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“We are Jamaicans. We are Brothers”: History, Brotherhood, and Independence in Kerry Young’s *Pao*

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“We are Jamaicans. We are Brothers”: History, Brotherhood, and Independence in Kerry Young’s *Pao*

Cover Page Acknowledgments

This article began as a book review for SX Salon. I owe a tremendous debt to the participants of the 31st Annual West Indian Literatures Conference, which took place in Miami in 2012. Particularly, Kelly Baker Josephs, Winnifred Brown-Glaude, Simone A. J. Alexander, and Daphne Lamothe provided me with invaluable and incisive feedback on an earlier incarnation of this work and have been my interlocutors as I move forward in the larger book project. My additional thanks to Patricia J. Saunders and the reviewers of this article whose questions and prodding have helped me produce a stronger piece of work.

“This is a story within a story—so slippery at the edges that one wonders when and where it started and whether it will ever end.”

Michel-Rolph Trouillot

The story of the Chinese in Jamaica is, in part, to borrow from Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, a story within a story.¹ It is a history of ebbs and flows, of migration created and maintained by the violence of first colonial, then neo-colonial and American imperial projects. It is an archive of documentation of trade and movement, official and unofficial “records” that authorize and legitimize the operations of capitalism by the nation state. It is accumulated tales of exploitation and abusive labor practices in which the Chinese are merely supporting characters, just another “raced” labor force facilitating colonial expansion of western European empires and later the United States’ efforts to achieve hemispheric dominance. This paper is a continuation of my interests in interventions made by Chinese Jamaican writers to reimagine and participate in national histories. Trouillot claims that silences enter “the process of historical production at four crucial moments: the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)” (26). Chinese Jamaican writers create tapestries of fable, myth, and memory that include tales of the quotidian to generate new sources and archives to address silences, battle Orientalist discourses and racist stereotypes, fill some of the aporias in historical narratives, and demonstrate that they are a part of, not apart from, Jamaican national history. These cobbled together texts are more than appeals for inclusion. They interrupt the logic and operations of the machines of history by disrupting and challenging narratives that exclude or relegate Chinese participation in nation building in the Caribbean Basin to a footnote.

In Benítez-Rojo's introduction to *The Repeating Island*, he describes the Caribbean as “a cultural sea” without boundary or center (4, 270). He privileges the “chaos” of the archipelago with its “discontinuous conjunctions” of “unstable condensations, turbulences, whirlpools, clumps of bubbles, frayed seaweed, sunken galleons, crashing breakers, flying fish, seagull squawks, downpours, nighttime phosphorescences, eddies and pools, uncertain voyages of signification; in short a field of observation quite in tune with the objectives of chaos” (2). The Caribbean is “a paradoxical fractal form extending indefinitely through a finite world” (270). The Caribbean, Benítez-Rojo argues, and its mechanisms cannot be

¹ This work was originally given as a talk at the 31st Annual West Indian Literatures Conference at The University of Miami October 11-13, 2012, and comes out of a larger project that takes up the literary and cultural expression of Chinese Caribbean subjects.

“diagrammed in conventional dimensions” but requires an equally chaotic manual to discern its “network of codes and subcodes” (18). For example, Benítez-Rojo cites Pedro Menéndez de Avilés as one of the early architects of the Caribbean machine, specifically his role in creating *la flota*, the fleet system. He reads *la flota*, a fleet of forty-nine ships, as a mechanism that “coupled” the Atlantic to the Pacific (7). Extending this argument, we can read Avilés’ *la flota* as creating the need for ingress and egress through the Isthmus Railroad/Canal. It is a mechanism whose “eddies and pools” invoke geographical and national boundaries... more machines. These machines, produced in conjunction with systems of governance, movement, and relations, did not halt the production of prior machines, but with each articulation, they became more intricately interwoven. The fleet created and necessitated the development of the canal, labor systems, commerce, treaties, laws, and doctrines.

Benítez-Rojo’s exegetical model of proliferating connection helps me read Kerry Young’s first novel, *Pao*, as a text that pulls together what he refers to as the supersyncretic effects produced out of the interlocking industrial, commercial, political, and ideological machines that are a part of the larger Caribbean machine.² *Pao* coadjutes seemingly disparate political and commercial entities and forces us to rethink the ways we discuss the Chinese diaspora in the history of the Caribbean. Taking this cue, we can reject reductive discursive models that analyze diaspora in terms of flows between mainlands and islands, islands and islands, between nations, nations and labor, labor and ships, ships and waterways.

The flow of Chinese bodies to Jamaica began in earnest mid-nineteenth century and was facilitated by the abolition of slavery and the need for replacement labor. The bulk of these Chinese immigrants were Hakka, from the Guangdong region of southeastern China. The Hakka, or “guest people,” were known for their migratory practices and cohesion as a group; yet, each wave, each generation of immigrants, had a different relationship to both Jamaica and China. With “homeland” no longer viable or desirable as a site of return, differences gave way to connection and affinity based on their experiences as *diasporic Chinese* and eventually, for many, as *Jamaican Chinese* (Look Lai “Asian Diasporas” 45-47).³

² Ricardo Donato Salvatore’s “Imperial Mechanics: South America’s Hemispheric Integration in the Machine Age” and Elaine Stratford et. al’s “Envisioning the Archipelago” were incredibly helpful, if not essential, to my thinking through the interconnectedness and porosity of the machines of empire operating in the Caribbean basin.

³ Andrew Wilson’s “Introduction” to *The Chinese in the Caribbean* reminds us that the “contemporaneous migrations systems that directed the Chinese migrants out from China into the global labor market were not identical parts of the same ‘Chinese diaspora’” but movements influenced by regional and changing market economic developments and demands (ix). See also Walton Look Lai’s “The People from Guangdong” (2006) and “Asian Diasporas and Tropical Migration in the Age of Empire: A Comparative Overview” (2010).

