sold in America:

> It is not a pleasant thought that the brilliant white note paper which your hand rests upon may have in it the fibers from the filthy garment of some Egyptian fella after it has passed through all the stages of decay until it is saved by a ragpicker from the gutter of an Egyptian town . . . At Mannheim on the Rhine the American importers have their ragpicking houses, where the rags are

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[193] Ibid., 98-99.

[194] David G. Fairchild, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Japanese Bamboos and their Introduction into America*, Bureau of Plan Industry, bulletin no. 43 (Washington: Government Printing Office, July 3, 1903), 11.

[195] Ibid., 10, 23-24.

> collected from all over Europe, the disease-infected Levant not excepted, and where women and children . . . with wet sponges tied over their mouths, sorting these filthy scraps for shipment to New York . . . The bast papers, therefore, are a creation of the Orient and are more nearly related to the South Sea Island tapa than to any of our products.[196]

In his comparison of imported American paper to Japanese paper "light as gossamer," Fairchild drew upon images of disease much like those associated with Chinese cigarmakers in San Francisco. Fairchild, however, used this image as a way to emphasize the cleanliness and refined qualities of the mitsumata paper—"softer, silkier, tougher, and lighter."[197] Yet again, he stressed the mitsumata's economic potential, for making tobacco and other pouches, as well as book covers, table covers, and even Japanese handmade wall paper, which was becoming fashionable in America.[198] Fairchild likewise extolled the virtues of udo, a salad plant which could be grown in the winter, and the Japanese horseradish, or wasabi.[199] Thus, his willingness to cultivate "exotics" depended in large part on how profitable and useful a plant may be. For example, his initial openness in 1900 to kudzu, a perennial imported from Japan and used as livestock feed and coverage, eventually gave way to alarm that it was

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[196] David G. Fairchild, U. S. Department of Agriculture, *Three New Plant Introductions from Japan,* Bureau of Plant Industry, bulletin no. 42 (Washington: Government Printing Office, June 24, 1903), 9-11.

[197] Ibid., 11.

[198] Ibid., 16.

[199] Ibid., 17, 20.

overtaking his property in Florida by the late 1930s.[200] The "yellow peril" in the form of potentially injurious insects and invasive species were conceived in similar ways to Asian bodies—sometimes valued for the economic gain they may have offered, while reviled for the menace they posed to the nation's health.

Conclusion

This chapter examined how new plant introductions from Japan occurred just as Japanese immigrants began entering the United States in mass numbers in the late nineteenth century. In this chapter, we saw how by the 1880s and 1890s, the earliest seeds were planted in shaping racial formation. Here, the "contagious yellow peril" image in the form of injurious insects and pathogens took root at the turn of the century. Acknowledging that while at times, United States agricultural and public health officials distinguished between Japanese and Chinese immigrants, they also began to make note of the dynamic interactions between these two countries and immigrant communities. Oftentimes, economics and perceptions of modernity frequently served to delineate Japanese immigrants from Chinese ones. Yet when questions arose as to the origins of the San José Scale, entomologists and other government agriculturalists remained uncertain, even if for a moment, as to whether or not it came from China or Japan. Public health officials responded even more aggressively when they sought to contain and forcibly vaccinate not only Chinese immigrants in San Francisco, but Japanese immigrants as well. The first chapter therefore traces the earliest stage of this evolution of Japanese "pests" into "enemy alien species."

[200] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Native Species*, 109.

The next chapter focuses on plant diseases imported from Japan and the correlative increasing concerns of how Japanese agriculturalists' business practices endangered the public's health. During the 1910s, we see how both the spread of chestnut blight and typhoid influenced dominant images of them as environmentally destructive and "cheap" Japanese agriculturalists that imperiled the nation's health. With the Asiatic racial form taking the shape of Japanese agricultural products and bodies, chapter two highlights Japanese immigrant fishermen and farmers. During this time period, discourse on Japanese plants and disease gradually became associated with "diseased" Japanese immigrants themselves. Recentering Japanese agriculturalists allows us to see how officials intensified their efforts to control those alien species within their borders.

Chapter 2:

The Ascent of the Japanese "Contagious Yellow Peril": Diseased Plants and Bodies and Menace of Plant Quarantine, 1905-1920

> The plant quarantine law that went into effect in 1917, I think, Quarantine 37, after that, we could get only plants that were certified free of insect disease, and free of soil, and then mostly for propagating purposes only, so that the USDA was limiting the amount of plants that could come in.
>
> --Toichi Domoto

Born exactly at twelve noon on December 11, 1902 in Oakland, California, Toichi Domoto initially helped his father, Kanetaro Domoto, run Domoto Brothers Nursery before eventually inheriting the family business. Domoto worked regularly in his father's nursery and recalled playing amongst the camellias, daphne, aspidistras, and fern balls. His earliest memories included the davillia fern "that would be wound around with a moss ball, and they'd soak it, and the dormant roots would come out in fronds."[201] Domoto also recalled boxes of chestnut trees imported from Japan. The agricultural inspectors, however, "wouldn't even open them if it was not permitted" and Domoto "ha[d] to pour fuel over the top of the box and burn it. That was before 1910."[202] By this time, according to Domoto, quarantine had been placed on chestnut and some fruit trees. Domoto's painstakingly detailed oral history reveals that at least some local inspectors assumed—or at least suspected—that chestnut blight had in fact been imported from Japan. Domoto admitted that plant inspectors may have singled out

[201] Toichi Domoto, "A Japanese-American Nurseryman's Life in California: Floriculture and Family, 1883-1992," an oral history conducted in 1992 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, 28.

[202] Ibid., 9-10.

Japanese chestnuts due to the bark disease, but also added that at the same time, "In the early days, dealing with importing, it was mostly just a routine examination. But some of it I think was discriminatory. I can't prove it for sure."[203] Thus, even as USDA officials debated in publications whether or not they truly believed the bark disease came from Japan, in practice, Domoto's recollections powerfully evidenced that at least at the local level, Japanese chestnuts were automatically deemed "guilty" and burned immediately without inspection.

In addition to his suspicions about Japanese chestnuts, which were primarily imported from Japan, Domoto also remembered at least a couple of incidents where Domoto nursery had shipped some potted plants to a florist in Fresno, but the crate came back unopened:

> They said, "Infested with mealy bugs." We couldn't find any on it, but they said it was. I know Dad said, "I can't see how they can inspect it without taking the burlap covering off." That was I think probably discriminatory . . .[204]

Domoto added that the agricultural commissioner owned a flower shop in Oakland. The San Francisco buyers came early and made their first selections—which were the largest quantity—the agricultural commissioner frequently indicated that he wanted to buy the very same blocks the San Francisco buyers had already purchased. If Domoto Nursery refused to give in to the inspector's demands, he would then condemn the entire nursery as "infected." While Domoto acknowledged that he could not definitively prove that such incidents were in fact acts of discrimination, Domoto

[203] Ibid., 35.

[204] Ibid., 36.

insisted that all the workers at their nursery carefully inspected each plant to ensure that they were free of mealy bugs.[205] His oral history indicates that Japanese nurseries were frequently singled out as centers of plant infection and potentially dangerous insects.

It is remarkable that *none* of the scholars debating today whether ecological restorationists were racist and whether there was in fact a relationship between attitudes toward plant and insect immigrants to human immigrants have consulted sources produced by immigrants themselves. While acknowledging the limitations of English-language sources this dissertation relies primarily upon, this research recenters the voices of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans. In focusing on the voices of the issei and second-generation Japanese Americans whenever possible and situating them as central in transforming environmental history, this narrative intervenes in the hegemonic discourse that has not taken into consideration immigrants' experiences and perspectives on plant quarantine and regulation or the restriction of human immigration.

Peter Coates correctly points out that the early twentieth-century dis-ease was without doubt, driven by economic interests.[206] Partly fueled by suspicions that Japanese chestnuts, citrus trees, and other plants were thought to bring in dangerous diseases and insects, including chestnut bark disease and the San José scale, these nursery stock inspectors appeared to believe that their policing of Japanese agricultural products in particular as a practical, objective matter.

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[205] Ibid., 37.

[206] Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 90.

Was the USDA's response to chestnut blight in fact an instance of discrimination against Japanese plant immigrants? Scholars of environmental history, including Coates, have questioned the extent to which these USDA officials were responding to the very tangible ramifications of plant disease that decimated "native" chestnuts rather than as acts of discrimination. Although these plant pathologists did not explicitly connect chestnut blight disease to disease in Japanese bodies, the oral history of Domoto suggests that in practice, they suspected the Japanese chestnut as the origin of the disease, and thus routinely screened them more carefully. Sources by and on Japanese immigrants have—and did—in fact leave behind evidence that at the very least, suggest such policing and exclusion targeted Japanese flora and fauna in particular.

Devastating and unstoppable plant diseases such as the chestnut blight—a disease previously unknown to the Federal Horticultural Board (FHB)—played a pivotal role in expanding the FHB's authority, particularly between 1916 and 1918. Philip J. Pauly characterizes the 1910s as a "fraught moment" in United States relations with the rest of the world.[207] Government officials feared the unchecked entrance of injurious insects, plant diseases, and human migrants that could become enemy aliens. Plant Quarantine Number 37 (PQN 37) was passed just a year after an immigration act later known as the "Asiatic Barred Zone" was also passed.[208] In 1919, the president of

[207] Philip J. Pauly, *Fruits and Plains: The Horticultural Transformation of America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 155.

[208] The Asiatic Barred Zone was an immigration act passed in 1917. After passing a succession of anti-Asian immigration laws—most notably the 1875 Page Law, 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, and the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement—the 1917 Immigration Act was passed to limit the number of Asian Indians. Peoples who lived east of the "Barred Zone" (from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, Aegean,

the American Forestry Association, Charles Lathrop Pack, compared Quarantine 37 to the literacy tests administered to immigrants. Pack described PQN 37 as the end of the "open door to plant immigrants," hoping that "the treasonable activities of these enemy aliens will be curbed."[209] Should his audience remain in doubt about what he meant by "treasonable activities" or the identity of these "enemy aliens," he published a cartoon to illustrate his point. This cartoon depicted hoards of Asian insect pests as monsters wearing pilgrim hats. Carrying luggage with words such as "pest" and "blight," the foreign insect pests that had already disembarked rapidly deforested the land by devouring nearby trees in one mouthful. Pack's insights did indeed become reality with the passage of PQN 37 and anti-Asian immigration legislation that targeted Japanese immigrants.

Chapter two examines how pathogens from Japan shaped quarantine and immigration restriction policies. Just what were the events that led up to PQN37? And in what ways did it focus on East Asia and Japan more specifically as an area and country rampant with deadly diseases that harmful migrants carried with them across the Pacific Ocean? Although USDA officials accepted the second batch of cherry trees sent by Japanese officials in 1912, Japanese plant immigrants of higher status were in fact more welcome than injurious ones at America's gates. Indeed, second-generation Japanese Americans who came of age in the 1920s could become those biotic citizens that David Fairchild spoke of. So too for plants: "Many Chinese and Japanese species

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and Black Seas) were denied entry at America's gates (see Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991], 55).

[209] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains,* 156.

are as much at home in America as in their own habitat. The drooping Japanese flowering cherry . . . that I planted in a place in the woods of Maryland, went wild there and in a generation one would come to think of it as native."[210] The re-telling of Japanese migration through a biological perspective seeks to recover the buried story of federal officials' attempts to contain and quarantine them first through PQN37 and later through legislation that barred Japanese immigrants themselves. While it was not his intended goal to focus on one ethnic or racial immigrant group, Coates does not examine those actual Japanese immigrants who carved an ethnic and economic niche in fishing, farming, horticulture, and nursery trade. The 1910s thus serves as an important time period because we see how following the passage of PQN37, United States agricultural and health officials began to shift their attention from Japanese insect, plant, and human immigrants that had already crept through their ecological and medical borders to the threat they posed from within.

Early Japanese Agriculture

The 1890s marks the beginning of American botanical and horticultural independence from Europe. American botanical and horticultural leaders relied less and less upon Europe for sources of new plants. Instead, they began to actively and systematically search for new plants elsewhere. The initial stimulus for this new systematic plant introduction was the growing interest by the 1880s in plants and gardens in the Far East, because of its temperate climate.[211] Like never before, American plant scientists spent extended periods exploring the flora and fauna of Japan.

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[210] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species,* 108.

[211] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains*, 124.

As part of its attempt to modernize by introducing Western agricultural education, the Meiji government hired these American plant scientists. On a concrete level, these scientists gained access to the countryside and experienced firsthand what had been previous abstractions: the sweltering Japanese summers, which resembled American summers. Both wild and cultivated plants in Japan also resembled the diversity in the United States, according to Pauly. The prominent plant explorer Charles S. Sargent also recognized the practical implications of the close affinities between Japanese and New England floras.

Following the 1896 election, Americans started to look increasingly outward with a "deeply nationalistic perspective."[212] The search for new markets, resources, and new territory that would enable the nation to be even more self-sufficient became a key part of the nation's priorities. The Agriculture Department and more specifically, plant introduction, was integral to this policy. Secretary of agriculture James Wilson (1897-1913) advanced long-term measures that would increase the diversity of the nation's economic plants.

The early twentieth century can be informally labeled the age of plant exploration not only to whet the appetites of those collectors eager to obtain newer and rare exotics, but also because entomologists and other plant scientists believed that since many plant diseases originated in Asia—especially China and Japan—they might be able to locate plants that had built up an immunity to diseases such as chestnut blight. For example, members of Federal Horticultural Board discussed a letter from Dr. Metcalf, where he indicated that he was "perfecting plans to send Dr. C. L. Shear to

[212] Ibid., 125.

China to study the chestnut-bark disease and particularly to bring back resistant trees."[213] Metcalf also believed that the Board could take advantage of Dr. Shear's presence in East Asia in order to determine

> by what means nursery stock from China reaches the United States, to endeavor to increase the efficiency of the inspection service of Japan, to investigate the activities of such commercial houses as the Yokohama Nursery Company, Limited, and to investigate the occurrence of disease in Japan and China which are liable to introduction into the United States, allotting a sum not to exceed $800.00 for this work. It is understood that the work to be done by Dr. Shear for this Board is entirely apart from the investigation of the chestnut-bark disease.[214]

Plant exploration in East Asia thus served a number of purposes. It allowed plant scientists to "discover" and identify important food plants, such as soybeans, as well as plants of high economic value, such as bamboo. In this sense, plant exploration could become the activity of empire building. Metcalf also wanted Dr. Shear to bring back knowledge about the means by which nursery stock has been brought from China to the United States, as well as to investigate the "commercial activities" of the Yokohama Nursery Company, one of the largest Japanese exporters to the United States. Finally, plant exploration could shed light not only on the business practices of Asian nurseries and other plant exporters, but also reveal the multitude of deadly diseases unknown to the Board that could easily slip past the borders into the United States. The information

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[213] R. L. Alshouse, Secretary of Federal Horticultural Board, Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes 1912-1928, Box No. 1, Entry 71, NA.

[214] Ibid., 106.

collected from plant explorations in "little-known and little-explored parts of the world"—which oftentimes focused on East Asia—would enable Department of Agriculture officials to decide on what kinds of nursery stock to exclude in PQN 37.[215]

Although agricultural trade intensified between Japan and other countries by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the development of commercial horticulture in Japan occurred on a much smaller scale. Ikebana, the art of flower arranging in Japan, was primarily for the wealthy.[216] However, foreign demand for Japanese ornamentals and fruit trees remained high for much of the early twentieth century.

The challenge these agricultural gatekeepers who worked for the USDA had to contend with was how to import and incorporate those who could become useful biotic citizens, while excluding particularly noxious alien species. G. W. Groff of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) spoke of the Bureau's work in China, Siam and the Philippines—and of the "value of plant quarantine and the lack of it in China."[217] While Groff noted the lack of plant quarantine in China, he also knew that there were "many food plants in the Orient which might be advantageously introduced into the United States; provided, however, plant diseases prevalent in the Orient could be

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[215] Beverly T. Galloway, *Notes: Observations, Suggestions, and Recommendations Relative to Nursery Stock and Some Related Subjects; Based Mainly Upon a Field Trip Made August 5 to 14, 1918*, National Agricultural Library, 97.

[216] Domoto, "A Japanese American Nurseryman's Life in California," 12-13.

[217] Letter to Mr. Harrison, from E. A. Sherman, Acting Forester, United States Department of Agriculture, October 13, 1920, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Division of Tropical and Subtropical Fruit and Insect Investigations, Correspondence Relating to Investigations of Citrus Fruit Insects in California, 1914-1921, Box no. 3, Entry 70, NA.

excluded from this country."[218] Therein lay the problem for these BPI botanists: how they could import economically profitable plants and insects while excluding harmful ones. This chapter demonstrates the significance and centrality of Asian "exotics"—and especially Japanese agricultural products—in transforming the American horticultural and agricultural industry. The increasing desire and demand for Japanese "exotics" and food products, however, sparked a debate as officials of Federal Horticultural Board clashed with nursery stock importers.

Japanese immigrants also imported Japanese flora and fauna, although unlike the Bureau of Plant Industry that promoted what would eventually become staple crops such as soybeans (*Glycine max*). According to existing secondary and primary source records, we know that many Japanese immigrant agriculturalists—especially nurserymen and floriculturalists—imported quantities of seeds and plants from Japan. Masakazu Iwata's overview of the issei agriculture in the United States in *Planted in Good Soil* (1992) offers a glimpse in the floriculture trade of Japanese immigrant agriculturalists in northern California. Although there is no comprehensive history specifically on the transpacific commercial trade between agriculturalists in Japan and the United States, Iwata's history does suggest that many Japanese floriculturalists frequently returned to Japan, purchased flower seeds, and brought them back to the United States for cultivation. Japanese chrysanthemums were oftentimes cultivated in this manner because of their unusually large petals, such as ones grown by Hiroshi Yoshiike, the first Japanese flower grower who worked in Oakland. Yoshiike

[218] Ibid.

experimented with his flowers and his improved strains shipped over to the East brought his flora great acclaim and popularity. In fact, even white floriculturalists noticed his flowers and decided to work with Yoshiike to continue the scientific development of the chrysanthemums.[219] Likewise, other Japanese nurserymen, such as the Domoto Brothers, imported wisteria, camellia, and azalea plants in large volumes due to the high demand for these flowers in the United States.[220] Although Iwata does not provide exact or even approximate dates for when such agricultural exchanges occurred, he does suggest that Japanese agriculturalists sought Japanese seeds and plants by around the very late nineteenth century. But shortly thereafter, when the San Francisco earthquake struck and subsequent fire razed the area on April 18, 1906, Iwata wrote that the "anti-Oriental mood was at its most bitter stage."[221]

After 1906, many issei flower growers decided to rebuild elsewhere and moved to southern California. A small cluster of issei flower growers had already begun to establish their businesses in southern California at the turn of the century. Sotaro Endo was the first Japanese American floriculturalist in the Los Angeles area to establish his business. Endo leased two plots of land in Los Angeles, at the intersection of South Main and West Jefferson streets, where he grew carnations in the 1890s. By 1896, Endo managed to produce the best-selling white and large yellow mums by first purchasing chrysanthemum plants from Yoshiike. Although Endo eventually relocated to Mexico and returned to Japan, his son, Gongoro and other extended family members

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[219] Masakazu Iwata, *Planted in Good Soil: A History of the Issei in United States Agriculture*, vol. 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), 453-454.

[220] Ibid., 455.

[221] Ibid., 462.

took over his business.[222] Before Endo returned to Japan, he and Jinnosuke Kobata merged their flower businesses in southern California. Kobata's business eventually supported numerous branches of other Japanese floriculturalists whom he trained before they launched their own businesses. Born in 1863 to an impoverished family, Kobata left Wakayama and went to Santa Monica in the 1890s, where he grew chrysanthemums around Jefferson Boulevard. He imported plants from Japan in order to expand into the nursery industry, and began providing nursery stock to the West Adams estates and other wealthy areas in Pasadena. Initially, he started a nursery on Jefferson Boulevard and then in 1910, he bought land in Gardena.[223]

By the early 1910s, many Japanese American floriculturalists grew their flowers along the slopes of Long Beach, Hermosa Beach, Hollywood, and other nearby areas. Most of these flowers were sold on First, Second, and Spring Streets. In 1909, Heiichiro Higashi and Yukitaka Ohta opened a private wholesale market—otherwise known as "Vawter Carnation Fields." In 1910, however, most growers, gathered along South Broadway nearby Sixth Street, to sell their flowers. Japanese immigrants such as Sunichi Murata formed S. Murata & Company in 1911 and became one of the major shippers and floriculturalists in the Los Angeles area before World War II. On April 12, 1912, a group of nine floriculturalists met at the Hotel Grand and decided to form Nanka Kaengyo Kumiai (or the Southern California Floral Industry Association).[224] The Nanka Kaengyo Kumiai was formed in large part because word had spread that

[222] Naomi Hirahara, *A Scent of Flowers: The History of the Southern California Flower Market, 1912-2004* (Pasadena, California: Midori Books, 2004), 40-41.

[223] Ibid., 41.

[224] Domoto, "A Japanese American Nurseryman's Life in California," 45.

Kanetaro Domoto and his brothers had organized the California Flower Growers Association. By 1912, Domoto Nurseries mushroomed into a 35 acre nursery in Oakland Hills, selling approximately 230 chrysanthemum varieties and 50 kinds of everblooming tea roses—which they shipped all over the United States. Japanese growers, according to Naomi Hirahara, first began selling in a small storefront in Lick Place, San Francisco, before rapidly outpacing the original store and becoming the California Flower Market in 1912, backed by fifty-four shareholders.

Although some befriended individuals such as Yoshiike, many white floriculturalists viewed these issei agriculturalists as a threat to their business. Domoto distinctly remembers during his father's era as a nurseryman where white exhibitors undercut Japanese growers at nursery shows by first purchasing flowers from the latter and then exhibiting them as their own. He added that oftentimes, the Pacific Coast Horticultural Society prohibited Japanese floriculturalists from showing their flowers: "Japanese growers, especially in the fall season, chrysanthemum season, they weren't allowed to compete in the show because they used to grow too good a flower. They'd get all the blue ribbons."[225] Was this a part of the "exotic flowering of alarmism" that the historian John A. Thompson wrote about?[226] How did views of the ascent of Japanese agriculturalists, an upwardly mobile group that even Alien Land Laws could not hold down, mirror and even at times, intersect with hegemonic perceptions of them as pathogenic diseases? What was the interplay between growing and personifying "too

[225] Ibid., 85.

[226] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 90.

good" flora and fauna and the transformation of a Japanese "contagious yellow peril" into a maliciously "poisonous" one? And how did other minority groups provide the foil against which Japanese immigrants would be perceived?

Plant Pathogens

In the latter half of 1904, a forester named Hermann Merkel saw a peculiar form of disease attacking American "native" chestnuts (*Castanea dentata*) in the New York Bronx Zoological Park.[227] The following year in an annual report to the New York Zoological Society, Merkel claimed that he had identified the first recorded case of chestnut bark disease, or chestnut blight. As early as 1909, agricultural publications began noting that Japanese chestnut trees, while not completely immune, exhibited some resistance to chestnut blight.[228] By August 1907, chestnut blight had thoroughly infected the state of New York, with New Jersey and Connecticut reporting some cases. At this time, the bark disease did not reportedly occur south of Virginia. But a 1909 publication in the USDA's *Miscellaneous Papers*, "The Present Status of the Chestnut Bark Disease," warned its readers that in the summer of 1908, inspectors visited almost every chestnut orchard and nursery throughout the Atlantic States located north of North Carolina and found that most of them had cases of the bark disease. Inspectors observed several cases where the disease had spread from nursery chestnut trees to nearby wild trees.[229]

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[227] Clarence F. Korstian, "Pathogenicity of the Chestnut Bark Disease," *Forest Club Annual* (1915): 1.

[228] Hermann Von Schrenk and Perley Spaulding, "Chestnut Bark Disease," U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plan Industry (BPI), Bulletin No. 149 (Washington D. C., June 30, 1909): 22.

By 1911, chestnut blight had dispersed throughout at least ten states and the District of Columbia.[230] Furthermore, the USDA's *Farmer's Bulletin* declared that although its "origin is unknown . . . there is some evidence that it was imported from the Orient with the Japanese chestnut."[231] This same publication further noted in the next paragraph that Japanese and "perhaps other east Asian chestnuts appear to have resistance."[232] This 1911 statement appears more uncertain than the previous article published in 1909 on the status of the chestnut bark disease: "The theory advanced in a previous publication of this Bureau, that the Japanese chestnuts were the original source of infection, has been strengthened by many facts."[233] The 1909 and 1911 articles, published by both Haven Metcalf, the Pathologist in Charge, and J. Franklin Collins, the Special Agent for Investigations in Forest Pathology, while demonstrating the cautiousness on the part of these authors, repeatedly suggested that chestnut blight originated somewhere in the "Orient," which they and other USDA officials believed to be a mysterious place filled with potentially deadly diseases and injurious insects.

Metcalf, Collins, and other USDA employees placed chestnut blight in the same category as the (Asian) San José scale. Metcalf and Collins recommended that "every State in which the chestnut or chinquapin grows should as speedily as possible pass a

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[229] Haven Metcalf and J. Franklin Collins, "The Present Status of the Chestnut-Bark Disease," U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry, Miscellaneous Papers (Washington D. C., 1909): 49.

[230] Haven Metcalf and J. Franklin Collins, "The Control of the Chestnut Bark Disease," U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmer's Bulletin 467 (Washington D. C., 1911): 5.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid.

[233] Metcalf and Collins, "The Present Status of the Chestnut-Bark Disease," USDA, BPI: 46.

law putting the chestnut bark disease on the same footing as other pernicious diseases and insect pests, such as the San José scale, against which quarantine measures are taken."[234] The authors then added that the Department of Agriculture would be more than willing to offer "detailed suggestions or advice regarding the framing of such laws." They further urged those inspectors who already exercised legal power to enforce the quarantine against chestnut blight in order to "take special care that no shipment of chestnut stock escapes their rigid inspection."[235] Haven and Metcalf also promoted a campaign where state pathologists and inspectors would educate the public about how to identify the bark disease so that it might be "stamped out" immediately wherever it appeared. Without early detection and treatment, Haven and Metcalf ominously warned, diseased "native" chestnut trees would be doomed to death. He told a reporter that "The stake for which we are fighting is nothing less than the present stand of chestnut timber in America. Unless the disease is controlled by human agency or unless some natural enemy appears to check the disease—and there is no hope of this—the chestnut tree will become extinct within the next ten or fifteen years."[236]

Metcalf knew that if they could not stop the epidemic, that the nation's most important trees—valued at approximately three to four hundred million dollars at the time—would be wiped out. Yet Metcalf and others recognized that while many individual trees could not be saved, he still hoped to be able to staunch the epidemic before it struck the highly valuable Appalachian chestnut stands. He, as well as other

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[234] Ibid., 49.

[235] Ibid.

[236] Susan Freinkel, *American Chestnut: The Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 46-47.

scientists, believed the answer to stop the spread of the disease was quarantine. Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson likewise observed that "There is no contagious disease known that does not yield to sanitation and quarantine."[237] In late 1908, Metcalf tested the efficacy of quarantine in the Washington, D. C. area. He sent out his scouts to scour the woods for infected trees and ordered them cut down and destroyed.

The American chestnut held not only great economic importance in American forests on the East Coast, but also symbolized something deeper. American Indians very likely consumed chestnuts along with other "native" foods, such as corn.[238] Chestnut trees not only provided food for its indigenous inhabitants; it also provided valuable wood for furniture and other related goods. The arrival of the chestnut blight occurred just when many Americans began to realize the limitations of the nation's natural bounty.[239] The historian Frederick Jackson Turner's declaration that the frontier had ended in 1893 signaled an increasing consciousness amongst many Americans that the nation's natural resources were not unlimited. In this sense, diseases such as chestnut blight and its devastating effects demonstrated the vulnerability of the native ecology and led to the "anxious roots of the modern environmental consciousness."[240]

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[237] Ibid., 46.

[238] Ibid., 9.

[239] Ibid., 4.

[240] Ibid., 4. Freinkel writes that "In 1907 the agency established a Laboratory of Forest Pathology to deal with growing roll call of tree diseases: peckiness, pine rot, ink disease, plum black knot, and of course, chestnut blight. Forest pathology itself was a relatively new discipline, a latecomer to a science that traditionally had been concentrated on diseases affecting food crops and orchard trees. That focus began to change at the turn of the century . . . Suddenly, there was an interest in promoting healthy forests" (Freinkel, *American Chestnut,* 44).

According to Susan Freinkel, the Laboratory of Forest Pathology turned its attention during the early twentieth century to the nations' forests "as a splendid but endangered resource to be enjoyed and exploited."[241] In 1905, the United States Forest Service primary goal was to preserve timberlands through scientific management, thereby indicating the interest in preserving healthy forests. It would be chestnut blight specifically that revealed the consequences of human-facilitated invasive species, foreshadowing the nation's attempts to resist biodiversity.[242] The historian of science Philip Pauly has specifically pointed out that the "oriental" chestnut that carried with it deadly fungal pathogens demonstrates how hegemonic "attitudes toward foreign pests merged with ethnic prejudices: the hessian fly and the oriental chestnut blight traded meanings with their presumed human compatriots."[243] Just as European Americans began to identify with certain plants they were both familiar with and found useful—including the "native" chestnut—so they too associated the "yellow peril" image with not only the "oriental" chestnut, but the countries from where it came and the "oriental" immigrants that at times even came with these plants.

It is noteworthy that both chestnut blight and citrus canker disease infected regions where Japanese immigrants did not reside in large numbers. The importation of citrus canker from Japanese nursery stock circa 1910 alarmed many USDA officials. According to Coates, citrus canker was caused by bacteria that somehow managed to

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[241] Ibid., 44.

[242] Ibid., 4.

[243] Philip J. Pauly, *Biologists and the Promise of American Life: from Meriwether Lewis to Alfred Kinsey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 74.

slip into Gulf region on Japanese plants. As a pathogenic disease, it inflicted lesions on leaves, twigs, and fruits, resulting in defoliation, permitted rot fungi to enter branches, led to "premature fruit drop," and caused severe cosmetic damage. According to secondary and primary sources, this disease devastated the Florida citrus industry by the mid-1910s: "Highly susceptible citrus groves in Florida were incinerated in a bid to contain the infestation that had caused land values to plummet and engendered the fear that the state's orchards would meet the same fate as the Northeast's chestnut forests."[244] The comparison of citrus canker to chestnut blight indicated its deadly potential, since by the mid-1920s, chestnut blight destroyed virtually *all* native chestnuts in New York and Pennsylvania—securing its position as the leading "menace" of introduced plant pathogens.[245] The state of Florida moved quickly to quarantine against citrus plants from foreign countries as well as states within the United States as a precautionary measure against citrus canker on May 19, 1914.[246]

In 1916, Karl F. Kellerman, Associate Chief of the Bureau of Plant Industry, published "Cooperative Work for Eradicating Citrus Canker" in the *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture*. In this article, Kellerman first pointed out that the citrus canker incident was the first time federal funds had been appropriated "specifically for the eradication of a plant disease. It is of overwhelming importance to the citrus industry, because citrus canker has been recognized as the most contagious of

[244] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 95.

[245] Ibid., 94.

[246] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, May 19, 1914, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Plant Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box No. 1, Entry 71, NA.

all known plant diseases and the most destructive of commercial values."[247] And while Kellerman remained unsure about the disease's origins, he stated that he firmly believed that "there appears to be no doubt that it has been introduced into this country direct from Japan."[248] Kellerman also noted that while the disease very likely infected nursery stock earlier, the first official observation occurred in Texas some time in 1911. Special efforts made by nurserymen, citrus growers, and state nursery inspectors in 1913 and 1914 to keep the disease in check by methods such as complete defoliation and Bordeaux mixture proved futile. Kellerman described citrus canker as a "severe epidemic [that] menaced the citrus industry"—a threat that neither the states it affected nor the citrus industry were prepared for.[249] Kellerman bemoaned the fact that infected nursery stock went undetected long enough to be shipped not only to nurseries in Texas, but in other states.[250] And like the chestnut blight menace, citrus canker could not be so easily disassociated from the country that presumably exported it into American nurseries.

On March 6, 1917, the Board Secretary read a letter from a Mr. Maskew, who pointed to the "danger from citrus canker through the importation of citrus fruit from the Orient. Dr. Kellerman suggested the calling of a hearing to determine the desirability of quarantine against citrus fruit from the Philippines, Japan, China, and

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[247] Karl F. Kellerman, "Cooperative Work for Eradicating Citrus Canker," *Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture* (Washington, 1916): 267.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Ibid., 268.

