



Romancing Jamaica: Chinese-Jamaican Women and Nationalist Aesthetics

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Abstract: My article examines depictions of Chinese women in Victor Chang's stories ("A Summer's Tale," "Light in the Shop" and "Mr. Chin's Property"), Kerry Young's novel, *Pao* (2011), and Herbert de Lisser's cultural and literary interwar magazine *Planters' Punch* (1922-45) to argue that racial and socio-economic battles in colonial and post-independence Jamaica were waged on Chinese women. In official accounts of Jamaican history and culture, Chinese women are largely invisible and their significance has been set into relief by the works of Chinese-Caribbean writers like Kerry Young and Victor Chang. An important exception was the presence of Chinese women in *Planters' Punch*, where de Lisser fashioned Chinese women as part of the myth of Jamaica as a lush tourist spot, thereby promoting the interests of the country's multiethnic business class. Chang and Young contest this myth through inclusive fictional narratives that address racial and sexual violence wreaked upon Chinese women.

Keywords: Chinese-Jamaican literature; gender; Caribbean archive; race; print media

Acknowledgements: All images from *Planters' Punch* are courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica

How to cite

Bandopadhyay, Amrita. 2018. "Romancing Jamaica: Chinese-Jamaican Women and Nationalist Aesthetics." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, issue 12: 245-268

On July 7, 1918, Fong Sue, a Chinese shopkeeper in Ewarton in the parish of St. Catherine left his shop under the charge of Caroline Lindo, his creole lover. During his absence, Corporal McDonald, a policeman, slept with Caroline. Fong Sue, however, returned unexpectedly the same night to find the two together and gave the Corporal a sound beating after which Corporal McDonald disappeared. He reappeared two days later unscathed (*The Daily Gleaner*, July 10, 1918).¹ This event sparked what is known as the anti-Chinese riots of 1918, as violence against Chinese shops spread in a matter of a few days over different rural parishes of Jamaica.² Critics like Andrew Lind, Jacqueline Levy and Howard Johnson have traced the historical development of economic and racial tensions inherent in the hostility between the Chinese and the Black population of Jamaica. The 1918 riots targeted the Chinese as a racial group as well as an economically mobile one, particularly with stereotypical rumours of the shopkeeper making pickle out of the constable. The violence was, as Jacqueline Levy points out, directed more at the property of the Chinese rather than at the persons. Another *Gleaner* article, "Twenty More Rioters Given Prison," (*The Daily Gleaner*, July 30, 1918), records how three Chinese men's shops were attacked and the goods stolen and stored in the rioters' homes.

However, central to the ethnic tension were sex and women's sexuality—Fong Sue and Caroline's relationship was one example among many between Chinese immigrant men and Afro-Jamaican women. Sexual tensions in Chinese and Afro-Jamaican relations receive nuanced treatment in fiction, and the most direct representation of the incident appears in Victor Chang's short story "Mr. Chin's Property." The story, narrated from the perspective of a young boy, captures the racialized tensions in the sexual intimacy between Mr. Chin, his assistant Miss Belle and Constable Samuels. The abuse hurled at Mr. Chin is both racialized and sexualized: 'Constable Samuels blustered, "So what, Chineeman, so what? You cyaan satisfy her, you hear, because you too small. You small and yellow like de banana dem!"' (Chang 2014). However, the racial hierarchy of sexual prowess is subverted because Mr. Chin, skilled at Tai Chi Kung Fu, delivers a series of blows to the Inspector. Initially people refuse to believe that Chin had beaten up Samuels because they undermine Chin's masculinity and physical

strength. It is only after Samuels goes into hiding that people ransack the shop presuming that Chin had murdered Samuels. The story centralizes the sexual anxieties that undergirded the xenophobic violence wreaked upon the Chinese shop.

Kerry Young and Victor Chang critique the dominant narrative of progressive nationalism by centering their fiction on Chinese-Jamaican women's position in Jamaican history and society. The women occupy liminal space in race and gender relations; they bear the burden of maintaining respectability and their perspective is rendered invisible in mainstream colonial and nationalist narrative. I am first considering the depiction of the Chinese-Jamaicans as it appears in *The Daily Gleaner*, the leading newspaper in Jamaica, during the 1910s and 1920s, during and in the aftermath of the anti-Chinese riots. Then, I examine the depiction of Chinese-Jamaican women in a *Planters' Punch* article, entitled "Our Jamaica Chinese," appearing in the issue of 1929-30. *Planters' Punch* was a magazine and the cultural arm of *The Daily Gleaner*. Herbert de Lisser who was one of the foremost writers of Caribbean literature, was also the editor of both *The Daily Gleaner* and the *Planters' Punch*. Next, I compare this depiction with the character of Fay Wong in Kerry Young's *Pao* (published in 2011) and Victor Chang's short stories "A Summer's Tale" and "My Brother's Keeper." I attempt to see how the two narratives—in the press and in fiction—about Chinese-Jamaican women show two divergent conceptualizations of the nation and women's roles in it. Young's novel dismantles the idea of multiculturalism embedded in the national motto of "Out of Many, One People" by revealing the racialized class fissures in the nationalist imaginary and functions as a narrative critique of Jamaican nationalist history. However, de Lisser's representation of the Chinese elides over the violence and ruptures within the Chinese community and their strained relations with Afro-Jamaicans and white Jamaicans, painting the community as a homogenous whole. Young, on the other hand, foregrounds the cultural and racial complexities and charts out a Jamaican history of the nation, through Pao's life and makes her female protagonists central to the narrative. The eponymous hero of Young's novel, *Pao*, arrives in Kingston and is initiated by his stepfather into becoming the next

