Alien Nation: Chinese Migration in the Americas from the Coolie Era Through World War II. Elliot Young. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. ISBN: 978146912966

Young offers in *Alien Nation* an important counter to dominant narratives of migration by challenging the single trajectory, nation-state centered biases of such narratives. In this multidimensional study of the experiences of Chinese migrants through several sites in the Western Hemisphere, he argues that many migration histories and studies reproduce the hegemony of the single nation-state paradigm in defining, describing, or representing the experience of migrants. Instead, he examines the migrant experience through multinational and transnational frameworks that place the policies, agendas, and actions of nation-states and their representatives on the table for comparative study. In so doing, Young also produces a cultural study of ideologies of race, technologies of resistance (to borrow from Omi and Winant's thesis on racial formation), and other axes within a matrix of contested identity formations such as sexuality, gender, gender identity. Not only does Young's new book model an improved transnational narrative, it prompts new thinking about how to teach migration history.

Alien Nation details a multinational study of the "coolie trade" between 1847 and 1874. This particular chapter highlights the important international competitions implicit in hypocritical migration policies, the sometimes violent resistance Chinese migrants offered against exploitation and oppressive treatment, and the conditions of this global trafficking in humans.

In opening his account of this migration in the mid-19th century, Young states that about 750,000 Chinese migrants left China for other Southeast Asian countries, and as many left with the intention of going to places in the Western hemisphere. Unfortunately, his narrative doesn't track the movements and intentions of those who moved to places closer to home. Instead his research exclusively details the experiences of many of the people who arrived in the Americas. This scholarly choice may reflect language or other barriers to archives in Asia but it also places important limits on the theoretical framework offered in his opening. While the focus of the book as it is displaces a nation-state focus, because the larger context of Chinese migration isn't addressed, it still places the movement to the Americas at the center of Chinese migration.

The study of the "coolie trade" to the Americas, however, reveals significant details about the experiences of Chinese migrants as they sought to gain entry into countries for work and other economic opportunities. The physical abuse, the selling of migrants at auction, and the lack of legal protections for migrants linked, in Young's mind, the "coolie trade" to racial slavery, both in its form and its content. In this section of the book, Young scrutinizes closely international comment and policies on the "coolie trade." In the 1840s, countries such as Cuba and Peru, with the aid of European and U.S. shipping and plantation interests, openly encouraged the "coolie trade," the creation of contract labor funded by a credit-ticket system ultimately paid for by the migrant. According to Young, "the precise details" of such contracts "provided for a system of forced labor in which the owner controlled nearly every aspect of the laborers' lives,

including food, healthcare, work, mobility, and family relations" (68). (Authorities in Cuba may have sought an entrée in the coolie trade in order to diversify their exploitable labor supply. In his recent book, *Race to Revolution*, historian Gerald Horne shows that Cuban authorities were deeply concerned about U.S. and British abolitionism and the potential for economic collapse should a slave rebellion of Haitian proportions take place there.)

Despite this goal, Chinese rebellion was both imminent and frequent. Migrants frequently mutinied aboard the vessels that carried them to the Americas. In the plantation system in South America and the U.S. labor, unrest and resistance in the form of flight were so frequent that in Peru, for example, escaped Chinese migrants were referred to as *cimarron*, the same term applied to escaped slaves. Such linguistic references suggest an equation in the Peruvian mind between the two groups of people and the conditions under which they labored.

Government policies designed to control migration after the close of the coolie trade period in the mid-1870s reflected Western racial animus toward Asian people above all else. In the middle section of Alien Nation, Young provides a comparative reading of immigration policies established in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and Peru. Using some translated archival documents from the respective countries, Young charts the development of such policies, ultimately pointing to the predominant influence of the U.S. in shaping immigration law in the other countries. For example, Young uses the example of Chin Chung, who migrates through the Western Hemisphere via Canada and Mexico to the U.S. in the early 1900s. Deported more than once, Chin Chung would revise his legal identity on several occasions in order to regain entry into the U.S. in order to locate job opportunities there. The U.S. government frequently pressured its neighbors to revise their own immigration policies in order to fit U.S. needs and goals regarding Chinese migration.

Meanwhile, Chin Chung's successful maneuvering to gain entry into these countries testifies to the quality of the transnational networks Chinese migrants of varying legal status, social class, and hometown connection had built to "evade [immigration] barriers, find jobs, establish families, and keep [migrants] mobile, ever on the search for the elusive Gold Mountain" (18). In the closing and most fascinating section of the book, Young reconstructs the activities and connections made by Chinese transnational networks, such as the Casino Chung Wah in Havana, which maintained a near monopoly on migration to Cuba. Other networks like Baohuanghui, operated across numerous national borders in Canada, Mexico, the U.S. and Cuba. While this organization originally began as a political movement against the Qing dynasty in China, it soon built up international networks, provided business opportunities to its members, and participated in the broader economic development of the local communities in which it existed. In sum, these networks "provided material support in the form of health benefits, burial expenses, legal resources, an alternative family structure, and, most important, a psychic space in which individuals thousands of miles from home could reproduce their social lives" (269).

Alien Nation could be effectively used in an upper-division or graduate migration studies course. It also lays some good foundations for additional research in the archives of the several countries under study to continue to follow Young's research agenda of redrawing the global map of human movement and to reconstruct the lives of Chinese migrants in the past two centuries.

Joel Wendland, Grand Valley State University