[250] Ibid., 271.

Oceania."[251] The Chairman, Charles Marlatt, further suggested that the Board ought to bring "all citrus fruit under inspection." A few weeks later, on March 27, 1917, the Federal Horticultural Board approved the decision to hand over a hybrid citrus from Japan to a Mr. Swingle due to the fact that the plant had symptoms of the citrus canker infection.[252] Swingle could only propagate the hybrid under quarantine at Bethesda, Maryland. The Board also directed the Secretary to prepare a hearing notice on May 8 of that year regarding the proposed quarantine against citrus fruits from eastern and southeastern Asia, including Japan, China, India, the Philippines, Siam, Formosa, Oceania, and the Malayan Archipelago. On May 16, 1916, Dr. Kellerman reported to the Federal Horticultural Board that the citrus canker continued its rapid spread in the form of a very serious outbreak that reached the West Coast, nearby a large commercial grapefruit development.[253] However, Kellerman later stated on April 3, 1917 that "the citrus canker situation seemed to be fairly well in hand" and that they would be able to "clean up" almost entirely the states of Florida, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and possibly Mississippi—with "the only real infection center remaining . . .

[251] R. L. Alshouse, Secretary of Board, March 6, 1917, Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, Folder: Minutes, January 9, 1913-April 6, 1917, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Plant Entomology and Plant Quarantine, General Records, General Correspondence, 1908-1924; 1907-1914, Box No. 1, Entry 34, NA.

[252] R. L. Alshouse, Secretary of Board, March 27, 1917, Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, Folder: Minutes, January 9, 1913-April 6, 1917, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Plant Entomology and Plant Quarantine, General Records, General Correspondence, 1908-1924; 1907-1914, Box No. 1, Entry 34, NA.

[253] R. L. Alshouse, Secretary of Board, May 16, 1916, Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes 1912-1928, Box No. 1, Entry 71, NA.

Louisiana."[254] Such fears of the menace of plant disease can be situated within the broader agricultural industry and a newly-expanded American empire where white elites fought to preserve a higher grade of human and plant citizenship.

Since BPI officials, such as Marlatt, believed that citrus canker and chestnut blight had entered the United States through Japanese imports, they began to discuss what policies they should implement to police plant diseases from Japan. On September 12, 1912, C. B. Knickman of McHutchinson & Co. criticized the absence of plant inspection in Japan at a Federal Horticultural Board meeting. Knickman argued that Japanese shipments to places like Seattle should be inspected at its port of origin, not at the port of entry. The Board noted that because nursery importers may, after a plant has entered U.S. borders, "take off [the] name of [the] shipper in order not to disclose to his customers the source from which he gets his stock."[255] Acting Solicitor Jones suggested that countries without a system of inspection should allow their nursery exports to be inspected prior to departure and accompanied with a certificate indicating a clean bill of health. Knickman concurred, stating that March 31 would be the best time to limit the "arrival of such goods from Japan."[256] Horticultural Board meeting

[254] R. L. Alshouse, Secretary of Board, April 3, 1917, Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes 1912-1928, Box No. 1, Entry 71, NA.

[255] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, September 12, 1912: 29, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Plant Entomology and Plant Quarantine, General Records, General Correspondence, 1908-1924; 1907-1914, Box No. 1, Entry 34, NA.

[256] Ibid.

minutes illustrate that while they recognized disease came from not only Japan, they were quite preoccupied with Japanese imports.

The "Yellow Peril" Within Japanese Cherry Trees

Similar if not more important than chestnut trees in American agriculture, the Japanese cherry tree would become one of the most prominent symbols of American horticulture and the nation's capital. The Japanese cherry tree, as well as other exotics, was highly sought after by leading American botanists and horticulturalists such as David Fairchild. Alongside fears of the foreign "oriental" chestnut, another potent symbol—the Japanese cherry tree—became infamous after Marlatt, then the acting chief of the Bureau of Entomology at the USDA, alleged that the cherry trees sent by the Japanese government were thoroughly infested with root gall worm, crown gall, two types of scale, a potentially new borer species, as well as "six other dangerous insects."[257] In a letter dated January 19, 1910, Marlatt wrote a report to the Secretary of Agriculture on the injurious insect pests he found on the cherry trees. Marlatt claimed that during his week-long investigation to have discovered, among other injurious insects and deadly diseases, Chinese diaspis (*Diaspis pentagona*), San José scale, root gall worm, and the Lepidopterous larva. Above all, he declared that the wood-boring Lepidopterous larva to be the "most dangerous insect pest":

> This undetermined species is apparently much more dangerous than the common peach borer, since it attacks the tree not only near the surface of the ground but frequently at the base of the upper branches. Twenty percent of the trees are

[257] Philip J. Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees, *Isis,* vol. 87, no. 1 (March 1996): 51.

> visibly infested with this insect, but it is impossible to tell how many of the others are also infested, since discovery is only possible in the latter stages when the insect has burrowed to the surface. The larvae of this insect are so deeply imbedded in the wood and so thoroughly protected by the gummy exudation of the wounded bark that no feasible fumigation would kill them. They undoubtedly constitute the greatest insect menace of this importation and might very easily be a source of tremendous loss in later years to fruit interests . . . The presence of the borer referred to, together with the six other insects, without other consideration warrants the recommendation which Doctor Howard makes and in which I concur, that the entire shipment should be destroyed by burning as soon as possible . . .[258]

Marlatt's emphasis on the danger that the wood-boring Lepidopterous larva posed to fruit trees hints at the possibility of danger hidden within the beautiful exterior of the Japanese cherry trees. The cherry tree incident, Pauly argues

> with its contrast between strong, symmetrical, but dull American elms and effete, twisted, and spectacular oriental exotics, its subtexts of racial inequality and (horti)cultural sisterhood, and its implications of an insidious Yellow Peril hidden within beautiful packaging—was saturated with meanings.[259]

Those who worked for the USDA understood that their bureaucratic survival depended upon their ability to wield political power derived from such racial and ethnic

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[258] From the Acting Chief of Bureau to the Secretary of Agriculture, January 19, 1910, Folder 1907 – 1908 – 1909 – 1910 – Office of Secretary, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Plant Entomology and Plant Quarantine, General Records, General Correspondence, 1908-1924; 1907-1914, Box No. 1, Entry 34

[259] Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees," *Isis*: 54.

connotations. Equally important, these USDA bureaucrats and government public health officials played a key role in transforming the issei, as well as plant and insect immigrants, into a deadly biological threat that potentially endangered (white) "native" Americans.

Coates points out the scientists supervised by the heads of the Bureau of Entomology, Howard and Marlatt, did in fact detect crown gall in about forty-five percent of the flowering cherry trees, as well as the fungous mycelium in the roots. Coates further adds that Marlatt's report to the secretary of agriculture was in fact "grounded in practical objections."[260] Yet even if the trees were infected with various fungi and injurious insects, in addition to the potential economic loss, this chapter details how United States agricultural and health officials used such "evidence" as a way to regulate and even exclude Japanese immigrants. Japanese farmers and fishermen form the important link between plant disease and diseased "oriental" bodies—between injurious insects that threatened the "native" biota and Japanese fishermen and farmers who presumably endangered the health of the larger (white) public. We shall later see how the emergence of the Japanese farmer in particular coincided with a larger movement to exclude potentially dangerous flora and fauna from Japan.

How did the Japanese cherry tree, which is so well-known today as a national symbol of the United States capital and an integral part of its landscape, shed its earlier history as a former "alien crop enemy"? J. G. Sanders, one of the inspectors of the cherry trees shipped in 1910 urged a complete embargo on foreign plants because they

[260] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 98.

posed "unknown dangers" that could easily be unleashed when released outside of their original environment. Sanders believed that such unknown dangers "lurk in every shipment of plants to America."[261] Focusing on insect, plant, and human migrants from Japan reveals the central role that an emerging "enemy alien species" played in shaping America's ecological and medical borders. Deadly disease outbreaks, such as chestnut bark disease and citrus canker, only further added to the evidence that a federal quarantine was necessary.

The United States government had already begun to implement exclusionary measures against Japanese immigrants at its borders. In a move designed to curtail the admission of Japanese immigrants, as well as Korean immigrants under Japanese colonial rule, the United States government implemented the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement, the first stage in a series of anti-Japanese laws. Under this legislation, the Japanese government agreed to stop issuing passports to its emigrants—specifically, male laborers—in an effort to prevent the monopoly of these Japanese laborers on Hawaii plantations.[262] During the very early twentieth century, about two-thirds of Japanese immigrants living in California worked as farm laborers of some sort.[263] Despite the passage of the Gentleman's Agreement, the Japanese still managed to migrate to the United States through the practice of sending for picture brides, where

[261] Ibid., 90.

[262] Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 16.

[263] Ibid., 38.

many marriages occurred through the exchange of photographs.[264] Unlike anti-Chinese immigration legislation, the United States government carefully avoided explicitly naming Japanese immigrants even as legislation excluded them in degrees. From 1907 to 1924, the United States passed increasingly restrictive measures that would slowly close the gates against Japanese migrants. The Japanese cherry trees, Pauly claims, were "integral to a complex political web" brewing at the turn of the century, when the Gentleman's Agreement had just been approved and Japan had emerged victorious from the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War.[265]

Based upon the recommendation of President Howard Taft's experts, particularly Marlatt's, the first batch of Japanese cherry trees were burned on January 28 on the Washington Monument grounds. Despite Marlatt's characterization of this incident as an "apolitical scientific necessity," the *New York Times* pointed out that "we have been importing ornamental plants from Japan for years, and by the shipload, and it is remarkable that this particular invoice should have contained any new infections."[266] The editorialist also thought it unnecessary that the public should be notified of the destruction of these trees, and that an "accident of the obviously unavoidable sort" could have easily and more tactfully been arranged. In a diplomatic move, the Japanese government responded by sending a second shipment of cherry trees carefully selected by specialists at the Imperial University, raised on grounds free of insects, nematodes, and sprayed with insecticides and fungicides before being fumigated upon packing.

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[264] Chan also notes that they sent for younger relatives or yobiyose (which she defines as "those 'called' abroad by kinsmen"). See Chan, *Asian Americans*, 38.

[265] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains,* 148.

[266] Ibid., 150.

The trees were planted around the Tidal Basin area, along with Potomac River, as well as on White House gardens, a "living symbol of friendship between Japanese and American peoples."[267]

Human Pathogens

In what ways did views of Japanese insect, plant, and human immigrants metamorphosize as it transferred from one Asiatic racial form to another? How did Japanese American nurserymen, farmers, and floriculturalists view PQN 37 and the discrimination that they encountered in attempting to import and distribute Japanese nursery stock? How did views of Japanese fishermen and farmers specifically transform during the 1910s, a time period where issei agriculturalists' importance rose in California history? And most importantly, how did issei agriculturalists respond to federal, state, and local officials' attempts to police them? Without the voices of the issei—as well as Japanese Americans—only a one-sided, hegemonic narrative has been told. By offering a community-centered counterhegemonic narrative, this dissertation begins to offer not only a corrective in ecological and medical debates about Japanese human, plant, and insect immigrants, but also demonstrate how such struggle by Japanese and Japanese Americans themselves formed a central part of this transformation.

This section constructs a history of the Asiatic fisherman and farmer, illuminating the ways in which Alien Land Laws and their subsequent transformation into a "poisonous yellow peril" by 1941 have been so very much about the specter of the "unsanitary and unscrupulous" Asiatic farmer. Up until the 1924 National Origins

[267] Ibid.

Act, state and local officials attacked Japanese and Japanese Americans primarily in the agricultural sector.[268] The attack upon Japanese immigrants—including plant immigrants—primarily in the agricultural sector coincided with their perceived economic monopoly upon California farming, which by the end of World War I, claimed approximately ten percent of all of the state's crops.

The 1890s marks the decade in which Japanese immigrants entered the West coast in significant numbers and the earliest beginnings of their notable presence in agriculture. In the West, they initially worked as domestics, miners, lumberers, and in canneries. By 1910 however, Japanese immigrants began to increasingly enter agriculture as fishermen, laborers, tenant farmers, and owners. From the turn of the century until around the beginning of World War I, Japanese Americans constituted the majority of agricultural laborers. Factors such as the discrimination the issei faced in most skilled labor and the agricultural background of the immigrants prior to migration provided them with farming opportunities.[269] Even with the proliferation of urban businesses, agriculture remained the mainstay of the issei economy. Trade associations involving the various aspects of the growing and processing of farm products therefore greatly impacted Japanese immigrant communities.[270]

During World War I, according to historian Sucheng Chan, the presence of Japanese Americans in agriculture reached its zenith. The demand for food increased

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[268] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 109.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Chan, *Asian Americans*, 69.

greatly in 1917 when the United States entered World War I, and at the same time, male farm laborers left the home front to fight in World War I. That year the issei in California produced approximately ninety percent of the state's entire asparagus, berries, cantaloupes, celery, onions, and tomatoes. They also grew approximately seventy percent of the state's floricultural products, forty-five percent of all sugar beets, forty percent of all leafy vegetables, thirty-five percent of all grapes, and produced half of all seeds in the state of California.[271] Finally, by around the turn of the twentieth century, the issei established a number of local agricultural cooperatives, farm labor contractors' organizations, and central agricultural associations.

One example of the impact Japanese immigrant farmers had on their land is the story of Livingston. In a pamphlet titled, *Contributions of Japanese Farmers to California*, the authors wrote that "The story of Livingston is almost a romance. It is a tale of tremendous struggle against hostile natural conditions, financial disaster and year after year of disappointment, but a struggle maintained by stout hearts with indomitable perseverance until it ended, as a romance should, in complete victory."[272] The pamphlet detailed the harsh living conditions the earliest issei farmers faced in Livingston, a place without shade, water, sanitation, schools, and churches.[273] Overcoming a number of obstacles, including the demise of the Japanese American Bank in San Francisco—which held second mortgages on their property—and the near-starvation of the earliest community, their persistence paid off. "Taken as a whole," the authors stressed, "their

[271] Ibid., 38.

[272] *Contributions of Japanese Farmers to California*, Livingston is a Remarkable Example of Faith and Grit of Japanese Farmers Under Disheartening Conditions, The Bancroft Library (1918), 1.

[273] Ibid., 1.

[issei] residences are about as good as those of their American neighbors."[274] The authors likewise emphasized how housing conditions on lands owned by Japanese Americans differed greatly from leased lands. "The Japanese farmer," they contended, "is anxious to be an American and wishes to live as well as his American neighbors."[275] Equally important, this pamphlet attested to how the success of Japanese agriculturalists quieted those who scoffed at them: in Colusa County alone, a rice crop of "forty-seven sacks to the acre . . . sold for . . . $1.90 to $2 a hundred."[276] Even though white American rice cultivators far outnumbered Japanese immigrant rice farmers, the fact that the issei raised land values up to four times its original worth enraged white farmers. In places such as Kings, the land value increased by more than sevenfold from 1913 to 1918.[277]

Beginning in 1909, various legislators sought to restrict Japanese agricultural economic mobility, particularly in the California state legislature. In 1913, legislators finally successfully passed the Webb-Henry Alien Land Law which prohibited Asian "aliens" from purchasing or even leasing land for more than three years. A writer named Peter Clark argued that the issei should be forbidden from leasing land altogether, commenting the following about the unclean and unmoral Japanese farmer:

> The Japanese—without meaning any disrespect to the little brown men—does not commend himself to the average American farmer family as a desirable

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[274] Ibid., 5.

[275] Ibid., 10.

[276] Ibid., 12.

[277] Japanese Agricultural Association, *The Japanese Farmers in California* (San Francisco, California, n.d.), 9-10.

> neighbor. He isn't overly clean. He is accused of being unmoral . . . the whole idea of social intercourse between the races is absolutely unthinkable. It is not that the white agriculturalist cannot compete with the Japanese agriculturalist. It is that he will not live beside him.[278]

Thus, according to Clark, Japanese farmers—those "little brown men"—could not commend themselves to the nuclear American farmer family because they lacked hygiene and morals. Clark, like public health officials, made this important connection between "cheap" Japanese agriculturalists and their lack of cleanliness. Clark's and others' observations can best be understood as a larger reaction to not only fears of "race suicide" that these bachelor "brown men" might cause, but also the economic implications of these unstoppable, ascending "cheap agriculturalists."

According to Sucheng Chan, the 1913 Alien Land Law did not significantly impact issei agriculturalists because of the need for food during World War I. Soon thereafter, however, anti-Japanese groups—backed by California voters—successfully mounted a campaign to close these loopholes.[279] The 1920 law not only prohibited Asian aliens from leasing farm land entirely, but also forbade them from purchasing corporations where they owned more than half of all stocks or to hold property in their U.S.-born children's name. It also further prohibited any Japanese alien from supplying money for anyone who held such land in the name of another person trying to circumvent the Alien Land Law. With few exceptions, much of the 1920 law was upheld until *Oyama vs. California* in 1948. By 1925, seven other states followed

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[278] Hirahara, *A Scent of Flowers*, 52.

[279] Chan, *Asian Americans*, 47.

California's example by passing their own alien land laws, including Arizona (1917), Idaho (1923), Kansas (1925), Louisiana (1921), Montana (1923), New Mexico (1922), and Oregon (1923).

Aware that many of these Japanese immigrants would manage to evade these Alien Land Laws, health officials remained vigilant. The Los Angeles county health department has in fact had a long history of focusing on its immigrant and Asian populations as a possible source of contagion and contamination in its local food supply. Historian Natalia Molina has noted how Dr. Walter Lindley, head of the Los Angeles City Health Department, wrote in his 1879 inaugural report that the city's sunny climate, combined with the ocean breeze and orange groves, was marred by that "rotten spot—Chinatown," which he argued polluted the air and water.[280] In addition to dominant views of them as "unassimilable" aliens with peculiar customs, many working-class laborers, such as members in the Workingman's Party, pressured politicians to restrict Chinese immigration. Health inspectors also believed that Chinese fruit and vegetable peddlers engaged what they viewed as unsanitary business practices—namely, where Chinese vendors would sleep in the same quarters where they stored their produce. Frank W. Mefferd, appointed the Chief Fruit and Vegetable Inspector in 1913, criticized the Chinese for violating a fruit and vegetable ordinance that the health department had recently passed. The following year, Mefferd wrote that eighteen Chinese peddlers were prosecuted, stating that such action was pursued "only

[280] Natalia Molina, "Contested Bodies and Cultures: The Politics of Public Health and Race within Mexican, Japanese, and Chinese Communities in Los Angeles, 1879-1939" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 2001), 34.

as a last resort after the means of education and persuasion had failed."[281] This incident insinuated that Chinese vendors' living conditions could directly "infect" their produce and pass on diseases to their consumers. Health inspectors would continue to police them throughout the 1910s, because they viewed it as their burdensome duty to restrict these "unhygienic" Chinese vendors in particular.[282] Many issei, keenly aware of how white Americans viewed Chinese immigrants as "unassimilable aliens" in large part due to their living conditions, favored assimilation that adopted "American" living standards (gaimenteki dōka) as much as possible.[283] Some issei, such as Kiyoshi Kawakami, sought to distance themselves from the Chinese, citing how compared to Japanese settlements, Chinatowns were "filthy quarters."[284] Yet it was this very ability to adapt and persist in agriculture that transformed fears of the Japanese from a "contagious yellow peril" to a perniciously "poisonous yellow peril" by the 1930s.

Japanese fishermen were not only racially suspect; they also faced a health department determined to extend its regulation and surveillance of the county's food supply, provoking more clashes that occurred in January of 1910. The 1910s marks an important time period, because like other growing cities across the nation, the Los

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[281] Mefferd, *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California for the year ended June 30, 1914*, 82.

[282] Molina, "Contested Bodies and Cultures," 53. Chinese corrals were, however, excluded from city-sponsored improvements, such as paved roads, which allowed the markets to be cleaned and washed regularly (53). In 1913, health officials had the new Municipal Market Department built on city property. The Chinese, however, were segregated from this new market. Rather, health officials re-located them to Chinatown, at least two miles from the new Municipal Market Department (54). Molina points out that the Municipal Market Ordinance "extended the power of the health department's fruit and vegetable division to more effectively surveil Chinese vendors" (55).

[283] Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 185.

[284] Ibid., 190.

Angeles County Health Department began to flex its organizational arms. Established after the city's health department, the Los Angeles County Health Department passed a number of health ordinances and sought to prosecute those who violated these ordinances. The growth of public health organizations coincided with the rise of Japanese fishermen and farmers, with the former often working to regulate the latter's supposedly negative impact on the health and welfare of white Californians.

Like the Chinese who migrated in mass numbers to California before them, evidence indicates that at least some leading medical practitioners frequently assumed the Japanese community to be a diseased populace. For example, outbreaks of diseases such as hookworm amongst Japanese immigrants had been reported at least as early as 1910. Dr. Joseph M. King of Los Angeles claimed that he had reported the first two cases of the hookworm scourge in southern California.[285] He explicitly blamed Japanese immigrants for bringing in the first ever recorded cases of hookworm. Dr. King believed that the first patient, S. Uriu, contracted the disease while working as a miner in Mexico around 1909. The second patient, according to Dr. King, picked up hookworm somewhere in the Pomona area in southern California. Regardless of how or where they contracted it, Dr. King feared that southern California was "menaced by the Mexican peons who come in swarms, Filipino and Japanese laborers who have worked in Mexico."[286] Apparently, both the Philippines and Mexico were "infected" with the hookworm parasite and immigrants could easily transmit such a contagious disease wherever they went. At a professional meeting for medical doctors, Dr. King further

[285] "Late Tourist: A Hookworm," *Los Angeles Times,* April 2, 1910: II1.

[286] Ibid.

alleged one of the Japanese patients he treated had worked in a number of towns, disseminating the disease in places such as Azusa.[287] King emphasized that thirty percent of all deaths in the area of recent years could be attributed to hookworm. There was such intense interest in the subject that the Los Angeles County Medical Society agreed to organize an additional meeting in another two weeks where local doctors could discuss difficult and rare cases.[288] Both the Department of Agriculture and medical professionals associated Japanese and Japanese Americans with hookworm specifically and intestinal diseases more generally. Such incidents illustrated that they focused primarily upon Japanese produce and bodies as the major ways in which these intestinal diseases could spread to the general populace. As the remainder of chapter two shall detail, the threat the Japanese posed became increasingly ominous during the 1910s in the form of the "cheap" Japanese agriculturalist who flagrantly engaged in "unsanitary" business practices.

Domoto's oral history that opened this chapter returns to the recurring theme of Japanese Americans as "disease carriers." When he was fourteen years old, around 1916, he contracted typhoid and for the nine-month duration that he was bedridden, his father refused to shave his beard. Domoto believed that he had caught typhoid from blocks of ice brought from the lake:

> The nearest thing that I could connect with it [typhoid] was in those days when they used to get these big blocks of ice from the lakes for the cut flower storage,

[287] "Hookworm at Azusa," *Los Angeles Times,* April 16, 1910: II10.

[288] Ibid.

> for the San Francisco Flower Market. My dad had a store over there in San Francisco, and I was over there visiting, and the iceman was just putting the big blocks of ice in the compartment above the place where they stored the flowers. I guess I picked up some shavings, pieces, and stuck them in my mouth—and just enjoyed the ice.[289]

Domoto claimed that since the ice taken from the lakes were not "artificially made" like the ice that restaurants used, he most likely contracted the disease from the ice sold to flower and butcher shops. Fortunately, a neighbor—a chrysanthemum grower "for [Domoto's] dad from Japan"—had nursed his own son who had also caught typhoid and Domoto was eventually restored to full health.[290] Domoto also added that he did not go to a hospital and was confined to one room; even his sisters were not permitted to enter. Domoto claimed that he "had pretty nearly every kid disease that came around from school" and that "[t]he epidemics would go through, and I'd bring it home—I'd get it first and the rest of the family would get it."[291] While Japanese Americans did not contract typhoid in higher rates than others, California health officials—like their USDA counterparts—viewed Japanese and Japanese Americans as a disease-breeding and disease-carrying population.

Local officials routinely targeted issei food handlers for diseases such as typhoid. Several days before January 28, 1910, a number of cases of typhoid fever and ptomaine poison were reported in Los Angeles—attributed to rotten fish that had been

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[289] Domoto, "A Japanese American Nurseryman's Life in California," 78.

[290] Ibid.

[291] Ibid., 80.

consumed. Two local officials, Deputy Jack Johnston and Constable Rice, went to "the white markets" to investigate the source of the matter, but they found nothing suspicious. They then made an inquiry at a Japanese market, where the fish looked fresh and healthy. There they learned the names of the fishermen who supplied the fish. They soon also discovered that the Japanese fishermen caught their fish around Playa del Rey Beach and they waited patiently on the beach all evening. Sure enough, at dawn, a Japanese fishing boat came into sight, where the fishermen on board were seining fish by the mouth of the sewer. Rice and Johnston had the Japanese men arrested and arraigned for catching fish within one mile of the Los Angeles sewer outlet—a violation of fishing law set forth by the Los Angeles County Health Department.[292] In court, the Japanese fishermen alleged that white fishermen regularly violated the county health ordinance as well, yet they had never been arrested or fined.[293] These "little brown men of the Land of Cherry Blossoms and Chrysanthemums," according to an article titled "Unhappy Japs," believed that they were "being discriminated against."[294] Significantly, these "little brown men" who caught and sold diseased fish were disparagingly associated with the "Land of Cherry Blossoms and Chrysanthemums"—the same plants that threatened white floriculturalists and botanists often associated with deadly disease and destructive insects.

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[292] "Unclean Fish Cause Disease; Japanese are Caught Seining Near Sewer Outlet," *Los Angeles Times,* January 29, 1910: II3.

[293] "Unhappy Japs," *Los Angeles Times,* January 20, 1910: II6.

[294] Ibid.

The Playa del Rey Beach issei fishermen claimed that Deputy State Fish Commissioner Pritchard had given them permission to catch fish for bait by the sewer.[295] Yet a group of white fishermen argued that the Japanese should be indicted regardless, since the issei had illegally established a camp on a bluff by the electric railway track. An article in the *Los Angeles Times* ominously warned its readers that

> The brown men have caused trouble before along this line. All the Japanese markets and many others, as well as street peddlers, rely upon these fishermen for their supplies . . . The Japanese, selling for market, do not bother about the sanitary conditions under which the fish are caught. Great numbers congregate about the mouth of the sewer to feed upon the slime and filth coming from it. This makes them unfit for food.[296]

The above incident was not an isolated one. Later that year, on September 26, 1910, local officials burned $500 worth of fish nets that they had confiscated from Japanese fishermen who had dared to fish by the Los Angeles city sewer outlet.[297] And in yet another similar incident on August 31, 1912, a squad of detectives in Hyperion Beach alleged that the Japanese fishermen sold their catches at various markets in the area spreading the danger throughout the entire Los Angeles county. Following the Hyperion incident, Deputy District Attorney Keetch stated that the county ordinance should require a three mile fishing limit, instead of only a one mile limit from sewer outlets. Keetch described the sewer-fed fish as a "perpetual menace" and added

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[295] Ibid.

[296] "Unclean Fish Cause Disease," *LA Times,* January 29, 1910: II3.

[297] "Confiscated Fishing Nets Used by the Japanese at Sewer Outlet, Are Destroyed," *Los Angeles Times* September 26, 1910: I4.

vaguely that "[a] number of fishermen are under suspicion."[298] Although Keetch did not single out Japanese fishermen, these incidents suggest that as major suppliers of the county's fish, local officials frequently monitored issei fishermen by waiting for them in hiding and then "catching" them in the act of a crime. Part of what fueled the transformation from a "contagious yellow peril" into a "poisonous" one was the fluid exchange between the natural and human worlds—in this case, a transfer between "diseased" fish and Japanese fishermen could occur easily at any moment. Appearing in various newspaper articles, such fears of a Japanese "yellow peril" persisted in the popular imagination.

The oral history of Dr. Kazue Togasaki, the first Japanese American woman to receive her medical degree (1933, Women's Medical College) reveals how at least some Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans resisted assumptions of them as a "contagious yellow peril." Dr. Togasaki recalled being "dreadfully poor," particularly after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.[299] The Togasaki family lived in a shack on one side of a hill on Dubois Street in a small Japanese colony. In 1912, Dr. Togasaki stated that she and her family were evicted "because they said it was rat infested. And there was a question of bubonic plague . . ."[300] According to Togasaki, the shacks gave them a suitable place to live. But she remembered "coming home from grammar school

[298] Ibid.: II10.

[299] Dr. Kazue Togasaki, Oral Interview by Sandra Waugh and Eric Leong, Combined Asian American Resources Project and The Regents of the University of California, Regional Oral History Office of The Bancroft Library (University of California: Spring 1974), 2.

[300] Ibid., 3.

one day and telling Papa that . . . the Board of Health will give . . . ten cents for every rat you catch and bring to them."[301] Her father warned the children of this "trick" these health officials used in their attempts to evict Japanese Americans residents.

Dr. W. F. Snow, Secretary of the California Board of Health, declared that in 1913, the last human case of plague was recorded from San Benito County "where a Japanese woman, who had been working in the fields, had been taken down."[302] Health officials believed that this Japanese woman contracted plague from a flea that had previously bitten a squirrel carrying bubonic plague. In an effort to remove the plague from San Francisco and nine Bay Counties, the State Board of Health identified "existing foci of infectious and contagious diseases, and to kill every squirrel in the 'danger zone.'"[303] Dr. Snow declared that "If we once get the source of infection removed, we can keep things under control."[304] Echoing the attitudes of previous health officials at the turn of the century, these health officials again assumed that the "foci of infections" and "danger zones" existed in Japanese bodies and Japanese immigrant communities. Diseased rodents in areas where Japanese and Japanese Americans resided provided "proof" to the San Francisco Board of Health officials that Japanese immigrants were a diseased "race" that needed to be carefully monitored, and at times, contained.

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[301] Ibid.

[302] "To Exterminate the Squirrels," *Los Angeles Times,* August 22, 1913: II5.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Ibid.

These Los Angeles health officials struggled to monitor and contain what they viewed as vermin. Echoing other consumer campaigns in the early twentieth century, unions sought to connect sanitary products to working and living conditions. In *Contagious Divides,* Nayan Shah recounts how union cigar makers in San Francisco claimed that their products symbolized the anti-thesis of dirt and disease—they did so by seeking physicians' endorsement that their products were "hygienically manufactured," preventing the transmission of disease.[305] Likewise, Los Angeles health officials coupled the health of Japanese farmers to the health of their produce and even attempted to ban all Japanese fruits and vegetables. As early as 1907, health inspectors had "reported from every district that the Jap hotels, restaurants, and clubs were incubators of filth and disease."[306] These inspectors fined Japanese restaurants for their "filthy kitchens," and the sale of "tainted" meat and vegetables.[307] That same year, inspectors also condemned Japanese hotels and boarding houses because of "vile" living conditions. Health officials expressed despair over their inability to sanitize the water front where Japanese fishermen lived in East San Pedro, "housed like rats in a row of shacks . . . and [where] recently several cases of contagious diseases have been found."[308] As Japanese farming became profitable during World War I, accusations that

[305] Shah, *Contagious Divides,* 169.

[306] "Japs Go Out in Big Huff," *Los Angeles Times,* November 3, 1907: I11.

[307] Ibid.

[308] "To Clean Up Waterfront: Health Department Seeks to Change Conditions," *Los Angeles Times,* January 17, 1915: I13.

they "degraded" white labor by working sixteen hour days and living in shacks took on an increasingly alarming tone.[309]

Many Japanese farmers, in fact, had begun organizing precisely to improve their working and living conditions. In 1915, a group of farmers formed the Japanese Agricultural Association in order to "campaign for the betterment of conditions among the Japanese farmers in California."[310] In addition to consolidating various farmers' associations in different locales, the Japanese Agricultural Association encouraged their members to share agricultural knowledge—otherwise known as "scientific farming"—in order to improve their methods. The Japanese Agricultural Association also significantly sought to improve their living conditions and promote the health of their members, particularly in rural communities.[311] This association argued that these pioneering farmers had to initially endure unsanitary living conditions, where they suffered from malaria and had little clean water. They claimed that "Only the natural personal cleanliness of the Japanese, who almost invariably follow a day's work on the soil with a hot bath, saved them."[312] They also claimed that those who leased their lands struggled with obtaining sanitary housing because they lacked the funds to improve their dwellings and the landlords refused to provide better housing.