“Uncle” of the Chinese protection system. His arrival coincides with labor riots and the formation of the People’s National Party. The transition to independence in 1962 serves as a backdrop to Pao’s life, which centres on his relationship with two women: Gloria, his black working class lover and his wife Fay, the daughter of a leading Chinese Jamaican businessman. Young also reveals the anxieties among different women, including Fay, (who is born of a Chinese father, Henry Wong, and an Afro-Jamaican mother, Cicely), and Ma Zhang, Pao’s mother. Chang in “A Summer’s Tale” focuses on domestic violence and sexual strife in a Chinese household that leads the battered wife to destroy the shop without any racist attacks from Afro-Jamaicans, while “My Brother’s Keeper” takes a poignant yet humorous perspective on the patriarchal prejudices of the Chinese.

Obika Gray, in *Radicalism and Social Change in Jamaica, 1960- 1972*, argues that oppression by landowners, threats of bankruptcy and the indifference of the colonial government led Afro-Jamaicans to protest during the period of 1920-38 against racial and economic inequality, which often manifested as xenophobic nativism and anger against local Chinese traders (Gray 1991, 15). Gray also emphasizes the importance of the militant struggle to seek racial empowerment (Gray 1991, 20), further noting that in 1963, when black consciousness was attacked, the black lower middle-class opposed Chinese overrepresentation in the upper echelons of the economy (Gray 1991, 83). These complexities are represented in literature by Chinese Caribbean authors who provide insiders’ perspectives of racial politics and their gendered impact on Chinese Caribbean women. Deborah Thomas in *Modern Blackness: Nationalism, Globalization, and the Politics of Culture in Jamaica* argues that ‘the cultural policy adopted at Jamaica’s independence reflected a vision of cultural “progress” and “development” that prioritized “respectability”’ (Thomas 2004, 5), which excluded the majority of urban unemployed that comprised Afro-Jamaicans. The stratification of Jamaican society along lines of racialized classes with the upper class comprising Chinese, Syrian and Jewish nationals, and the lower class comprising Afro-Jamaicans, served the colonial purpose of divide and conquer. Resentment against colonial hierarchy was directed at

another migrant community, the Chinese Jamaicans who, being light coloured, did not suffer from the same structural violence as black Jamaicans. However, the conflict put Chinese and Afro-Jamaican women in a precarious position where they were exploited on the axes of race and gender, and often nurtured mutual hostility with tragic consequences, which is found in the conflict between Cicely and Fanny in *Pao* as well as Mae and Mei in "A Summer's Tale". The press reflected the politics of respectability through the achievements of the business class. In the 1920s and 1930s editions of *Planters' Punch*, this politics is played out by upholding young Chinese women as markers of cultural progress. The depiction of Chinese women as helpmates and supportive daughters helped the Chinese patriarchal business class to consolidate their position in Jamaican society.

The 1880s and 1890s saw an influx of Chinese indentured labourers followed by the coming of shopkeepers and businessmen in the early twentieth century. They gained a strong foothold in the retail trade through a set of shrewd business practices, such as selling items on credit and in small quantities, aimed at meeting the needs of rural peasants and workers (Bryan 2004, 17). Mr. Chin does the same in Victor Chang's story by selling "two ounces of butter or cheese as well as a half gill of cooking oil" (Chang 2014). This helped Chinese retail stores become convenient and popular among their Afro-Jamaican consumers but also fueled economic and social anxieties. As historian Patrick Bryan points out, by the end of the nineteenth century, colonial authorities were concerned about the growth of a Coloured Chinese group that emerged out of sexual and social liaisons between Chinese men and Afro-Jamaican women (Bryan 2004, 16). The colonial authorities began to allow Chinese women to immigrate in an attempt to mitigate such creolization. However, the Chinese wives often found themselves in circumstances of sexual strife where an Afro-Jamaican mistress would already be present in her husband's life. The influx of Chinese wives more or less undermined the position of the Afro-Jamaican domestic partner and therefore sexual congress between Chinese men and Afro-Jamaican women was also delegitimized, despite the long-standing social and sexual relations between the Chinese and black Jamaicans. The growing economic power of

Chinese men, in conjunction with the racism and economic disenfranchisement suffered by Afro-Jamaicans, pit the two communities, including women, against each other. These tensions are captured in fiction by pushing imaginative boundaries, something that the island's establishment press had historically left out.