Throughout their early history in Jamaica, the Chinese structurally and willfully remained on the “periphery of economic life and colonial consciousness,” but in the years leading up to and post-Independence, those who chose to stay in Jamaica became more involved with and in Jamaica’s political, social, and economic life (Look Lai “Images” 1). After Jamaica achieved its independence from British colonial administrators in 1962, many of the upper classes and petite bourgeoisie, classes that the Chinese had moved into through micro business entrepreneurship, were motivated by self-interest to emigrate. By 1972, Jamaica’s Chinese population, which had been second in size only to that of Cuba, had reduced by half.⁴ However, the entire population of Chinese immigrants and Jamaican born Chinese did not leave post-Independence and Kerry Young’s 2011 novel, *Pao*, takes up a fictionalized narrative of one who chose to stay.⁵

PAO

Yang Pao, the novel’s central protagonist, does not leave in the face of social and political transformation post-Independence, but embraces Jamaica as home. Pao emigrates as a child with his family, an older brother Xiuquan and his mother, from Guangdong China to Jamaica in 1938, a year marked by national violence and upheaval in both China and Jamaica. Pao’s father had been a liberation fighter alongside his close friend Zhang and died in the attempt to extricate China from foreign control. The family leaves a China that is reeling from political chaos, poverty and natural disasters in search of economic and political stability.⁶ Zhang, we discover, has used his fighting skills, originally employed to help free the Chinese peasant from the “tyranny of war lords and foreigners,” to set himself up in the protection and enforcement business in the underworld of Jamaica’s

⁴ Easton Lee, Chinese Jamaican poet, writer, actor, and retired Anglican minister writes that the Hakka are “known for their hard work, industry, adaptability and for their nomadic tendencies,” but “when things don’t suit them, they move on.” He notes that with Independence, and later Michael Manley’s turn to explicitly socialist politics, the “fear of Socialism and rumours of Communism” frightened many and “true to their Hakka heritage, they moved on” (2008).

⁵ See Li Anshan’s “Survival, Adaptation, and Integration: Origins and Evolution of the Chinese Community in Jamaica (1854-1962)” and Gail Bouknight-Davis’ “Chinese Economic Development and Ethnic Formation in Jamaica” in *The Chinese in the Caribbean*.

⁶ In 1938 China’s political and economic landscape was marked with a convergence of: an exponential increase in population; conflicts with Japan (Sino-Japanese War, The Rape of Nanking 1937-1938); continued domestic struggles with Western powers for sovereignty; and natural disasters in the form of floods (The China Floods of 1931 which claimed 4,000,000 lives, the flooding of the Yangtze River in 1911 and 1935, claiming 245,000 and the 1938 flooding of the Yellow River, resulting in the loss of 700,000 more lives). For more see Ping-Ti Ho’s *Studies in the Population of China, 1368-1953*.

Chinatown. The Jamaica that greets Pao and his family is both a land of promise and disaffection.

The novel charts the evolution of the central protagonist's political consciousness, which is facilitated by the teachings of his surrogate father, Uncle Zhang, and his romantic relationships with Fay Wong and Gloria Campbell. Fay Wong is the "proper" black Chinese daughter of a grocery store mogul who represents a link to upward mobility and respectability, a woman with whom he can sire children that can carry his name. Gloria Campbell is the "not so proper" black prostitute and madam with whom he has an "outside" child. When we meet Pao, he has become heir apparent to Uncle Zhang's underworld empire, using his legitimate and not so legitimate connections as a kind of Chinese Robin Hood, if you will, to right wrongs. Specifically, he helps young women and girls who have been abused and exploited by rapacious Americans and Brits. Readers are made privy to the central protagonist's struggle to define himself in the contexts of patriarchal systems, literal and symbolic genealogies that require constant adjudication. Through his eyes and voice, we bear witness to a developing political consciousness and nation.

This article focuses on a short chapter entitled "Doctrine" that appears early in the novel. To begin with the obvious, "Doctrine" is epistemological. "Doctrine" is taught: a principle or set of principles; a principle of law based on an accretion of precedents; fundamental governmental policies dealing with international relations and often encompassing military principles and strategies. The chapter opens with our narrator, Pao, as a young boy, describing a commotion caused by dockworkers who were able to "bring the whole of downtown to a standstill" in their protest for better pay and working conditions and against the imprisonment of Alexander (Busta) Bustamante for suspicion of inciting the strikes and riots of 1938.⁷ Pao also notes other disturbances, specifically violence against the Chinese. Uncle Zhang tells Pao that the disturbances are "not the Jamaicans' fault[;] they just hungry. He say the British set the slaves free but "they didn't give them no education or training or any jobs other than the same ones they was doing on the plantation all them years for nothing" (Young 29).⁸ Zhang educates Pao on the history of colonial labor

⁷ In an attempt to improve wages and working conditions, dockworkers launched successful strikes in 1938, compelling colonial administrators to bend to their collective pressure. In *Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion*, Abigail Bakan claims that with the nation's dependence on agroindustry, "the strike presented itself as part of the organic ideology of the working class," albeit preventing "a more coherent 'trade union consciousness'" (Bakan 121-122).

⁸ Three significant instances of anti-Chinese violence occurred in Jamaica. The first, in 1918, was widespread, reaching rural parishes and was the result of a love triangle gone wrong. The riots of 1938 and 1965 were confined primarily to the City of Kingston, and hostilities were not limited to the Chinese inhabitants but directed toward ethnic and racial groups perceived as part of a prosperous "middle-class." Accused of dominating small trade, "clannishness," cheating

relations in Jamaica and introduces him to Marcus Garvey's critique of colonialism and American imperialism. After acknowledging that Garvey is primarily concerned with "the African's plight," Zhang draws connections between the conditions of the poor African and the Chinese peasant, who "is right now fighting for *liberty, equality and fraternity*" (Young 29, emphasis mine). For Zhang, the Africans and Chinese are "brothers in arms" (Young 30). Zhang's platitudes and tales of peasant rebellion, littered throughout the text, are part of a *bricolage*, a cobbling together of voices and narratives of revolution from both African and Asian Diasporas. At the level of intertextuality, we have passages from Sun Tzu, lyrics from Lord Creator's "Independent Jamaica," alongside quotations from Karl Marx, Marcus Garvey, and Michael Manley interspersed throughout the narrative. The concatenation of these voices is the soundtrack for Pao's emerging political consciousness. Pao's voice joins with others to become a counterpoint to neo-colonial and American imperial doctrines.

From the historical context of the Kingston dockworker strike of 1938 and what could be read as explicit political dogma, the narrative action shifts to a scene with Pao and his friends hanging out on the corner of Barry Street debating on whether or not to confront another "bwoy" who is "well out his proper jurisdiction" (Young 30). After a brief discussion of Pao's "inheritance," his position of relative power as putative heir of one of the heads of the underworld, they notice:

two white men stand up on the corner talk to one another. Then one of them turn 'round and hawk and spit right on top of the fruit on a nearby handcart. Just as *casual and careless* as you like. And then the two of them carry on talk like nothing happen. The higgler turn 'round mad as hell when he see his business spoil up like that, but when him see it is a white man him stop dead in his tracks. Too late though. The white man see the look on his face and slap him down.