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[309] "Their Answer is 'Rats,'" *Los Angeles Times,* May 6, 1921: I14.

[310] Japanese Agricultural Association, *The Japanese Farmers in California*, 27. In 1918, there were over 1,000 members in the Japanese Agricultural Association, mostly along the coast and in the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys (northern California).

[311] Ibid., 27.

[312] Ibid.,.15.

The Japanese Agricultural Association's claims contradicted health officials perception that Japanese immigrants and other ethnic and racial minorities lacked concern over their sanitary housing conditions.[313] On July 1, 1912, Dr. L. M. Powers, then the Health Commissioner for the city of Los Angeles, expressed deep concern for the rapidly rising population in that city and how this in turn led to the spread of poor housing conditions. In particular, Dr. Powers criticized the large number of inhabitants of old cottages and houses in those increasingly commercialized and manufacturing districts:

> This class of habitation is mostly occupied by the poorer foreign residents, made up mostly of Russians, Russian-Jews, Japanese, Mexicans, and others, and they are mostly in poor sanitary conditions, the owners not caring to expend more money on these buildings than is absolutely necessary, and, not coming under the rooming and apartment house ordinance, or the house courts, we find it very difficult to handle them.[314]

Since, according to Dr. Powers, these poorer foreign residents did not even care to improve the sanitation conditions in this district, he recommended that an ordinance be passed that would give the health department the power to evict them until the owners or agents complied with sanitation laws. Powers argued that such an ordinance was not only "very necessary," but that it should be passed swiftly due to the steadily increasing

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[313] John B. Wallace, *Waving the Yellow Flag in California: The Truth About the Japanese in California Told by a Former Newspaper Man Who has Lived in the State for Many Years and Who is Now an Orange Grower in Southern California*, vol. 2 (The Dearborn Independent, Mr. Henry Ford's International Weekly, September 4, 11, 1920), 6.

[314] L. M. Powers, M.D., Health Commissioner, *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California, For the Year Ended June 30, 1912*, 97.

numbers of foreigners that "will surely come, in the near future."[315] Such concerns with the "poorer foreign populations" living in the Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles areas—where many Japanese Americans lived—continued to pose problems for the health department.

In 1917, Mexican and Russian immigrants were arrested for violating health ordinances. Of the 112 arrests made for these violations, thirty-nine were convicted, seventy-one dismissed, and ninety five dollars in fines collected, as well as $150.00 in fines suspended. Fifty two out of the seventy one dismissed cases were related to sanitary sewer issues—and all were Mexican and Russian families who were in the process of purchasing their homes on monthly payments.[316] Ultimately, the Chief Sanitary Inspector, Arthur Potts, had these Mexican and Russian families dismissed after the sewer connections were made because they lived in a "poor district," and punishing them with a fine would cause "extra hardship on these people."[317] Yet, as we will see in the following chapter, perceptions of Mexicans as extremely poor also worked against them, particularly in the 1920s and especially in the 1930s when the health department linked them to tuberculosis.

Unlike Mexican immigrants, Japanese immigrants were often depicted as "cheap farmers" who lived on next to nothing in order to dominate labor-intensive agriculture. In his 1920 study of Los Angeles' agricultural districts, Ralph Fletcher Burnright, a student of the pioneer sociologist Emory Bogardus at the University of Southern

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[315] Ibid.

[316] Ibid., 87.

[317] Ibid.

California, offered an insightful comparison of the "rough, unpainted shacks" that stood on acres of prosperous Japanese farm lands to that of Mexican housing: "Much of the same type of shack is seen in the Mexican quarters of the cities, but there it is evidence of extreme poverty and is probably as good as the inhabitant can afford."[318] Although many whites pointed to the poor housing conditions of Japanese and Japanese Americans, they did so primarily in conjunction with their economic success. In other words, Japanese agriculturalists succeeded through "cheap" practices such as using sewage waste as fertilizer and lived in dilapidated shacks in the midst of lush acres of fruitful lands. When health officials repeatedly noted the poor, overcrowded housing that Mexicans lived in, they appeared more concerned with how they might "strain" the social welfare system.[319] Japanese and Japanese Americans' image as a "contagious yellow peril" went in hand with their "scheming thriftiness"—a sharp contrast to their Mexican counterparts who threatened to "drain" city and county funds.

Nativist organizations and many white Americans shared the fears of these health officials. An article in *The Grizzly Bear*, a magazine published by the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden West, called for complete elimination of the Japanese from California farms and that white Californians should "NOW refuse to

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[318] Ralph Fletcher Burnright, "The Japanese Problem in the Agricultural Districts of Los Angeles County" (masters thesis, University of Southern California, 1920), 20, 30.

[319] M.S. Siegel, director, *Pictorial Representations of some Poor Housing Conditions in the City of Los Angeles Property of Bureau of Housing & Sanitation* (1938). This book supplemented the Los Angeles City Health Department slum clearance report. There were several photographs, such as the house of Lorenzo Gomez, who lived there with his wife and three children. The caption noted that "[a]nother baby is expected in the near future," that there are "no electric lights, bath tubs or sanitary facilities in the house," and that "[w]alls in house in a dilapidated condition."

purchase vegetables, berries or fruits grown or sold by the Japs" in light of reports of typhoid fever, open cesspools, lack of plumbing, and dilapidated toilets on "practically every ranch visited" by state health inspectors.[320] *The Grizzly Bear* even advocated for a statewide legislation that would require all Japanese farm products to be clearly labeled. A consumer in San Francisco responded with his recollection of how in June of 1913, he was "poisoned" by some strawberries or lettuce he had consumed in Spokane, Washington. His own doctors could not diagnose the cause of his illness, but after going to a specialist in Los Angeles, he was diagnosed with "amoebic poisoning, caused by eating fruit or vegetables handled by Orientals."[321] Although his health was restored, he underwent surgery to have "a new opening made [to the] stomach."[322] Such articles publicized and fanned fears that consumers could become extremely ill from contaminated Japanese produce.

The association of Japanese immigrant food handlers with food-borne diseases was not a new one. Public health workers believed that Japanese immigrants were vulnerable to food-borne illnesses, which they could in turn pass on to their consumers. Despite low reported cases of typhoid during the 1910s, officials blamed those few occurrences on predominantly Japanese-grown produce, such as celery and berries, which could easily transmit typhoid since they are usually consumed raw. As early as 1911, the Los Angeles City Health Department began reporting cases of typhoid fever in the Boyle Heights section of Los Angeles, where they "suspected a food supply,

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[320] *The Grizzly Bear* (June 1922): 2.

[321] *The Grizzly Bear* (May 1923): 18.

[322] Ibid.

which was possibly handled by an infected person."[323] The following year, health officials highlighted that "[s]even-eighths of the vendors and merchants who deal in fruit and vegetables are foreigners and unfortunately have very little regard for the State laws and City ordinances. There is a class of vendors who make it a practice of avoiding the inspector when they have a load of fruit or vegetables which they know to be unwholesome."[324] These foreign merchants and vendors presumably "took advantage" of the fact that inspectors had large territories to cover and attempted to cheat their customers by filling boxes with unwholesome fruit on the bottom. This report ended with a plea to the general public to "exercise more care in the selection of fruit and vegetables" when making purchases, since the city of Los Angeles lacked sufficient funds to hire three fruit and vegetable inspectors.[325]

Yet county officials appeared even more vigilant of Japanese farmers, perhaps in an attempt to prevent any food-related disease outbreaks in the first place. In 1918, the Los Angeles County Board of Health investigated twenty-eight cases of disease outbreaks on sewage farms in the vicinity, claiming that six of these cases had occurred on Japanese farms.[326] One such case where "Japs def[ied] sewage laws" actually

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[323] *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California, For the Year Ended June 30, 1911*, 16.

[324] *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California, For the Year Ended June 30, 1912*, 61.

[325] Ibid.

[326] "Japs Defy Sewage Laws: Irrigate Garden Tracts with Effluent Says County Health Board Report," *Los Angeles Times,* July 21, 1920: 12.

occurred on the "Japanese section" of the "Pasadena Sewer Farm."[327] In addition, the article lamented, "[f]our others occurred at the house of the man who had charge of the Japanese section of the Pasadena Sewer Farm where vegetables were being irrigated with sewage which were being eaten by the consuming public, without being cooked."[328] But did these alien agriculturalists really commit crimes? If so, what was their crime?

On July 29, 1919, Dr. J. L. Pomeroy, the County Health officer, discovered that Japanese berry pickers employed under J. Okomoto were picking the fruit on land surrounded by plants that reeked with "sewage effluent." Okomoto presumably knowingly violated health codes established by the county and departments, as well as the engineering department of Pasadena. The Japanese, through "legal technicalities and various delays," continued to brazenly violate the health laws. Repeated violations "time and time again" included the harvesting of rhubarb on land "wet with sewage" in the summer of 1920. The District Attorney's office issued complaints and had "such portions of the crop . . . placed in quarantine" and later sent to the cannery since it was illegal to sell raw fruits and vegetables grown with sewage water.[329] The Board of Health conducted further investigations and found that Okomoto was "endeavoring to obtain control over the sewage effluent of many cities throughout Southern California [and] that undoubtedly he had back of him a big organization assisting in his protection,

[327] Ibid.

[328] Ibid.

[329] Ibid.

furnishing, and perhaps, financial aid."[330] Not only did the Japanese control "sewage effluent," backed by a large organization, but the Japanese section of the ranch was "alive with large black rats." Due to the issei's repeated violations of health laws, the health officer conducting the investigation recommended the removal of the Japanese from the premises. Repeated references to vile rodents, such as rats, served as a key imagery to associate this "yellow peril" for the general public who read the *Los Angeles Times.* The Board and the District Attorney's office responded to the issei's outright refusal to comply with health codes with quarantine and the attempt to remove them from the land.

The discussion of control and use over sewage also offers another twist to the conservationist movement. As Lye has astutely pointed out, beginning in the 1890s, debates about Japanese farming grew out of the conservationist movement—during a time when the disappearance of affordable land and natural resources, water in particular, became a primary concern of the public. Just as cheap land had been disappearing and fears of diminishing resources heightened, Japanese immigrant farmers increasingly signified this "miracle economy" within California agriculture by managing to "[live] on next to nothing . . ."[331] The shift to intensive farming during the Progressive Era represents, in part, the shift towards more efficient land use, since irrigation provided the pathway for making small farms more economically practical.

Beginning in the 1910s, Asian exclusionism was articulated through land reform, through the promotion of irrigation and other scientific farming methods, and

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[330] Ibid.

[331] Lye, *America's Asia*, 158.

"back-to-the-land experiments" that attempted to revive small family farms.[332] In the 1920s and particularly in the 1930s, however, the correlation between the monopoly that the Japanese maintained over highly valued land (which in turn fueled rent prices and production) and accusations of their poor soil conservation became increasingly insidious.[333] Focusing not on soil damage, but on interrelated environmental dangers such as "foreign" plant diseases that attacked the native ecology, this research tells a narrative of how public health and agricultural officials sought to exploit and even distort hegemonic views of Japanese agriculturalists during a time when the demand for Asian agricultural goods was high and when Japanese immigrants practiced innovative farming techniques. The Asiatic figure—specifically in the form of Japanese immigrants—represented not only the powers of capital accumulation—but also the wasting of raw materials and agricultural products.[334]

Such wasting away included the destruction of fruits and vegetables, which health officials charged the Japanese did intentionally in order to profit from inflated produce prices. On September 9, 1919, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, sanitary inspector of the county health office, accused Japanese farmers of destroying produce rather than selling it at a lower price.[335] Kirkpatrick declared that many tomatoes had been "plowed under in districts south of the city because growers decline[d] to cut prices," even though one

[332] Ibid., 156.

[333] Ibid., 156-157.

[334] Ibid., 156-158.

[335] "Truck Growers Face Charges," *Los Angeles Times,* September 9, 1919: II1.

box of tomatoes can cost fifty cents or even more."[336] Kirkpatrick thus sought warrants for the ten Japanese vendors who failed to properly protect their food products for sale along the highways. Inspector Kirkpatrick noted that with the increasing number of stands lining the county's highways, the County Counsel should prepare an ordinance that would require all fruit and vegetable stands to be licensed, in order to "provide means to keep track of the activities of Japanese vegetable growers who conduct these stands."[337] In addition to implementing stricter licensure procedures for fruit and vegetable stands, Chairman Dodge of the Supervisors also decided to incorporate into the ordinance a "provision intended to curb the alleged practice of Japanese in holding prices so high that produce is often spoiled and thrown away."[338] Here, we see how concerns over public health merged with the economically exploitative Asiatic farmer. Specifically, Kirkpatrick alleged that Japanese farmers were displaying "eatables," including fruits and vegetables, without any kind of protective covering, and thereby selling food in an unsanitary manner. Thus, health officials insinuated that Japanese farmers unfairly raised prices through intentionally limiting the supply of produce by violating sanitary codes and making them unfit for human consumption. Equally if not more ominous, these officials at the same time claimed that Japanese agriculturalists remained indifferent to the health of their customers.

Biological Border Patrolling

[336] Ibid.

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid.

Mexican immigrants faced a particular kind of "biological border patrolling" where Horticultural Board members exercised a great deal of influence over plant and even human immigrant policies. During the 1910s, American cotton growers feared the boll weevil, a devastating insect that feeds on cotton buds and flowers. Coates writes that the boll weevil very likely originated in India and that it arrived in Texas via Mexico in Egyptian cottonseed. After the shipment of cottonseed was accidentally scattered following a storm, all railroad boxcars that may have been contaminated with the cottonseed imported from Mexico and thus, all raw cotton going to Texas mills was "intercepted at the border . . . in an attempt to bring deliverance from the weevil evil" throughout the late 1910s and 1920s.[339] At the five main border stations, all boxcars were disinfected in large fumigation sheds. Coates adds that Marlatt still remained concerned about the continued "insect invasions . . . represented by the 'uncontrolled entry'" of laborers that traveled to Texan cotton districts. Migrants and all their belongings—such as quilts, pillows, and mattresses—were all fumigated as well. During the mid-1910s, the Horticultural Board was being "posted as to the conditions along the border."[340]

In the spring of 1917, Federal Horticultural Board officials, headed by Marlatt, worked closely with the Mexican Department of Agriculture and the Mexican government in order to establish an investigative commission that would monitor and manage the another cotton pest, the pink boll worm. At this time, the Horticultural

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[339] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 99.

[340] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, October 17, 1916, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

Board debated whether or not it would be necessary to restrict cottonseed cake from Mexico, imported in cars crossing the border.[341] By May 22, 1917, the pink boll worm now concerned Horticultural Board members enough so that they then attempted to "guard against the entry from Mexico and [its] establishment in the United States" by passing legislation to protect its borders from this increasingly injurious pest.[342] The following month, the Horticultural Board had drafted and revised the rules and regulations "governing the entry of railway cars and other vehicles, and freight, express, baggage, or other materials from Mexico at border ports into the United States . . ."[343] On August 28, 1917, a report at one of the regular weekly Federal Horticultural Board meetings noted that the "work on the border is going on smoothly, considering the newness of the work" and that:

> [t]he chief difficulties are the mistaken impressions which the Mexicans entertain toward Americans, and everything American, the gross inefficiency of Mexican labor, and the scarcity of men due to the inadequacy of salaries in view of the unusual living conditions at the border . . .[344]

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[341] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, March 27, 1917, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[342] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, May 22, 1917, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[343] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, June 7, 1917, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[344] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, August 28, 1917, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

Just how did these "inefficient" "pests from Mexico" compare to the Japanese "yellow peril"? While the Japanese "yellow peril" appeared to exist in the form of mass quantities of nursery stock and other agricultural products shipped from large, corporate nurseries in Japan to meet the growing demand and desire for "exotics," "pests from Mexico" appeared to slip slyly across the U.S.-Mexico borders through shipments of agricultural products (including seeds), factories that existed along these borders, and even on Mexican immigrants themselves.

By the early 1920s, members of the Federal Horticultural Board grew increasingly alarmed over the steady and rapid spread of the pink boll worm, such as "infestation . . . evidently brought about through Mexicans entering the United States irregularly."[345] Concerned that "infestation would be frequently brought to Juarez," the Pink Bollworm Commission established a "regulated zone" to prevent the importation of cotton products, to "continue the plan of extermination," and to "place guards at the places of exit and to inspect all cotton going east."[346] Therefore, Horticultural Board members were concerned not only with the unwanted entrance of infestation and potential "crop criminals," but also those immigrants who carried in those very plant diseases and injurious insects with them. And like those health officials who helped manage and determine border policies, members of the Horticultural Board also played

[345] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, April 12, 1921, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 2, NA.

[346] Ibid.

a key role in patrolling which plant and human immigrants could cross the U.S.-Mexico borders.[347]

Indeed, members of the Horticultural Board frequently worked in concert with Public Health Service officials. The Federal Horticultural Board expressed great concern over the Marine Health Service's change in policy for vessels moving between the Hawaiian Islands and San Francisco. Previously, the Marine Health Service required such vessels to submit to an examination by quarantine officials. However, when this policy changed and ships were no longer subject to examinations, the Horticultural Board could no longer inspect these vessels for fruit from the Hawaiian Islands because they lacked the authority and necessary equipment to do so.[348] A Mr. Maskew furthermore asked specifically how he should deal with specimens of fruits coming in from Mexico into California ports in accordance with the Notice of Quarantine No. 5. The Board did eventually appear to resolve its concerns by working together with United States Public Health officials: "Mr. Hunter reported a very satisfactory outcome of conferences with the Commissioner of Navigation, and with the Public Health Service, with reference to the boarding, at quarantine, by inspectors of this Department, of vessels from Hawaii."[349] Fearing that the Mediterranean fruit fly could be introduced via Hawaii, the Horticultural Board made arrangements through the

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[347] See for example, Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 71.

[348] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, August 8, 1916, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[349] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, September 26, 1916, Nos. 1-257 (Jan. 1, 1914-Dec. 31, 1917), Inclusive, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

Public Health Service to hold ships that came into the United States mainland from Hawaii in quarantine until the Horticultural Board inspectors declared them free of fruit fly material.[350]

Similar to previous fears over the spread of the bubonic plague at the turn of the century, the Federal Horticultural Board again expressed concerns over the spread of disease via fruits and vegetables from foreign countries, "principally China and Japan."[351] The Department of Agriculture maintained direct contact with the Public Health Service in order to remain aware of how workers' health and the health of fruits and vegetables might endanger the public. Specifically, they knew of "Chinamen employed at Mexicala in truck gardening"—most alarming was that the intended "market for the product was this side of the international boundary."[352] The Department of Agriculture claimed that "the eating of raw vegetables infected with the intestinal parasites, as these vegetables doubtless would be—due to the Chinese method of intensive farming," posed a menace to the public's health.[353] At one of their weekly meetings, members of the Horticultural Board discussed a letter from the Public Health Service Surgeon, W. C. Billings. Dr. Billings suggested that if the "Chinamen" cannot be cured of the hook worm prior to departure for Mexico, then the Department of

[350] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, July 29, 1913, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[351] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, August 22, 1913, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[352] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[353] Ibid.

Agriculture ought to be "notified of the probable condition of the vegetables of Mexicala, in order that they might, if so disposed, declare quarantine against such vegetables."[354] The Horticultural Board, however, believed that this matter did not fall under their jurisdiction according to the Plant Quarantine Act, and "suggested that a reply be made that the control of such a pest was fairly within the province of the Public Health Service."[355] It is interesting that such a matter was even raised at one of their weekly meetings, demonstrating how at times, such issues were in fact quite ambiguous. The aforementioned passage also illustrates the interchangeability between human "pests" and insect "pests." Most importantly, the Board eventually attempted to have the Plant Quarantine Act amended to include jurisdiction over the "entrance into the United States of vegetables from foreign countries and principally from China and Japan"—giving them jurisdiction over "the vegetables likely to communicate intestinal diseases, such as hookworm, etc."[356] Horticultural Board members hence worried that Japanese and Chinese vegetables could very likely transmit communicable intestinal diseases.

PQN 37

Scholars such as Coates have pointed to the limits of the meaningful association between plants, insects, and human immigrants.[357] However, even he has noted that the

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[354] Ibid.

[355] Ibid.

[356] Federal Horticultural Board Meeting Minutes, August 22, 1913, in RG 7, Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Quarantine, Minutes, 1912-1928, Box 1, NA.

[357] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 99.

imagery deployed by Marlatt, such as the San José scale, boll weevil, Japanese beetle, European brown-tail moth, and European corn borer, had been compared with those human migrants that came with them. Marlatt argued that these unwelcome entrants had taken advantage of the "freedom of entry" into the U.S.: though he resigned himself to "these undesirable immigrants" he believed that "we must lodge and board forever . . .[and] shut the doors if we can to their brothers and sisters and cousins and aunts."[358] Since the United States remained the single "major" nation in the world without any federal quarantine legislation, Marlatt pushed for restrictive measures at the national level. The Plant Quarantine Act of 1912 not only established the Federal Horticultural Board (chaired by Marlatt), but also would exclude "any tree, plant, or fruit disease or any injurious insects new or not theretofore widely prevalent or distributed within and throughout the United States."[359] Initially, the Board attempted to police "bad overseas bugs" from their point of departure. According to the Act of 1912, only countries that had an official inspection service could export nursery stock to the United States. Despite these stringent measures, a number of noxious insects still managed to enter the United States. Coates cites that between 1912 and 1919, 148 invasive insects from Holland and 245 insects from France gained entrance into the United States.[360] The next major plant quarantine legislation was PQN 37, which went into effect on June of 1919. Unlike previous legislation, PQN 37 excluded entire categories of florists' stock. Marlatt and other entomologists urged for the passage of

[358] Ibid., 101.

[359] Ibid.

[360] Ibid., 102.

PQN 37, arguing that "our plants" ought to have the same protection that white Americans and livestock had enjoyed.[361]

In early 1919, the U. S. Department of Agriculture published a brief statement in *The Journal of Heredity*, justifying the implementation of PQN 37 effective June 1, 1919. The USDA stated that the Secretary of Agriculture promulgated this plant quarantine act in order to check the introduction of "dangerous crop enemies" which cost them approximately a half million dollars annually.[362] The plants quarantined included lily bulbs, lily-of-the-valley, narcissus, hyacinths, tulips, stocks, cuttings, scions, buds, rose stocks for propagation, seeds of fruit, ornamental and shade trees, ornamental shrubs, and seeds of hardy perennial plants, among others. They asserted that they had discussed Quarantine Number 37 for a number of years and gave it careful consideration, with the input of Department of Agriculture experts, several states, and business interests. Emphasizing that PQN 37 represented years of careful consideration, they believed that the quarantine embodied the best judgment of the plant experts of the department and of several states, all of whom had a vested interest in actual plant production:

> It voices the belief that the policy of practical exclusion of all stock not absolutely essential to the horticultural, floricultural and forestry needs of the

[361] Ibid.

[362] United States Department of Agriculture, "Restricted Entry of Plants to Protect American Goods . . .," *The Journal of Heredity* vol. x, no. 1 (January 1919): 87.

> United States is the only one that will give adequate protection against additional introductions of dangerous plant diseases and insects.[363]

The Department of Agriculture's exclusion of those nursery stock "not absolutely essential" to the horticultural, floricultural, and forestry industries significantly foreshadowed the same rationale that would later be used in the forcible removal of Japanese and Japanese Americans from the West coast during the Second World War. These "dangerous crop enemies," as we have seen in this chapter, included not only chestnut blight and citrus canker, but the very Japanese agriculturalists who caught and sold fish, engaged in farming, and grew and sold labor-intensive fruits and vegetables.

Although perceived as a threat to the American working man, anti-Japanese legislation, including PQN 37, during the 1910s actually intensified Asiatic labor competition. Carey McWilliams later acknowledged the difficulties of ascertaining which groups profited by the Alien Land Act of 1920:

> It would be extremely difficult to determine precisely what groups profited by the passage of this act, the agitation for which has jarred two continents and nearly precipitated war . . . Landowners certainly did not profit, for they were forced (at least momentarily) to accept lower rentals. Agricultural workers did not profit, for their wages declined to an all-time low by 1933 . . . The competitive position of the California farmer was not improved. The general public did not benefit; on the contrary, it paid for the bill.[364]

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[363] Ibid.

[364] Lye, *America's Asia*, 108-109.

Coates has similarly noted that one key overlapping area between the coterminous debates over human immigration and plant immigration was that many businesses desired to maintain a cheap supply of labor and agricultural products. Many plant importers actually protested PQN 37 because they were primarily concerned with maintaining a steady supply of cheap bulbs and other plant products. These importers were "doubly opposed to the ban since the desire to nurture a domestic bulb industry capable of providing an adequate and disease-free home supply complemented the stated objective of excluding diseased foreign bulbs."[365] Importers held a laissez-faire view of the economy of nature: PQN 37 and other embargoes represented attempts to establish an impermeable tariff barrier. They also further argued that one cannot avoid the "fundamental principal" of nature that plants and animals constantly have enemies and parasites. Erecting "artificial barriers," according to them, such as plant quarantine and even regulations only drew imaginary lines created by national boundaries. For groups such as the Merchants' Association of New York, plant quarantine merely represented business overregulation. Coates wryly noted that "[c]reeping bureaucracy was a far bigger menace than foreign creepy-crawlies."[366] Indeed, many nurserymen such as William Pitkin who represented the American Association of Nurserymen at the congressional hearings in April of 1910, claimed that the number of plants carrying deadly diseases and injurious insects was actually trivial. Yet the chairman for the House Committee on Agriculture countered that "If we were inspecting human beings coming into this country, we might find a million healthy and then find another one

[365] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 104.

[366] Ibid.

with the smallpox." Pitkin later mocked exaggerated fears of those government officials' paranoia that the plant world's "dangerous criminals" would "enter this country and . . . spread destruction over the face of this fair land."[367] While the emergence of the Japanese "yellow peril" and its transformation into a "poisonous yellow peril" was partly imaginative and chimerical, it was also part real in its tangible and costly destruction of "native" American ecology.

As one of the world's leading nursery exporters, it may have appeared justified or practical that Japan would be targeted as one of the primary exporters of injurious insects and lethal plant diseases. A report written by B. T. Galloway regarding Dr. Marlatt's inquiries into the exclusion of nursery and florist stock documented the importance of Japanese agricultural trade with the United States. After noting that florists and nurserymen would be hurt by the sudden exclusion of balled plants, Galloway divided balled plants into four groups.[368] According to B. T. Galloway, trade in balled plants—with as azaleas, rhododendrons, palms as some of the most important—were approximately one million annually and that the chief exporters of these plants "in their order of importance" were Belgium, Holland, France, and Japan.[369] Yet Galloway also noted, out of the leading exporting countries, Marlatt singled out Asia for the "total exclusion of balled plants" under PQN37.[370]

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[367] Ibid.

[368] Trees lifted with the roots and some soil intact are referred to as "balled plants."

[369] Galloway, *Notes*, 8.

[370] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 102. Coates also notes that Africa was also singled out, but Galloway's statistics show that, compared to the Asian continent, Africa was not a leading exporter.

Domoto's oral history also hints at how Quarantine 37 foretold of the 1924 Immigration Act. He commented that had PQN 37 *not* passed, he might have had the opportunity to travel to Japan:

> If it wasn't for Quarantine 37, which stopped importing of plants from all over--not just from Japan, but all over—for propagating purposes, to prevent disease and insects from coming in, I might have been inclined to go [to Japan]. But that stopped all chance of importing, because my father's business was started mainly in importing plants from Japan.[371]

PQN 37 not only stopped the importation of plants from various countries, including Japan and Holland, but according to Domoto, it prevented Japanese nurserymen from traveling back and forth to and from Japan for trading purposes.

Japanese nurserymen, such as Domoto's father, hence rushed to get in their last nursery stock orders before PQN 37 firmly shut the door on those suspected plant plunderers in 1919. While USDA officials still permitted the private importation of a whole host of ornamentals and other "exotics," its complete exclusion of "florists' stock" hurt Domoto nurseries financially, since Domoto Bros. and other nurseries that catered to a clientele who collected Asian and African "exotics" in particular. Domoto recalled one nurseryman who requested that this father bring back as much Japanese nursery stock as he could—attesting to its high demand in the United States:

> The Kurume azaleas and aspidistras—almost any of the ornamental plants that could come from Japan, the war was on, and the quarantine was already going

[371] Domoto, "A Japanese American Nurseryman's Life in California," 5.

> into effect—wasn't effective yet, but there was no way of getting the plants from Japan to here because of the war. At that time Mr. [Charles W.] Ward, who was president of Cottage Garden Nursery back in Long Island, he told my dad, "When you are in Japan, you buy all the plants you can get. I'll take care of the permits."[372]

Once Domoto's father brought the plants into the U.S., they would divide the shipment in half—half going to Domoto Bros. and the remainder going to Cottage Gardens. The half that went to Cottage Gardens would first be shipped to Eureka, California, where Cottage Gardens had a nursery branch there. From there, part of that shipment would be sent to their Queens, Long Island Nursery and the azalea plants would be divided between two other nurserymen, Henry A. Dreer in Philadelphia and Bobink & Atkins.[373] As Domoto himself reveals, it was the practice of nurseries to distribute their stock all over the country. USDA plant pathologists and entomologists feared most the dispersal of nursery stock that could easily result in the silent, unchecked spread of plant diseases and harmful insects—including tiny larvae and caterpillars that could in turn mature and reproduce. But certain alien crop enemies inspired more fear than others.

The gardener and preservationist, J. Horace McFarland protested the Quarantine 37 on the grounds that it illegally overreached the authority given to USDA officials under the Plant Quarantine Act. McFarland argued that PQN 37 mistakenly focused on

[372] Ibid., 37-38.

[373] Ibid., 38.

plant exclusion, not on invasive insects and fatal diseases.[374] Yet despite his best attempts to challenge the legality of PQN 37, McFarland could not counter the "scientific hysteria." In response to the Indiana University entomologist Alfred Kinsey's endorsement of federal pest policy, McFarland asked, "What is America, anyhow?" Kinsey's "Utopian America" filled with "native plants and people" differed sharply with the reality of "composite people[s]" who lived in different states with different climates and vegetation, but yet traveled relatively freely across state lines, on roads that were beneath one flag. While he found no problems with attempts to "scrutinize plants for bugs and bothers," he still believed that America "ought to continue to be cosmopolitan in plant relation."[375] It is noteworthy that PQN 37 led individuals such as McFarland to question "What is America, anyhow?" For many like Kinsey, a utopian America would be one only filled with natives.

Conclusion

The 1910s thus marks an important decade in which various contagious diseases—ranging from chestnut blight to typhoid—led to federal plant quarantine. As noted earlier in this chapter, there was also a heightened concern over forest health during this same time period. Beginning with the chestnut bark disease and citrus canker, this chapter reveals how the progression of fatal and highly destructive plant diseases paralleled southern California officers' regulation of Japanese fishermen and farmers in particular. Japanese agriculturalists moved in a society and during a time period when a modernizing nation-state began to establish not only its horticultural

[374] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains*, 162.

[375] Ibid., 163.

independence, but also governing bodies that included agriculture and public health. USDA officials believed that chestnut blight and citrus canker were imported from Japan; thus, their reception of the Japanese cherry trees sent by the Japanese government was characterized with suspicion. And as the issei became increasingly successful in labor-intensive agriculture, many officials feared the food-borne diseases that they might pass on to their customers, as well as through their unsanitary business practices. Thus, the public health policing of these food handlers correlatively intensified with their perceived success—however imaginary. At the same time, stereotypes of the "cheap" Japanese agriculturalist were juxtaposed in contrast to impoverished Mexican migrant workers who crossed the Texas-Mexico border, carrying with them injurious insects. Threats of various foreign biological menaces, especially from Japan, culminated in quarantine and tightening anti-Japanese legislation. PQN 37 and immigration restriction and regulation would begin to answer the question, "What is America, anyhow?"

Chapter two outlined the full emergence of the "contagious yellow peril": the Asian flora and fauna that devastated the "native" ecology, taking on a life all their own, as well as Japanese fishermen and farmers whose thrifty business practices endangered the health of their customers. How did this "contagious yellow peril" shift in the 1920s and 1930s, a time where second generation Japanese Americans symbolize both the permanence of Japanese American settlement and the possibility of assimilation? Chapter three focuses on the issei's determination to circumvent their exclusion from and persecution within mainstream public health. It also outlines how

health officials' policing of Japanese Americans took on an even more menacing tone as they alleged that they poisoned their customers with deadly insecticides, even as Department of Agriculture officials stepped up their efforts to quarantine and exterminate Asian insects. The 1920s and especially the 1930s became the decades when the Japanese beetle not only represented another "biological yellow peril" but also when it became increasingly clear to the Federal Horticultural Board that this was indeed the most obnoxious entrant following chestnut blight.[376]

[376] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 94.