According to Andrew Lind, the first group of Chinese arrived in Jamaica in 1854 from Colón, Panama. However, most of them died as paupers in Kingston and St. Catherine because their health had been completely broken by the hard labour in Panama and they could not work anymore (148). The next group of Chinese came in 1884. However, as Lind points out, Chinese agricultural labourers might have migrated in 1864 to Jamaica and later moved on to businesses.³ Lind further explains that the experience of the Panama Canal made it difficult for Chinese to adjust well to the plantation economy and many absconded due to disagreements with employers (148). The Chinese along with Indian indentured workers were considered 'godless,' not possessing Christian values (Lind 1958, 148). In 1858, the Colonial Legislature wanted to import Chinese labour, bringing forth "strong opposition, particularly from native Jamaicans" (Lind 1958, 148). But in 1884, Chinese labour became necessary because of the loss of Afro-Jamaicans and Indians who went to work on the Panama Canal (Lind 1958, 149). The Chinese in Jamaica occupied a liminal position of being an ethnic minority and an economically mobile community. Consequently, the Afro-Jamaican majority viewed them as cultural aliens and the colonial administration saw them as a threat to the plantation economy.⁴ The press played a central role in disseminating opinions about the Chinese, and reflected the contradiction between the economic power of the Chinese and their status as an ethnic minority. This can be traced in the way Herbert de Lisser represents the Chinese. In 1910, in his book *Jamaica and Cuba*, de Lisser claims that the Chinese had captured the retail trade through "masterly and judicious knavery" (De Lisser 1910, 88). This is consistent with the established rhetoric that persecuted the Chinese as a foreign force usurping the space from the local Afro-Jamaicans. Anne-Marie Lee-Loy in "World War I's Exciting Effects" elaborates how this rhetoric of foreignness was promulgated by *The Daily*

Gleaner. The tensions and violence of the First World War triggered xenophobia towards the Chinese because, as Lee-Loy argues, the press depicted the Chinese as a menace invading Jamaica and a danger worse than the Germans (Lee-Loy 2015, 49). This is evident even in sympathy expressed for Chinese shopkeepers. For example, even though Corporal McDonald was humanized in *The Daily Gleaner* article of July 10, 1918, the rioters as a whole were not excused for their actions. Yet the press did not sympathize with the Chinese as people and saw the attacks as merely the unfortunate destruction of property and not persons. A *Gleaner* article, "Paying for the Riots", expresses outrage at the expense the riots cost the colony, with the victimized shopkeepers demanding eighteen thousand pounds (*The Daily Gleaner*, December 9, 1918). The attacks are construed as an economic inconvenience rather than damage to a community or a group of persons. *The Daily Gleaner* reports on the attacks as though they existed independently of the people perpetrating them. It makes a clear divide between the material existence of the shops and the lives of the people. The press enacted the role of an objective presenter of fact and truth, and made invisible the racial and sexual aspect of the attacks. The press did not consider, for instance, the unease caused by sexual intimacies that led to the violence in the first place. The rhetoric either focuses on disturbances to law and order, or presumes burning of property as irrational violence displayed by Afro-Jamaicans.

If the negative rhetoric about the Chinese is contrasted with an article appearing in *The Daily Gleaner* on Saturday, October 29, 1921, titled "Chinese Dinner at Myrtle Bank Hotel,"⁵ it becomes evident how the press coverage reflects a rapidly changing public view of the Chinese. The anonymous shopkeepers depicted in the press coverage of 1918 are represented as honoured and wealthy merchants by 1921. The party hosted a number of influential Chinese businessmen and it clearly identifies the importance of the press in highlighting the influence of the community. The article describes the party and its guests, indicating the purpose of hosting a party particularly for the Chinese. De Lisser, as the editor of *The Gleaner*, is called upon to raise a toast to the Chinese present and his somewhat patronizing tone is evident in his speech

(The Daily Gleaner, October 29, 1921). He clearly states how the Chinese have “changed” over the years and were now an economic force to reckon with. He further commends the “orderliness” and “neatness” of the Chinese shop (*The Daily Gleaner*, October 29, 1921). Very glibly, he also claims how despite prior suspicions and resentment against the Chinese, they have become an “inherent” part of Jamaica and are no longer outsiders (*The Daily Gleaner*, October 29, 1921.).

This change in de Lisser’s rhetoric is consistent with the choice to grant Chinese-Jamaican women a prominent space in his annual magazine *Planters’ Punch*. They do not appear as frequently as Jewish or English and American women do. However, the fact that they are presented in similar ways as Jewish, English and American women suggests that they were being classified in the category of white women. The change in de Lisser’s attitude towards the Chinese is the driving force behind the article. As Rhonda Cobham-Sander observes, the magazine itself was the “official magazine of the Jamaica Imperial Association” (Cobham Sander 1981, 80) and specifically catered to the interests of upper and middle class women across racial and ethnic identities. *Planters’ Punch* represented Jamaica as rich and lush based on its depiction of diverse social gatherings, travel, and tourism. In doing so, it also created an image of Jamaica that appeared to be harmonious and productive but, in fact, excluded the fractures and tensions present in colonial society. This was largely because de Lisser’s own politics were aligned with the elite classes.⁶