The white man shout, 'Who you looking at nigger?' and then start take off him belt to give the man a hiding. Him so irate he don't even care that his Panama hat fall off his head and float into the gutter. We run 'cross the street and Hampton cover up the higgler with his own body and I jump on the white man. Before he could even lean back to swing the belt, he fall on the ground with

customers, and insurance fraud through arson, Chinese immigrants' attempts to preserve "culture" were consistently read as threats to a coherent Black/Brown Jamaican nationalism. See Howard Johnson's "The Anti-Chinese Riots of 1918 in Jamaica," Kevin A. Yelvington's "The 1965 Anti-Chinese Riot in Jamaica," and Hu-DeHart's "Indispensable Enemy or Convenient Scapegoat? A Critical Examination of Sinophobia in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1870s to 1930s."

me on top of him punching him in the face. Him friend drag me up, just when I hear Panama saying something 'bout teaching the Chink and his Nigger friends a lesson. That is when Judge Finley step in.

'I wouldn't do that, mister. That boy, his papa is Uncle Zhang, Chinatown Zhang.'

Panama hesitate just long enough for me to get the strength for a roundhouse kick just like Zhang teach me. Then I punch to the throat with my forearm and when Panama on the ground I stand back and say, 'I am not a Chink and these boys are not Niggers. We are Jamaicans. We are Brothers.' (Young 33, emphasis mine)

There are two threads of inquiry in this textual moment that are my foci for this article. First, I am interested in the representation of "the higgler" as male, especially given the dominance of women in this particular informal market system in the historical moment in which the scene is set. While not precluding men from this role, from the development of this local market that began with provision grounds allotted slaves by their masters, labor and trade through higgling has been dominated by women, specifically black women. The representation of the battle against neo-colonial and American imperial projects as a struggle between men and boys in the market place solicits the obvious relationship between masculinity and resistance, but the choice to cast this battle as solely the province of men is a fascinating one. The second thread is the reduction of the aggressive American to his "Panama" hat and what that imagery does in terms of invoking a history of labor in the Caribbean Basin. More specifically it invokes a history of colonial, national and imperial jockeying for power in this region, and of continuous flows of bodies, capital, and ideology. In doing so, this scene connects technologies of colonial and neo-colonial basin economics to what I read as rebellious political and economic strategies. Through our central protagonist and his friends' battle with "Panama," explicit links are made between literal and abstract mechanisms of economic and political control. The Panama Railroad and Canal, with their superadded base structures of American imperial and neo-colonial forces are put in direct conflict with rebellious market interventions: rolling strikes, informal marketing/trade in the forms of higgling, and explicitly illegal gangster or rather *lumpenproletariat* activities. Seemingly insurmountable forces of capital that would make the project of independence impossible meet up and, at least temporarily, are challenged by articulations of resistance from the local.

THE HIGGLER

As part of an internal informal market system that links the capital city to local agrarian production, the higgler is part of a thriving domestic economy that is not dependent upon foreign agents. Historically denied access to education and employment outside of domestic labor, higgling enabled the poor black women to supplement their family incomes through “[p]etty trade” (Wong 507). The higgler’s body is a rebellious one, forever “matter out of place” and historically subjected to a continuous mapping of sexual and racial stereotypes. In terms of cultural representations of the higgler, Krista Thomson notes in “Black Skin, Blue Eyes: Visualizing Blackness in Jamaican Art, 1922-1944,” that early colonial depictions of the black market woman rendered her with “as much representational particularity as an ant trailing along a landscape” (4). The market woman was a set piece, an exoticized, bawdy element of pastoral imagery deployed to market the island and its economic potential to civilized and civilizing Anglo American publics.

In the years leading up to Independence, the market woman remained a figure onto which ambivalent projections of nationalism consistently converged with discourses of race and class. In an interview with Charles V. Carnegie, Sidney Mintz describes being taken aback by an unexpected diatribe made by Norman Manley in a speech in 1954 in which Manley stated that he found the Chinese “socially objectionable, as outsiders, as an obstacle to Jamaican development” (150). Mintz expresses his shock at Manley’s harangue, asserting that Manley “ought to have known what was wrong—politically as well as ethically—with his argument” (150). Mintz links Manley’s invectives to Eddie Burke’s contemporaneous “rhapsodizing about the contribution of the Chinese to Jamaican culture,” a rhapsodizing which pairs the black female higgler to the analogously raced Asian Informal Commercial Importer (ICI) who also participates in these informal market spaces. Burke described this market as “the perfect combination, because on the one hand you have the big strapping handsome black women, with their enormous breasts and their powerful arms, and on the other you have these tiny little, petite, doll-like creatures with very good brains for mathematics” (151). For Mintz, these comments – Manley’s anxiety about Chinese Jamaicans as perpetually outside and a threat to the national “family,” and Burke’s reduction of these two mercantile positions occupied by women (the black higgler and the Chinese ICI) to figures consistent within a network of colonial stereotype – are surprising, not because they are incommensurate with then contemporary discourses of race and nation, but because they were made during a historical moment when the Chinese Jamaican community “was being transformed from an ethnic enclave to a more active and

engaged part of Jamaican society” through their growing visibility and participation in Jamaican political and popular culture (151). For this reader, and arguably Mintz as well, it becomes a question of what bodies (and when and how they) can be visible in the articulation of a Jamaican nationalistic ethos. In Manley’s speech, the Chinese Jamaican body is visible as political pariah and economic parasite. With Burke, we have a rendering of market practices that locate the Chinese ICI and the black female higgler in a continuum of stereotype, with the hyperfeminized, orientalist, “doll-like,” passive, Asian woman on one end of the spectrum, and the masculinized, “big strapping handsome,” black female threat to normative conservative gender roles on the other.