Chapter 3:

The "Poisonous Yellow Peril":

The Japanese Beetle Pest and Japanese Immigrant "Pests"

during the 1920s and 1930s

In a 1992 oral history interview, Toichi Domoto shared his views of the Japanese beetle. Whereas most agriculturalists viewed it as a nuisance, Domoto seemed to see something else:

> Oh, as far as beetles, I think if a person is interested in collecting beetles, [Japanese beetles are] the most interesting of insects. Even more beautiful than the butterflies. Butterflies are spectacular, but little beetles, their colored designs are a lot more interesting.[377]

Domoto recalled taking an entomology class in college, which helped foster his deep appreciation of these insects. For a course assignment, most of his colleagues collected butterflies, but Domoto instead collected Japanese beetles. Domoto's observations about the Japanese beetle are significant because they demonstrate that not every agriculturalist viewed it as a pest, even as they acknowledged its destructive capabilities. This chapter therefore tells a tale of how the Japanese beetle and other so-called "Japanese pests" became a "poisonous yellow peril." Specifically, what events led up to the construction of the Japanese beetle as a potential saboteur that could effectively ruin millions of dollars of valuable crops? How is the response on the part

[377] Toichi Domoto, "A Japanese-American Nurseryman's Life in California: Floriculture and Family, 1883-1992," an oral history conducted in 1992 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, 52.

of the Department of Agriculture interrelated to the response issued by public health officials towards Japanese agriculturalists, including gardeners? The Japanese community's response to health officials—which again, signified an ascendant "poisonous yellow peril" was instrumental in the shaping of this new ominous threat.

Chapter three seeks to illuminate and fill in what Lye calls an "archival silence on the 'Asiatic problem.'"[378] This archival gap, from 1924 to 1941, has silenced Japanese American history in such a way that Japanese American internment appears more as a "lingering reflex" or something residual from a separate past that begins in the late nineteenth century. Yet as chapters one and two have begun to demonstrate, internment is more of an epilogue to a narrative that had focused on decades of fears of a biological invasion, immigration exclusion and restriction, and Alien Land Laws. Here, in this chapter we see how factors, such as "epidemics" in the form of insecticides and hordes of Japanese beetles and a newly growing second-generation or nisei, helped further transform the debate on Japanese Americans as a "poisonous yellow peril." This chapter focuses on the Japanese beetle and Japanese fishermen, farmers, and gardeners as a way to better understand the malleability of the Asiatic racial form. The "crime" that Japanese fishermen and farmers committed as "cheap agriculturalists" included not only the violation of health ordinances, of price fixing, but also—best illustrated with the Japanese beetle—of early "fifth column" activities that destroyed acres of profitable farm goods and cost the federal government millions in their efforts to contain this destructive pest both before and during the Great Depression.

[378] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 113.

In filling in the gap in this archival silence, this chapter examines the interrelationship between humans and the environment, focusing on a rising beetle population during a period of militarization. The 1920s and the ensuing decade are especially significant because the 1924 National Origins Act almost completely banned Japanese immigration, which the issei recognized as a racist immigration law.[379] Yet as previous chapters have shown, before the 1924 Immigration Act, the "enemy" was already within the gates.

Who was the enemy? And why were officials so concerned? One reporter for the *New York Times* lamented in 1930 that "new pests are ever arriving from other parts of the globe."[380] The writer admitted that "[a]s immigrants they are sometimes given names which tend to provoke an unkind feeling toward the countries or regions from which they come: as the Japanese beetle, the Mediterranean fruit fly and the Argentine ant."[381] But many agreed with the *New York Times* author who claimed that "insects are the real enemies of man." Even before the Great Depression set in on October 24, 1929, farmers such as James J. Montague, talked about the need for farm relief and guidance. Montague complained that Congress had very little knowledge about Japanese beetles, so when they made their presence known amongst his apple trees, he had no one to turn to and experimented with a number of different methods to rid his

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[379] See Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 83-84. The 1924 Immigration Act, excluded Korean immigrants in addition to Japanese immigrants. According to Sucheng Chan, "The Immigration Act of 1924, which barred the entry of 'aliens ineligible to citizenship,' virtually ended Japanese immigration" (Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* [Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991], 55).

[380] "An Enemy Within the Gates," *New York Times,* February 4, 1930: 20.

[381] Ibid.

quarter acre plot of land of the nuisance. But even after spraying his trees with arsenate of lead, the beetles continued their devastation since they remained immune to the poison. Again, even after soaking his entire yard with arsenate solution prior to a storm, the baby grubs simply moved to his next door neighbor's yard.[382] A cartoon of Montague being overshadowed by Japanese beetles and most likely tent caterpillars depicted him as a small farmer holding relatively harmless weapons. The insects that towered over him were endowed with human-like characteristics, as they stand on their hind legs and peer down with curious expressions. Another newspaper writer similarly claimed that "Everything has been done to get rid of the pest, but to no avail. The plants on which it feeds have been sprayed with arsenic, the soil has been saturated with cyanide—two poisons deadly to man. The Jap bug only laughs."[383] Even the USDA had to concede that the "Jap bug" had the last laugh. Just before the United States sank into the Depression, C. H. Hadley, a USDA quarantine and inspection official, stated that

> After thirteen years, we acknowledge neither victory nor defeat. This we admit, however: The Japanese beetle can never be exterminated. It is going to spread from one end of the country to the other. It would not be economically advisable to exterminate it even if we could—and know now we cannot.[384]

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[382] "Talking About Farm Relief," *Los Angeles Times,* June 30, 1929: F25.

[383] John Steven McGroarty, "Last and Greatest War: Mankind vs. Insects," *Los Angeles Times,* July 23, 1929: 1.

[384] Allen Shoenfield, "Beetle Fight Not Yet Won: Experts Say Japanese Pest Cannot be Eradicated," *Los Angeles Times,* October 7, 1929: 9.

The history of the Japanese beetle, according to the author of the article, "virtually repeats, stage for stage, the history of other invasions by foreign pests."[385] In 1916, only twelve beetles had been found. In 1919, the number multiplied to 15,000 beetles collected by a person in a single day. In 1925, the number gathered in New Jersey and Pennsylvania had exploded to the "tubful." By 1927, "clouds of beetles of the Japanese variety" had settled on streets and even alighted upon pedestrians in numbers so great in the East, notably Philadelphia, that they had to pick the insects off of one another.[386] So common was the sight of Japanese beetles on people's clothes that one newspaper writer likened it to a "fad from France for beetle jewelry," where Parisian artisans made insect accessories, such as earrings, brooches, and necklaces.[387] Agriculturalists who worked for the USDA, however, did not find the Japanese beetle problem beneficial in any way and on January 1, 1933, extended the Japanese beetle quarantine to parts of New Hampshire, Vermont, enlarged areas of Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.[388]

By the 1920s, the discourse about the Japanese beetle—commonly called the "Jap beetle" in the press—took on a militaristic tone.[389] Having colonized Formosa

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[385] Ibid.

[386] "Beetles as Decorations," *Los Angeles Times,* September 13, 1927: 24.

[387] Ibid. According to the author, the insects are sorted according to species by specialists, mounted using delicate instruments, where their heads are removed, and the insects are thoroughly cleaned "inside and out." The body is then filled with a solid substance to maintain the insects' shape and then treated to a process that hardens and preserves their shape and color (24).

[388] "Bug Quarantine Extended," *New York Times,* December 24, 1932: 14.

[389] For example, "Eases Jap-Beetle Quarantine," *New York Times,* September 23, 1935: 18.

(Taiwan) and Korea in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Japanese military turned its attention to China in the late 1920s. Many Americans who viewed Japan's hostile actions in negative terms linked the beetle to the Japanese. In 1929, an article that decried the denuding of golf greenery angrily recommended that "If any California golfer sees a Japanese beetle on the links there are but two things to do—hit him on the head with a niblick and declare war on the Mikado."[390] In 1939, articles such as "Japanese Beetles About to Strike" and "New Fields Invaded by Japanese Beetles" overtly alluded to an actual attack and invasion by Japan.[391]

The link between chemical-warfare techniques employed to control insect and human "pests" was not new. The historian of science Sarah Jansen had already advanced the idea that the rhetoric and practice enabled the field of entomology to use chemical-warfare as a way to exterminate forest insects and humans in the Holocaust. She traces how the adoption of such warfare by economic entomologists permitted them to use one technique in one field and apply it to another:

> . . . we traced the trajectory from nineteenth-century zoology to early twentieth century forest hygiene modeling social hygiene and finally to the militarized field of economic entomology during and after World War I. We observed the gap that emerged in about 1900 between ways of seeing insects and ways of controlling them. What I have tried to argue is that the introduction of chemical

[390] "Not Fooled: Our Insect Pests," *Los Angeles Times,* September 1, 1929: A4.

[391] "Japanese Beetles About to Strike," *New York Times,* June 23, 1939: 20; "New Fields Invaded by Japanese Beetles," *New York Times,* August 16 1939: 21.

into economic entomology can be seen as a contingent solution to this gap—but a solution that produced problems of another scale entirely.[392]

Likewise, the "Japanese beetle problem" similarly connected poisonous pesticides used on these insect pests to that of the militarized field of economic entomology. The media appeared to quickly make these connections. For example, the *New York Times* claimed that the "campaign against the Japanese beetle, which will soon complete its ravages above ground and dig in to prepare the way for the next generation, is merely a skirmish along a vast battlefront."[393] As well will eventually see, in the natural world, America had already entered a war in the form of its own chemical warfare used against Japanese beetles. As George H. Copeland of the USDA wrote,

> the struggle with the insect world is fierce, never-ending warfare, fought without rules, with poison gas and bacteria, in the air and under the sod and with battlelines extending from Amazon jungle to Hawaiian canefields, from Oregon orchard to Japanese rice terrace. Our North American pests—listed as 10,000 public enemies—cost us $1,601,527,000 yearly, including crop damage, diseases carried, and armament expense. And no martial music or big parades glorify the conflict.[394]

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[392] Sarah Jansen, "Chemical-Warfare Techniques for Insect Control: Insect 'Pests' in Germany Before and After World War I," *Endeavor*, vol. 24.1 (September 7, 2000): 32.

[393] George H. Copeland, "Warring on Insects—With Insects," *New York Times* (6 August 1939): SM2.

[394] Ibid.

It would only be a matter of time before the warfare already begun in the natural world would be extended into the human one. And most notably, powerful imagery that depicted Japanese soldiers as insects would provide a rationale for total warfare.

Discovery of the Beetle

Coates ranks the Japanese (fruit) beetle, after chestnut blight, as the "most obnoxious entrant" from abroad in American agriculture. It was first detected in 1916, according to him, at a New Jersey nursery. And like its infamous predecessor, the San José scale, the Japanese beetle was not considered a pest while it remained in the Japanese archipelago.[395] The repeated reference to foreign species being relatively harmless in their country of origin, but extremely dangerous outside of it, hinted at an association with indigenous peoples. In 1871, C. V. Riley, the future chief entomologist for the USDA, reflected that "Many diseases that are comparatively harmless among civilized nations acquire greater virulency and play fearful havoc when introduced among savage or hitherto uncontaminated peoples."[396] It is noteworthy that entomologists repeatedly reversed the roles of victims and perpetrators with regard to such introduced species. The Japanese beetle specifically conjured images of a "native" American ecology as the innocent victim of a menacing, invading army.

Domoto does not recall precisely how the Japanese beetle entered, but he believed that it probably came in on some plants imported with the soil intact or root

[395] Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 94.

[396] Ibid., 96.

balls.[397] Coates also claims the beetle very likely entered as a grub on Japanese iris rootballs.[398] The Japanese beetle in its grub and adult form ruined not only fruits, but also decimated major vegetable crops, flowers, shade trees, roses, and ornamental shrubs. Richard Quinn, assistant to the chief engineer of the War Department in Hawaii claimed that by 1925, roses became rare in Hawaii because the Japanese beetle had cleverly sought refuge in the ground during the day, but at night completely defoliated all the roses. Quinn stated that "The beetle long has been a menace . . . The native-born Japanese children in Hawaii are also another Hawaiian problem . . . Although they are American citizens, considered with other Japanese on the islands, they constitute virtually half of the total population."[399] Indeed, at times it was difficult to distinguish in such discourses between Japanese insect and human immigrants.

On January 8, 1919, at hearings for an Agricultural Appropriations Bill, U. S. Bureau of Entomology chief Leland Howard described the beetle as "very striking in its oriental appearance."[400] In other words, the Japanese beetle did not "look American." Howard's opinion can be placed alongside Domoto's appreciation of the various colors of the beetle. However, clearly, Department of Agriculture officials viewed the Japanese beetle first and foremost as a pest. The *New York Times* wrote that as of March 26, 1919, the Japanese beetle had already rapidly covered about 10,000 acres near Riverton, New Jersey. The article therefore stressed that the Federal Department

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[397] Domoto, "A Japanese American Nurseryman's Life in California": 52.

[398] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 94.

[399] "Explains Why Roses are Rare in Hawaii," *Los Angeles Times,* May 18, 1925: 13.

[400] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 94.

of Agriculture is waging a campaign of eradication and containment: "In the control campaign poison belts have been established, one immediately outside the infested area and others at intervals further back, somewhat like a defensive system of trenches in human warfare . . ."[401] Just as entomologists had compared San José Scale to "dreadnoughts and armies of little brown men," so we see that Department of Agriculture officials engaged in warfare with the Japanese beetle that refused to be so easily contained.

A Growing Japanese Population

A *Los Angeles Times* article commenting on "Japanese aggressiveness" instead argued that this menace was not military but economic—one that could only be ignored at America's peril. But at what point could the Japanese "military menace" be disentangled from its "economic" one? Japanese aggression was characterized by not only its monopolistic economic tendencies, as well as a rising military and empire, but also in the minds of many white Americans, its population growth in the United States. These Japanese people were "virile and aggressive," and their "surplus populations . . . pour forth into other countries, not to assimilate, but to subjugate."[402] "Aggressive" Japanese migrants, no matter where, established themselves as masters; they have, according to the article "shown in the Far East many of the characteristics of the English sparrow."[403] The English sparrow, it should be noted, was dubbed the "little foreigner" or the "avian alien," and stigmatized in the United States. As a stigmatized

[401] "Will Use Miles of Poison: Great Areas in New Jersey to be Made Deadly to the Japanese Beetle," *The New York Times,* March 26, 1919: 8.

[402] "Japanese Aggressiveness," *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1919: II4.

[403] Ibid.

foreigner, the English (house) sparrow encountered "disfavor, if not . . . outright loathing" from North American birdwatchers, biologists, and conservationists.[404] Noted for its fecundity—a sparrow could mate up to fourteen consecutive times at a rate of "five seconds per act, with mere five-second intervals" according to the prominent nature writer Henry Van Dyke—Phelan was not the only one to link small floral and faunal arrivals like the sparrow to "undesirable" immigrants. The nature writer Neltje Blanchan stressed in her widely read bird study guide for beginners that there was a difference between feathered undesirables and their immigrant counterparts from Asia during the height of "sparrow mania." Yet the English sparrow, Coates acknowledges, was the one exception: "To highlight its misdeeds, [Blanchan] wielded "yellow peril" imagery, beginning to catch on as shorthand for American fears of invasion—military and demographic—from China and Japan. "As the 'yellow peril' is to human immigration," she warned, "so is this sparrow to other birds."[405] Yet unlike human immigrants from England, Japanese immigrants bore the stigma as a racialized, fecund population and hated in ways the English were not.

The consolidation of the American empire at the turn of the century that included the islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific had in fact sharpened the United States' awareness of the possible threats to its biotic security at the federal level. While there was no "sparrow exclusion act" like there was a Chinese Exclusion Act, Department of Agriculture officials, such as Theodore Palmer, used existing regulations

[404] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 26. This was the observation of James Brown in the late 1980s—an example of how some prejudice shaped attitudes to faunal foreigners (27-28).

[405] Ibid., 44.

as a way to exclude potentially diseased livestock. Through the Lacey Act of 1901, the "first federal wildlife conservation measure," the secretary of agriculture could then bar potentially injurious foreign species. The English sparrow was a key player in changing the "open door" policy that had previously existed since the fifteenth century throughout the Western hemisphere.[406] How did a "fecund" population of Japanese immigrants—which became ubiquitous throughout the West—find expression in the Japanese beetle?

By 1920, the Japanese beetle rapidly gained a reputation as a strong flier that could easily cross long distances by traveling in vehicles or even on people's clothing. Quarantine was placed on New Jersey nursery stock and "intensive warfare" waged against this beetle, thus prompting USDA officials to revise the quarantine law to include "all kinds of farm, garden, and orchard products," in addition to corn from infected districts.[407] Although these officials used miles of poison throughout New Jersey in an effort to eradicate this pest, the beetle had firmly established itself over approximately 10,000 acres throughout the state.[408] A mere four years earlier, according to a 1920 article, scientists found only a dozen Japanese beetles. Now, in New Jersey, boys hunting beetles could find as many as 20,000 beetles daily by hand.[409] Another article published around the same time in September of 1920 explicitly stated that high rates of fertility is a "Japanese characteristic": "This beetle has a truly

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[406] Ibid., 45.

[407] "Bugologists are on the Hop: Insects Immigrants to this Country Keep 'Em Busy," *Los Angeles Times,* October 17, 1920: III42.

[408] "Will Use Miles of Poison," *Los Angeles Times,* March 26, 1919: 8.

[409] "Bugologists are on the Hop," *LA Times*: III42.

Japanese characteristic in its rate of increase."[410] Despite the fact that "very elaborate steps were taken" by state and federal officials which included flame throwers, poison squads and trappers, the Japanese beetle was estimated to be in the millions. In this chapter, we see how this "Japanese characteristic" of fecundity helped fuel their image as a rising "poisonous yellow peril" by examining insecticides used on Japanese beetles and the ones health officials claimed that Japanese agriculturalists used to "poison" their consumers.

Was the rising population of Japanese in California a part of this "silent conquest" of the Western Hemisphere that Senator Phelan wrote about?[411] Many white Americans like Phelan feared that just as the Chinese had settled throughout North and South America, the Japanese would similarly invade these continents. Phelan insisted that one cannot "compromise" with the Japanese and that they ought to be eliminated like a "swarm of locusts, which they alone equal in economic destructiveness."[412] Noting the "danger" that picture brides posed, Phelan argued that their greatest danger was "their innate and deep-seated desire to become land-owners."[413] Phelan expressed pride in the fact that he circumvented the sale of about 800,000 acres of land in Mexico by the United States border to a Japanese corporation. Pointing out that the Japanese work eighteen to twenty hours a day, Phelan further argued that while landowners may

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[410] "New Beetle Pest Beyond Control," *Los Angeles Times,* September 5, 1920: X10.

[411] "Phelan would Bar Japanese," *Los Angeles Times,* June 21, 1919: I3.

[412] Ibid.

[413] Ibid.

benefit from the increase of their land values, the white American farm laborer have been stripped of their livelihood and joined the "ranks of the Bolsheviki, the I.W.W.'s and the radicals."[414] Phelan's observation of white American laborers' willingness to join various radical movements, such as the "Bolsheviki and the I.W.W.'s" demonstrates that even the most radical labor activists of the time perceived the issei as economically exploitative.[415] Fears of the "cheap" and exploitative agriculturalist also included a lethal type of "yellow peril" where their "poisonous nature" could easily wreak havoc upon the native biota and cost the federal government millions.

On the very same page with the article on Phelan, appeared another titled "State Investigates Births." This article publicized the birth registration of Japanese babies born in California, which the State Board of Health recorded. In Santa Clara County, Dr. W. H. Kellogg, secretary of the board, cited "irregularities" in these registrations.[416] Dr. Kellogg stated that in his conversation with nurses and inspectors of the health board, there was one case where they attempted to trace the record of a Japanese baby born in the county:

> "When they went to the place of registration the child could not be found," Dr. Kellogg said. "Later they returned and found another several years older, which was produced as the child indicated on the registration card."[417]

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[414] Ibid.

[415] Lye, *America's Asia*, 57.

[416] "State Investigates Births," *Los Angeles Times,* June 21, 1919: I3.

[417] Ibid.

The above incident mirrored some of the larger fears about the "Japanese problem," that could—in the blink of an eye—somehow mysteriously produce full-grown children. By the early 1920s, both health officials and entomologists grew increasingly anxious about the presumably "fecund" Japanese immigrant and Japanese American population.

Coinciding with the fears of Japanese "fecundity" was the "horrifying suggestion" of interracial sex and marriage. In an anti-miscegenation news article titled, "A Horrifying Suggestion," the author claimed that the millionaire George Shima, otherwise known as the "Potato King," believed that just as one would cross-breed potatoes to suit the climate, Shima and other Japanese Americans advocated for the interracial marriage between "American girls and Japanese men."[418] Conveniently neglecting interracial sex and marriage between Japanese women and white men, the article reported that Shima advocated interracial marriage between whites and Japanese Americans in a testimony before Congress regarding the "Japanese peaceful invasion of California": "According to his view the era of picture brides is approaching its term. The Japanese in California shall seek wives in the future, not in Japan, but among the daughters of the white residents of the State."[419] This dissertation focuses on Japanese immigrant men because anxieties of the "contagious and poisonous yellow peril" persisted markedly with respect to this group, although certainly Japanese and Japanese American women did represent and invoke such perceptions. The same aforementioned newspaper article noted that Shima himself was a millionaire out of the "industrial

[418] "A Horrifying Suggestion," *Los Angeles Times,* July 15, 1920*:* II4.

[419] Ibid.

invasion" and held a vision of a "Pacific Coast populated and controlled by a mongrel race, half white and half yellow."[420] Japanese immigrant men such as Shima invoked such images in large part because of their success in carving out an ethnic niche in labor-intensive agriculture. Since orientalism has been historically associated with notions of monopoly capitalism and the focus of "official" wage earners has been on men, these government public health and Department of Agriculture officers targeted them. It was minority men—including Japanese and Japanese American men—whom many feared would intermarry with white women and lead to "race suicide." How did Japanese men incite fears of degeneration as a result of interracial sex and marriage and how did it operate at the intersection of race, gender, and class?

Lisa Lowe's articulation of how juridical practices such as migration, exclusion, naturalization, detention, and antimiscegenation produced technologies of gendering *and* racialization provide useful ways for understanding the complexities of the Asiatic racial form that found expression in a "poisonous yellow peril."[421] David L. Eng builds upon Lowe's technology of gendering as a way to understand Asian American racial formation, arguing that the "the nation-state's sustained economic exploitation, coupled with its political disenfranchisement, of the Asian American male immigrant is modulated precisely through a technology of gendering not adjunct but centrally linked to processes of Asian American racial formation."[422] Eng correctly points out that Asian immigrant and Asian American male identity has been historically characterized

[420] Ibid.

[421] David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 5.

[422] Ibid., 16.

by these critical intersections. Eng remains one of a small handful of Asian Americanists who have sought to engage in a theoretical *and* historical examination of Asian American masculinity. But rather than analyzing those early Asian immigrant men who engaged in historically "feminized" professions such as laundries and domestic work, an examination of Japanese immigrant fishermen, farmers and gardeners illuminates how their strong presence in historically masculine wage labor struck at the heart of hegemonic understandings of the white, male citizen.

Just as Eng connects the real and the psychic elements of race, connecting the larger environment to Japanese immigrant communities links material reality to imagined perceptions of them.[423] Yet examining plant and human pathologies illustrates how it is not only the psychic aspects of racialized biological dangers, but also their unseen and yet very real elements. Plant pathology demonstrates the complexity of the "contagious yellow peril" that is invisible to the naked eye and yet is quite material and had real economic ramifications:

> In certain troubles, like the white pine blister rust, it also became evident that no inspection was absolute insurance against the introduction of ailments of an elusive and hidden character. For instance, the bacteria of citrus canker may be carried unseen on the surface of apparently healthy twigs, leaves, and fruit: likewise it developed that disinfection in such cases was not feasible nor possible.[424]

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[423] Ibid., 20.

[424] Henry W. Kruckeberg, "California's New and Growing Plant Industry is Menaced," *Los Angeles Times,* April 30, 1922: IX3.

Even inspection did not guarantee that plant immigrants would be disease-free and protect the nation's ecological borders from "ailments of an elusive and hidden character." What was so particularly fearsome about the "contagious yellow peril" then was both its unique characteristics of invisibility and yet materialist and costly effects.

As early as 1862, the medical discourse on germs had been linked to Asian immigration. Arthur Stout's *Chinese Immigration and the Physiological Causes of the Decay of a Nation* (1862) counterposed the idea of an "armed invasion" and the "yellow peril":

> Better would it be for our country that the hordes of Genghis Khan should overflow the land, and with armed hostility devastate our vallies [sic] with the saber and fire-brand, than these more pernicious hosts, in the garb of friends, should insidiously poison the well-springs of life, and spreading far and wide, gradually undermine and corrode the vitals of our strength and prosperity. In the former instance we might oppose the invasion with sword and rifled cannon; but this destructive intrusion enters by invisible approaches . . .[425]

Lye points out that this "yellow peril" blurs the boundaries between outside and inside, enemy and friend. Just like with degenerationism, she sees "yellow peril's" alien danger—a biological danger—that implies internal (pathological) decay. The historical appearance of the "poisonous yellow peril" here can be best understood as not the primitive within the modern but as a form of mechanical abstraction—or as Lye puts it, "the appearance of the otherness of Western modernity to itself."[426] This silent

[425] Lye, *America's Asia*, 55.

[426] Ibid., 56.

replacement of "native Americans" by Asiatics also occurred in agriculture. This pernicious "yellow peril"—in the form of a petit ethnic bourgeoisie farmer or packaged within a Japanese cherry tree—may very well "insidiously poison the well-spring of life." The Japanese beetle and chestnut blight, for example, did spread far and wide, and many whites feared that interracial marriage would degenerate the race.

It was horrifying, according to the aforementioned article, that the Japanese aimed to "make an experiment" of children of mixed race, but that since they are not "students of biology" they therefore remained ignorant of the "consequences of such intermarriages."[427] Such results of "blood fusion" included "degeneracy" and even sterility. The takeover of the best agriculture lands in California by the issei went hand in hand with giving away "our daughters in marriage to the slant-eyed subjects of the Mikado!"[428] In claiming that it was "morally repugnant and biologically impossible," the author explicitly attempted to deny the relationship between plants and humans in writing that mixed-race children are not like propagating a new potato species. Examining interracial sex and marriage from not only a racialized and feminist angle, but also from a scientific perspective elucidates how products of such unions were viewed as aberrant and deviant in a biological sense. Yet, as previous chapters documented, plant explorers and nurserymen were not opposed to importing and even mixing foreign plant species so long as they produced a superior hybrid breed and resulted in capital gain.

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[427] "A Horrifying Suggestion," *Los Angeles Times,* July 15, 1920: II4.

[428] Ibid.

It is significant that the article, aptly titled "A Horrifying Situation," claimed that "degeneracy" would be the result of interracial marriages. The term "degeneration" first appeared in medical dictionaries sometime in the 1850s, and was defined as "morbid change in the structure of parts consisting in the disintegration of tissue or in a substitution of a lower for a higher form of structure."[429] The historian Alexandra Minna Stern has also noted that the term degeneration has been historically imbued with moral and scientific meaning. In expressing concern over the resulting "degeneration" from marriages between Japanese men and white women, the author of the article suggested that such unions would place (white) humans closer to animals, an idea in part advanced by Darwinism and monogenesis.[430] The Japanese embodied those "types" just below whites on the evolutionary ladder.[431] Within the United States, it was the hardening of these racial hierarchies that helped implement Jim Crow policies, spurred the rise of Sinophobia and anti-Asian racism, as well as justify colonial ventures in the Pacific and Latin America. As many white Americans feared their racial decline numerically due in large part to modern contraception, fears of degenerationism were translated into concerns over miscegenation and increasing immigrant "invasions." Eugenics, declared Stern, "was sown in the soil of degenerationism."[432]

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[429] Lye, *America's Asia*, 47.

[430] Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 13.

[431] Ibid. "The turn of the twentieth century," writes Stern, "was the heyday of racial taxonomies that placed whites and Europeans at the apex of civilization, blacks and Africans on the bottom rungs, and nearly everyone else in the suboptimal middle position of hybridity and mongrelization" (13).

[432] Ibid., 14. As an elusive word that can mean many things, in this chapter, *eugenics* is defined first and foremost as better breeding. Sir Francis Galton coined the term in 1883, combining *eu* (Greek for good or well) with *genesis* ("to come into being, be born") and *ics*: eugenics was "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to

Both Stern and Lye note that degeneration was a concept that originated in debates of the nascent field of criminal anthropology, as well as evolutionary science. Lye specifically points out that "While the applications of degeneration should have been reassuring, since atavism was thought to be localized in distinct and immutable individuals, the conceptual possibility of regression it allowed for led to full-blown anxieties about the decay of the entire social body."[433] In fact, connecting non-Europeans to notions of "pre-modernity" and atavism was one of the key justifications for European American colonialist and imperialist enterprises under the guise of "economic and/or cultural 'modernization.'"[434] Connecting Japanese and Japanese Americans with atavism could thus be viewed as a justification for plant exploration and other engagement of activities of empire in Japan specifically and even throughout the Pacific more broadly. In what ways did the discourse on "survival of the fittest" and the exclusion of "bad blood" from the "national stock" find expression in flora and fauna, as well as in Japanese immigrants themselves?

California's interwoven tripartite system of sterilization programs, psychometric research, and antialien deportation policies worked in concert, thus making it home to one of the most activist eugenics movements in the United States and perhaps even in

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the utmost advantage." According to Galton's definition, "science" was knowledge and skill, theory and practice. And since "race" referred to the human species, eugenics was a "kind of interventionist religion" that included the betterment of human "stock" and "specimens" (See Stern, *Eugenic Nation,* 11).

[433] Lye, *America's Asia*, 47. According to the Webster dictionary, atavism is the recurrence in an organism of a characteristic or trait typical of an ancestral form, often due to genetic recombination.

[434] Eng, *Racial Castration*, 9.

the world.[435] Stern's *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (2005) illuminates the "deep affinities" between nature-making and eugenics. Building on and complicating Stern's analysis of "race suicide" and species survival in the early twentieth century, in this research, we see how chestnut blight imported on Japanese chestnuts virtually drove native American chestnuts into extinction. Unlike the case with California redwoods, chestnut blight heightened fears that the "contagious yellow peril" could easily disperse across the east coast due to widespread trade routes between nurseries on the east coast and major nurseries such as Yokohama Nursery Company. It was precisely the mobility of pathogens and particularly injurious insects from Japan that inspired tremendous fear in nativists. These nativists included a number of officers in the Department of Agriculture, some of whom associated with those eugenicists that Stern examines.

Stern's incisive analysis of eugenic landscapes in California focuses on how influential intellectuals such as August Vollmer, who eventually established the School of Criminology at the University of California at Berkeley, sought to preserve the land through conservationist efforts. And for men like John Muir, and the organizations he founded—the Sierra Club (1892), the Sempervirens Club (1900), and the Save-the-Redwoods League (1918)—eugenic principles of selective breeding and concerns of species endangerment formed the foundation of their worldview and organizations.[436] Stern significantly notes that men such as Luther Burbank, a plant explorer and collector who moved in the same circles as David Fairchild, eventually joined the

[435] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 25.

[436] Ibid., 116, 119-120.

Eugenics Committee of the American Breeders' Association, the first eugenics organization in the nation. Indeed, as Stern points out, these eugenicists' approaches to the environment varied widely—from those who built roads and concessions to make the outdoors accessible to the public to preservationists who attempted to erect barriers in order to protect nature from outside intruders. Yet she points out that selective and "better breeding" united these eclectic eugenicists: "Almost always their vision at once mirrored and extended into the world of plants and animals in the Pacific's West brand of nativism and racial exclusion . . ."[437] And although USDA officials such as David Fairchild did not fit the mold of the "typical" eugenicist—which usually (but not always) included the promotion of sterilization—their views of eugenics did in fact mirror and extend into the world of plants and insects in the Pacific West and beyond.