Planters’ Punch made its first appearance in 1920 as an annual magazine that carried one of de Lisser’s novels in a serialized form (Roberts 1951, 120) and featured the achievements of businessmen and the rise of their promising young sons and other professionals. It carried articles and columns on tourism and travel in Jamaica with the intention of promoting trade and commercialized tourism. Certain sections were devoted to the lifestyle of young women and to the social gatherings and parties thrown by them. The women were the wives and daughters of an elite class of professionals and traders and their lifestyles reflected a high degree of consumption. Reflecting de Lisser’s political and

ideological leanings, the magazine held up the elite business class as the "future of Jamaica." There is no reference to working-class Afro-Jamaicans. Leah Rosenberg observes in *Creolizing Womanhood* that de Lisser represented the dark-skinned Afro-Jamaicans as people of easy virtue as against the moral superiority of the brown elite. Later as editor of *Planters' Punch*, de Lisser aligned himself completely with the interests of the expanded "white" class that included communities other than the British settlers and American expats (Rosenberg 2000, 110). Donna Marie Urbanowicz, referring to several issues of *Planters' Punch*, argues that de Lisser gives "non-white women within Jamaican society a shared voice alongside the white Jamaican ladies of social standing" (Urbanowicz 2013, 227) in *Planters' Punch*. She further claims that "de Lisser's conceptualization of women as a national symbol of Jamaica is not based on racial boundaries alone" (Urbanowicz 2013, 229). However, this argument sounds much more egalitarian than de Lisser's intentions. By inserting Chinese women alongside white women, de Lisser included the Chinese as part of an expanded elite class that also included Lebanese (Issas)⁷ and Jewish (Lindo and Meyers) merchants along with British settlers and American expats. Effectively, these women represented their community, not themselves, as carriers of economic progress fashioned in cultural terms. They functioned as helpmates to their fathers and brothers, and therefore participated in the emerging economic force of Chinese trade, but never stood for gender empowerment and self-determination. Moreover, the Chinese are represented as an extended "white" class due to their economic agency and not as a distinct cultural, ethnic and racial entity in Jamaica. De Lisser does not address the complexities of migration and indenture; instead, he uses anglicized Chinese women in an attempt to include the community into an elite category.

De Lisser deploys Chinese-Jamaican women as part of a colonial imaginary, omitting mention of social tension and leaving racial, colour and class hierarchies intact. In contrast, Young, through Fay, makes a Chinese woman protagonist central to an inclusive Jamaican nation-space, and presents tensions among Jamaica's different ethnic, racial, gendered, and socioeconomic groups as defining that nation. Young's novel, therefore,

functions as a counter-narrative to de Lisser's optimistic narrative of the nation. Written from a Chinese-Jamaican point of view, Pao explores the concealed narratives of racial and sexual tensions among the ethnic groups in Jamaica. The novel incorporates the dystopic ruptures in Jamaica and in doing so, undermines the utopic narrative created by de Lisser's press. De Lisser's influential voice in the press represented the interests of the business class and could not afford to make racial and economic anxieties visible. His rhetoric in the island's middlebrow press had to be optimistic and pander to common sense notions of business and national integration. For example, "Our Jamaica Chinese," published in the 1929-30 issue of *Planters' Punch*,⁸ focuses only on Chinese women, and yet they come to represent the Chinese community as a whole. He clearly emphasizes that the Chinese are hardworking and educated, and that they play an important role in nation building. He opens by declaring that he is writing for and about the West Indian Chinese who are becoming a part of the country's emergent capitalist class by contributing to economic development. At the outset, the article claims, "As the eye travels over the faces of the portraits printed in these pages, it realizes that the ladies represented belong to an intelligent and cultured class. They are either brain workers or destined to become such; they are in occupations which require intelligence and industry, and these qualities they undoubtedly display" (*Planters' Punch* 1929-30, 8). This goes to support that de Lisser cast middle-class and upper-class Chinese in the role of Jamaica's future ruling class.

De Lisser makes a generational distinction between the Chinese—he draws a clear line between the immigrants from China and the generation of Chinese-Jamaicans who were born on the island and were more assimilated. When he states in "Our Jamaica Chinese" that the Chinese in Jamaica are "Chinese in descent but Jamaicans by birth and British subjects by nationality" (De Lisser 1929-30, 8) he offers an assimilationist view of the Chinese as central to the functioning of Jamaican society. This kind of progressive modernity is then framed in terms of the way the Chinese treat their women. He makes broad ahistorical claims about how Chinese women were secluded and poorly treated in the past but were now engaging in the "male" sphere of economic and



Figure 1: Dr. Hoashoo



Figure 2: Doris James



Figure 3: Mildred Tie Ten Quee

cultural activities. De Lisser represents the Chinese community as a component of colonial society insofar as they contribute to economic growth, which he connects to cultural refinement and consumption that worked towards the establishment of a new capitalist class ("Our Jamaica Chinese," *Planters' Punch* 1929-30). The Chinese women depicted here therefore, are doctors (including an aspirant for medical school), classical vocalists, and assistants in their fathers' shops. These women represent an upwardly mobile middle to upper class: Dr. Hoashoo (See Fig. 1), for instance, is representative of bourgeoisie female emancipation that indicates women's "equal" participation in a masculinized social order. The women here appear to align their interests with the patriarchal order of upper class Chinese.