Because of their objectionable independence, higglers are a threat to colonial and neo-colonial forces. They interrupt the flow of capital from and between colonial administrators pre-Independence and neo-colonial and American imperial authorities post-Independence. Consequently, these women are simultaneously policed by agents of the State tasked with the job of protecting outside/neo-colonial interests and by the communities they serve through conservative discourses and conventions of race, sex, sexuality, and class. As women of trade, higglers defy the roles black women of the middle and upper classes are given to play, and as Brown-Glaude notes, their performance of identity in the public space is riddled with ambivalences (96-7). Young’s *Pao*, deploying the higgler as male, flies in the face of historical fact, and threatens to reduce the market struggle to a masculinist drama.⁹ The evacuation of the black woman from the market specularizes the castrating effects of colonial and neo-colonial capital formations – albeit hyperbolically and redundantly so. Again, it is the question of colonial and neo-colonial operations of gender and how they make the raced body visible. To cast the higgler as male specifically in 1938 presents us with questions: What does it mean to represent this struggle in the Kingston marketplace as a struggle between men? What confluence of national and gendered subjectivities are being deployed, and to what end?¹⁰

As a focalizing axial figure, *Pao*’s higgler and the adolescents’ protection of him, produces an explicit critique of Anglo American neo-colonial business

⁹ Brown-Glaude notes that exigencies of our contemporary economic reality have produced a rise in male participation in “higglering.” Additionally, Chinese Jamaican participation has facilitated international linkages between micro businesses in Jamaica and Taiwan and Hong Kong through Informal Commercial Importers (ICIs).

¹⁰ Sydney Mintz, Douglass Hall, and Irving Rouse’s *The Origins of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System*, Lorna Simmonds’ “Slave Higglering in Jamaica 1780-1834,” and Winnie Brown-Glaude’s work on Jamaican market women have been invaluable in understanding signifiers of economic tension in this novel. According to Brown, the higgler, in conjunction with her modern counterpart ICI, are part of resilient informal economies that are expanding, not contracting, and that continue to provide employment to the poor, especially poor women in developing countries.

interests, as well as the residual colonial discourses of race and power that make *careless* and *casual* abuses possible, that make *carelessness* and *casualness* a part of American imperial doctrine. In the ideological terrain of Young's novel, Kingston's Barry Street becomes a theatre of war in which the black male is cast as entrepreneur, victim, protector, and self-sacrificing hero. In this battle, the traditionally feminized Asian male performs the role of hero, with a superior "Asian" fighting style (à la Bruce Lee) handed down from a generation of rebels and used to protect an informal economy of Kingston. Within this jurisdiction, a *lumpenproletariat* zone with blurred boundaries between legal and illegal trade, Pao and his friends have the power to protect the higgler, the embodiment of local trade and perpetual thorn in the formal market's side. The male higgler takes up the symbolic role of Jamaica within networks of power. Traditionally, patriarchal rhetoric relies on using a feminized "land" as symbol of innocence, that which has to be protected from the onslaught of predators. *Pao* presents us with a more fluid black subject, existing in simultaneous positions of victim, protector and rhetorician who, along with the historically stereotyped and emasculated Asian male, collaborate to undermine the oppressor. It is Judge Finley who addresses the American and distracts him long enough for Pao to act. It is Hampton who sacrifices his own body to cover and protect the traditionally feminized symbol of domestic economy, the higgler. Together, this triumvirate represents the uncontainable element of the *lumpenproletariat* as an element that exhibits consciousness of its own threat to the dominant order.

While it is tempting to read this scene as a triumph of the underdog protecting kith and kin, we can never forget that this act of resistance is facilitated by Pao's attenuated privilege, his tertiary position vis à vis race and class in Jamaica. Outside of the black-brown/white racial formation of Jamaica, the Chinese benefitted from their peripheral status but also suffered from being perceived as perpetually clannish and marginal to political life. Pao's in-between and outsider-ness privilege affords him mobility: the ability to take advantage of the American's hesitation and throw that roundhouse kick that divests the American of his symbol of power, his "Panama" hat.

THE "PANAMA" HAT

"[A]s brazen a bit of imperial land-grabbing as is recorded in modern history."
 – William Appleman Williams¹¹

The second thread I want to pick up is the reduction of the belligerent American to his "Panama hat," whose representation shifts from his being referred to as an

¹¹ Qtd in Julie Greene's *The Canal Builders* (6).

American in a Panama hat to simply “Panama.” The hat becomes a loaded signifier of overlapping and intersecting labor histories that floats unceremoniously down a gutter waterway. This image locates the struggle in the Kingston marketplace within the same colonial machines and territories, literal and symbolic, as the struggle for control the Isthmus/waterway trade between the Pacific and Atlantic going back to the 1500s. To invoke Panama is to invoke the history of alternating seats of power and the flow of slave and indentured labor in, between, and from all over the Caribbean Basin.¹² The canal construction, from 1904 to 1914, with death tolls in the thousands, was supposed to stand as testament to technological achievement of modern man and to the hemispheric ascendancy of the United States. Ultimately, the railroad and canal are colonial and imperial machines that produced and reproduced the Chinese Caribbean subject.

With the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands in 1898 and conquest of the Philippines in 1902, the United States felt it imperative to protect its newly acquired territories in the Pacific Rim.¹³ To control the Isthmus was equal parts protection of domestic and newly acquired interests and mastery over maritime trade between the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Oceans (LaFeber 13, Baxter 8). Once the United States set its sights on the Isthmus waterway, there was no stopping the mechanisms of conquest, law, and commerce. In 1903, when Colombia rejected America’s offer to build a canal, the United States used eight of its naval vessels to support a revolution. Within weeks of its declaration of independence from Colombia, the newly formed Panama signed the Philippe Bunau-Varilla penned treaty, a treaty that obviously benefited the United States (Strong 114-5).¹⁴

The 1903 treaty accorded the president of the United States, in this case Theodore Roosevelt, with enormous power over the Zone. It gave the United States “in perpetuity the use, occupation and control of a zone of land and land underwater for the construction, maintenance, operation, sanitation and protection of said canal of the width of ten miles extending to the distance of five miles on each side of the center of the route of the canal to be constructed” (Article II,

¹² In Lok Siu’s “Migration Stories...” she uses the concept of “serial migration” to argue against constructions of Chinese identity that deploy the trope of “homeland.” Instead, she suggests that practices of migration should be the locus of identity formation. Lok Siu reads Panama as a nodal point through which the Asian diaspora flowed into and throughout the Caribbean (160-1).

¹³ The United States’ first entrance into the Pacific Rim took shape in the tripartite “protectorate” established at the 1889 Berlin Conference shared between the United States, Britain, and Germany, over Samoa. Samoa, thus, is considered “America’s first overseas possession” (Collin 67).