Stern asserts that men like Vollmer have been long forgotten in eugenic literature because they did not fit the mold and devoted little attention to sterilization and immigration restriction. Yet she maintains that his story still remains significant among the variegated narratives of hereditarianism. And much like Vollmer, Fairchild likewise is a complex figure that many may not have associated with eugenics. On the surface, he appeared to be a "cosmopolitan" because he—since Thomas Jefferson—became the most prominent figure who promoted the introduction of foreign species, such as the soybean and helped bring in the (in)famous Japanese cherry trees. Unlike many of his predecessors, Fairchild explicitly disassociated himself from those plant explorers who perpetuated the image of the botanist "as effete aesthete preoccupied

[437] Ibid., 119.

with the self-indulgent scholarly study of wild plants of no practical benefit."[438] Fairchild set out initially to introduce tropical plants from recently acquired territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands, as well as cereal grains from the arid and semiarid regions in the West. In 1901, the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) was formed, with the Section for Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction under the BPI. Under the promotion of individuals like Fairchild and the BPI, durum wheat eventually formed the foundation of the "new cereal empire in the North-west." Certain regions of the United States were in fact quite similar to the climate of various parts of Russia and China. Floral resemblance between the American South and China was so close that Frank N. Meyer wrote that he felt "suddenly transported from either region to the other" and that some "would not always exactly realize where he was."[439] During World War I, Fairchild's major concern was that plant exploration in China would be disrupted.

The plant explorations which were discussed in chapter two increasingly became romanticized by the 1920s. In 1923, to commemorate the achievements of the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction, Fairchild extolled the importation of durum wheat, Sudan grass, rice cultivation from Japan as some of the greatest achievements in American agriculture. Department of Agriculture plant explorers appealed to many Americans, according to Coates, because they offered a glimpse of "representatives of white civilization" and those who lived on "savage lands."[440] Typical articles such as

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[438] Coates, *The American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 82. In 1933, the Committee on the Marcellus Hartley Fund of the National Academy of Sciences recognized Fairchild's role in enhancing the agricultural "wealth of the nation" with the Public Service Medal for distinguished services to the application of science to the public welfare (82).

[439] Ibid.

[440] Ibid., 83.

"Millions Added to Nation's Wealth by Food Plants Sent by Agriculture Agents from World's Far Corners" not only glamorized and romanticized plant exploration; they also stressed the economic and agricultural benefits of importing such plant immigrants: "Little-known crops of Washington experts, risking lives in savage lands, already has added scores of valuable fruits and vegetables to America's natural production—some that have brought riches cited—romance and thrilling incidents recalled by veterans stationed here—some of the tragedies service has suffered."[441] As Coates has illuminated, the Department of Agriculture described plant exploration in exhilarating terms as discoveries of exotic fruits from "a perfect virgin field untrodden by any botanist or agricultural explorer" were made.[442] Many of these "virgin fields" were in "exotic" locales like Asia. These early twentieth-century cosmopolitans, including Fairchild, looked especially to places like Asia which seemed like a boundless "floral frontier."

Historians have debated whether earlier openness to plant immigrants did in fact mirror initial willingness to open America's gates to human immigrants. From the 1880s to the 1920s, as federal legislation began to increasingly tighten regulation against plant immigrants, so too did legislators seek to exclude human immigrants during this same time period. Government entomologists and even botanists who participated in plant introductions were both highly sensitive by the late 1890s to the potential hazards that plant immigrants could bring with them. Yet Coates questions here—as he does elsewhere—whether Pauly is accurate in his assessment of the "extent

[441] Ibid., 83.

[442] Ibid.

to which scientists as well as lay persons were affected by racial neuroses and ethnic bias."[443]

Indeed, to what extent were plant scientists such as Fairchild affected by "racial neuroses and ethnic bias"? Stern's analysis of eugenic landscapes offers some clues for how California eugenicists shaped and participated in the naming of key preservationist landmarks. Fairchild, in some ways similar to men like Vollmer and Luther Burbank, may not at first glance appear to fit the mold of a eugenicist. However, Fairchild was also active in preserving the "the virgin wilderness of tropical plant and animal life under the very eaves of the greatest civilization of Anglo Saxons that has ever gathered under the coconut palms."[444] In fact, Fairchild became the first president of the Tropic Everglades National Park Association, and in 1929 Fairchild argued for the need to protect the "native" flora and fauna of southern Florida's original hammock grassland and mangrove swamp. At the same time, Fairchild warned of the possible "terrifying scenario" where the United States could be overrun with foreign immigrants and "overpopulated" like China—and perhaps Chinese immigrants themselves—and emphasized the "native charms," such as the palmetto, of this "strange and fascinating region . . . unlike any other" in the entire nation.[445] He bemoaned those foreign invasive species that had ruined these "native charms," saying that the only thing that remained was the Sunshine State's climate. Finally, while Fairchild was initially fascinated by kudzu at the turn of the century, a semiwoody perennial that fed livestock, he eventually

[443] Ibid., 90, 99.

[444] Ibid., 110.

[445] Ibid. This speech took place at the American Forestry Association's annual meeting.

became dismayed by its tendency to spread at will. While he possessed an "undue passion for the new," he found that the seeds he had brought back from Japan and planted on his Florida property "took with a vengeance, smothering everything they got onto, and pretty soon we became alarmed. Feeling that the kudzu was too much for us, we began to cut it out."[446]

Fairchild also served as president of the American Genetics Association.[447] Indeed, his attitudes towards foreign plants was directly shaped by—and shaped—his views of human immigrants. He published articles such as "Testing New Foods" in *The Journal of Heredity*.[448] In "Testing New Foods," Fairchild disagreed with the foremost food chemists, Osborne and McCollum, who believed that the Japanese "instinctively" preferred an American menu over a Japanese diet because of their "craving for a higher protein diet," using examples such as the Japanese willingness to copy American dress such as hats, shoes, coats, and even trousers.[449] Fairchild wrote that "I am afraid that the peoples who drink milk and eat butter and meats are larger than those who get their "fat soluble A" from green vegetables."[450] He also appeared to agree with Galton's definitive studies on the inheritance of height to which he declared that he was "disposed to consider the statement as an expression of an idle notion and a neglect to

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[446] Ibid., 108-109.

[447] The American Genetics Association was formerly known as the American Breeders Association.

[448] Formerly the *American Breeders' Magazine*.

[449] David Fairchild, "Testing New Foods," vol. x, no. 1, *The Journal of Heredity* (January 1919): 27.

[450] Ibid.

consider the role played by heredity."[451] Fairchild questioned, for example, how it was that the "pygmies of Africa [who] lived side by side with the normal sized blacks" were different yet ate the same foods. Yet at the same time, he believed that the

> greatest, most progressive races will reach out after all kinds of foods that are good; and with the same hospitality of mind which has characterized the Americans in their adoption of new labor-saving machinery . . . believe our countrymen will test with interest many new foods and learn to use so many kinds that it will be profitable to grow those best adapted to each agricultural region and season, because there will be the necessary demand for them.[452]

In his view, Japanese "craving for a higher protein diet" was not necessarily instinctive, while at the same time those who consume dairy products and large quantities of meat were larger. Thus, he believed in the practical and economic function of plant exploration—that is, of importing plants that would yield a wide variety of nutritious foods. Acknowledging that although traits are hereditary, Fairchild nonetheless believed that humans could evolve. He sought to strengthen the "greatest, most progressive races"—in this way, his plant explorations in East Asia could therefore be viewed as the activity of empire-building. Fairchild ended this article with the warning that by having a "restricted menu," the "essential function of eating" is affected and "so affects the adaptability of the species and hinders its evolution."[453] Clearly, when such plants had either what he believed were "aesthetic" purposes—such as the Japanese

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[451] Ibid.

[452] Ibid., 27-28.

[453] Ibid., 28.

cherry trees, or could possibly serve to meet the gradually increasing demand for a wider variety of foodstuffs of the American public—Fairchild exhibited a great deal of openness to such immigrants.

While Fairchild's openness toward useful and profitable plant immigrants did not always precisely mirror his attitudes toward human immigrants, Fairchild was strongly influenced by the dominant studies of hereditarianism published by Galton and others, which in turn influenced his attitudes toward human immigrants. While he expressed enthusiasm over profitable plants in particular, as witnessed in chapter one, his changing views of invasive species eventually matched his concerns over human degeneration.[454] By the early 1930s, Fairchild openly opposed miscegenation or racial mixing. While one could not restrict humans to their geographical origins—in many ways similar to the dissemination of flora and fauna—Fairchild determined that one could and should confine them to their "proper genetic spheres."[455]

Even as early as around 1913, Fairchild had already formed an association with Paul Popenoe. Stern writes that Fairchild had been "impressed with the young Popenoe" and asked him to take on the position of editor of the American Genetics Association's journal, *The Journal of Heredity*. According to Stern, Fairchild wanted Popenoe as editor to extend and recast its original focus from livestock and plants to that of humans—as well as from animal husbandry and horticulture to eugenics. Popenoe wrote to his parents that "The idea is to show that plants and animals obey the same laws of heredity, and that these laws are the ones which govern Homo Sapiens, as

[454] Coates, *The American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 108.

[455] Ibid., 87.

well."[456] Under his editorship from 1914 to 1917, *The Journal of Heredity* began to focus on topics such as feeblemindedness, "inferior" immigrants, sterilization and marriage legislation, and undesirable hereditary traits (such as criminality). Interested in fruit horticulture and taxonomy, Popenoe also eventually became "immersed in the burgeoning universe of race betterment."[457] Stern has noted that Popenoe fraternized with Fairchild and his circle, and befriended other prominent eugenicists. And like those horticulturalists who worked for the USDA, Popenoe similarly policed the U.S.-Mexico border, looking for cases of venereal diseases, closing down red-light districts, and gambling houses under the National Defense Act around the time the United States entered World War I.

Unlike Stern's narrative that examines the efforts of eugenicists to preserve California's "native" landscapes through organizations such as the Save-the-Redwoods, (re)centering Japanese Americans in this narrative demonstrates how environmental and public health dangers, including chestnut blight and plague, actively and directly threatened the native biota. Ecological threats from Japan had become such a major menace that by the early 1920s, Japanese plant and insect immigrants—and the diseases imported along with them—formed the impetus for Quarantine 37. On May 15 and 16, 1922, the Secretary of Agriculture Wallace organized a plant quarantine conference in Washington D. C. where the "danger of bringing additional foreign pests into the

[456] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 157.

[457] Ibid.

United States was emphasized."[458] Conservative estimates of the cost of imported pests, excluding plant diseases, were at about two billion dollars annually.

One key justification for federal quarantine was the ominous threat and real devastation that Japanese plant and insect immigrants had wrought upon American agriculture. The article, titled "Better Understanding Results from Quarantine Conference," pointed to some of the most damaging pests that arrived with "very insignificant shipments":

> A single trivial importation of Japanese iris brought in the Japanese beetle. It is acknowledged that this little insect cannot be exterminated, that it will continue to spread over the country and that it will be the cause of much injury to our crops. The San José scale was brought in some forty years ago with some Chinese flowering peaches. It now costs America at least $10,000,000 a year for spraying orchards and in reduced output and value of fruit crops.
>
> Citrus canker, introduced with Japanese trifoliate orange stock some thirteen years ago, has cost about $2,130,000 of Federal and State funds for control work. Orchards and nurseries valued at $11,063,000 were burned to the ground in Florida and other Gulf States in an effort to control the disease.
>
> A few Japanese flowering cherry trees brought in the oriental fruit worm in 1911. It is now firmly established in half a dozen Eastern States and is expected ultimately to spread to all parts of the country . . .

[458] "Better Understanding Results from Quarantine Conference," *Los Angeles Times,* June 11, 1922: IX3.

> One of the most spectacular scourges is the chestnut blight, brought in on a trivial shipment of oriental chestnut trees. Half of the American stand of chestnuts has succumbed thus far and the prediction is made by 1940 the blight will wipe out all trees east of the Mississippi. New York and Pennsylvania suffered total destruction. The disease is now spreading down the Appalachian Mountains as far as North Carolina and Alabama, and westward into West Virginia.[459]

This article summed up the major injurious insects examined so far in this dissertation. All of the above injurious insects and plant disease listed were at least suspected to have been imported from Japan even if it did not originate there. The article noted other highly injurious pests, such as the potato wart, but it remained clear that imported pests from China and particularly Japan constituted the lion's share of the "worst pests" listed here. The article agreed that the "American farmer must board and lodge forever" against those "undesirable immigrants." Prior to the implementation of Quarantine 37, the article stressed, plant enemies easily entered the United States with "great rapidity": "During the four years, 1909-1912, when efforts were being made to put the legislation through Congress, the Oriental fruit worm, the Japanese beetle, citrus canker, potato wart and the European corn borer, all pests of major importance, got in and became established in commercially-producing regions."[460] The author stressed that since the passage of Plant Quarantine 37, no "important pest" had established itself in the United States.

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[459] Ibid.

[460] Ibid.

Representatives from Holland, Belgium, England, and Wales all attended this conference. The article detailed how these Europeans "brought the point of view of the foreign grower, who is anxious for easier and wider markets in the United States."[461] It was made clear to the European delegates that "the quarantine does not seek to exclude their plants, but the pests that are likely to damage our major agricultural crops."[462] While sources do not address why Japanese and Chinese growers and traders were excluded from such dialogue, the author thought it important that these European delegates received reassurance that trade with the United States would not be negatively affected. Not only were Asian growers excluded, but Japanese insect immigrants in particular were disproportionately singled out as foreign pests.

Human Self-Defense

The story told here would be incomplete if the struggles of Japanese Americans were excluded. Due to archival and language limitations, materials produced and written by first-generation Japanese immigrants have been difficult to locate. With the coming of age of second-generation Japanese Americans in the interwar years, we can begin to learn how Japanese immigrants directly addressed unequal public health policies and to a lesser extent, plant regulation.

While sources on health care for Japanese Americans prior to 1915 remain scarce, a short article illuminates the various services provided to this community in southern California. Harry Honda has written that the "Little Tokyo health care and

[461] Ibid.

[462] Ibid.

delivery system" in 1915 had two Japanese "hospitals," four infirmaries, nine midwives, three dentists, and even one veterinarian.[463] The first central Japanese Hospital in Boyle Heights (later known as City View Hospital) began in a small, two-story brick building on the corner of Amelia and Turner Streets. While more work needs to be done in understanding the regional and local differences in how Asians in America struggled to obtain the best quality health care available to them prior to the Civil Rights Movement, we do know that Chinese and Japanese Americans in the West faced intense levels of discrimination from medical institutions. During the first half of the twentieth century, many hospitals either outright refused to treat patients of Asian descent, as well as other minorities, or insisted on segregating them.[464] The oral histories of issei and especially nisei physicians have also brought to light how California city hospitals routinely refused to hire Japanese and Japanese American physicians and denied them hospital privileges even as late as 1959.[465] With city hospitals closed to medical practitioners and patients of Japanese descent, Drs. Inose Inosuke and Komai Toyosaku decided to build the first Japanese hospital in Los Angeles in 1915. However, the 1917-1918 Influenza Epidemic demonstrated the desperate need for a larger, central hospital. According to Naomi Hirahara and Gwenn M. Jensen, "The expansion was prompted by

[463] Harry Honda, "A Picture of Health," *Little Tokyo Life,* no. 15, Japanese American National Museum. Honda wrote that the two Japanese "hospitals" were Tanaka Byōin and Rafu Byō. The four infirmaries were located along north San Pedro and East First Streets, as well as Wilmington (now Weller) Streets, operated by Fujimori, Ito, and Ikeuchi, and Karaki. The nine midwives were as follows: Katow, Okazaki, Nakano, and Hiraga, who had offices on Wall Street. The three dentists were Takagi, Oka, and Shiina. He also listed one veterinarian, Kaji, near the 9th Street Market.

[464] Many Japanese immigrants also practiced what is now called cross-cultural medicine. Others also preferred to stay in the Japanese Hospital because of language services and the familiar Japanese food served there.

[465] Kiyoshi Ogawa, M. D., interview by author, Pasadena, CA, August 20, 2001.

infected Japanese Americans being turned away from hospitals operated by and for the white community."[466] Other sources, including a newspaper article, also support the claim that Japanese and Japanese Americans without financial means often turned to welfare services, although few scholars have examined this.[467] Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, small clinics and the small Japanese Hospital provided the bulk of health care for the community.[468] When they attempted to move the hospital to a new location, however, the 1913 California Alien Land Law prohibited the issei from acquiring land to do so.

The grounds upon which California legislators, specifically Secretary of State Frank Jordan, opposed the new Japanese Hospital reveals the extent to which providing more equal health care access to this minority population was tied to the struggle over agricultural lands. A *Los Angeles Times* article reported that the

> [a]rticles of incorporation for the hospital were refused, according to the opinion, on the grounds that the institution would be a violation of the State antialien law. Inasmuch as the antialien law applies to principally to agricultural

[466] Naomi Hirahara and Gwenn M. Jensen, *Silent Scars of Healing Hands: Oral Histories of Japanese American Doctors in World War II Detention Camps* (Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton , 2004), 11-12.

[467] "East and the West to Meet in the Name of Charity," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1916: II2. This article discusses a charity event held for Japanese tubercular patients held at the Yamato Theater on First and San Pedro Streets. While the Japanese Buddhist Mission organized the event, a number of white artists and musicians participated in this fundraiser, as well as "Chinese, Hindus, and Persians." The Japanese consul, Mr. Aoyama, opened the program and there was even a "Cherry Blossom Dance," as well as another folk dance including the "Old Pine Tree." The article ends, "The proceeds of the entertainment will be handled by the Buddhist Mission, for the relief of Japanese hospital patients who are now a charge on the public" (II2).

[468] Hirahara and Jensen, *Silent Scars of Healing Hands*, 11.

lands and Japanese may conduct commercial enterprises under the new law the Supreme Court declared, the erection and operation of such a hospital is legal.[469] Thus, while the Supreme Court declared that it was in fact legal for the Japanese Hospital group to erect and operate a hospital, Jordan had originally attempted to deny them the articles of incorporation based on the Alien Land Law. Just as anxieties over pathogens from both bodies and plants were intertwined, the issue of citizenship and the struggle of lands bound agricultural competition with "cheap Japanese farmers" to that of the larger community's health and well-being.

The history of the Japanese Hospital and the Alien Land Laws, in a sense, cannot be so easily separated. Historian of medicine Susan Smith's observation that the Alien Land Laws themselves had not been overturned in the *Tashiro* case argue for their continuity and here, I suggest, increasingly cast the spotlight on the presumably "innately" alien characteristics of California farm labor, including substandard housing, low wages, and extensive work hours, which threatened agrarian democracy.[470] Again, Lye stresses how the

> prohibition of agricultural property ownership by aliens ineligible to citizenship was often evaded through the creation of corporations in which the majority of stockholders were American citizens . . . Refusing the notion of land as infinitely exchangeable property, they insisted upon a territorial definition of

[469] "Japanese Hospital Approved," *Los Angeles Times,* May 22, 1927: B5.

[470] Lye, *America's Asia,* 130.

land as national soil. In this period, representations of agricultural corporatization and representations of the Japanese in agriculture overlap.[471] Tashiro's position as corporate president and the decision to sell shares to Japanese stockholders heightened fears of a corporate takeover by aliens. Since the bulk of Japanese farm enterprises were created in the name of a corporation owned mostly by American stockholders, it oftentimes made it difficult, according to Carey McWilliams, to ascertain which particular businesses or industries in California were owned exclusively or primarily by Japanese immigrants.[472] By managing to claim the land—the very national soil—the issei invoked in state legislators and many white Americans the panic of an Asiatic takeover in the form of medical facilities. While Lye makes the significant point that "representations of agricultural corporatization and representations of the Japanese in agriculture overlap," the *Tashiro* case powerfully highlights the interrelationship between control of medical institutions and control of the national soil itself.

Indeed, as Japanese and Japanese Americans found themselves excluded from many mainstream hospitals and fears of an Asiatic takeover were heightened, perceptions of them as "disease-breeders" persisted. The 1923-1924 pneumonic and bubonic plague epidemic, while not as devastating as the bubonic plague outbreaks in San Francisco at the turn of the century, demonstrated yet again how Japanese and

[471] Ibid., 126.

[472] Ibid., 127.

Chinese immigrant communities were targeted as possible foci of infection.[473] Although it predominantly impacted the Mexican district in the area, health officials once again singled out Chinese and Japanese Americans in Los Angeles. On October 2, 1924, the City Health Department officer, Dr. Giles Porter, responded to a call to Jesus Lajun's home at 700 Clara Street. Dr. Porter did not suspect anything unusual about Mr. Lajun's illness, a Los Angeles Railway day laborer. Lajun's fifteen year old daughter, Francisca Concha Lajun, had a severe case of the flu, in addition to a sore throat and headache. Their neighbor, Luciana Samarano, visited the Lajun home in order to care for Francisca. On October 4, as Francisca's condition worsened, she died on the way to the hospital due to "double pneumonia."[474] According to the historian William Deverell, all told, by its end in 1924, the plague outbreak had killed almost forty people. Deverell notes that those who died were all connected by kin or neighborhood. He writes that Dr. Emil Bogen had observed that the epidemiological chain started with Luciana Samarano: "During the following two weeks, her mother, sister, uncle, nurse, and the nurse's sister, and her four sons, and her husband, his mother, brother, five cousins, six boarders, four friends, his priest, nurse and ambulance driver and a neighbor all developed similar symptoms, and only the nurse and one son survived."[475] Ninety percent of those who died of the plague were of Mexican descent.

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[473] While it is more commonly known as the 1923-24 Pneumonic Plague outbreak, there were some cases of bubonic plague.

[474] William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 176.

[475] Ibid., 182.

In his examination of plague preventive work, Deverell has noted that health officials launched a "militarized sweep" that included both minority and white neighborhoods. One health report stated that "It is important to remember that the danger from infected rats exists . . . even in residence districts occupied by native Americans [i.e., native-born whites], and these must be dealt with as definitely as the foreign districts."[476] However, anxieties over foreign dangers that resided in these "foreign districts" meant that health officials directed much of their eradication efforts "especially in the foreign quarter . . . in the Mexican, Russian, Chinese and Japanese quarters by the destruction of all structures not worth rat proofing."[477] Additionally, "Negro shacks" on 7th Street were also targets of plague abatement measures.

While Deverell does not negate that there were in fact links of ethnicity, sociability, neighborhood, and kin in these plague vector patterns, he persuasively argues that these officials assigned Mexicans in Los Angeles to rigid economic, occupational, social, and ethnic containers.[478] For example, he notes how these officials viewed "The Mexican" as a "Catholic people" who did not hide their dead or sick and therefore immediately would seek medical aid.[479] More ominous, other "typical Mexican traits" included the confluence of Mexican ethnicity with poverty, rats, and disease.[480] Deverell leaves little doubt that Mexicans had in fact been conflated with

[476] Ibid., 193.

[477] Ibid.

[478] Ibid., 205.

[479] Ibid., 201.

[480] Ibid., 203-204.

rats during this plague. Dr. Pomeroy feared that Mexicans in Belvedere "would scatter" if they became aware of the present of plague or quarantine restrictions. The militarized response

> best expressed by the quarantine and sanitary details—had as its purpose a goal of aggressive cleanliness aimed at both rats and Mexicans. Just as Merchurochrome was thought to be a cleanser for the plague's internal manifestations, so too with petroleum spray and chloride of lime aimed at the lives of those within the confluence of poverty and Mexican ethnicity.[481]

Deverell argues that the 1923-24 Pneumonic Plague offered the "proof" for the theorem—that the plague outbreak affirmed the dominant view of all Mexicans as a degraded class and of them as "poverty-stricken laborers" who lived in rat-infested shacks.[482] In fact, districts that had no cases of plague were quarantined—they had, as Deverell succinctly put it, only verified cases of ethnicity.

It is significant that dominant assumptions of Chinese and then Japanese immigrants were later also placed on Mexicans in the 1923-24 plague incident. Just like their immigrant forebears, Mexicans in Los Angeles were stereotyped in terms of "typicality." Natalia Molina has argued throughout her book, *Fit to be Citizens?* (2006), that the racialization of first Chinese and then Japanese Americans "pave[d] the way for the racialization of another: Mexicans."[483] One of the most important aspects of *Fit to be Citizens?* lies in its identification and examination of the transferal of the

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[481] Ibid., 203.

[482] Ibid., 205.

[483] Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 91.

"contagious yellow peril" to the "contagious brown peril." Within fifty years, three minority populations were interrelated in that they "were assigned to the lowest position in L.A.'s racial hierarchy: a powerful example of how rapidly racism can be repackaged, re-energized, and relegitimated."[484] Ann Laura Stoler has also pointed out that discourse of racisms gained their polyvalent mobilities precisely because of its "promiscuous" range of conservative and progressive projects they found expression in.[485] The 1923-24 pneumonic and bubonic plague outbreak offers an important way of understanding of how such discourse is one that vacillates—between not only different political projects but also upon "*different* elements of earlier discourses reworked for new political ends."[486] Similarly, just as it had expressed itself in "oriental plague" at the turn of the twentieth century, we see how its reappearance in the 1920s as the "Mexican plague" gained force by freezing the "typical Mexican" in time and space through quarantine measures. By linking Mexicans with class assumptions, rats, and disease, health officials drew upon the same ideologies they had used over at least two decades before and applied it during a time when the number of Mexican laborers began to steadily increase.

Photographic documents most likely taken by public health officials attested to how Asian immigrants in California continued to be linked to plague. It has been difficult, however, to track archival evidence that documented the extent to which health officials carried out rat eradication and other prophylactic measures in Little

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[484] Ibid., 11.

[485] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 200.

[486] Ibid., 72.

Tokyo and Chinatown in the Los Angeles area. Health officials, such as Dr. Walter Dickie, the California Board of Health secretary, attempted to suppress publicity surrounding the plague in newspapers and amongst local business leaders.[487] By around November of 1924, Dr. Dickie and others had already enacted damage control measures, which then accelerated shortly thereafter. Fearful that unfavorable press would hurt Los Angeles' economy, local officials instead referred to it as a "slight epidemic of pneumonic plague."[488] A Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce director admitted that "It would be a black eye we couldn't get over for years" and another added that "it is my personal feeling to suppress publicity."[489] Dickie himself admitted, "No disease known has such an effect upon the business world as the plague," and officials moved quickly to eradicate rats and sanitize the Los Angeles harbor.[490] One of the few available archival materials that illustrate the extent to which health officials targeted Japanese and Chinese immigrants as "foci of infection" include a collection of photographs that documented not only sites of the pneumonic plague outbreaks, but also of the discovery of infected rats and the ensuing eradication programs.

These photographic images focus on Japanese businesses as sites of potential and actual plague infection, although at least one photograph included a "Jap section" or residential district.[491] As we have seen in chapters one and especially two, perceptions

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[487] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 195.

[488] Ibid., 196.

[489] Ibid., 197.

[490] Ibid., 199.

[491] Photographic Documentation of Pneumonic Plague Outbreak Sites and Rats in Los Angeles, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley,

of the issei as thrifty and "cheap agriculturalists" were directly linked to assumptions of them and their business practices as not only unethical but also unsanitary and dangerous. We see a variation upon this narrative when health officials singled out, for example, a "Jap restaurant" on 136 N. San Pedro Street where five infected rats were caught.[492] It is noteworthy that Japanese businesses, including a hog ranch and grocery store, were expressly singled out in documentation of infected rats in Los Angeles. These photographs illustrate the extent to which the Japanese community in Los Angeles was intertwined with hegemonic assumptions of economic frugality, unsanitary business conditions, and the plague itself. Indeed, as this incident and others have revealed, it is often difficult to distinguish between economic, racial, and pathological dangers.

These images reified and reflected racist assumptions of minority immigrants in southern California. Photographic images of a Chinese laundry on 558 Ceres Avenue, nearby the Southern Pacific Depot, exemplified how health officials focused on Chinese living conditions and businesses—some of which were one and the same. Unlike with the Japanese in Los Angeles, a number of stark photos of dilapidated laundries and homes were taken. Just as it had been characterized at the turn of the century, a *Los Angeles Times* representative quoted an exterminator who insisted that the plague was foreign in its origins: "Los Angeles is exposed to three lines of attack—from the ground squirrels in the north, from the rats that may be imported from the Orient, and

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http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/FindingAids/dynaweb/calher/bubonic/figures/I0027339A.jpg (accessed September 5, 2008). These "Jap sections" existed on Central and E. First Streets.

[492] Ibid., http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/FindingAids/dynaweb/calher/bubonic/figures/I0027111A.jpg and http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/FindingAids/dynaweb/calher/bubonic/figures/I0027115A.jpg

from the rats that may be imported by train from Mexico. This epidemic is the first gun fired by the enemy."[493] Natalia Molina writes that "By tapping into preexisting medicalized racial discourses, the exterminator quoted in the *Times* reaffirmed the direct association between foreigners and disease."[494] Not only were foreigners directly associated with disease, but as the exterminator stated, the epidemic would be the "first gun fired by the enemy." The association between insects and militaristic symbolism would and could also be easily applied to epidemics.

The plague incident was also significant, according to Molina, for two specific reasons. First, it exposed the extent to which Mexicans were associated with environmental health concerns. Just as health officials believed that the contagion could conveniently be segregated spatially—tying together space and race—so too could they potentially pollute the environment with germs because of their "appalling[ly]" low hygiene standards.[495] Fear of those "polluting" Mexicans led to the creation of "Mexicans only" health clinics.[496] Second, in ways that were similar to the treatment of Japanese agricultural imports, Mexican laborers were permitted to leave the strictly regulated quarantine zone.[497] Molina points out that so long as laborers had permits and remained "under observation," they could exit and re-enter so-called

[493] Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 86.

[494] Ibid.

[495] Ibid., 90.

[496] Ibid., 88-89.

[497] Ibid., 85.

quarantined areas. Not only was this an attempt to "balance labor needs with public health standards," as she astutely notes, but the agreement to issue permits also called into question these officials' supposed commitment to defending the public's health instead of corporate wealth.[498] Like plant and even insect immigrants, by permitting laborers to pass through quarantined zones, we see how economics played a key role in migrant laborers' ability to move across boundaries.

Demand for Mexican labor increased dramatically after the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act. By the early 1920s, the Gentleman's Agreement, the Alien Land Laws, and the refusal to grant Japanese immigrants citizenship in *Ozawa v. United States* (1922), all combined to significantly slow Japanese migration. Referring to Japanese beetles in 1922, one *Los Angeles Times* reporter prophesized that the "wall against pests" would be soon strengthened.[499] Such attitudes could also be placed upon Japanese human immigrants. Even after immigration restriction, alien land laws, and denial of citizenship to aliens were being enforced by the early 1920s, the social and economic anxieties of nativists had not been calmed, especially those in California, who cast themselves as "victims" of unfair labor competition. It required the draconian Immigration Act of 1924 that terminated all Asian immigration to satisfy these nativists. Yet interestingly, employers faced labor shortages due to the mounting restrictions on Asian immigrants.[500] According to Molina, following 1924, Mexican immigration

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[498] Ibid., 85. Molina also added that "During the [typhus] plague epidemic, the compromise was similar: a stringent quarantine gave the appearance of increased public health precautions, but exemptions for laborers guaranteed the continued availability of a low-paid workforce" (85).

[499] "Wall Against Pests to be Strengthened," *Los Angeles Times,* November 26, 1922: IX4.

[500] Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 60.

posed a greater "threat" to the racial order via public health standards and medical discourse.[501]

Since her comparative study of Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans in Los Angeles through a public health lens is the first of its kind, this chapter seeks to further add to her important findings. Public health records strongly support Molina's claims that after the early 1930s, Mexicans were cast in an unfavorable light compared to Japanese Americans.[502] Indeed, Molina's insightful analysis illuminates how gradually and unevenly, the position of Japanese and Mexican immigrants began to simultaneously shift. Just as chapter two demonstrated the involvement of horticultural gatekeepers in regulating Mexican migration during the 1910s, we see the continued involvement of USDA officials in engaging in border patrol in the 1920s. Parallel to Molina's analysis, the policing of Mexican migration began to reach a feverish pitch by the late 1920s. In the *New York Times* article "The Insects that are 'Criminals,'" under the subheading "Stowaway Parasites," the author explicitly states that:

> Human immigrations must also be watched lest they smuggle into the United States plants and plant products known by the Government entomologists to be hosts for deadly insects. Avocados are found concealed in loaves of bread; cotton seed containing the devastating pink boll worm is found in the lining of clothing of Mexican laborers . . . Pillows and other bedding of

[501] Ibid., 119.