They appear as efficient contributors to the patriarchal economy and as good supportive helpmates. The women, handpicked by de Lisser, are portrayed in ways that define modernity in terms of bourgeoisie respectability. They are accomplished in fine arts like Audrey Leahong (See Fig. 6) who is a fancy work painter and Doris James, who is a vocalist (See Fig. 2). They receive a western education like Miss Mildred Tie Ten Quee, who may study medicine on leaving school (See Fig. 3). They help their fathers in creating an economy driven by high production and consumption like Fay Hendrickson (See Fig.5) and Elma Fung (See Fig. 4). De Lisser fashions a

category of people who can behave like the white elite and mimic the same economic and social structures; women's accomplishments become important insofar as they contribute to these structures. De Lisser uses the press to make an exhibition of the women, freezing them into artefacts to shape an ongoing discourse about the Chinese community mired in stereotypes.

De Lisser's portrayal of women is associated with his attempts to create an upper class group of Jamaica's first citizens, a highly successful business class. This had implications as far as racial categorizations were concerned. In *Planters' Punch*, de Lisser seeks to create a largely "white" class of businessmen and the socio-cultural accomplishments of women related to them. Leah Rosenberg defines this class as including "the long established Jewish merchants and industrialists, old white creole planter families, newly emigrated middle Eastern retail store owners, office workers, expatriate government officials and the managerial class of the United Fruit Company" (Rosenberg 2007, 110). Some of the people represented in *Planters' Punch* were business owners belonging to the Myers family, the Lindos and the Issas. In de Lisser's class construction, race was inflected by economic mobility. This was a new rising class and as Rosenberg observes in *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature*, with the example of Frederick Myers, many of these families were not powerful before 1880 (Rosenberg 2007, 68). In "An Historical Profile of the Jewish Community of Jamaica," Thomas August argues that by the 1890s,



Figure 4: Elma Fung



Figure 5: Fay Hendrickson



Figure 6: Audrey Leahong

the influence of planters' decreased substantially due to the rise of professional groups, which loosened the restrictions of colour so that in the 1906 Legislative Council election, there was a "legislative kaleidoscope of four Europeans, four Jews, five coloreds, and one black" (August 1987, 307). De Lisser's categorizations left out Afro-Jamaicans, and his representations were therefore, economic as well as racialized. The Chinese were accommodated as a part of this class because of their economic rise and the cultural accomplishments of selected Chinese women. However, as Patrick Bryan remarks, the Chinese were "integrated into the Jamaican community, but resisted assimilation" (Bryan 2004, 18) and de Lisser erases this fact, making a narrow and incomplete representation of the Chinese.

The news articles appearing in *The Daily Gleaner* and *Planters' Punch* are part of the archival material that reveal a particular narrative about the Chinese as successful businessmen with Chinese women occupying narrow roles as helpmates. Chang and Young, as Chinese Caribbean writers, employ fiction to create a counter archive that centres on female figures. The female protagonists of both authors remain marginal to the mainstream narrative created by the press for the first half of the twentieth century as demonstrated in the above analysis of the press. Pao and "A Summer's Tale" undermine the male-dominated history of Chinese economic success by centralizing the innate sexist violence of this success story. The Chinese community contributes to de Lisser's construction of Jamaica as a space of wealthy and cultured people whose lives centre on consumption, socializing, high culture, and commerce. By contrast, Kerry Young's *Pao*, through the character of Fay Wong (and the novel as a whole) centres precisely on racial and class violence, and dismantles the national romance de Lisser constructs. Donette Francis's idea of the antiromance in *Fictions of Feminine Citizenship* serves as an effective lens to read Fay's predicament. Francis shows how intimacies within the heterosexual romance plot "masks coercion as consent" (Francis 2010, 4-5), justifying colonization of land through the conquest of the female body. Francis draws upon Doris Sommer's idea of the national romance in Latin American fiction where national progress and the utopic vision of the free nation is developed

through the heterosexual romance plot. Young undermines the romance of the nation through the breakdown of Fay and Pao's marriage where a happy heteronormative unit of production and consumption becomes impossible.