¹⁴ When accused of aiding insurrection and political chaos in Colombia, Roosevelt claimed he “did not lift [his] finger to incite the revolutionists... [He] simply ceased to stamp out the different revolutionary fuses that were already burning” (qtd. in Collin 269).

Convention Between the United States and the Republic of Panama 1904). The treaty also contained a proviso granting the United States “in perpetuity the use, occupation and control over any other lands and waters outside of the one above described which may be necessary and convenient for the construction, maintenance, operation,” extending U.S. sovereignty three marine miles into both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea (Article III). This “brazen bit of imperial land grabbing” was made possible by and through doctrines of conquest, in this case the Monroe Doctrine: “a vaguely worded but passionate icon of American independence from European hegemony” (Collin 53). With this ambiguously defined code underwriting the project of conquest, Roosevelt was empowered to declare that any encroachment upon United States territories or interference with its efforts to achieve dominance in the western hemisphere, particularly by Western Europe, would be met with force (Collin 54).¹⁵

Despite emigration from China not becoming legal until 1891, in the mid-nineteenth century, many Chinese looked to California and Panama for financial security offered by the gold rush and work on the railroad and canal. The first large group of 267 Chinese immigrants arrived in Jamaica from Hong Kong on July 30, 1854, just months before another 205 arrived from Panama (Patrick Lee 80, Lowe 87). That year the Panama Railroad Company secured three ships full of “coolie” labor. The Chinese labor force had been pacified by opium, the supply of which was halted, to the chagrin of railroad administrators, by what they deemed arbitrary legislation coming from “[s]ome anonymous, grubby, ink-stained bookkeeper in New York who did not know a spiking maul from a fielding pin, who had a head full of trash instead of brains [and] had decided to institute certain economies which had fatal results” (Totten).¹⁶ When the opium supply ran out, mass suicides began. 125 Chinese men hung themselves in trees, mostly with their own queues; another 300 threw themselves on their own machetes or crude makeshift spikes; some drowned themselves by weighing their clothes down with stones and wading into rivers and inlets; and still others paid their Malay co-workers to assist them to their deaths with a bullet or machete. Many of those who did not commit suicide died from the poor living conditions, dysentery, or malaria. Fearing death from yellow fever, the remaining 205 undernourished and

¹⁵ Apologists like Collin admit the historical fact of “American impatience and bullying” but claim that “American proposals to Colombia for a Panama canal were *reasonable*, *reasonably* negotiated, and represented a *fair consensus* of Latin American, United States, and European views on how to build a technologically difficult international waterway in the isthmus. There were differences about whether the canal should be under international or American control, but such issues were resolvable through *normal diplomatic negotiations*” (xi, emphasis mine). One cannot help but read the repetition of the term “reasonable” and inclusion of phrases such as “fair consensus” and “normal diplomatic negotiations” with suspicion.

¹⁶ Congressional legislation of opium use and importation began in March 1905, with *The Opium Exclusion Act* passed in February 1909, and culminating in *The Harrison Act* of 1914.

sick Chinese workers demanded to leave Panama and arrived in Jamaica on November 1 and 18 of 1854, 195 on the *Vampire* and the remaining ten on the *Theresa Jane*. Of this 205, less than fifty survived (Lowe 87).¹⁷

When we cull historical narratives, we see consistent and unsurprising revisionist readings of the relationship between Chinese laborers and the Isthmus Railroad/Canal. In some, there are explicit refusals to acknowledge the brutal conditions under which these bodies labored and misrepresentations that fatalities “among the construction workers were not large” (Hammond 23).¹⁸ More disturbing still is the attribution of blame to the Chinese for their own deaths: “[They] resisted medical treated, exposed themselves to bad weather, smoked opium, and eventually, in a panic-stricken state, many of them committed suicide” (Hammond 23-24). These claims often came with the caveat that the Chinese failure to adapt and adjust was genetic (Otis 35-6). In *History of the Panama Railroad*, Fessenden Otis goes so far as to claim that

every possible care taken which would conduce to their health and comfort – their hill-rice, their tea, and opium...had been imported with them—they were carefully housed and attended to—and it was expected that they would prove efficient...But they had been engaged up on the work scarcely a month before almost the entire body became affected with a melancholic, suicidal tendency, and scores of them ended their unhappy existence by their own hands. (155)

Otis represents this tragic loss of life as a product of inherent, natural, racial, weaknesses and “tendencies” of the Chinese. Canal administrators, in this version of history, get to cast themselves as saviors protecting the Chinese laborers from

¹⁷ Of those fifty, Chin Pa-kung (Robert Jackson Chin) opened a wholesale operation in downtown Kingston on Pechon Street. Later, Chang Si-Pah and Lyn Sam opened grocery stores. These three men paved the way for Chinese small mercantilism in Jamaica and provided support and guidance for successive Chinese immigrants. See Patrick Lee’s “Chinese Arrival in Jamaica” (76).

¹⁸ David McCullough addresses rumors about labor on the Isthmus, tales of “a dead man for every railroad tie between Colón and Panama City. In some versions it was a dead Irishman; in others, a dead Chinese” (36) and quickly deems them “non-sense,” but allows that “from what many thousands of people have seen with their own eyes, it seemed believable enough” (37). The Company insisted that less than a thousand laborers died in the construction of the Canal, yet these were numbers associated with white laborers who “represented only a fraction of the total force employed over the five years of construction” (37). While the company failed to keep “systematic records” on the deaths of non-white workers, there are copious records detailing company’s difficulty managing sick and dying employees and their burial which serves as a counterpoint to this deficient accounting (37-8).

themselves by posting guards near the labor camps to “prevent the trees from bearing such grim fruit” (Martínez 44).