[502] See for example Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 128-129.

immigrants frequently contain products that carry foreign products that carry foreign insect pests and plant diseases.[503]

Again, just as we saw in the 1910s, the practice of disinfecting Mexican immigrants' personal effects and even the migrants themselves continued into the 1920s. Mexican border patrols were stationed at eight ports in order to "prevent the further invasion of the pink boll worm."[504] In 1929, the boll weevil was considered to be "the most destructive of this branch of the insect race"—one of the "ruling classes" or "aristocracy" in the hierarchical insect world.[505] The boll weevil "is by birth a Mexican and his folk emigrated to the country in the year 1892, crossing the Rio Grande near Brownsville, Tex. His tribe rapidly increased."[506] The late 1920s and 1930s hence signals a time period when anti-Mexican sentiment was directed both at human and insect immigrants and the diseases that may have traveled with them. During this very same time period, views of Japanese Americans metamorphosized from a "contagious yellow peril" into a "poisonous yellow peril."

Poisonous Pesticides and Japanese Farmers

Just as disease and the "contagious yellow peril" connected Japanese bodies to injurious insects and plants, poison in its manifold forms likewise bridged this so-called divide. The 1920s and the 1930s marks an era where discourse about a "poisonous yellow peril" began to strengthen. The debate centered on insecticides used on plants

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[503] "The Insects that are "Criminals,"" *New York Times,* November 27, 1927: XX8.

[504] Ibid.

[505] John Steven McGroarty, "Last and Greatest War: Mankind vs. Insects," *Los Angeles Times,* July 23, 1929: 2.

[506] Ibid.

and pests and those who consumed such produce. As discussed earlier in this chapter, beginning in 1919, the USDA joined forces with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture and waged an eradication campaign in an attempt to wipe out the Japanese beetle in that state, or at the very least, to contain the pest. Noting that the beetle is a "voracious" feeder that defoliates practically everything in its path, these Departments of Agriculture established miles of poison belts both within the infested area and outside of it to form a barrier similar to trenches in human warfare.[507] Their dangerous warfare against the Japanese beetle resulted in one death and about 2,000 thousand insecticide-related illnesses—called "devil's grippe" by physicians—in New Jersey in 1925.[508]

Politicians and a wider American public were just beginning to become aware of the dangers of pesticide residue in food in the 1920s.[509] Sharply increasing amounts of mass pesticide use characterized the modernization of American agriculture. Yet, with larger numbers of few corporations controlling more acreage, the demand for farm labor intensified. Linda Nash argues that unlike with most modernized agriculture, fruit and vegetable production still remained labor-intensive—that is, instead of using machines to harvest crops such as cauliflowers, lettuce, berries, and peaches, farm laborers had to

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[507] "Will Use Miles of Poison: Great Areas of New Jersey to be Made Deadly to Japanese Beetle," *New York Times,* March 26, 1919: 8.

[508] "Eating Sprayed Fruit Kills One and Makes 2,000 Ill in New Jersey," *New York Times,* August 21, 1925: 1.

[509] Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 153. This issue, according to Linda Nash, would not receive sustained attention until the 1950s, when United States Representative James Delaney held a series of hearings on the risks associated with even small quantities of organochlorine chemicals, such as DDT (153).

hand pick them.[510] Japanese bodies here symbolized not an organic entity, but one that is part human, part machine: "Their short, crooked legs seemed to carry them so close to the ground that they had scarcely to bend over."[511] Not surprisingly, Lye also sees how the renewal of the yeoman's mythic life would lead to alien land laws that would attempt to preserve "the human body from the deforming effects of industrial mechanization."[512] The Japanese body did not represent the mechanization of modern agriculture, but became in fact it its "negative substitute, not its logical end but an alternative incompletion."[513] Modernization via mechanization could be done without alienation and held the promise of "universal freedom from labor."[514] Just as many white agriculturalists feared the alienating effects of modernization—the negative substitute of the Japanese body and its poisonous effects—health officials progressively feared poisonous insecticides sprayed upon Japanese produce.

Was it merely coincidental that health authorities, alongside agricultural officials, grew increasingly aware of poisonous sprays that the Japanese gardeners allegedly used in the 1920s and particularly the 1930s, just when the modernization of agricultural technology intensified? I suggest that this was not simply coincidental, and that the growing presence of naturalized Japanese bodies posed a threat to modernization with its alienating—*and poisonous*—effects. Previous chapters in this

[510] Ibid., 130-132.

[511] Lye, *America's Asia,* 135.

[512] Ibid., 130.

[513] Ibid., 134.

[514] Ibid.

dissertation have focused on Japanese farmers, many of whom lived in rural areas. However, the large presence of Japanese gardeners in cities demonstrated their resilience within a flexible ethnic economy. Sociologist Ronald Tadao Tsukashima has commented on how issei gardeners were able to survive in this craft because they successfully transferred their rural skills to "urban horticulture"—that is, gardening.[515] Tsukashima calls them "bourgeois peasants" who earned over two dollars per day—a significant amount considering that day laborers in Los Angeles earned $1.75 and railroad hands who worked in the Pacific Northwest earned only $1.35 per day.[516] He also points out that it was a "one-man operation" that required little capital, few tools (since most equipment was provided by the owner), and generally, little English. Initial investments could be rapidly recovered and the turnaround of profits was fast compared to farming, making gardening a relatively low-risk profession.[517] And finally, because issei gardeners provided a luxury service and catered more to a well-to-do socioeconomic clientele, they managed to survive during the Great Depression. Other Japanese laborers and farmers actually turned to gardening during the Depression. Japanese gardeners, perhaps even more than issei farmers, symbolized an unstoppable economically efficient, mechanized Asiatic body due to an unprecedented demand for gardening during the 1920s.[518]

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[515] Ronald Tadao Tsukashima, "Background Resources of Issei Gardeners: Effects of Host Antagonism," *Turf and Garden*, vol. 43, no. 3 (March 1998): 6.

[516] Tsukashima unfortunately does not provide a more precise time period other than "around the 1900s."

[517] "Curb on Poisons Sought," *Los Angeles Times,* September 20, 1933: A1.

[518] Tsukashima, "Background Resources of Issei Gardeners," *Turf and Garden*: 6.

In the 1920s, health officials grew increasingly alarmed that Japanese agriculturalists poisoned their produce. In the 1922 annual health report, fruit and vegetable inspectors noted that:

> Poisonous sprays were used in excess by the celery and apple growers last fall. Lead arsenate was recommended to them by the entomologists as being the best spray to kill the worms. The growers evidently operated on the theory that if a little was good, a large dose would be much better. At least some of the celery and apples on the market proved to contain a dangerous amount . . . They immediately notified the Los Angeles County authorities and the State Department, who at once started to gather samples from all the celery patches in the County. Where a patch showed evidence of an excessive amount, that patch was quarantined. Our part of the work was to keep the poisoned celery out the markets of the city. . . .[519]

The following year, the Los Angeles city health department specified who these growers were: "[This year] there were . . . less number[s] of condemnations of poisoned celery . . . Evidently the Japanese growers were educated by their experience in court the previous year."[520] Dr. John L. Pomeroy, head of the Los Angeles County Health Department, also seized and then quarantined a supply of poisoned celery in June 1931. Health authorities alleged that a gardener, T. Yos[h]taki from Inglewood, grew celery using arsenic so concentrated that it could have caused "severe intestinal

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[519] L. M. Powers, M.D., Health Commissioner, *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California, For the Year Ended June 30, 1922*, 43.

[520] L. M. Powers, M.D., Health Commissioner, *Annual Report of Department of Health of the City of Los Angeles, California, For the Year Ended June 30, 1923*, 44.

disturbances" and even death.[521] Apparently, the federal food inspector in Minneapolis had notified the Inglewood food inspector that the celery had traces of "poison." According to the *Los Angeles Times* article, "Celery Covered with Poisoned Spray Seized," a "possible large scale food poisoning epidemic was averted yesterday by food inspectors working under the direction of Dr. J. L. Pomeroy, county health officer, with the seizure and quarantine of seven crates of celery asserted to have been sprayed with deadly arsenic insecticide."[522] Yoshtaki denied the accusations that he had poisoned the celery with arsenic spray, claiming that he had in fact used only lime and water.

Only two years later, in August of 1933, the Los Angeles County Health Department's food inspector, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, convicted M. Kumamoto of violating a county ordinance that regulated "the sale of produce on which poisonous insect spray has been used."[523] The article makes it clear that while Kumamoto, a Japanese gardener from Moneta, had not actually grown the "poisoned" cabbage, Kirkpatrick had stated that "cabbage not meeting the requirements of the law in regard to the use of the poisonous spray which subsequently was sold to the same restaurant was traced to the Japanese's gardens." Recently, some "arsenic-poisoned cabbage" caused fifty-eight people to become ill at the Ocean Park restaurant when they consumed cole slaw there. The next month, another article appeared stating that a grand total of sixty-five people had in fact been poisoned.[524] The article also publicized how

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[521] "Celery Covered with Poisoned Spray Seized," *Los Angeles Times,* June 29 1931: A9.

[522] Ibid.

[523] "Poison Spray Fine Imposed," *Los Angeles Times,* August 25, 1933: A18.

[524] "Food Poisons Seventeen: Montebello Convalescents Made Ill by Meal Eaten; Arsenic Spray Suspected," *Los Angeles Times,* September 19, 1933: A1.

on September 18, 1933, seventeen patients at the Los Angeles County Convalescent Home on 309 Beverly Boulevard in Montebello had been poisoned after consuming cabbage. The article stressed that "[a]mong the most seriously ill are several children" between three and five years old. Several of the patients were reported to be quite ill, although none were in critical condition. Dr. Pomeroy first heard of the "epidemic of illness" the Thursday before, but the health report had not reached him until that Saturday afternoon. Upon receiving the report, Chief Food Inspector Kirkpatrick again sprung into action, where he rushed to the Montebello convalescent home and requested the aid of Dr. W. L Halverson, the district health officer. The article then concluded that:

> Coincident to reports of food poisoning, M. Takaki, Japanese gardener of Torrance, yesterday was convicted of violation of the county ordinance prohibiting the spraying or treatment with poison solution of market produce grown for human or animal consumption. He was sentenced to a $50 fine following his trial before Justice of the Peace Bennis of Lomita township. Takaki was arrested following an investigation of the Ocean Park outbreak, authorities said.[525]

These two food poisoning outbreaks led Los Angeles health officers to suspect that Japanese agriculturalists—specifically, Japanese gardeners—systematically misused and abused insecticides. Such misuse and abuse of toxic chemicals greatly alarmed health officials because such incidents of food poisoning demonstrated that the most vulnerable populations were at risk.

[525] Ibid.: A1-A2.

Immediately following the outbreak in Montebello, Dr. Pomeroy requested federal regulation of poisonous sprays on produce. In addition to the seventeen reported to be suffering from food poisoning, an additional nine cases occurred elsewhere in Los Angeles County. Health officers had ordered laboratory tests, which showed the "percentage of .027 grains of arsenic per pound of cabbage among samples taken from the storeroom of the institution."[526] Out of the nine additional cases reported, health officials believed that four in Santa Monica are due to poisonous sprays used on spinach and summer squash. The remaining five cases occurred in the Torrance district due to spray on celery. A two year-old victim was reported to be in "serious condition." Kirkpatrick reported that

> during the last six weeks approximately 100 persons in various sections of the area served by the county health department have been poisoned as the result of the improper use of insecticides. In this course of time fourteen Japanese gardeners have either pleaded guilty to, or been convicted of violating the county ordinance regulating the use of poison sprays.[527]

Following these incidents, the officers condemned several hundred acres of the produce and ordered them "plowed under the ground." Dr. Pomeroy stated that not only would he seek the aid of federal agricultural authorities in enforcing more stringent legislation regarding poisonous insect sprays, but also push for the development of a

[526] "Curb on Poisons Sought: Pomeroy to Ask Federal Aid in Regulation of Use of Insecticides as Total of Victims Passes 100," *Los Angeles Times,* September 20, 1933: A1.

[527] Ibid.

"nonpoisonous spray."[528] Again, the following year, another Japanese gardener, K. Toda and his son, T. Toda, were fined $500 and $50, respectively.[529] K. Toda of Lomita, "failed to follow instructions of State inspectors regarding washing and stripping of his celery to make it safe for human consumption."[530] Probation officers informed Municipal Judge Ambrose that Toda's celery had .045 grains of arsenic trioxide per pound, while state law permits only .01 grain per pound. The inspectors who discovered the poison had informed Toda that he must wash and strip his celery according to their instructions, but unfortunately, Toda failed to follow them. Toda therefore had the choice to either pay the steep fine of $500 or spend six months in jail. No longer only a "contagious yellow peril," Japanese and Japanese Americans committed "crimes" by using toxic chemicals in their food.

Conclusion

Chapter three traced the materialization of the "poisonous yellow peril" in the 1920s and 1930s. The Japanese beetle followed a line of successive injurious insects and plant diseases imported from Japan, beginning in the 1890s. However, unlike its predecessors the use of pesticides gained prominence during this era of modern agriculture. We saw how the beetle successfully resisted a number of insecticides and displayed characteristics of voraciousness and fecundity. In line with fears of an exploding beetle population, many white Americans also opposed interracial sex and marriage due to fears of "degenerationism" and the passing of negative hereditary traits.

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[528] Ibid.

[529] "Heavy Fine Assessed in Poison Case: Japanese Gardener, Once Warned, to Pay $500 for Unsafe Celery Sold," *Los Angeles Times,* March 21, 1934: A5.

[530] Ibid.

Eugenicists like Fairchild promoted hybridity and foreign species so long as their beneficial attributes outweighed the negative ones.

The founding of the Japanese Hospital of Los Angeles signaled the ascent of the nisei and the preservation of an ethnic enclave. Excluded from mainstream hospitals, Japanese and Japanese Americans struggled to establish themselves through institutions on the strange new soil. However, health officials continued to respond in the form of restrictive and punitive measures. With the outbreak of the pneumonic and bubonic plague in 1923, Los Angeles health officials implemented rat eradication programs within minority immigrant communities through the lens of race and class. Following the 1924 Immigration Act, biological "Mexican dangers" began to replace a Japanese one as the former migrated to the United States in greater numbers. Yet Japanese immigrants bore the stigma of a new kind of "yellow peril": poison. Health officials systematically policed issei gardeners whom they alleged used excessive amounts of poison on their crops.

Chapter three illuminated how various forms of arsenic and other insecticides have been used both on Japanese beetles and on Japanese fruits and vegetables as well. Howard had once written that "All living nature is engaged in a series of gigantic battles."[531] Amongst destructive beetles and the issei, we have seen how hegemonic views of them transformed from "pests" into "enemies" via lethal pesticides. Well before the United States or even Japan entered World War II, the writer Newton Fuessle had dubbed the Japanese beetle the "real yellow peril" in 1923.[532]

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[531] Copeland, "Warring on Insects," *New York Times*, August 6, 1939: SM2.

[532] Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*, 94.

On the eve of the United States' entrance into World War II, with "national and natural enemies" or a "venomous yellow peril" already inside the gates and multiplying at an astonishing rate, government officials acted to contain, neutralize, and eventually reform Japanese Americans. Coates admitted that while the world wars have illustrated how enemies have been dehumanized through animalization, "a process that facilitates beastly behavior toward the animalized," he then goes on to write that "What this xenophobic mentality lacked . . . was an eco-jingoistic dimension. There was no backlash against German ivy in 1917. Nor were Washington's trademark Japanese cherry trees assailed after the attack on Pearl Harbor."[533] But in chapter four, we find out that Coates was wrong, for a group of vandals mysteriously attacked the Japanese cherry trees in Washington D. C. soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Since the 1890s, the "contagious yellow peril" and later on, the "poisonous yellow peril" set the stage for the fusion of natural and national enemies.

Chapter 4 explores how this synthesis into a single menace during the Second World War was also very much about the possibility of Japanese American rehabilitation, assimilation, and even conservation—a process which excluded the issei and the Japanese in Japan. Although the Japanese beetle symbolized "the real yellow peril" and all of its poisonous effects, as I suggested in this chapter, increasing emphasis on the dangers from Mexico materialized just when the "model minority" image as we now know it surfaced. Finally, using the Kudo family from Peru as a case study, the

[533] Ibid., 157.

final chapter reveals the extent to which liberal American politicians were willing to attempt to reform and conserve Japanese Peruvians. Chapter 4 ends with a brief discussion of United States' interests not only in Asia, but also in Latin America.

Chapter 4:

Yellow Peril No More?:

National and Naturalized Enemies During World War II

On December 15, 1941, only eight days after Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, anonymous vandals mysteriously attacked the infamous Japanese cherry trees that graced the Lincoln Mall in Washington D. C. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that those vandals who destroyed

> a number of the lovely Japanese cherry trees . . . had a strange idea of patriotism. It is the same type as that which considers it traitorous to listen to the music of Wagner, or who kick a dachshund puppy because the breed is supposed to be of German origin. Actually it goes back to ancient Egypt. An eastern audience turned so cold an ear to a revival of the tuneful "Mikado" that further performances were abandoned. Silly, isn't it?[534]

Interestingly, the article's author, Chapin Hall, called the attack on the cherry trees "a strange idea of patriotism." Even more important, Hall mused publicly that the destruction of the cherry trees could be deemed patriotic was "silly." Since the turn of the century, the Japanese cherry trees had been closely associated with the country from which they had been imported along with Japanese immigrants themselves. What had changed within half a century of the pathologization and racialization of the "yellow peril"?

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[534] Chapin Hall, "What Goes On?: Vandals Scored," *Los Angeles Times*, December 15, 1941: 11.

To be sure, longstanding beliefs since the turn of the twentieth century that Japanese plant immigrants deceptively concealed injurious insects and fatal diseases persisted and took on anti-patriotic overtones during the Second World War. Another *LA Times* writer noted that even the word "cherry tree" itself was almost synonymous with treachery:

> Remember the cherry trees the Japanese sent to Washington in commemoration of undying friendship? Fred J. Reynolds says that you can reverse the words "Cherry Tree" and come pretty close to making "Treachery" out of 'em . . .[535]

While some may have agreed with Hall that the attack on the cherry trees soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor was "silly" and dismissed it, there were many others who still viewed the trees not only as injurious pests, but enemy aliens. Handbills written in Japanese with Japanese cherry trees that "fluttered down" on Broadway Street aroused suspicion that Japanese fighter planes had dropped them down during a raid.[536] In fact, so strong was the sentiment against these cherry trees during World War II that a member of Congress, Representative Rankin, urged others to rename it: "it is time to call them 'Korean' rather than 'Japanese.' The Japanese stole them from the Koreans like they stole everything else . . . I suggest we call them by their right name."[537] Rankin's comments referred specifically to the Japanese cherry trees given by the Japanese government and planted in the nation's capital. While he did not protest the trees themselves, but their name, Rankin expressed anti-Japanese sentiments held by

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[535] Bill Henry, "By the Way, Odds and Ends," *Lo s Angeles Times*, January 17, 1942: A1.

[536] "Handbills in Japanese Appear During Alarm," *Los Angeles Times,* April 10, 1942: 7. F.B.I. translators revealed that they were merely "advertisements of "sushi"—Japanese rice cakes—and "bento"—Japanese box lunches, sold by the Sakurasuki, a Little Tokyo confectionary" (7).

[537] "Jap Cherry Trees Renamed 'Korean,'" *Los Angeles Times,* March 30, 1943: 1.

many—if not most—white Americans. Thus, in the first half of the 1940s, Japanese plant and insect immigrants were not only a "poisonous yellow peril" but a treacherous threat to the national economy, its agriculture and food supply, and "native" Americans themselves.

Chapter four examines how during the Second World War racial categories were reified at times, but also destroyed and remade through the lens of public health and the natural sciences. In viewing racial formation through such a lens, we see how the construction of Japanese Americans as worthy of conservation depended in large part on the creation of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans as vile disease-breeders. Japanese Americans incarceration on Indian reservations symbolizes and perhaps even facilitated their acceptance as "native" Americans worthy of conservation. Yet such liberalism—promoted expressly by liberal politicians—had their limits. Chapter four also highlights the role that the awareness of the destruction of total warfare played in the decision to drop the atomic bomb and the reconfiguration of Japanese Americans as citizens who could assimilate into American society. In its "progressive" attempts to include peoples of Japanese descent into the nation-state, we see through the eyes of a Japanese Peruvian family how their lives were uprooted as they were forcibly deported to a foreign land.

Poisoned Food & Sabotage

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, reports of suspected sabotage in foodstuffs grown by Japanese immigrants emerged. Although initially unconfirmed, health reports claimed that certain vegetables (mostly celery) were contaminated with

"poisonous sprays." Complaints of artichokes turning blue at the center were reported, later attributed to boiling of the vegetable. Robert M. Plunkett, the Food Poisoning Investigator, also noted other reports of glass in cans of seafood, but again, later said to be magnesium ammonium phosphate (struvite), dissolving in hot water after a few minutes. The Los Angeles County Health Department immediately prosecuted and convicted Japanese farmers who used "excessive" amounts of arsenic on their vegetables, "[in] cooperat[ion] with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in several cases of suspected sabotage."[538] The *Los Angeles Times* also reported similar accounts. On December 10, 1941, the same year the health reports came out, the *LA Times* reported that the City Health Board acknowledged at a press conference that "rumors are in circulation that Japanese truck gardeners may poison vegetables, but it did not take much stock in the report and contended that the ordinary washing of vegetables that should be done in any case would take care of the situation."[539]

Despite repeated reassurances that no instances of poisoning had occurred and that the washing of produce would render them safe, the California Department of Agriculture took every precaution to ensure that the public's health would not be threatened. Frank M. Kramer, the administrative assistant for the Department of Agriculture, supervised the testing of all produce: "No vegetables are allowed to be sold without testing. Our force of inspectors that has worked for seven years has been augmented. Despite the making of innumerable tests in fields and markets, nothing

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[538] J. L. Pomeroy, M. D., Health Officer, *Annual Report, Los Angeles County Health Department, 1941-1942*, 7-8.

[539] "Many Doctors Ready for Duty; Rumor Discounted," *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1941: 1D.

objectionable has been uncovered."[540] Officials had conducted "hundreds of chemical tests" that "revealed no poisoning in Japanese-grown vegetables."[541] The Japanese interviewed by an *LA Times* reporter declared that

> we naturally are going to take every possible precaution to prevent any polution[sic] of the produce we raise and sell. We know we are on the spot and that it would be suicidal for us to permit anything to "kill the goose that lays the golden egg."[542]

Although the *LA Times* in the 1940s rarely quoted Japanese and Japanese Americans, the issei were highly conscious of views of them as a "poisonous yellow peril," for since the 1920s, accusations that Japanese growers had poisoned their customers abounded. And once more, in spite of limited English sources from the issei, some records have documented that at least some Japanese agriculturalists had vehemently denied instances of poisoning. During World War II, however, even hints and rumors of food poisoning took on an increasingly ominous tone. It is significant, therefore, that the issei publicly voiced their awareness that the *pollution*—not poisoning—of their produce would "put them on the spot." Such rare instances raised important questions such as why Japanese growers would even poison their customers, intentionally or even unintentionally, and thus jeopardize their livelihood. If Japanese growers knew the risks and feared "killing the goose that laid the golden egg," then why did fears of their sabotage persist and take on an especially malicious turn by the end of 1941?

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[540] "Vegetables Found Free of Poisons," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1941: A2.

[541] Ibid.

[542] "Dearth Seen in Vegetables: Expected Black-outs May Interfere with Deliveries to Market ," *Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1941: 16.

Citing Asian Americanist Bob Kumamoto, Lye points out that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had already, in early 1941, compiled a list of some 2,000 suspects. Lye's observation revealed the extent to which Japanese agriculturalists had been singled out. Group A, the "most dangerous category," consisted of produce distributors, fishermen, farmers, and Buddhist and Shinto priests, and influential businessmen. In Los Angles, it is noteworthy that *every* prominent Japanese distributor and grower fell into this most dangerous category, Group A. In light of the historical and longstanding fears of a pathologized and ecologically dangerous "yellow peril," writers such as Blayney Matthews claimed that

> The [American] housewife might become the object of a saboteur's attack just as readily as an armament plant. The vegetables, meats, groceries, and milk she purchases may be contaminated just as the water supply of the community in which she lives may be polluted . . . What is to prevent Japanese spies, in their fanatical zeal, from striking a blow for their Emperor by excessively dusting vegetables with arsenic?[543]

In addition to raising the specter of what Lye terms the "sexualization of the bogey of racial integration"—or an attack on white womanhood—Blayney's novel attests the extent to which the "poisonous yellow peril" had infiltrated the popular imagination. And unlike previous decades, the "poisonous yellow peril" took on elements of not simply pests, but enemy aliens who were so fanatically pro-Japanese that they would excessively dust vegetables with arsenic.

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[543] Colleen Lye, *America's Asia: Racial Form and American Literature, 1893-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 106.

Chapter two demonstrated that immediately following World War I, fears over food controlled by enemy aliens were directed at Japanese fishermen, despite the fact that Japan had been the United States' ally during this time period. In a California State Board of Control Report, *California and the Oriental*, some 2,000 Japanese fishermen who resided in Terminal Island shantytowns in the San Pedro Bay in particular concerned officials. In 1935, California legislators attempted to amend the California Fish and Game Code in effort to exclude Japanese fishermen, but their proposal was eventually dropped.[544] Kumamoto accurately describes the Japanese community as the most misunderstood and mistreated by counterintelligence agents during the Second World War.[545] By the 1940s, they consisted of mostly elderly issei who turned primarily to fishing as a means of survival. The Japanese on Terminal Island were not only isolated from mainstream American society, but also from Japanese and Japanese American communities on the mainland. Japanese immigrants who traveled to the Terminal Island settled there because the land was relatively cheap. Yet because Terminal Island was adjacent to the United States naval base where warships were being constructed, the Naval Intelligence carefully monitored Japanese Terminal Islanders. The FBI had carefully monitored the ships manned by "these aliens," equipped with radios that they supposedly used to communicate with enemy submarines and other craft out at sea.[546] Moreover, J. Edgar Hoover argued that Japanese fishermen were well-acquainted with the Pacific Coast since they frequented the area on boat,

[544] Ibid., 276.

[545] Bob Kumamoto, "The Search for Spies: American Counterintelligence and the Japanese American Community, 1931-1942," *Amerasia Journal* 6(2): 59.

[546] Ibid.

which they presumably could easily adapted as patrol boats, mine layers, and other such spy craft. While all persons of Japanese descent were suspect, Terminal Islanders in particular were the most suspect and information was collected on them even before the U.S. went to war:

> A mass of data collected during recent months by Dies committee agents, it was said, includes much information about Japanese fishing boats and the activity of the Japanese colony at Terminal Island.[547]

Kumamoto notes that since the 1920s, fishing interests had protested competition from Japanese fishermen. This fear of economic competition gave way to fear of wartime subversion.[548]

Wartime hysteria, combined with the longstanding fears of the "contagious yellow peril," led to at least one report that claimed that the Japanese would spread highly contagious diseases. On October 6, 1941, readers of the *Los Angeles Times* read the following report:

> The data which have been suppressed, has a direct bearing on the activities of Japanese in Los Angeles. Equipment of Japanese "fishing boats" at Terminal Island, including depth-registering mechanism; plots to spread highly contagious diseases by Japanese "suicide troops," teachings of instructors at Japanese schools in this country; organization of anti-American groups by

[547] Warren B. Francis, "Coast Spy Data to be Aired," *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1941: 18.

[548] Kumamoto, "The Search for Spies," *Amerasia*: 59.

Japanese students in California universities and similar activities have been checked by Federal authorities.[549]

While the article does not explicitly state whether or not these "suicide troops" are the issei or nisei in the United States, every other act of potential sabotage listed concerns Japanese American institutions and directly references Japanese Americans. And while at times distinctions between the Japanese in America were made from the Japanese in Japan, almost always these distinctions were acknowledged only in regards to the second-generation nisei. Both Japanese fishing boats at Terminal island and Japanese "suicide troops" could therefore constitute an internal army ready at any moment to wage maritime and biological warfare.

Local and government officials remained cautious, even forbidding the sale of Japanese produce. Despite the fact that Japanese-grown produce had not been poisoned, "No alien Japanese vegetables can now be marketed."[550] The Associated Produce Dealers and Brokers secretary, Homer A. Harris, reiterated that "At present, no transactions are being made and none are legal with alien Japanese. Until the Treasury Department orders otherwise this policy will be enforced. We have no idea when vegetables now on farms of alien Japanese can be taken to market."[551] Likewise, the Associated Produce Dealers also issued the following statement: "[N]o authenticated case of spray residue poisoning has ever occurred in Los Angeles despite rumors to the

[549] "Test Looms in Congress on Japan Spy Dangers," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1941: 4.

[550] "Vegetables Found Free of Poisons," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1941: A2.

[551] Ibid.

contrary."[552] Yet still, "individuals" handed out cards warning the public "not to trade in Japanese stores due to the possibility of food poisoning," but added that "Even a casual examination will reveal most poison sprays. In fact, the really dangerous sprays actually kill the tissues of vegetables to which they are applied. We are certain that no deliberate poisoning can result even if the Japanese attempt it."[553] Interestingly, even as local officials denied any instances of poisoning, they still conducted hundreds of tests to ensure the food supply remained safe:

> Rumors of possible sabotage of California vegetables through poisoning or other means were branded as "simply malicious and unfounded." But, just to be on the safe side, it was learned, more than 2000 samples of Japanese-grown produce have been chemically analyzed "without discovering anything wrong."[554]

It was likely that officials repeatedly denied food poisonings in the *LA Times* even as the California Department of Agriculture conducted hundreds—or thousands—of tests on food grown by the issei because they feared such rumors could hurt California's agricultural industry even during a time of war.

Concerns over poisoned produce were raised almost always alongside concerns over food shortages. While no instances of food poisoning had occurred, Japanese produce could not only no longer be marketed but "alien custodians" began to take control of Japanese ranches: "'Within a week," it was predicted by an American

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[552] "Dearth Seen in Vegetables," *Los Angeles Times,* December 9, 1941: 16.

[553] Ibid.

[554] "Vegetables Found Free of Poisons": A2.

grower, "most of the alien growers will be out of the picture . . ."[555] At the same time, the public was told that "But except for bunch vegetables such as carrots, beets and turnips, no serious shortage has developed here."[556] By December 11, thirty-five "alien Japanese vegetable produce houses" were closed in three main local vegetable marts located on Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Streets. The public, however, was reassured that "these closings . . . present no threat to the distribution of vegetables because there are 250 other houses, mostly American-controlled, to handle the closed houses' produce."[557] The Second World War and internment finally uncovered the fact that many native-born white Americans had in fact engaged in agriculture in numbers that rivaled Japanese Americans:

> "It is time for Los Angeles to realize," said an Associated Produce Dealers' official, "that in this area there is a larger percentage of native-born white Americans jobbing vegetables than in any other part of the country. A varied foreign element is in charge in some other places . . ."[558]

The Western Growers and Shippers Association also insisted between February and December of 1942 that the Japanese growers did not constitute a major force in the California produce business. According to a newsletter published by the association, the issei operated only a tiny fraction of the total farms in the state, and their labor force was also minor in numbers. In October of 1942, Chester Moore, the secretary manager

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[555] Ibid.

[556] Ibid.

[557] Ibid.

[558] Ibid.

for the association, declared that they faced "practically no competition from the Japanese . . . We represent large growers and shippers. The competitive factor was exceedingly small."[559] While Lye and other scholars cannot say for certain how sincere Moore's statement really was, his declaration that "The Japanese are small growers and shippers" finally revealed what most Japanese agriculturalists had always been: small agriculturalists dwarfed by large corporations.[560] While previously depicted as having a monopolistic stranglehold on the agricultural industry despite Alien Land Laws, now suddenly and ironically, their "smallness" became a condition for their forcible relocation.[561]

Certainly, the reversal of the historical perception of Japanese agriculturalists as monopoly agriculturalists was by no means universal. For example, on the same page where the use of poisonous sprays on Japanese produce was discussed, the problem of possible food shortages was also raised:

> Due to expected black-outs in this area, Southland housewives may be unable to procure fresh vegetables, it was disclosed yesterday. This problem and that resulting from the freezing of credits are creating a serious situation for Japanese who grow at least 80 per cent of Southern California's "salad crop."[562]

The California State Department of Agriculture calculated that Japanese agriculturalists grew approximately forty percent of all of California's vegetable crops, arguing that any

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[559] Lye, *America's Asia*, 136.

[560] Ibid., 128.

[561] Ibid., 138.