Since *The Gleaner* is only superficially inclusive, Chinese women do not appear as complex characters who make hard choices, face unhappy domestic circumstances, or attempt to escape, all of which Fay Wong does in *Pao*. Fay, Pao's wife and the daughter of an upper class Chinese businessman and an Afro-Jamaican woman, is almost a nightmarish contrast to de Lisser's portrayal of Chinese women as loyal and placid companions. Trapped in a loveless marriage, Fay is defiant and critical of the life and profession of the family. The marriage is fractured for a number of reasons: there are insurmountable differences in class and lifestyle, but most importantly, Fay's choices are never given their due respect; she has no control over money and property, she is a mere pawn in the aspirations of Henry Wong and Pao. Further, her mother, Cicely, manipulates her and she has to contend with being the wife of a "common criminal". As Pao himself recognizes, there are vast differences in the social position of husband and wife. During their honeymoon, Pao thinks that Fay knows her place in the world. She can speak to visitors and guests at the hotel and order people around with confident familiarity that Pao cannot. However, Pao is mistaken in his assumptions because while Fay is privileged in terms of class, she is ignorant about the complex economic and social realities that affect her marriage. When Fay begins to live with her husband and in-laws at Matthews Lane, a run-down and disreputable part of Kingston, it dawns upon her that the marriage is one of sheer convenience, orchestrated to help Pao secure social stability, win respectability and build networks with powerful people through an association with Fay's father, Henry Wong. Fay realizes that she was tricked into the marriage by her parents, particularly her mother, to teach her a lesson by ensuring that Fay lives away from her tennis parties and clubs, spending a lifetime in hard labour.

Fay keeps shuttling from Matthews Lane to Lady Musgrave Road in a desperate attempt to escape her domestic predicament. She leaves Pao because she is

partly afraid of the crime that surrounds her and partly because of Pao's relationship with Gloria, an Afro-Jamaican sex worker. She realizes that Pao and Gloria's relationship is based on consensual love and support acquiring a sincerity that Pao and Fay's marriage never can. The marriage benefits the public standing of Henry Wong and Pao by their respective association with respectable business establishments and the disreputable violent protection system, using Fay as a pawn to serve their interests. Fay's bitterness and anger at being bartered among the two men show the hypocrisy and violence underneath the respectable veneer of Henry Wong's household, as it also plays up the capitalist elite's hand-in-glove association with the violent intimidation tactics of the protection system. Ultimately, Fay and Pao's relationship is destroyed when Pao rapes Fay to thwart her desire to leave with her children. It reminds Fay of her own humiliating position within the household. In de Lisser's depiction of Chinese women none of these fractures in domestic life get featured. Since de Lisser's depiction of Chinese women includes upper class Chinese women—the face of wealthy respectability—he automatically excludes women like Ma, Pao's mother, who arrives as a single mother with her sons from China. Her subsequent marriage to Zhang offers her security and respectability in Chinatown, but also exacts hard labour from her. She, and not Fay, is the perfect helpmate. De Lisser elides the labour extracted from women who aid their fathers to run businesses, even as he mentions their contribution to the economy. His focus remains on the women's class-motivated sophistication. However, Ma represents the physical labour that contributes to maintaining respectable domesticity. When Fay refuses to help Ma wash utensils and pluck duck feathers to make pillows, Ma reads it as pure laziness. Fay, on the other hand, not only looks down upon this kind of domestic labour, she is ill-equipped to do it. The clashes between the two women are along class as well as racial lines. Fay sees herself as part of the white elite while Pao and his family, despite economic force, are far from the social elite. Unlike de Lisser's representation of the Chinese as a homogenous community, Young's depiction of fraught family ties shows the community as comprised of people in divergent relations with social and economic power.

While de Lisser writes out the domestic and sexual relationships between Afro and Chinese Jamaicans, Young uses Fay's relationship to illuminate the complex divisions in Jamaican society and the prominence of gender and sex in social interactions between the different communities. While the relationship of Gloria and Pao contains some semblance of sincerity, Fay and Pao's relationship rings hollow. Fay is also victimized by Cicely because Cicely and Henry's marriage is also one of convenience where respectability is acquired solely by class aspirations. Race and class dynamics intersect making Fay's position highly precarious in her family. This becomes evident when Fay recounts Cicely's manipulative behaviour to mould her daughter according to her selfish purposes along class and racial lines. As Fay recounts "My whole life has been spent being white for Cicely to stop her feeling ashamed, and being black for Cicely to stop her feeling alone" (Young 2011, 115). Whiteness appears as a spectral presence in the relationship of an Afro-Jamaican mother and a half Chinese daughter. Cicely is quick to accuse Fay of being too "white" once she tries to exercise her own agency. Being white suggests an internalization of values, behaviour and style that contains wealth and refinement, which requires access to formal education and elite clubs. Fay grows up inhabiting these structures and casts an image of refinement; yet she is restricted from enjoying it. Therefore, Fay has to shuttle herself repeatedly between two opposing sets of values. She has to underperform in school so that Cicely feels secure and needs to regulate her behaviour to conform to Cicely's notions of "decency." On the one hand, Cicely strives to rise up the social ladder by marrying Henry Wong, erasing her identity as a descendent enslaved Africans, and on the other, she prevents Fay from outshining her. Young locates the dominant political action in Jamaica as a backdrop, and privileges the fraught and troubled narrative of Chinese Jamaicans, a prime example of which are the crippling effects of economic and personal violence on Fay. This makes Kerry Young's narrative of the nation far more inclusive than de Lisser's since she puts forth the social, economic and racial complexities of a marginalized community that de Lisser's harmonious narrative never recognizes.