American canal administrators also found themselves mired in the ideological and juridical inconsistencies of proposing Chinese labor be brought into the Canal Zone while America prevented Chinese entry to its continental territories. Canal administrators, in an attempt to avoid political interference, turned to the West Indies to provide the bulk of the brawn needed to complete the project. In Frederic J. Haskin's 1914 *The Panama Canal*, published the year the canal was completed, we see slippage between racist and gendered discourses surrounding the laboring body. After citing the failure of Chinese labor venture, he contemplates the merits of the “West Indian Negro” laborer, musing that in spite of the West Indian's “bad reputation” as physically incompetent and intractable, “he lived down this bad reputation in large part, and, although it must be admitted that he is shiftless always, inconstant frequently, and exasperating as a rule, he developed into a good workman” (Haskin 154). Haskin declares that the successful transformation of the West Indian from “shiftless” reprobate to ideal worker was due to the “firm but gentle guidance of the master American hand” (Haskin 162). In a fascinating turn, Haskin comments on the manners of the West Indian who would respond to questions with a “‘Oh, yes, Sir,’ or ‘Oh, no, Sir,’ or if he has not understood, ‘Beg pardon, Sir.’ He would no more omit the honorific than a Japanese maiden addressing her father would forget to call him ‘Honorable’” (Haskin 157-8). The representation of these bodies reflects the explicitly raced and gendered nationalism at the core of American imperialist rhetoric. In another conflation of blackness, Asianness, and gendered labor, the West Indian negro, with training, becomes as reliable as “our own American cottonfield hand” and as respectful of American authority as a Japanese maiden. Like the American Negro, the West Indian male is made tractable by colonial formations of power and white supremacist violence. America had tamed the black brute where the British had failed. Like the Asian female, the West Indian Negro is rendered silent and subservient to his logical and natural betters. Read as paradoxically feminized and hyper masculinized, the West Indian Negro was bound by discourses of biological inferiority, genealogical servitude, and filial piety. In its bid for global domination, we have a representation of America as a successor to, if not a better colonizer than, the quintessential colonizer, the British Empire.

Actual historical events are less amenable to constructions of this “raced labor” as passive. Chinese “Coolie” labor, like their slave predecessors, has a long history of rebellion in the Americas and Jamaican laborers were actually quite reticent to participate in the American canal project.¹⁹ Memories of the French

¹⁹ Evelyn Hu-DeHart lists the strategies of resistance in which Chinese “coolies” participated: “they rebelled individually and collectively; they committed suicide (by plunging into wells or

canal project's collapse and abandonment of Jamaican laborers still haunted Jamaican cultural memory at the time of the American takeover (Mack 538). Further, in April 1905, 150 Jamaican laborers rioted in what "appears to have been well-justified protest against poor food and unwarranted delays in the distribution of wages" (Mack 541). In addition to inequities in pay – black labor was paid on the silver system, and their white counterparts were paid in gold, there were stark differences in housing, supplies and types of labor accorded laborers by categories of race.

The history of the Isthmus waterway is a bloody one. The Panama hat deployed in Young's novel symbolizes a nodal point where Chinese diasporic subjects came in direct contact with brutal voracious technologies of empire and their proliferating machines. *Pao* presents us with a complex splicing together of gender, race, and national discourses produced in a microcosmic theater of war on Barry Street in Kingston, a battle that the young "bwoys," albeit provisionally, win.²⁰

CHINESE JAMAICAN MASCULINITY AND NATIONALISM – INDEPENDENCE SONG

Pao is equal parts bildungsroman, anti-heroic narrative, and romance; and in the tradition of heroic narratives, the heteronormative romance stands symbolically for a point along in the evolution of our central protagonist. With his mother a relative non-presence in the novel, Pao is ostensibly the child of two men: his deceased father and his father's comrade Zhang. As a "fixer," Pao helps young girls and women who have been sexually and physically victimized, securing support for their education and their illegitimate children. This does not mean that we have a candidate for sainthood. Later in the novel, while "negotiating" with then Sergeant Clifton Brown, Pao attempts to leverage Brown's homosexuality against him. Brown meets this threat with silence. It dawns on Pao "what a hard life Clifton making for himself and what a dangerous place Jamaica is for a man like him...what [he] realize is that all Clifton really want is to be with some people who know what he is and not looking to knife him over it" (Young 71). The two men, allied through simultaneous insider- and outsider-ness, become friends and together they protect their specious business interests. But they also

overdosing on opium); they torched buildings and crops; then engaged in various forms of sabotage; frequently they ran away" (97). See also Moon-Ho Jung's *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* and Lisa Yun's *The Coolie Speaks*.

²⁰ One historical event that occurred in Panama in 1856 resonates with the "battle" in Young's *Pao*. Of approximately 900 passengers waiting to board the Pacific Mail Line steamer bound for California, one drunken "hooligan," Jack Oliver, "helped himself" to a melon from a black fruit vendor's cart. When pursued by the vendor demanding payment, Oliver drew a gun and a riot ensued. Oliver along with fifteen other Americans and two Panamanians died. Thirty others were seriously wounded (Martínez 47).

protect other sexual minorities, like Marguerite Lopez (“Margy”), a young girl who gets sexually involved with a murderous British white girl. The two help Margy escape legal and social persecution; they protect her from being condemned for participating in the “perversions of white people” (Young 127). Pao knows that “judge and jury” would punish Margy and not the white girl who committed the murders; he knows that “judge and jury” want to imagine Jamaica as a strong, brown and heterosexual nation; he knows that “judge and jury” will not tolerate such “nastiness” from a Jamaican girl. As men Pao and Sergeant Brown benefit from having access to heteronormative patriarchal forms of power; and yet, this is attenuated privilege. Pao may be inside heteropatriarchal normative structures because of his marriage, mistress, and inheritance from Zhang, but he is outside of Jamaican “middlebrow” sensibility and politics because of his Chineseness and questionable business practices. Sergeant Brown is tasked with the job of policing boundaries of law and respectability, but his own sexual desires and practices are in direct violation of law and respectability.²¹

At the close of the chapter, “Doctrine,” Pao regales his uncle Zhang with the tale of his having beaten down the arrogant American, but Zhang does not allow Pao to revel in fantasies of individual heroism. Zhang reminds Pao that responsibility is with the “masses...not individual men” to free themselves from the “yoke of oppression” and the “tyranny of warlords and the domination of foreigners” (Young 34). Zhang, as is his pedagogical practice, repeats stories of revolution to a young Pao every night: “Zhang say the revolution is a war between an army of workers and peasants determined to overthrow the feudal warlords and foreign powers; and the imperialists and counter-revolutionaries who wish to suppress them. That is how Zhang talk” (Young 30). Zhang passes revolutionary discourse on to Pao and in doing so provides him, and the reader, with global and historical interlocutors for the struggles in the dockyards and contrapuntal narratives to Pao’s battle in the streets. Pao invariably and unconsciously repeats this pedagogical practice with his own children.

Zhang’s rhetoric of revolution is made even more complex by his relationship to the local and national economies. We learn that Zhang gained power by sorting out conflict and garnered a reputation for toughness and compassion through displays of simultaneous barbarity and humanity (Young 31). Specifically, after arriving to Kingston, he makes a name for himself by hanging a black man upside down for burning down a local Chinese shop, but upon discovering the arson was the result of a fraught romantic relationship between the man and the shopkeeper’s daughter, Zhang cuts the man down and nurses him back to health and the two become best friends (Young 32). With these two acts, Zhang becomes “Uncle Zhang” and thus “Uncle Law” comes into force.