[562] "Dearth Seen in Vegetables," *LA Times*: 16.

interruption to Japanese agricultural production could prove detrimental to national interests. An article in the *Nation* cited that

> From 30 to 40 per cent of California's truck gardening is in Japanese hands, and in some parts of the state the raising of green vegetables is virtually a Japanese monopoly, with stores and markets wholly dependent on their production. Important at any time, the yield of the Japanese truck farms is vital with the sudden quartering of something like half a million troops in California. Nor is it possible to supplant these Japanese farmers in a hurry.[563]

Ultimately, however, perceptions of Japanese growers as economically inconsequential held sway, signaling the end of the historical view of them as monopoly agriculturalists, and eventually as a "contagious yellow peril" as well.

In *America's Asia*, Lye proposes an important reason why views of Japanese Americans began to shift by the Second World War. She compares earlier Japanese immigrant laborers to "Okies," or Dust Bowl migrants. While initially, Okies appeared to fall into the same cycle their Asian predecessors had to contend with, they met with a different fate. Okies were not only undeniably American and thus could not be deported, but also refugees and small landowners or farm laborers recognizable in the early American narrative.[564] The Okie finally humanized the migrant worker, and according to Lye, during the New Deal, the Asiatic became its ancestor.[565]

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[563] Lye, *America's Asia*, 137.

[564] Ibid., 152.

[565] Ibid., 152-153.

One key effect of a gradual acceptance of Japanese Americans was the recognition, for the first time ever, that they were a significant population worthy of documentary representation. Ansel Adams' photography, for example, seemed to depict Japanese Americans in "secret harmony" with their surroundings. Such images that depicted Japanese Americans as noble survivors also served to visually indigenize them as Californians.[566]

Asian Americanist Karen Ishizuka has also compared and contrasted the forced encampment of American Indians to that of Japanese Americans. The War Relocation Authority (WRA) had constructed a number of camps on Indian lands. For example, Gila River had been constructed on the Gila River Indian community in the state of Arizona. Other internment camps on Indian land included Minidoka in Idaho, Heart Mountain in Wyoming, and Poston in Arizona. Ishizuka points out that the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) first administered Poston.[567]

Already well-seasoned in "the bureaucracy of colonization," the OIA worked closely with the WRA to establish and maintain the internment camps. Dillon S. Myer, director of the WRA from 1942 to 1946 also served as director of the OIA in 1950. Biographer Richard Drinnon also pointed out the similarities between the government's handling of American Indians to that of Japanese Americans. Drinnon quotes Francis Frederick in his comparison of the two groups: "Indian Service for ten years and like all of those guys feels that there are only two kinds of Indians—gooduns and baduns—

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[566] Ibid., 202.

[567] Karen L. Ishizuka, *Lost & Found: Reclaiming the Japanese American Incarceration* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 147.

and feels that Japs are Indians."[568] Ishizuka believes that the "indoctrination to 'civilize' the Indians was used also to 'Americanize' the Japanese Americans."[569]

Examining how the same health officials who managed internment camps also managed Indians uncovers an important perspective through a hegemonic medical gaze. It reveals not only how OIA officials managed both racial groups in the same vicinity, but also the changing views of government medical personnel of Japanese bodies. No longer a "contagious yellow peril," while still at times a "poisonous" one, Japanese bodies gradually became treatable and assimilable like their Indian counterparts.

For example, in Poston, Arizona, where some 20,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were incarcerated, the District Medical Director, Dr. Ralph B. Snavely, considered placing Japanese evacuees who suffered from tuberculosis at the Indian Service Hospital in Yuma, but remained unsure if it was large enough to house tuberculosis patients due to its small size.[570] He noted in 1942 that

> It appears that tuberculosis among the Japanese is a serious problem, the rate being almost as high as for Indians. In 1941, the case rate, according to reports made to the State Department of Health, was in the neighborhood of 200 per 100,000. On this basis we would expect about 40 new cases per year in a 20,000 population group. We have not yet had time to think out all the details of

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[568] Ibid., 147-148.

[569] Ibid., 148.

[570] Letter to Dr. G. D. Carlyle Thompson, Regional Medical Officer, from Ralph B. Snavely, District Medical Director, May 28, 1942, in RG 75, Box 461, Laguna Niguel, National Archives and Records Administration, (NALN). Snavely graduated from the College of Medical Evangelists in 1935, and then interned at Los Angeles County General Hospital for two years thereafter. He also served as instructor of surgery, then attending staff at White Memorial Hospital (Letter to Ralph B. Snavely, District Medical Director, from George Kawaichi, M. D., July 8, 1943, in RG 75, Box 461, Poston, Arizona, NALN).

> care for tuberculosis patients, but I am keeping in mind the possibility of using the Yuma hospital for that purpose.[571]

It appears that Snavely resolved the issue by placing these Japanese patients at the Indian Service Sanatorium, located on 1550 E. Indian School Road: "There are a number of Japanese patients at the Indian Service Sanatorium in Phoenix . . . located at 1150 E. Indian School Road, and Dr. A. J. Wheeler is the superintendent."[572] These archival records show how the OIA managed both Indians and Japanese Americans, as well as how they cared for these two populations in the very same health care facilities. Focusing on how Indian health officials managed Japanese American bodies illustrates how many United States government officials' attitudes began to shift by the time the U. S. entered World War II.

The response on the part of these OIA health officials to tuberculosis outbreaks throughout Poston provides strong evidence of this shift. On June 24, 1942, District Medical Director Snavely wrote that:

> I learned at that time that there were a few cases of tuberculosis in the camp but did not consider this fact of any unusual significance inasmuch as the evacuees had already been located there about a month, and, on the basis of reports previously furnished to me by the State Department of Health in California, I

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[571] Letter to Dr. J. R. McGibony, Director of Health, from Ralph B. Snavely, District Medical Director, San Francisco, California, April 16, 1942, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN.

[572] Letter to Miss Ruth N. Crawford from Ralph B. Snavely, District Medical Director, Albuquerque, N. M., August 24, 1943, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN. Another source also states that "Mr. Sakamoto will tell of his trip to the Indian Sanatorium in Phoenix on Wednesday, December 15, and what he found the patients were doing to hasten their recovery. Investigative visits are being made to every diagnosed case of tuberculosis. The name and age of every family contact are being secured and placed in a file for follow-up" (Letter to Dr. A. Pressman, Director of Health & Sanitation from Elma Rood, Supervisor, Public Health Nursing, Poston, Arizona, December 16, 1943, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN).

knew that we would be faced with a relatively high number of new cases of tuberculosis.[573]

Snavely and the other medical practitioners at Poston knew of the high tuberculosis rates, which in some cases documented that Japanese and Japanese Americans had this disease twice as often as "all races." In 1940 and 1941, tuberculosis rates for Japanese Americans were 168.6 and 227.3, respectively. Poston officials remained deeply concerned over such high rates, considering that for "all races," the rates were 111.7 and 106.7 during those same years.[574] Health officials thus immediately moved to implement prophylactic and educational measures to stop the spread of tuberculosis. One measure they took included showing videos that helped educate the incarcerated Japanese Americans about how to prevent the spread of and treat tuberculosis. Poston officials showed a video titled "Another to Conquer" which featured an "Indian tribe and tells how one of their leaders helped to save his people from an old enemy, tuberculosis."[575] In "Another to Conquer," the government doctor inspects the students at the Indian school. When he tested Robert, the physician saw that his arm became red. When Don, Robert's friend, also becomes ill, his family takes him to the hospital. The doctor tests the entire family, discovering that the grandfather, "Slow Talker," also has tuberculosis:

It was very hard for "Slow Talker" to decide to stay at the hospital and not go back to his people. But he sees that Robert is now well, and he decides to stay

[573] W. T. Harrison, Senior Surgeon, Director, District No. 5, to Ralph B. Snavely, District Medical Director, San Francisco, California, June 24, 1942, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN

[574] "Morbidity and Mortality, California, All Races and Japanese," 1940 and 1941: 1, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN. These rates were per 100,000 population.

[575] "Another to Conquer (A synopsis of the film on tuberculosis," RG 75, in Box 461, NALN

and in this way protect his people . . . He will be the example for his people of the best way to fight and overcome their odl [sic] enemy tuberculosis.[576]

In showing "Another to Conquer" to Japanese Americans at Poston along with Japanese translations of the video, OIA officials sought to encourage its audience to seek treatment. And very likely, they believed that Japanese Americans could relate to such a video about a minority population who "lived in the desert country" and "fought all their natural enemies, storms and wild animals, and always won." Prior to the Second World War, Japanese immigrants in particular were perceived as a "contagious and poisonous yellow peril" that was largely excluded from mainstream public health policies and medical institutions. In fact, whenever California health officials paid attention to this population, it was almost always because they feared they posed a menace to the public's health. Now, however, the OIA attempted to provide health care for this community and implemented health measures to protect Japanese Americans.

Lye views the 1940s as a time period in which the nisei in particular were liberated from "doubt, suspicion, hatred, and distrust."[577] Paradoxically, the incarceration of Japanese Americans and the violation of their civil rights served as a catalyst for the newly emerging view of them as model Americans. This was a view shared not only by a small few, but by liberal government officials and the War Relocation Authority personnel. At Poston, Edna A. Gerken, Supervisor of Health Education at the United States Indian Service, noted that "It is not anticipated that there will be any problem of sanitation since Japanese people are known to take pride in

[576] Ibid., 2.

[577] Lye, *America's Asia*, 200.

keeping their premises clean."[578] Contrary to historically dominant perceptions of Japanese immigrants as filthy disease-breeders who lived in unsanitary shacks on acres of prosperous lands, now Japanese Americans were represented as having an express desire to maintain sanitary living conditions. Like those who worked for the Indian Service sought to "civilize" and indoctrinate the Indians, so too did they attempt to "Americanize" Japanese and especially Japanese Americans.[579]

By placing both American Indians and Japanese Americans under the jurisdiction of the OIA, we see how not only did these government officials group them together as minority populations, but also how such an intimate association helped transform images of Japanese Americans into potential "native" Americans. In sharing the same medical facilities in camps such as Poston, it served to symbolize how racialized Japanese bodies could also be transformed into "native" Americans and thus finally become "real Americans." This changing image becomes overtly salient when compared to how southern California health officials responded to and treated Mexicans and Mexican Americans whom they believed carried and spread tuberculosis.

The "Tuberculosis Problem" & the "Mexican Problem"

Changing views of Mexican immigrants were shaped by comparisons to Japanese and Japanese Americans already made during the 1930s.[580] The few reports on Japanese and Chinese Americans noted their low rates of communicable diseases.

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[578] Memorandum to Mr. Head through Miss Findley, Nutrition of Infants and Young Children at Poston, from Edna A. Gerken, Supervisor of Health Education, United States Indian Service, September 15, 1942: 6, in RG 75, Box 461, NALN.

[579] Ishizuka, *Lost & Found*, 148.

[580] Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 128.

Due to the Alien Land Laws and immigration restriction passed during the 1920s, Japanese Americans were no longer, according to Molina, "a visible threat."[581] Since Mexicans could still migrate to the United States, they presumably posed a health threat to the general populace. Molina observes that images of disease-breeding Mexicans who infected their families and larger social networks gradually replaced the previous image of the "inassimilable Mexican."[582] During the Great Depression, such images took on an especially ominous tone.

Comparing and contrasting health officials' reaction to Mexican and Japanese populations highlighted the polyvalent mobilities of racisms in terms of its fluidity. Racial formation and medicalized nativism depended upon the juxtaposition of different racial minorities at certain key historical moments. While second-generation Japanese Americans could be "Americanized," biologically-based hegemonic representations increasingly depicted Mexican immigrants and even Mexican Americans as a grave health menace by the mid-1920s. Molina stresses the key role that health officials played—making "unprecedented contributions"—to the newly emerging perception of them as an undesirable immigrant group.[583] Racist public health discourse operated in tandem with other institutions to not only racialize but also criminalize Mexicans. In 1920, health reports documented that Mexicans in the county of Los Angeles died at a rate twice that of the rest of the population.[584] The Director of California's Bureau of

[581] Ibid., 129.

[582] Ibid., 125.

[583] Ibid., 120.

[584] Ibid., 121.

Tuberculosis, Edythe Tate-Thompson, conducted a study of the health of Mexicans in Los Angeles from 1922 to 1924. When she noted the high rates of tuberculosis amongst Mexicans, she also claimed that they presented a "drain" on the governments' budgets.[585] Frequently ignoring the direct link between poverty and tuberculosis, health officials such as Tate-Thompson chose instead to place the blame on minorities themselves, pointing to poor eating habits and living conditions, as well as their tendency to not follow health codes.

Rather than considering the central role language barriers played in obstructing and fears of being perceived as "overusing" the health care system, the press and health officials depicted Mexicans as recalcitrant. In 1934, a judge ruled to deport two Mexican immigrant girls, Dolores and Teresa Marquez, who were not U. S. citizens from Culver City because they were presumably members of a religious cult that forbade medical aid and thus refused treatment for tuberculosis.[586] In another case, a young Mexican woman had a case of active pulmonary tuberculosis and according to a 1937-1938 Los Angeles County Department of Health Report "evaded an order of isolation."[587] Los Angeles County health officials alleged the following:

> This case is especially interesting in that this woman is the daughter of a man who was one of the first cases placed in isolation for tuberculosis by the County Health Department. The family history shows the father died of tuberculosis, a younger sister died of the same disease, a brother is now under County care in

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[585] Ibid., 120.

[586] "Judge Seeks Cult Ouster," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1934: A5.

[587] J. L. Pomeroy, M. D., Health Officer, *Annual Report of the Health Department of Los Angeles County, Year Ended June 30, 1938*, 38.

> Olive View Sanatorium, and we know of others of the children who are arrested cases. The family has always been non-cooperative, and refused to comply with any rules, regulations or laws.[588]

This young woman was eventually arrested and found guilty, but when she arrived at the sanatorium, they discovered that she was pregnant from an affair with a married man. This "male friend called upon her" at the sanatorium, "loaded her into an automobile, and she disappeared."[589] These "recalcitrant, tubercular" Mexicans posed a menace to the larger public because, according to these health officials, Mexican families were infected earlier and more intensively.[590] They cited statistics that claimed that whereas seven or eight percent of the population was Mexican, approximately 23 percent of all active tuberculosis cases occurred amongst Mexicans "consistently during the past 5 years."[591]

Despite acknowledging the role that poverty played in helping spread tuberculosis, the health department was far more concerned with the financial burden of providing care for Mexicans in the county. One report read that "It can no longer be denied that poverty is a major contributing factor to the incidence of tuberculosis."[592] However, despite the high rates of tuberculosis for poor minority communities, the Board of Health Commissioners intentionally excluded non-citizens. Mexican, African, and Asian American children did not fully benefit from the limited allocated funding for

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[588] Ibid.

[589] Ibid.

[590] Ibid., 11.

[591] Ibid., 63.

[592] Ibid., 5.

tuberculosis detection.[593] Moreover, on the following page of the same report, they expressed concern for the public's health over their desire to care for these impoverished ill individuals: "In the development of the hospital program it is clear that the sole motivating factor was not the desire of society to care for the sick. The primary purpose and justification for the expenditures of such large sums of public money is the protection of the public health through the segregation of large numbers of disease spreaders."[594] The health department made no effort to conceal who these "disease spreaders" that needed to be segregated were:

> When it is considered how small a per cent of the expense resulting from this situation is borne by Mexican people directly or indirectly, we are justified in our close and sometimes arbitrary supervision of Mexicans with tuberculosis in a communicable state.[595]

This "Mexican tuberculosis problem," as they called it, continued into the 1940s with a great number of new cases discovered amongst Mexicans.[596] The rhetoric employed in these health reports clearly conveyed that these officials viewed the "tuberculosis problem" as the "Mexican problem." Such depictions of Mexican immigrants were far

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[593] Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 161.

[594] Pomeroy, *Annual Report of the Health Department of Los Angeles County, Year Ended June 30, 1938*, 6.

[595] Ibid., 63.

[596] J. L. Pomeroy, M. D., Health Officer, *Annual Report of the Health Department of Los Angeles County, Year Ended June 30, 1940*, 57.

from benign. Lawmakers and well-known eugenicists drew upon such public health data when making anti-immigrant arguments.[597]

A new "contagious brown peril" not only co-existed with a "yellow peril," but was in fact during key historical episodes, its necessary opposite. Unlike previous decades, "race" and "alien" had not been synonymous with "Mexican."[598] Along with anxieties over providing health care for Mexicans during the Depression, international events during World War II altered images of Japanese Americans. Whereas disease was used to criminalize Mexicans—making them subject to deportations—quarantine in the form of internment camps actually served to assimilate Japanese Americans.

Recall in the previous chapter that the Japanese beetle population had mushroomed so much that it covered one-half square mile in New Jersey in 1916 to about 213 square miles in 1921 and then to approximately 500 square miles between 1924-1925. Beginning in 1921, the Federal Japanese beetle quarantine was implemented, in order to retard the spread of the pest, including the inspection, certification, and treatment of millions of agricultural products coming through and from nurseries, farms, and greenhouses.[599] By the end of 1927, the beetle population had spread over the entire state of New Jersey and the state repealed its quarantine upon the beetle. Similar to that of internment, state officials in New Jersey recognized there

[597] Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?*, 161.

[598] Ibid., 129.

[599] Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, "Japanese Beetle Quarantine," History of Rutgers' Department of Entomology-Part 25 http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~insects/jb.htm (Accessed December 26, 2008).

was no way they could completely eradicate the Japanese beetle and instead turned to methods that would help them manage the beetle population.

Internment therefore did not level the playing field; nor did it erase biological nativism either in medicine or the natural sciences. Rather, incarceration served as a new mechanism of control—a constant correctional supervision that would remake second-generation Japanese Americans into viable citizen-subjects. This prison industrial complex in actuality served to continue to police Japanese and Japanese Americans in a more effective and efficient manner.[600] The ever-present eye of the Panopticon installed a form of permanent surveillance of this community through the reformation of prisoners and the treatment of patients.[601] The incarceration of Japanese Americans thus served to systematically inoculate them both literally and figuratively and to neutralize the "poisonous yellow peril," rendering them as nonthreatening to the native biota.

Human Conservation

Previously viewed as a threat to the native biota, internment itself could also have been an act of conservation. The U. S. government consciously chose to depict incarceration as a story of human conservation, which was best exemplified in the title of their report on wartime activities, *A Story of Human Conservation* (1946). Lye notes that in its institutional history, there were various forms of material overlap between

[600] I would like to thank Juliana Pegues for first mentioning the idea of the link between the prison industrial complex and Japanese American internment.

[601] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 205.

conservationism and internment under the Roosevelt administration.[602] Dillon S. Myer, who eventually became director of the War Relocation Authority, was once an administrator for the Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment Administration under the umbrella of the Soil Conservation Service. Richard Drinnon himself even stated that "for the public servants who went from land conservation to people keeping, administration was administration."[603]

The connection between conservation and Japanese Americans was by no means new. The 1890s—when notions of a "contagious yellow peril" first emerged—generated a conservationist movement due to concerns over western economic growth and water development specifically.[604] The Great Depression, particularly in the 1930s, marks an important decade where concerns over Japanese agriculturalists' depletion of the soil arose. Under the supervision of R. L Adams, the California Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Administration, the environmental effects of tenancy were examined.[605] As researchers studied the "crop producing power" of the state, they associated farm tenancy to poor soil conservation practices. They noted that due to high rental prices and tenant mobility, beneficial practices such as cover cropping or crop rotation were not followed. The leading group of these "bad environmental practices"

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[602] Lye, *America's Asia,* 159. The first director of the War Relocation Authority (WRA), Milton Eisenhower, formerly directed the Office of Land-Use Coordination and helped successfully negotiate the Mount Weather Agreement (159).

[603] Ibid.

[604] Ibid., 158.

[605] Ibid., 132.

was Japanese farmers since they engaged in truck farming in great numbers and hence tended to be tenants. One report by William Salvage, claimed that

> While they [Japanese farmers] fertilize heavily and obtain excellent crops they concentrate on vegetable crops and so do not have a diversified rotation program . . . Such programs are mining the land and will eventually run the natural fertility down and increase the disease problems of the crop used most often.[606]

Salvage, one of Adams' students, had hoped to promote "definite conservation programs" in his report, although he himself did not recommend any specific alternative practices.[607] Yet clearly, such studies directly linked the "Japanese problem" via farm tenancy to poor environmental practices and damage to the native biota.

Whereas popular images of the Japanese once depicted them as "insatiably greedy" agriculturalists who saw the land only for its productive capabilities—as opposed to the native son who presumably viewed the land in more extra-economic and sentimental ways—during the Great Depression, views of Japanese began to change.[608] During the New Deal administration, Japanese Americans became famed agriculturalists who could miraculously reclaim the land, since they had historically turned "wastelands" into arable fields.[609] Ironically, the War Relocation Authority had to rebut previous accusations that Japanese agriculturalists damaged the environment. Having worked for years in the Department of Agriculture, Myer testified that "I

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[606] Ibid.

[607] Ibid., 133.

[608] Ibid., 119, 161.

[609] Ibid., 161.

personally know something about soil conservation and I know these people bought as much fertilizer as the average California farmer."[610] *Myths and Facts about Japanese Americans*, a public relations pamphlet published by the WRA in 1945, reiterated the claim that these agriculturalists not only did *not* displace whites, but also did not drain the soil of its nutrients. Lye argues that this perception of Japanese Americans as "environmentally damaging—and damaged—pointed to another sense in which they would figure as the WRA's targets of reform, not the agents of its mission."[611] While for the WRA, it was *A Story of Human Conservation* of the Japanese population in America, the same could not be said of the issei, Japanese in Japan, and parts of Latin America.

Annihilating National Enemies

In an increasingly borderless global economy, World War II marks not only the triumph of the "war of liberation for the Nisei," but also the expansion of United States' interests in the Asia-Pacific, as well as Latin America.[612] Prior to the Second World War, U.S. racial measures that policed Asians within its borders conflicted sharply with its economic interests throughout the Pacific Islands and East Asia. Since the Asiatic and the Mexican signified the ascension of globalization, we witnessed how these tensions played out in both environmental and public health communities. There can be no more potent an image or fear than invisible pathogens and miniscule injurious insects associated with their immigrant counterparts. U. S. economic expansion into the

[610] Ibid.

[611] Ibid.

[612] Ibid., 202-203.

Asian frontier offered what Lye terms "split alternatives": one where the entire world would become American and the other where there would be "an apocalyptic clash of civilizations."[613]

These "split alternatives" begin to explain why the U.S. waged total warfare on the Japanese population in Japan. Magazine cartoons and newspaper articles repeatedly associated the Japanese with insects. While at least one scholar, Edmund P. Russell, has made the direct connection between popular images of Japanese as insects and total warfare during World War II, except for Philip Pauly, no other scholar to my knowledge has explicitly linked how views of Japanese insect immigrants, along with pathogens, have evolved from the 1890s to 1945. In addition to recognizing the Japanese in America, particularly Japanese Americans, as targets of conservation, the U. S. began to focus instead on the increasing biological dangers from Japan. The very technology used to wage war against Japanese beetles in the United States was diverted to fight the war on human enemies. In "All-Out Campaign is Needed to Defeat Japanese Beetles," an article casually noted that

> The amateur gardener's year is sharply divided into two parts: that delightfully carefree (in retrospect) season before Japanese beetles come out of the ground—and the rest of the Summer. This year beetles were reported devouring roses on a New York penthouse terrace as early as June 13, and it will probably be the end of October before the last few stragglers disappear, even though the peak period will have passed by mid-August. Meanwhile, gardeners must continue to

[613] Ibid., 10.

fight these pests in a year when war priorities have limited to some extent the usual chemical types of ammunition that can be used against them.[614]

Natural and human enemies are hence interdependent even and especially during a time of war, since the technologies used to combat one were frequently related—and at times, the same exact poisonous chemicals. Russell argues that during the first half of the twentieth century, the science and technology of war was interrelated to the "*science and technology* of pest control."[615]

Perhaps due to the scarcity of chemicals during wartime, a state agricultural official turned to bacterial disease as a way to combat Japanese beetles. John C. Schread of the Connecticut State Agricultural Experiment Station at New Haven, recommended that homeowners infect Japanese beetles with the milky disease, which "[i]nstead of being a poison for the grubs . . . is an attempt to inoculate them with living bacteria which give them the fatal disease."[616] Killing Japanese beetles with bacterial disease was also eventually practiced throughout the eastern United States.[617] By April 16, 1944, USDA entomologists had "perfected the method of using milky disease," which they attributed to the significant decline of Japanese beetle in some of the older infested areas.[618] So effective was the milky method that the USDA held a patent,

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[614] Cynthia Westcott, "All-Out Campaign is Needed to Defeat Japanese Beetles," *New York Times*, July 12, 1942: D8.

[615] Edmund P. Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation'" Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 82, no. 4 (March 1996): 1508.

[616] "Inoculate Japanese Pest!," *New York Times,* September 13, 1942: RE7.

[617] Bob Becker, "Day by Day on the Farm," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 10, 1941: B13.

[618] Edgar J. Clissold, "Death to Beetles," *The New York Times,* April 16, 1944: X10.

although they granted a license to permit its commercial production for any agriculturalist. Even with a shortage of chemicals, these entomologists still managed to discover an effective way of waging war upon the Japanese beetle.

Whether through chemical warfare or biological control in the form of bacterial diseases, the rhetoric and ideology used against Japanese beetle immigrants was one of weapons of mass destruction. The twentieth century, unlike before, advanced the idea that one could annihilate both natural and national enemies on an unprecedented scale and across wider regions precisely because of the intimate institutional links between pest control and war.[619] We have seen how in previous decades shared metaphors, rhetoric, and even institutional links have influenced biological nativism both in the natural and public health sciences. World War II coincided with modern agricultural technological developments, serving as a key turning point for pest control in that never before had the American public—perhaps even the world—been so keenly aware of insect and human pests.[620]

In a time period of intense nationalistic fervor, insects and their human counterparts shifted from a nuisance to a national threat.[621] One such insect enemy, the Japanese beetle, did not respect U. S. boundaries and came to symbolize one way in which the injurious "yellow peril" penetrated U. S. security measures. Japanese beetles posed a threat to national security: "Saboteur insect pests are reported to be working on

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[619] Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation,'" *The Journal of American History*: 1508.

[620] Ibid.: 1524.

[621] Ibid.: 1527.

California's guaynie rubber shrub plantations. Could they be Japanese beetles?"[622] Such references to saboteur Japanese beetles did not occur in a vacuum; previous decades of biological nativism provided the historical context. And during a time when control over natural resources became paramount, it was especially telling that the article referenced America's need for a steady supply of rubber, which the Japanese controlled.

Like Japanese farmers that depleted the soil, Japanese beetles constantly threatened California horticulture, as well as the nation's security. At the Brentwood Country Club, a golfer, Betty Richard, asked the manager, "How do you play out this kind of trap?" Joe Robinson, the club manager responded, "You don't . . . You're not supposed to get in. These traps are for Japanese beetles, who are always threatening to infiltrate into California to damage the foliage and roots of fruit trees and plants."[623] Since they are always threatening to infiltrate California, the mass extermination of Japanese beetles could not be anything less than a defense measure:

> The importance of shade trees in maintaining property values, as well as general morale, is unquestioned. Recently . . . we urged the continued protection of trees which are a legacy from the past to be held in trust for future generations. Since then Dr. E. P. Felt, veteran entomologist and ardent tree preserver, has made the very practical suggestion that trees should be protected, despite shortages of spray materials, as an important air raid precaution measure. Trees in full foliage are valuable camouflage; they hide munitions factories and

[622] "If not, What Then?: Quick, the Spray!" *Los Angeles Times*, September 4, 1942: A4.

[623] "Japanese Beetle Trap Intrigues Local Golfer," *Los Angeles Times,* July 16, 1945: 12.

dwellings; they afford concealment to movements of armed forces or transfers of civilian populations.

Large masses of brown, unsprayed trees will immediately lead enemy planes to population centers . . . Elms in residential areas are peculiarly subject to insect attack; masses of leaves browned by the skeletonizing of elm leaf beetles or the lacy feeding of Japanese beetles would make easy landmarks for enemy planes . . .[624]

Here, we see the importance of protecting shade trees in maintaining property values and "general morale," as well as for future generations to enjoy. And since the beetles rapidly defoliated trees at astonishing rates, entomologists such as Dr. Felt, emphasized the need to use chemicals, despite shortages, to combat these voracious insects. In anthropomorphizing the Japanese beetle during the 1940s, the media injected militaristic overtones into this "unwelcome visitor."[625] The war with the Japanese beetle was a "war against evil":

The essence of self-defense and the law of survival call for continual warfare against evil and evildoers. Were it not for our warfare against even so tiny a group of enemies as insects, the Japanese beetle would have brought starvation to America before the Japanese warriors attacked us at Pearl Harbor. If we followed the weakening fallacy of non-resistance to its logical conclusion we

[624] "Protection of our Shade Tree is Urged as a Defense Measure," *New York Times,* May 24, 1942: D9.

[625] "Vanguard of Japanese Beetles now Starting Annual Invasion," *New York Times,* July 4, 1943: 20.

would allow our farms to become hideous wastes by the aggression of caterpillars.[626]

Failing to defend one's biotic borders would then allow the tiny but "aggressive" enemy to penetrate the nation's boundaries, attack civilian populations, and lead to starvation.

Again blurring the boundaries between insect and human enemies, newspapers linked metaphors of the Japanese beetle to human enemies in Japan:

> Japanese "beetles" are plotting to swarm over this country and lay their explosive eggs on our cities in order to:
>
> 1.—Destroy or cripple war production.
>
> 2.—Disorganize communication and transportation.
>
> 3.—Break down civilian morale by fire, destruction and death.[627]

Connecting Japanese "beetles" to Japanese human combatants, the article drew upon an arsenal of insect metaphors. Japanese "beetles" threatened to "swarm" over the country, "lay their explosive eggs," and attack the country's infrastructure as well as civilian populations. Linking Japanese insect enemies to human ones not only served as a potent metaphor and provided vivid imagery with which to envision their enemy, but also served to dehumanize the Japanese. In part, such connections imbued with meaning rested upon Western philosophy and ideology that viewed nature as something to be harnessed and conquered, rather than a co-existing relationship. And here, conquest of insect enemies offered a metaphor that could justify the mass extermination of peoples.

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[626] Hyacinthe Ringrose, "War: Against Evil," *New York Times,* May 10, 1942: E7.

[627] William S. Barton, "Protective Side of Plan for Civil Defense Told," *Los Angeles Times,* March 17, 1942: A12.

Some immigrants, such as the Japanese cherry tree, however, slowly gained acceptance, while injurious and invasive species were still reviled. For example, the detested English sparrow was even praised for making a "delectable meal" of the Japanese beetle.[628] While the Japanese cherry tree's native roots in Korea facilitated its gradual acceptance, Japanese beetles were still associated with the enemy: "It develops now that the celebrated Japanese cherry trees aren't really Japanese at all, being native to Korea. The Japs, however, still get the blame for the beetles."[629] One writer even commented that "Coming from Japan, he [the Japanese beetle] must be pretty nasty."[630] One *New York Times* reader referred to the beetle as "Our other enemy, the fifth columnist that attacks our gardens" and urged others to control "this most serious pest" that threatened Victory farmers everywhere.[631] As gardening resembled warfare, warfare also resembled gardening.[632] The American media's association of the Japanese as insects drew upon nationalist and patriotic imagery that compared the powerful bald eagle to the lowly and tiny Japanese beetle. In a photograph with the heading, "Antithesis of the Japanese Beetle," *New York Times* readers only saw a large photo of "Jerry, [a] famous American eagle at the Washington Zoo, who is on duty as a model for national war posters, but whose preference is for active service . . ."[633] As the

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[628] "Senator Soaper Remarks," *Los Angeles Times,* July 25, 1941: A4.

[629] "Is Washington Relieved!" *Los Angeles Times,* May 15, 1942: A4.

[630] "Vanguard of Japanese Beetles now Starting Annual Invasion," *NY Times*: 20.

[631] Harry Moreland, "War Maneouvres Urged now Against Japanese Beetles," *New York Times*, June 28, 1942: E9.

[632] Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation,'" *The Journal of American History*: 1509.

[633] "Antithesis of a Japanese Beetle," *New York Times,* December 18, 1941: 19.

photo made glaringly clear, without doubt, there are very few phyla that rank lower in the animal kingdom than insects.[634] By routinely associating Japanese soldiers and the civilian population with insects, the enemy became dehumanized and the moral issues of killing human beings on a mass scale were effectively muted.