The Chinese women represented in *Planters' Punch*, have their selfhood tamed in ways that could be understood through Foucault's concept of docile bodies. According to Foucault, power structures tame bodies so that they can become agents that enact power. Foucault argues in "Docile Bodies" that eighteenth-century methods of constraining the body were a matter "of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself—movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body" (Foucault 1984, 181). Foucault uses the body of the soldier as an example of the docile body. Social, political and economic institutions have historically tamed women's bodies to serve the interests of patriarchal power structures. Fay Wong is also tamed through the colonial structures of an Anglicized education and a social life comprising tennis parties and club visits. She embodies all the values that the Chinese debutantes of *Planters' Punch* do. Fay subverts the system because she refuses to be a docile body when she exercises agency and pursues the activities of her pre-marital life. Fay enacts a strong reaction against the family apparatus, which sustains itself on the docility and labour of women. Ma Zhang and Cicely sustain the exploitative structure of the family; as mothers, they enact the patriarchal power of the family, even though they do not possess any. However, Cicely actively oppresses Fay because she seeks to overcome her lower social status using Fay as an instrument of social mobility. Ma Zhang is more sympathetic because state violence forces her to leave China, and she undergoes hard labour to make a life for herself and her children.

The press's portrayal of the Chinese reflected how Chinese businessmen and traders saw themselves. A 1938 article in *The Daily Gleaner* entitled "Chinese and Royal Commission" shows how Chinese traders saw themselves as representatives of the entire Chinese community while bargaining with the colonial administration for changes in laws. The article carries the text of a memorandum signed and submitted to the Royal Commission by Presidents Lyn Ah Woo and Albert Chang of the Chinese Merchants' Association on behalf of the Chinese traders. The memorandum lists organizations such as a school, almshouse and sanatorium that contribute to the life of the community. It makes

demands pertaining to trade, taxation and immigration such as increasing the number of male Chinese immigrants and changing laws such as *The Shop Assistant Law*, no. 38 of 1937 and *The Drugs and Poisons Law* 44 of 1937. The laws were deemed to inconvenience the retail trade through restrictions on business hours and the prohibition of selling patent medicines without a licensed druggist (*The Daily Gleaner*, November 29, 1938). A fleeting mention is made of women to state that twenty Chinese women are allowed to immigrate only if they are getting married to Chinese residents in Jamaica and/or are the children of resident Chinese. It is then argued that more Chinese male traders should be allowed to immigrate as it benefits the retail trade. This reveals that the Chinese community valued its members primarily as traders, contributing to the narrative of economic success that de Lisser also promotes. Women merely feature as incidental to a largely masculine enterprise. Mei Lin in Victor Chang's "A Summer's Tale" is one such woman and the story provides the violent narrative of her life that is written out of the mainstream discourse of retail trade success.

Mei Lin, the wife of Lincoln, a Chinese shopkeeper in Jamaica, shatters, not only the family as a state apparatus by refusing to be the docile body, but destroying the Chinese shop itself. The Chinese woman, who was never allowed to be anything other than the wife or helpmate, destroys the shop, which is a site of patriarchal violence. The destruction attacks the heart of the retail trade and by extension, also symbolically undermines Chinese existence in Jamaica. The story revolves around Mei Lin who comes to Jamaica from China, to be married off to Lincoln. Her parents, who had migrated many years before she comes, had left her as a toddler with her grandparents. As a woman familiar only with the lessons taught to her by her grandparents, Mei Lin finds it impossible to adjust to her husband's demands. Lincoln, accustomed to a Jamaican diet cooked by Mae, his Afro-Jamaican mistress, deems her food unpalatable. To make matters worse, Mae thwarts every attempt Mei Lin makes to create a space for herself in the home. Mei Lin is unable to plant and grow bak choy and is harassed by Mae whenever she seeks to do housework. While Mae is disenfranchised and cannot gain the status of a wife, she has agency because of her familiarity with the island. She sees Mei Lin as an intruder and prevents her from taking any space