²¹ Here, I refer to Jamaica’s *The Offences Against the Persons Act*, which prohibits “buggery” under Articles, 76, 77 and 79.

This “Uncle Law” gangsterism magnifies the brute force brought to bear on the diasporic subject. Gangsterism, after all, is at the core of imperialistic logic as evidenced by Roosevelt’s infamous claim that he “took the Canal Zone and let Congress debate it” and his open threats to any European power that would interfere with America’s imperialistic ambitions (Ryan ix, emphasis mine).²² Uncle Law relies on the specularization and constant threat of violence; it is both a direct response to larger social structures of power and a counter capital formation. Zhang embodies the very real involvement of the Chinese in the underworld in Kingston, where freemason societies (Tongs) controlled many of the illegal gambling houses, nightclubs and were very much involved in Jamaica’s music industry (Lowe 94, Thomson 225).

For Marx, the *lumpenproletariat* was disposable social refuse incapable of “class consciousness.”²³ It is a “dangerous class” of degenerates, beggars, pimps, prostitutes, petty thieves, and the chronically unemployed and unemployable. More in the tradition of Mikhail Bakunin, a contemporary and critic of Marx, Frantz Fanon located hope and possibility in this population, claiming that revolution cannot be achieved without this class because they were the most capable and ready to fight, could connect rural to urban pockets of resistance, and would be better allies than enemies.²⁴ Fanon explains that the presumed moral flexibility of the *lumpenproletariat* is the main source of anxiety for leaders of both revolution and the bourgeoisie. This population, according to Fanon in *Wretched of the Earth*, can be easily enlisted to function in a counter-revolutionary capacity. Fanon speculates that the “oppressor, who never loses a chance of setting the niggers against each other,” would lose no time taking advantage of the “ignorance and incomprehension” of the *lumpenproletariat* and make them complicit in their own destruction to the detriment of all (109). The real enemy, forces of neo-colonial capital and imperialism, would then merely step back and watch as ideological structures of rebellion collapsed (109-110).

²² In the foreword to Paul B. Ryan’s 1977 *The Panama Canal Controversy: U.S. Diplomacy and Defense Interests* Thomas A. Bailey’s quotes Roosevelt’s 1911 famous dictum as well as S. I. Hayakawa, who stated of the Zone “[w]e stole it fair and square” (ix). Bailey then laments the amnesia of those who had forgotten the “benevolent role of Uncle Sam in bringing sovereignty, status, stability, sanitation, protection, and prosperity to the Panamanians” (ix).

²³ Although mentioned in *The German Ideology*, Marx refers to this dangerous class as “scum” in *The Communist Manifesto* (27) and in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852), where he describes the lumpenproletariat as irredeemable: “with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, lazzaroni, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, maquereaux [pimps], brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars — in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French call *la bohème*” (2).

²⁴ See Mikhail Bakunin’s *Marxism, Freedom and the State* in which he states that this class of “non-civilized, disinherited, wretched and illiterates” will be salvation (37).

With no loyalty to ideology, revolution, or the dominant bourgeoisie, the *lumpenproletariat's* “free agency” and unpredictability are perceived the greatest threats to leadership and successful rebellion.

Pao's family is simultaneously part of both the petite bourgeoisie and the *lumpenproletariat*. The family has legitimate entrepreneurial business interests through ownership of a shop but also not so legitimate ventures in the protection business and black-market trade of American military surplus. The higgler and gangster, in the world of Young's novel, occupy the same ontological space. They are not dispossessed fringe populations existing outside capital formations or centers of industry. In this text, rural and urban economic interests, the independent agrarian commercial worker and gangster, come together symbolically in the struggle against American imperialism. This moment crystalizes a class struggle that, according to Fanon, gives the *lumpenproletariat* purpose, and more importantly the possibility and means for their own transformation:

So the pimps, the hooligans, the unemployed and the petty criminals, urged on from behind, throw themselves into the struggle for liberation like stout working men. These classless idlers will by militant and decisive action discover the path that leads to nationhood...These workless less-than-men are rehabilitated in their own eyes and in the eyes of history. . . all the hopeless dregs of humanity, all who turn in circles between suicide and madness, will recover their balance, once more go forward, and march proudly in the great procession of the awakened nation. (104)

While potential failure of the *lumpenproletariat* to cathect to a bildung narrative that serves all underclasses is ever present, Zhang teaches Pao narratives of liberation and revolutionary struggle along with “the business.” These “idle” youngsters, initially contemplating a turf war with another idle youngster, witness an attack on the domestic economy of Jamaica and act. Gangsterism provides the young Chinese male a mode of operating that directly challenges castrating Orientalist representations of the Asian men as apolitical, passive, feminine, “less-than-men.” Pao represents evolving class-consciousness as a character that does not fully come to understand the materiality of his condition until he is older.

This *lumpen* space is not utopic. In spite of his privilege, Pao is far from immune to the mapping of discourses of race and stereotype. Pao, in a moment of discernment, describes his connection for American military surplus, Bill, as a shifty looking white boy, who “never seem to realise that I was only a boy. But then him never really look at me. He only look at the idea of me, and see Fu

Manchu” (Young 39). Pao immediately recognizes the “country” in Bill, but Bill is incapable of recognizing the “child” in Pao. In his defeat of the American, Pao may be read in the context of debilitating ambivalent stereotypes of a Chinese masculinity toggling between invincible warrior and kow-towing, passive, effeminate, and duplicitous shopkeeper. Instead, I propose we consider the “warrior ethos” embodied by Zhang, Pao, and his compatriots Judge Finley and Hampton, in conversation with Fanon’s discussion of the function of the oppressed’s dreams of muscularity. In *Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon claims that the subordinate native dreams images of strength and physical prowess to psychologically cushion against the effects of colonial oppression. The “native” has to first imagine him or herself having strength to participate in revolution of any kind. The representation of the Chinese and black men in the novel as warriors, soldiers, rebels, and gangsters allows us to locate them in a genealogy of resistance, a genealogy of violent uprisings and protests staged by proletariat and raced labor in China and the Americas.