A cartoon that appeared in *Leatherneck* magazine published by the United States Marines, depicted an insect called "Louseous Japanicas" and stated that "the first serious outbreak of this lice epidemic was officially noted on December 7, 1941."[635] Below the picture of a buck-toothed insect with horns was the following statement:

> Flame throwers, mortars, grenades and bayonets have proven to be an effective remedy. But before a complete cure may be effected the origin of the plague, the breeding grounds around the Tokyo area, must be completely annihilated.[636]

The following month, the United States launched its mass incendiary bombing campaign throughout Japanese cities, including Tokyo, before dropping two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively. For many Americans, European enemies were often acknowledged as people. As Ernie Pyle admitted, "But out here I gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman and repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice."[637] This linkage of biological dangers spreading from Japanese people, insects, and flora was not limited to the U.S.

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[634] Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation,'" *The Journal of American History*: 1512.

[635] Ibid.: 1506.

[636] Ibid.

[637] Ibid.: 1522.

Did fears of a "contagious and poisonous yellow peril" also emerge in Latin America? Fears of "foreign poaching" by Japanese fishermen occurred in Canada. Edward W. Allen, secretary of the International Fisheries Commission, warned that the "Japanese threat to Northern Pacific fisheries is very serious."[638] Yet more telling is how countries such as Mexico responded to the "domination of Mexico's West Coast fishing by Orientals," which often meant Japanese fishermen.[639] Abelardo Rodriguez, the former president of Mexico, stated that in refusing to renew Japanese fishermen's licenses, they would "return control of important fisheries in the Gulf of California to Mexicans."[640] During the 1910s, Mexican issei who lived in Baja California not only carved an ethnic niche in cotton agriculture, but also eventually became some of the leading fishermen in Ensanada.[641]

Max Miller, author of *Land Where Time Stands Still*, recalled a rumor he heard from Mexican pearl fishers: "the La Paz pearling industry was ruined by introduction of an oyster disease. Japs around La Paz had been doing mysterious things. Nice little guys, Japs, even up to murdering defenseless oysters."[642] Recall that in previous chapters, accusations that Japanese plant immigrants infected native species occurred in the form of chestnut blight and citrus canker. Miller's account, however, differs in that he recalled hearing Mexican pearl fishers declaring that Japanese fishermen themselves

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[638] "Japanese Poaching Feared in Victoria," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1940: 8.

[639] "Mexico Turns on Japanese Fishermen," *Los Angeles Times,* February 2, 1941: 1.

[640] Ibid.

[641] Daniel M. Masterson, *The Japanese in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 60.

[642] Ben Howden, "Tortilla 'Front' Covered," *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1943: C4.

spread an oyster disease. Accusations that Japanese fishermen "dominated" the industry and spread diseases to oysters should be understood in its historical context. The United States government placed diplomatic pressure on Mexico because the former feared that Japanese immigrants sought to illegally enter U. S. borders through Mexico. Despite Mexico's initial potential to be the leading receiving country for Japanese immigrants, the U. S. government successfully influenced Mexico to sharply curtail any further Japanese immigration there.[643] Thus, fears that Japanese immigrants threatened to dominate Northern Pacific fisheries and possibly even poisoned oysters demonstrate how widespread such perceptions really were.

"Yellow Perilism" in Latin America

The incarceration of thousands of Japanese Latin Americans provides an important backdrop for understanding "yellow perilism" through a hemispheric perspective. According to Seiichi Higashide, a Japanese Peruvian incarcerated in Crystal City, about 2,118 peoples of Japanese descent were also forcibly deported from Central and South America during World War II.[644] They came from a dozen countries, but Peru by far deported the largest number—or 84 percent—of Japanese Latin Americans. A report sent to the Secretary of State on May 29, 1944, titled "The Japanese in Peru," strongly indicated fears of a "contagious yellow peril":

> Japanese and Peruvian accounts differ as to the living conditions and treatment of the new arrivals, and to their efficiency and desirability. Japanese reports

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[643] Masterson, *The Japanese in Latin America*, 34.

[644] Seiichi Higashide, *Adios to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U. S. Concentration Camps* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 177.

> state that landowners whipped them, refused to live up to contracts, provided unsanitary quarters, little or no medical facilities, and in general drove them like slaves . . . On the other hand a Peruvian writer condemns the Japanese as unable to work and as carriers of disease and plague . . .[645]

Fears of a "contagious yellow peril" in places such as Mexico and Peru revealed the extent to which the United States powerfully influenced and profoundly shaped perceptions of Japanese immigrants in other countries. This chapter focuses on the Kudo family from Lima, Peru, since existing health records of this family provided a rare glimpse into how their presence within the United States demonstrates the complexities of this historical "contagious and poisonous yellow peril."

Suketsune Kudo arrived in Peru in 1918. He farmed in Cañete until 1925, and in 1926, he purchased 500 acres of land from the Peruvian government and started Kudo Plantation.[646] Beginning in 1931, he farmed cotton for about five years and then ran a dry goods store in Imperial City. In 1940, he opened a hotel business in Lima city until December 8, 1942. He was arrested earlier on November 30, 1942 and eventually detained at Kenedy, Texas on February 12, 1943. He later wrote that "I had never been given any chance of hearing in court to be interned in this country, and my hotel business was ordered to close on December 10, 1942, thus the foundation of our living

[645] Antonello Gerbi, "The Japanese in Peru": 9-10, in RG 59, Box 5906, National Archives Records Administration, Washington D. C.

[646] U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service Alien Detention Station, Kenedy, Texas, June 7, 1943, Folder 2 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

was destroyed completely."[647] Archival records attest not only of the violation of their basic civil rights by being detained and denied a hearing in court, but also the personal anguish of being separated from their families and stripped of their livelihood. In various documents, Suketsune repeatedly expressed his sorrow at being deported from Lima and leaving his family behind:

> Having no money saved up to support family and having no friends or relatives my wife is getting assistance from Spanish Government getting sixty soles a month which is not enough to support my big family much less to pay Doctor and Medicine. Because poor health of my wife and poor financial condition of family I am worrying day and night abut their condition. And would like to ask to have them united with me in this country as soon as possible.[648]

While archival materials recording when Suketsune's wife, Shigemi, contracted tuberculosis conflicts, she most likely became ill around 1942 or 1943, when Suketsune was incarcerated in Texas.[649] Shigemi herself wrote that

> Before his [Suketsune] apprehension, I had been suffering from lung disease and was under the care of the Janja Hospital of Peru. Owing to my surprise at the unexpected apprehension, my condition became worse but I was transferred

[647] Letter to the Honorable Tom C. Clark, from Suketsune Kudo, no date, Washington D. C., Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[648] U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service Alien Detention Station, Kenedy, Texas, June 7, 1943, Folder 2 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[649] Notice of Death of Civilian Internee, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

with all of my children to this country in order to be reunited with my husband at this alien internment camp, Crystal City, Texas.[650]

Letters written by Shigemi repeatedly point to the incarceration of her family as one of the key factors that negatively impacted her health and the progression of her tuberculosis. Despite having committed no crime, Suketsune found himself incarcerated in Crystal City without his family. He wrote to the Peruvian ambassador on April 10, 1944, requesting that his family be permitted to join him. The Kudo family that remained in Peru were forced to live on 70 soles provided by the Embassy for protection, but this amount could not support the family and purchase the medicine needed to treat Shegemi's illness.[651] Suketsune also wrote that when he was finally reunited with Shigemi in the Alien Internment Camp in Crystal City on July 4, 1944, she had already been suffering from the "lung disease, and owing to her surprise her condition became worse."[652] It is difficult to refute that first the painful separation and then incarceration of the Kudo family played a major role in the advancement of Shigemi's illness. Her own letters to United States officials repeatedly evidence not only her outrage, but also her desperate struggle to find a cure for this highly fatal disease in an alien land.

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[650] Letter to the Honorable Willard F. Kelly, Immigration and Naturalization Service, from Shigemi Kudo, Philadelphia, Pa., December 30, 1946, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[651] Letter to His Excellency the Spanish Ambassador to Peru, from Suketsune Kudo, Lima, Peru, April 10, 1944, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[652] Letter to the Honorable Clark from Kudo, N. D., Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

A lawyer representing Shigemi, along with three other internees, wrote a letter to the Secretary of State George C. Marshall requesting that they be permitted to obtain drugs that would treat their tuberculosis.[653] Collins pointed out that

> Obviously, these unfortunates who were torn from their homes and impoverished by reason of their prolonged detention are unable to discharge or incur such an expense. None of them, however, now would be suffering from the disease had they not been seized and lodged in a concentration camp in this country where the climate differs from that of their homeland Peru.[654]

Collins argued that the government had both a legal and moral obligation to provide the "best possible treatment" for them. Shigemi believed the recent discovery of the drug streptomycin toward the end of the war could very well save her life. But in prison, she could not easily obtain the medicine she needed.

After writing numerous letters, Shigemi Kudo's physician in Crystal City finally ordered streptomycin through the Immigration Commissioner.[655] One reason why the United States Public Health Service expressed reluctance to administer this drug to Shigemi was its high cost and still unproven effectiveness in combating tuberculosis.[656]

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[653] Letter to Secretary of State George C. Marshall, from Wayne M. Collins, March 3, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[654] Ibid.

[655] Letter to Dr. Boyd, Medical Officer, Camp Hospital, Crystal City, Texas, January 29, 1947, from Shigemi Kudo, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[656] Letter to Shigemi Kudo from Walter L. Rathbun, M. D., Superintendent, Crystal City, Texas, March 10, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB. Dr. Rathbun wrote that "Some of the results obtained through it's [sic] use are astonishing, but, nevertheless, it is not a "cure-all", and should be used only in

Government and health officials were also highly aware that Shigemi's tuberculosis was perhaps the most advanced out of all the cases: "In the case of Mrs. Kudo there is little hope, and she could either expire almost any time or linger indefinitely."[657] The medical officer at Crystal City did not believe that anything could be done for her because she suffered from an advanced case of bilateral tuberculosis.[658] Yet well into 1947, Shigemi indicated that she would pay for the drug and continued to cling to the hope that she would survive: "I do not like to die on the age 43, leaving dearest children, especially youngest daughter of 7 years old and loving husband."[659] On July 9, 1947, she still expressed the hope that she would one day return to Peru: "I would like to be taken care until my condition will become possible to bear long trip to Peru, at some hospital in this country."[660] Yet by August 1946, a health report showed that an examination of Shigemi revealed "extension of all Tuberculosis processes, with beginning cavitation in both apices and extension of hilar and cervical lymphnod

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conjunction with the usual Sanatorium treatment" (1). He also informed Shigemi that the cost for four month's worth of the drug would be about $400.00 (2).

[657] Letter to the Commissioner, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Central Office, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, L. T. McAllister's, Acting Officer in Charge, Crystal City Internment Camp, February 20, 1947, p. 1, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[658] Letter to the Surgeon General, U. S. Public Health Service, Washington D. C., from Arthur M. Boyd, Jr., Assistant Surgeon, United States Public Health Service, Medical Officer in Charge, February 1, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[659] Letter to Dr. Walter L. Rathbun, Superintendent, The Newton Memorial Hospital, Cassadaga, New York, from Shigemi Kudo, February 27, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[660] Letter to L. T. McCollister and Dr. Boyd, Crystal City, from Shigemi Kudo, July 9, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

Tuberculosis."[661] The course of the disease continued to rapidly extend throughout her lungs and she suffered from numerous fevers that lasted for a week per episode. The drug's long-awaited arrival seemed to lift Shigemi's spirit. However, the streptomycin treatment was

> heartily received by Mrs. Kudo that is, for about 60 days, whereupon an extensive intracutaneous rash broke out over her entire body with the exception of her face. There further occurred desquamation of the skin on the soles of her feet and on the palms of her hands, and these surfaces were replaced by a purple granular rash . . .[662]

After an August 1, 1947 x-ray revealed further extension of all tuberculosis processes, in addition to fluid in her right lung, she then opted to discontinue to the treatment after five months. Once the treatment was discontinued on August 20, 1947, "the patient's psychological outlook broke completely and she seemed ready to die, and no resistance was offered to further extension of the disease."[663] Seven days later, her condition grew grave and she was given oxygen to help her breathe. On September 3, 1947, sedated with large doses of opiates, Shigemi Kudo passed away quietly in the morning.

Conclusion

This chapter ends with the Kudo family because their family history illustrates, along with the Japanese cherry trees, how some aliens did *not* in fact becomes "natives." In his article on the Japanese cherry trees Pauly rightfully points out that

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[661] Resume History of Shigemi Kudo, Peruvian Detainee, September 11, 1947, Folder 1 of 2, in RG 85, INS San Francisco District, General Immigration Case Files (1300), 1944-55, File # 1300-62400, NASB.

[662] Ibid.

[663] Ibid.

cherry trees have been a central image in American nationalism. By gifting the U. S. government with their Japanese cherry trees, the Japanese government linked themselves to the U. S. in an unpredictable way: "The primary meaning imputed to the trees—that their growth and bloom, year after year, would symbolize the enduring friendship between the Japanese and American peoples—became, through Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, ironic and even embarrassing."[664] Pauly muses that these former plant immigrants, however, hold a very different meaning if viewed in their "alternate guise." He argued that, with their annual displays "more spectacular than ever," the trees have become naturalized.

Perhaps this is so. Higashide, who later found himself related to the Kudo family when his two daughters married two of Kudo's sons, recalled visiting Washington D. C. in the April of 1947. He expressed anticipation in seeing the cherry blossoms, which were in full bloom. He marveled at their beauty "reflected in the calmly flowing waters of the Tidal Basin."[665] He stated that he had expected to find great crowds of people to view the flowers, with parties forming under the trees, but saw only small groups of people strolling by. Still, he felt a sense of pleasure at seeing the trees:

> That sense of pleasure and the fact that the cherry trees in Washington still were there were enough to make it a happy time. When I was in Peru, I had heard a shortwave report from Japan that every cherry tree in Washington had been cut down. I remember feeling an indescribable anger when I heard that

[664] Philip J. Pauly, "The Beauty and Menace of the Japanese Cherry Trees: Conflicting Visions of American Ecological Independence," *Isis,* vol. 87, no. 1 (March 1996): 73.

[665] Higashide, *Adios to Tears*, 191.

report. Even if they had come from an enemy country, I felt there was no need to destroy the trees. I was saddened that war could bring such hatred to people that they would even cut down such trees.

When I heard that the cherry trees in Washington were in full bloom, I thought only a few trees had escaped destruction. But, marvelously, those expectations were wrong. I learned later that a few trees had been cut down by fanatics, and that fair-minded people in Washington D. C. had rigorously opposed all proposals to cut down the rest of the trees.[666]

Higashide's pleasure in seeing the cherry trees and his anger upon hearing that some vandals had attacked the trees corroborate the connections that have been made between humans and the environment throughout this dissertation. It is also symbolic that he sees the acceptance of the trees as significant, since following the war, the United States government attempted to forcibly "repatriate" Japanese Peruvians to Japan. Even after forcibly deporting Japanese Latin Americans to the United States, the government has not only refused to officially acknowledge its unjust actions, but again attempted to deport them as illegal aliens. According to Daniel M. Masterson, only 70 Japanese Peruvians—those of Peruvian citizenship and their families—were permitted to return to Peru. Except for 364 Japanese Peruvians permitted to remain in the United States following a legal battle, the rest were "repatriated" to Japan.[667] Thus, Japanese Peruvians—as well as the issei and Japanese Latin Americans more broadly—have remained aliens in an alien land and unlike Japanese Americans, never received redress

[666] Ibid., 192.

[667] Masterson, *The Japanese in Latin America*, 168.

and reparations. The stories behind Japanese plant and insect immigrants strips away these layered silences. They also critique the "naturalization" of internment by demonstrating both the historical connections and through its social deconstruction.

Throughout this dissertation, I have constructed a narrative that has highlighted the longstanding connections between the human and natural worlds, specifically focusing on Japanese plant, insect, and human immigrants. Beginning in the 1890s and ending in the post-WWII era, we saw how insects such as the Japanese beetle and plants such as the cherry trees were anthropomorphized and how Japanese immigrants were naturalized through fears of contagion, poison, and direct attacks on the native biota. What Japanese cherry trees and the Japanese beetles have revealed and still continue to reveal is the extent to which certain species were gradually naturalized, while others still carry the stigma of being an illegal alien and an invasive species. While Coates may be correct in pointing out that the linkages in the post-1965 period between plant and human immigrants are not so clear, in a post-9/11 world that includes bio-terrorists, the spread of disease in a global society, and intensifying debates on global warming and conservationism, I remain unconvinced that the past has not somehow fundamentally shaped our current understandings.

Conclusion

Towards a 'Multi(horti)cultural Global Society

In an article that sought to promote "multihorticulturalism," Michael Pollan wrote that "I had always assumed that the apotheosis of the native plant was a new phenomenon, a byproduct of our depending environmental awareness."[668] But as this dissertation reveals, outbreaks of "native plant mania," as Pollan called it, have occurred before. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, this dissertation sought to challenge nation-bound historical narratives by examining how the "contagious yellow peril" image first applied to Chinese immigrants soon also applied to Japanese plant, insect, and bodies. As Japanese and Japanese Americans in California resisted this stigmatization, early views of Japanese agricultural products, fishermen, and farmers transformed from a "contagious yellow peril" into a "poisonous" menace by World War II.

Chapter one focused on the late nineteenth and turn-of-the century mass plant introductions and human migration from Japan. The late nineteenth century marks the emergence of a particular "yellow peril"—a "contagious yellow peril." Here, this "contagious yellow peril" took shape in the form of injurious insects and diseased bodies. Although transpacific biotic exchanges had been occurring centuries before, this chapter uncovers dialogue and debate amongst U. S. and Japanese government scientists—specifically over invasive species—such as debates on the origins of the San José Scale. Fearful of biological invasions from Asia—specifically, bubonic plague—

[668] Michael Pollan, "Against Nativism," *New York Times,* May 15, 1994: 1.

public health officials responded by attempting to regulate Chinese as well as Japanese immigrants in northern California. Chapter one hence traces the earliest stage of the transformation of Japanese "pests" into "national enemies."

Chapter two focuses on plant and bodily pathogens from Japan during the 1910s and how agricultural officials passed the landmark Plant Quarantine 37 (PQN 37). This chapter juxtaposes devastating diseases that endangered natives, from chestnut blight to typhoid. Examining the spread of disease in native trees alongside "native" white bodies illustrates how modern institutions of public health and agriculture sought to regulate Japanese plants and bodies through increasingly restrictive immigration legislation. The ascent of issei fishermen and particularly farmers greatly concerned health officials since they became a major source of specialty crops for much of the region. These officers not only feared that Japanese agriculturalists passed on food-borne disease to their consumers, but they also turned their attention to the escalating "Mexican problem" in areas such as Texas. Horticultural authorities believed that these Mexican laborers carried injurious insects across the U.S.-Mexico boundary. The passage of PQN 37 firmly shut the door against such suspected plant plunders in June 1919. It also became the prologue to the 1924 Immigration Act, clearly defining America as a land that would be reserved for natives.

The third chapter traces the important shift in the 1920s and 1930s from a "contagious yellow peril" to a poisonous, biological menace. The Japanese beetle surfaces as the "yellow peril" and the concept of poisonous pesticides takes center stage during this period of modernization. Although fears of the issei as disease-breeders did not fully subside (as evidenced in the 1923-1924 Pneumonic and Bubonic Plague in Los

Angeles), here fears of a "toxic yellow peril" materialized. Ranging from pesticides used to combat Japanese beetles to insecticides on produce grown by Japanese agriculturalists in the 1920s and 1930s, agricultural and public health officials often joined forces to wage war against this new threat. Despite attempts to eradicate the beetle pest, it continued to multiply in rapid numbers. Fears over the rising beetle population were also mirrored in a growing Japanese and Japanese American population in California that posed the specter of miscegenation and "degenerationism" of the white native stock. In order to provide health care for a growing and segregated Japanese American community in southern California, Japanese immigrants founded and built the Japanese Hospital by waging a legal battle that went all the way to the federal Supreme Court. Chapter three also spotlights how officials began to actively target another kind of danger: a biological "Mexican brown peril." Thus, on the eve of the U.S.'s entrance into the Second World War, a whole host of exclusionary and regulatory mechanisms aimed at plant, insect, and human immigrants had already been enacted.

Chapter four examined the impact that World War II had upon Japanese insect and human immigrants, reshaping some as worthy of human conservation, while others were not. Fears of food poisoning resurfaced, although this time, within the context of sabotage and wartime hysteria. Yet some Indian service officers believed that Japanese and Japanese Americans were like Indians in that there were "gooduns" and "baduns." However, in sharp contrast to Japanese Americans, Mexican and even Mexican Americans revealed how the latter group became even more vilified as disease-carriers and as a "financial burden" that would cost Los Angeles. And depictions of Japanese

populations in Japan as insects dehumanized them, paving the path for the use of total warfare in the form of two atomic bombs. Japanese Latin Americans, such as the Kudo family from Peru, demonstrated the U.S.'s influence over this region in disseminating perceptions of a biological "yellow peril." Yet the second batch of Japanese cherry trees planted in the nation's capital in 1912 survived and symbolizes the naturalization of some groups of peoples, but not others, such as the Kudo family and the issei.

As chapter four concluded, World War II did indeed become a key turning point for raising a national and global awareness of insect control. Government entomologists eager to annihilate both new and old introduced pests saw "the great opportunities" to create "a new day" for the field.[669] With Uncle Sam "fighting one World War," the next battle "will be a long and bitter battle to crush the creeping, wriggling, flying burrowing billions."[670] One of the greatest weapons to fight this war would be DDT (Dichloro Diphenyl Trichloroethane), which became the "miracle chemical" shortly after World War II. Zyklon B, unlike DDT, was initially developed some time in the late 1910s or early 1920s as a potent and highly efficient insecticide.[671] Since Nazi leaders such as Heinrich Himmler did not believe that the use of carbon monoxide killed enough people per day in the death camps Germans had established, they instead turned to technology that more closely aligned with its rhetoric and ideas of efficiency. After the Nazi Rudolf Hess observed the effect that fumigation of insects

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[669] Edmund P. Russell, "'Speaking of Annihilation': Mobilizing for War Against Human and Insect Enemies, 1914-1945," vol. 82, no. 4, *The Journal of American History* (March 199): 1524.

[670] Ibid., 1524-1525.

[671] Sarah Jansen, "Chemical-warfare techniques for insect control: insect 'pests' in Germany before and after World War I," 24:1, *Endeavor* (March 2000): 31.

had in the camps he decided to experiment with gas on prisoners in late 1941, using the remaining insecticide left behind by an extermination company, Zyklon B. Russell has, however, pointed to fact that unlike Nazi Germany, the United States did not similarly use such insecticides to kill human beings (although at times, it did have that unintended effect).[672] They instead turned to developing efficient insecticides, such as DDT. Many entomologists were hopeful that DDT could help them wage the battle against injurious insects, but the toxic chemical created problems even as they solved them. In addition to killing undesirable insects, DDT wiped out beneficial predators and parasites that checked pests and kept their populations under control. In this dissertation, we saw how concerns over poisoned produce grown and sold by Japanese immigrants and the beetle pest played a central role in the new technological warfare on insects. We saw how during the 1940s, fears of a Japanese "poisonous peril" played a role in raising the awareness of toxic chemicals used on food. The racialized fears held by many Americans and government officers also attested to the central role that Japanese agriculturalists played in shaping the dialogue over natural and national enemies.

This dissertation covered most the major aspects or stages of American horticulture that Pauly discussed in *Fruits and Plains.* He characterizes the first stage as the most visible since it involved the introduction of "new" species from all over the world into the United States' ecology. He calls the second stage the "naturalizing" of

[672] Russell, "Speaking of Annihilation," *The Journal of American History*: 1529.

foreign plants, or assisting them in surviving in their new environment. In the third stage, plant specialists searched for and attempted to identify useful plants already within North America. The fourth element involved that of exclusion, suppression, or even extermination of undesirable plants. Such efforts at containment also included that of intracontinental regulation, such as attempts to thwart the spread of phylloxera aphids westward to California's grapes.[673] In tracing the historical evolution of these biological "yellow perils," we saw how definitions of "native" and "foreign" evolved as the land changed from being a frontier to farms and cities. Newly modernizing public health and agricultural institutions sought to erect and strengthen medical and ecological borders that would shut out potentially dangerous immigrants.

Current Debates

Environmental studies scholars have been currently debating whether or not campaigns against introduced species or "exotics" were and are xenophobic and racist. While such opposition may not be *inherently* racist, this dissertation has elucidated the ways in which plant regulation was in fact closely linked to the regulation of Japanese immigrants in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. And although nativism in the United States may not have matched the nativist purism in Nazi Germany, examining the historic connection between nativism in the social and political realm to that of ecological spheres can help us better understand introduced species and ecological restoration today.

Daniel Simberloff has contended that most conservationists and invasion biologists attempt to bring attention to introduced species' tangible economic and

[673] Philip Pauly, *Fruits and Plains: The Transformation of American Horticulture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), 4.

ecological impacts. "Asian chestnut blight," according to Simberloff wiped out "entire communities" in the eastern half of North America. Within fifty years of its discovery, chestnut blight has killed almost every single mature chestnut. While not extinct, the bark disease has prevented American chestnuts from reaching maturity, making the majority of these trees "functionally extinct."[674] In this dissertation, I do not deny that introduced species such as chestnut trees from China or Japan devastated the ecology and economies that relied on the chestnut trees. Rather, in this narrative, nativism *and* the very real effects served as a key motivation for government officials.[675] Indeed, we saw how perceptions of Japanese immigrants as economically exploitative and monopoly capitalists moved back and forth between the costly effects of chestnut blight and an "alien takeover" of various agricultural sectors. The devastation of such an emblematic tree, according to Pauly, not only almost completely destroyed an important natural resource and radically altered the environment, but it also impoverished a national identity just when American consciousness of the end of the frontier and the implications of limited resources was heightened.[676] Today, such anxieties can also resurface in an era of intensifying globalization, concerns of conservation and preservation, xenophobia, and fears of biological terrorism.

As the first comprehensive work on the cultural consequences and history of species transfer, Coates attempted to provide a "cool historical perspective" on such often emotional debates in *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species*.

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[674] Daniel Simberloff, "Confronting introduced species: a form of xenophobia?" *Biological Invasions*, 5 (2003): 180.

[675] Ibid.: 185. Here, I draw on Banu Subramaniam's arguments on how nativism has been fueled by anxieties of globalization, which in turn feeds xenophobia (185).

[676] Pauly, *Fruits and Plains,* 263.

Since it is the first book of its kind, *American Perceptions* deserves serious engagement and offers many new insights. Coates has claimed that there is "material discontinuity . . . between attitudes to nonnative species of flora and fauna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the one hand and the past three decades on the other."[677] He is correct to the extent that overt discrimination and biological racism in large part have lessened in post-1960s America. Additionally, the 1965 Immigration Act that finally opened the gates to Asian and southern and eastern European immigrants "happen[ed] to coincide" with the easing of restrictive quotas to introduced plants around this same time.[678] Yet it is troubling that Coates based his arguments on assumptions of the dissipation of centuries-long racism:

> My main finding is that for all the racy and attention-grabbing accusations of botanical xenophobia and eco-racism, ties between conservation and prejudice, between the desire to preserve an "American" nature and to defend "old stock" America, once substantial, have largely dissolved. This is because racism and so-called eco-racism have both largely dissolved. Though by no means entirely banished to the past, prejudice against non-whites nowadays is a shadow of its ugly former self. And as racism directed against immigrants and non-whites has weakened, the vital connection that often sustained eco-racism has been severed.[679]

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[677] Peter Coates, *American Perceptions of Immigrant and Invasive Species: Strangers on the Land* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 187.

[678] Ibid., 5.

[679] Ibid., 187.

Coates' claim that racism itself has "weakened" and that in turn, its vital connection to eco-racism has been severed merits examination. Has racial discrimination really become a "shadow of its ugly former self"? Has it in fact "weakened"? In *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (2001), Henry Yu made an appeal for historians and others engaged in knowledge production to acknowledge this long historical legacy of racism. "A truly democratic production of knowledge," he asserted, "must recognize that racial practices have had a long history in the United States and have produced profound legacies that cannot be wished away as mere cultural differences."[680] As Ann Stoler has advanced, racisms' polyvalent mobilities and promiscuity has in fact made it highly malleable and many would argue, racisms have in fact been re-energized in the policing of minority immigrants and fears about bio-terrorism in a post-September 11 climate. Alexandra Stern has also cautioned that the historic alliance between environmentalism and eugenic racism—which "seemed quite natural to the founders of both movements"—continues to "flicker on and off" even into the twenty-first century.[681] Donna Haraway has added that "my own suspicious hackles are raised by restoration ecology's potentials for deepening nativism and xenophobia in what is still a white supremacist country."[682] The tale told in this dissertation is one where Japanese and Japanese Americans and officials moved within

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[680] Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 203.

[681] Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 127. Stern cites such alliances in the Sierra Club, which has endorsed "xenophobic platforms," as well as in the rhetoric for greenbelt campaigns, "no- or slow-growth policies," and strict zoning codes (127-128).

[682] William O'Brien, "Exotic Invasions, Nativism, and Ecological Restoration: On the Persistence of a Contentious Debate," *Ethics, Place, and Environment*, vol. 9, no. 1 (March 2006): 67.

a hegemonic racist and anti-Japanese immigrant environment. It is, to echo Haraway, a cautionary tale because white supremacy persists and continues to inform the sciences.

In engaging with Coates' *American Perceptions*, this dissertation seeks to open new avenues of inquiry for future scholars. In his review of *American Perceptions*, although Philip Pauly agrees that political nativism "is much less important in contemporary anti-invasive science and activism" compared to earlier time periods, he expresses concern that such a comprehensive work as Coates' may in fact close new areas of inquiry.[683] One critical area that has begun to demand the attention of historians of medicine and science more generally is that of globalization and transnationalism.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the processes and effects of globalization have accelerated in large part due to new technologies. In the twenty-first century, the transnational flow of bodies, agricultural products and livestock, and pollution have increasingly concerned natural scientists and health professionals. As discussed in the introduction, with China and India as the two most populated nations in the world, fears of pollution from Asia have also emerged. It is telling that in their discussion of the "Asian haze" that blanketed southern Asia for a span of about two miles, Gregg Mitman et al. did not raise the issue of race and xenophobia. The coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympics again raised the specter of harmful pollutants traveling at a rapid pace from China all the way to the United States in a short time

[683] Philip Pauly, "Politics and the Environment: Essay Review," *Journal of the History of Biology*, 40 (2007): 774.

period.[684] And while studies have increasingly shown that pollution can and does cause death and illness, such news coverage reminds us even today that harmful biological matter from rapidly industrializing countries in Asia can easily penetrate United States' biotic borders and endanger the public's health.

Fears of a medicalized "brown peril" have not abated. Most recently, in April of 2009, leading health officials located a farm village in Mexico as the epicenter of the recent "swine flu" or "influenza a (H1N1)" pandemic. News media coverage of the pandemic has spotlighted American vacationers who returned from Mexico and later came down with the flu virus. The media has also focused on Mexican immigrants who have carried the disease into United States, at least one of whom has died of this flu. Not only does the "swine flu" incident raise of the specter of a "contagious brown peril," it also once again brings to the forefront the interrelationship between the human and natural worlds as it moves between pigs, birds, and humans.

The rising interest in environmental studies in the twenty first century shall undoubtedly stimulate further scholarship. Hopefully, the scholarship produced will not be a "cool historical perspective" but informed, interdisciplinary works that are compassionate and engage in open-ended dialogue. Yu argues that "We cannot flee from this society into a world of pure ideas, a realm where we can dispassionately examine knowledge with a detached eye. Those who can imagine such a world are

[684] See for example Nayan Chanda, "Olympic Cloud," YaleGlobal Online, http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=11216 (Accessed December 30, 2008).

benefiting from a tremendous privilege . . ."[685] An important part of avoiding our flight into a world of "pure ideas"—something that too easily occurs in the histories of science and medicine—includes the recognition that the voices of immigrants themselves who were—and are—at the center of such debates. Those few and rare voices, such as Domoto's, should be taken seriously:

> I guess the different feelings that we had, through my father's period when we were importing—my dad was importing plants from Japan—I think there was a certain amount of prejudice about the plants he was bringing in, even though they would buy plants from him for resale. But as such, there was quite a bit of discrimination.[686]

The hybrid flowers Domoto cultivated—just like the cherry trees—are still with us today.

[685] Yu, *Thinking Orientals*, 201.

[686] Toichi Domoto, "A Japanese-American Nurseryman's Life in California: Floriculture and Family, 1883-1992," an oral history conducted in 1992 by Suzanne B. Riess, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, 136.

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