on the land. She is also complicit in the patriarchal power exercised by her lover. Mei Lin is brutalized and ultimately suffers a miscarriage as Lincoln throws her down the stairs. Mei Lin calmly seeks revenge and burns down the entire shop. As with Fay and Cicely, any kind of feminist solidarity is impossible because of the divisive nature of the patriarchal trade and economy. Being a suitable helpmate, a good wife or mistress, implied being co-opted into the system of brutality. Mei Lin's act of revenge returns our attention to the beginning of the paper where Fong Sue's shop is broken down and vandalized. In "A Summer's Tale," the attack on Chinese property is used as a trope to give a new layer of meaning. The circumstances of Mei Lin's exploitation have affinity with the case of Fong Sue. Both are racially charged sexual affairs. However Victor Chang, like Kerry Young, makes an inward turn to reveal the fissures in the Chinese community. The cause of the destruction of property is not ethnic or economic resentment, but the extreme violence that is meted out to Mei Lin. She attacks the inherent patriarchal structure that allows for the prosperity of the shop where the wife is expected to provide labour and keep up the pretence of happy domesticity. Chang shifts the focus suggesting that the Chinese community suffered as much from internal fractures as from external issues of ethnic tensions. Mei Lin's actions are an inversion of the attacks that took place during the riots of 1918. By reworking the trope of attacks on the Chinese shop, Chang, like Young, provides a counternarrative by privileging the Chinese woman's perspective. In a milder way, Chang's "My Brother's Keeper" also undermines the image of cultured and docile Chinese women through the character of Gloria Woo, who is a successful entrepreneur but rejects the role of the submissive and hardworking wife. Ah Go, the narrator's older brother, marries Mrs. Gloria Woo, a widow for twenty years who plays "mahjong like a man." Initially, this is a cause of attraction but post-marriage, Ah Go is horrified to find out that she uses the chamber pot, her speech is vulgar and she has a strong sexual appetite, all of which he attributes to spending long years in the proximity of the Black population. He leaves her and gradually retreats to the space of his shop, distancing himself from his brother and other Chinese women like Mrs. Lee who introduced Ah Go to Gloria Woo. While the story empathizes with Ah Go as he tries to navigate the cultural and economic landscape of colonial Jamaica,

facing prejudice from the white and black populations, it is also critical of Ah Go's own resistance to intermixing and cultural amalgamation which manifests through his quiet misogyny.

It could be argued that both Young's and Chang's works operate in the present and therefore, have the privilege of hindsight that de Lisser did not. However, given the incidents of violence against the Chinese reported in *The Gleaner*, de Lisser could not have been wholly ignorant to the difficulties the Chinese faced. Immediate circumstances, such as his job as a prominent newspaper editor, made him ignore it because *The Gleaner* thrived upon the sponsorship of the business class, and so de Lisser could not call attention to racial or ethnic tensions in colonial society. Young and Chang also include the different communities of Jamaica and operate within the concept of "Out of Many, One People" which is the national motto. But boundaries of fiction being flexible and individual also allow the space to voice concerns that could easily be suppressed in newspapers that are only expected to provide empirical facts or at best, express concern that is assimilationist. Since the Chinese resisted assimilation for a long time, it was also not possible to get a glimpse of household "truths," which finds fictional representation in the image of bars in Chinese shops that separate customers from the counter and the back of the shop, where the home begins. The construction of the Chinese shopkeeper in Victor Chang's "My Brother's Keeper" and "Mr. Chin's Property" among others, portrays a man of very few words, who would exchange goods for money keeping an account of credit only he can follow. Hidden behind the stoic efficiency are complexities and violence that requires a "fictional" articulation.

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¹ Special thanks to the NewspaperARCHIVE.com Online Newspaper Database where all *The Daily Gleaner* articles referred to in the paper were accessed through University of Florida.

² Description of this incident appears in Howard Johnson's essay "The Anti-Chinese riots of 1918 in Jamaica." A very brief account can be found in *The Daily Gleaner* of July 10, 1918, where the corporal is sympathized with in a way the Chinese are not.

³ Lind describes this point elaborately with 1871 Census data and accounts of family history. He mentions that a family, residing in Jamaica, when he was conducting his research, told him that they traced their family back to a migrant who came to Jamaica in 1872.

⁴ Anne Marie Lee Loy's essay "The Chinese Shop as Nation Theatre in West Indian Fiction" explores the liminality of the Chinese shop and the Chinese community as a whole. According to Lee Loy, the colonial authorities regarded the Chinese shop as a threat to the plantation economy, while the Afro-Jamaicans perceived the community as competitors in the job market (Lee Loy 2, 3) making the shop a liminal space, located, at once, inside and outside the nation.

⁵ Later on, Abrahama Issa would go on to buy The Myrtle Bank Hotel which would soon become a place for American, European and Jamaican celebrities to gather and socialize riding on an image of exoticism and wealth. Krista Thompson's *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*, has a chapter "Diving into the Racial Waters of Beach Space in Jamaica: Tropical Modernity and the Myrtle Bank Hotel's Pool" that delves into the class and racial politics of the hotel's space.

⁶ In 1910, he became a member of the Board of Governors of the Institute of Jamaica and worked with the Jamaica Imperial Association--an organization of merchants, planters and professionals, founded in 1917 and led by Arthur W. Farquharson (Roberts, 112).

⁷ Suzanne Issa's biography on Abraham Issa, *Mr Jamaica Abe Issa: A Pictorial Biography*, charts the rise of the family of Issas from shopkeepers of linen and dry goods to one of the biggest business families of Jamaica, to the extent that Abe Issa would earn the unofficial nickname of Mr. Jamaica.

⁸ The 1929-30 issue of *Planters' Punch* and all images from *Planters' Punch* (1929-30) referred to and reproduced in the article are courtesy of the National Library of Jamaica. Accessed at the Digital Library of the Caribbean through University of Florida.