While Zhang provides the most explicitly didactic voice, it is the women in Pao’s life who complement his “education.” Through exposure to their shifting perspectives and responses to political change, Pao comes to a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of Jamaican political life and his relationship to it. Pao’s wife, Fay, represents the mercantile class, and her response to Independence ranges from indifference to outright hostility,

especially because the newly elected prime minister was Bustamante which didn’t please her none because Busta so strong with the union. Maybe Fay worried ‘bout what going happen to her little rich girl friends from Immaculate who all married to their American—or English—educated doctor, dentist, lawyer, accountant and all them little light-skin boys that running the bank and the insurance company. Or maybe she just think that if Busta get higher wages for workers it going mean her papa business don’t do so good and she going to have to take a cut in her allowance, which is what been on her mind all along (Young 114)

Unlike Fay, whose response to Independence is modulated by self interest, Pao reads Gloria as more “enthusiastic” about Independence because she is black, speculating that “maybe it more straightforward for her, like the white man not ruling over the black man no more,” but then adds that there were those for whom Independence was not so simple as black and white, as there were “those of us that too white to be black, or too black to be white, or too Chinese to be either” (Young 115). This is one of the moments in which Pao channels a growing

understanding of the complex social tapestry produced in the colonial moment. We discover, along with Pao, that Gloria's political perspective is far more nuanced than Pao ever gives her credit. After criticizing him for living in his own "little world," she tells Pao bluntly that,

there wasn't no revolution, and the workers didn't win it. The same thing that was going on before is the same thing that is going on now. The British take all the profit from the plantations, and they still taking it. And now the Americans and the rest of them going take the big profit from the bauxite and all the hotels and factories they busy throwing up all over the place, and Jamaica going to be left exactly where we always been. (Young 118-9)

Like Zhang, Gloria teaches, and with each exchange, Pao evolves from interested observer to active participant. Independence, as an event, is foundational for Pao's political and social consciousness. He is simultaneously inside and outside celebration and critique of the developing black nation state. Eventually, Pao is able to critique foreign business interests controlling bauxite and aluminum industries. He compares Jamaicans to the "slave working to make the masa rich" (Young 196). Pao becomes reflective, lamenting personal and national "loss[es] of opportunity," and questions forms of nationalist amnesia that would elide the commercial origins of all Jamaicans, aside from the Arawaks, since "we was all imports" (Young 243).

At the conclusion of this novel, we have the problematic representation of Pao's arc of political consciousness resolving in his granddaughter, Sunita, whose name means one who is polite or well mannered in Sanskrit. She is described as this "tiny little African, Chinese, Indian baby and [Pao] think[s] to [himself], Sunita, you are Jamaica. Out of the many, you are the one. And you won't have no need to go back to Africa, or China, or India because this is where you belong, with your own identity and dignity" (Young 259). As readers we know that nation building is anything but well mannered and that political doctrine is only superficially "polite." The novel concludes with a tripartite resolution: Pao and Gloria's daughter, Esther, gets married and has a child, allowing Pao an opportunity for contrition and redemption for not having been a good father; his estranged daughter, Mui, taken to England by Fay, is about to return as a barrister; and Pao and Gloria are preparing to "retire" and move to Ocho Rios. Yet, this is not an entirely happy ending but a tentative one. The closing chapter of the novel, "Weaknesses and Strengths," meditates on the production of identity, shifting between historical and fictional figures that occupy the novel's diegesis and comes back to the question of "doctrine." Pao laments "how hard [he] tried to find something to believe in," something comparable to Zhang's relationship to

Chinese nationalism and rebellion. He then quotes Michael Manley's edict that "Jamaicans had to make an identity, and dignity and destiny for ourselves" and contemplates the difficulty of retaining this sensibility in a violent capitalist regime. He paraphrases Gloria's ideological position that "not everybody had their sights on building a nation," and develops an awareness of his own complicit capitalist self-interest:

Some people just wanted to put food on the table. And I suppose that was me as well because even though I talk Zhang's high ideals I was still busy just making money and fixing any problem that anybody wanted to bring to me. I try hard to believe that out of many we could be one people, but when the shooting start I couldn't make up my mind to go get myself killed over it. Not like my father did in China. (Young 269)

For Pao, access to a genealogy of the heroic, specifically a heroic Chinese masculinity, is untenable. Unlike Zhang, who crafts his identity in conversation with explicitly revolutionary rhetoric of the founding of modern China, Pao has to negotiate processes of identity formation mediated through his identity as diasporic Chinese in Jamaica. The ill fit of Chinese national identity is illustrated by Pao's vexed relationship to his brother and son who both share the name "Xiuquan." Pao's brother is named after the fictional rebel and father figure Zhang Xiuquan, "Uncle Zhang" in the novel's diegesis, and Hong Xiuquan who, along with Yang Xiuqing, was influenced by Christian missionaries and led the Taipei Rebellion against the Qing Dynasty (1850-1864).²⁵ In terms of a construction of national fantasy and allegory, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, first president and founding father of the Republic of China, interpreted the Taipei Rebellion and the rebels' struggle against imperial powers, warlords, and foreign interests as part of a revolutionary genealogy for modern China. As Yang Xiuquan, Pao's brother embodies a collapse of both leaders, Hong Xiuquan and Yang Xiuqing. Fearing the growing political power of his military advisor, Hong Xiuquan had Yang Xiuqing assassinated. Pao's brother's name signifies a complex intersection of nationalistic desire, rebellion, violence, and betrayal. Pao notes that both his brother and son have betrayed him: the brother who abandoned him and his mother and to escape "Chineseness" in the United States and become a farmer, and the son who left Jamaica for England with his mother and chooses to go by the name Karl.

²⁵ For more see Vincent Y. C. Shih's *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations, and Influences*, Holger Cahill's *A Yankee Adventurer: The Story of Ward and the Taiping Rebellion*, and *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* by Jonathan D. Spence.

Through Gloria, Pao comes to understand himself in relation to an alternative genealogy of rebellion and revolution in which “Independence was just the beginning of something we might do,” not necessarily something fully actualized (Young 116). This awareness does not prevent Pao from seeing simultaneous hope, possibility, and potential for failure in Jamaica. For us, as readers, once we understand the chaotic forces converging in the street brawl between men and boys we will have a better understanding of what Benítez-Rojo refers to as the chaotic machines that make up the Caribbean. More specifically, history is revealed as yet another chaotic colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist mechanism. Young’s novel retrieves voices from the ether to challenge history and its makers.

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