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“And that is not how Jamaica is”: Cultural Creolization, Optimism, and National Identity in Kerry Young's *Pao*

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While scholars have long considered Caribbean nations as mixed, blended, and multicultural societies, acknowledging the role of many different ethnic, national, and racial groups in the formation and ongoing lives of these societies, the Chinese Caribbean community has received comparatively less attention than the Afro- or Indo-Caribbean ones. Yet many Caribbean countries experienced significant Chinese migration. Beginning in the nineteenth century and through the twentieth century, thriving Chinese communities could be found in Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad, and other islands. The Chinese Jamaican community was both representative and unique: arriving in Jamaica at the end of the 1800s, Chinese immigrants established prosperous shops and other businesses throughout the island. Later in the twentieth century, as Jamaica became more tumultuous, many Chinese Jamaicans fled the country. Though a Chinese community persists in Jamaica, it is now much smaller and much less prominent than it was at its height from the 1930s through the 1960s. While some novels, like Patricia Powell's *The Pagoda*, feature prominent Chinese Jamaican characters, Kerry Young's recent novel *Pao*, published in 2011, represents the first novel about the Chinese Jamaican community written by a Chinese Jamaican.

Pao tells the story of Yang Pao, a Chinese immigrant who arrives in Jamaica as a child and rises to become the crime boss of an underworld empire. To the extent that it is a crime novel, a novel of personal relationships, and a history novel, *Pao* is also a novel of ideas, and Young grapples prominently with concerns about Jamaican national identity. *Pao* tracks Jamaican political evolution from the turbulent 1930s to independence and the country's postcolonial nation-building phase, and, as the novel's plot progresses, the demographics of the Jamaican polity change, as do ideals of Jamaican citizenship. On her own terms, Young makes an important contribution to Jamaican literary production. At the same time, literature in Jamaica, as in other postcolonial Caribbean societies, is always engaged with the writing and reading of national and nationalist discourses: literature both reflects and contributes to changing understandings of national identity (Harney). *Pao*, told from the point of view of a Chinese immigrant to Jamaica, expresses the titular protagonist's optimism about the future of the Jamaican nation combined with his anxiety about the extent to which the Chinese will become fully integrated members of a new Jamaican society. Yang Pao frequently makes reference to an official Jamaican national ideology of creolization and strength through diversity as an appeal to the fundamentally inclusive and tolerant nature of plural Jamaican identity. To this extent, the book seems, at first glance, to align itself with a Jamaican nation-building project rooted in such an ameliorative view of creolization, one in which the idealized Jamaican state is a blended one, and the ideal Jamaican citizen is herself racially and culturally creole.

To stop there, however, would be to miss essential aspects of the novel. As a character, Yang Pao is himself caught between different nationalisms: though, as a Chinese Jamaican, he expresses support for creolization and multiculturalism, and hopes to see greater inclusion for racial minorities, his stated anti-white and anti-imperialist politics have strong Black Nationalist resonances. Furthermore, Pao's own actions, his line of work, and his eventual transition from a crime lord to a legitimate capitalist complicate his politics even further. Though Yang Pao represents and integrates many strains of Jamaican political thought, he never comes to fully embody any one. Thus, we cannot read Pao's personal political development or political positions as coterminal with the novel's own. Seemingly in response to Pao's limiting point of view, Young expands the vision of Jamaica and Jamaican society that the novel presents primarily through the experiences and the voices of black female characters. Through these characters, *Pao* acknowledges the difficulties of life in Jamaica for the black majority and problematizes Pao's multiculturalist optimism. In this novel, violence disproportionately affects blacks generally and black women in particular. Characters like Faye Wong and Marcia Campbell directly suffer the consequences of racialized violence, while both Cecily Wong and Gloria Campbell, Pao's girlfriend, critique the inadequacies of Yang Pao's leftist and multiculturalist rhetoric. I argue that, while *Pao* responds to a normative middle-class ideal of a creole Jamaica in which different cultural groups can coexist, the novel relies on its women characters to represent a darker side of the postcolonial experience, one that specifically touches the black Jamaican majority. In so doing, *Pao*, pushes back against Yang Pao's naively utopian understanding of creolization in Jamaican society, and demonstrates, finally, that any multiculturalist Jamaican national ideology must also address racialized social and economic inequality if it is to succeed.

Kamau Brathwaite, writing on creolization in Jamaican culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, defines creolization as "a cultural action [...] based upon the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their environment as—as white/black, culturally discrete groups—to each other" (Brathwaite 297). The process of creolization begins with the encounter of two or more culturally differentiated groups, and takes place as these groups adopt elements of culture belonging to one another, radically altering the original cultural practices from which they came. Creolization gives rise to new cultural formations born out of this encounter, and in Jamaica, as Brathwaite illustrates in his study, creolization took the form of Europeans adopting African social or dietary habits and Africans adopting European political and educational structures as well as European ways of talking, working, and understanding themselves as subjects. Theories of creolization represent an important way of interpreting the culture of the Caribbean, and anthropologists, historians, literary scholars, and

sociologists have employed these theories in order to explain and discuss the results of the unique cultural encounters that have taken place and continue to take place in Caribbean societies (Tanikella 156).

While creolization remains a foundational model for understanding Caribbean societies, it has not escaped vigorous argument and serious critique. More specifically, scholars studying the Caribbean have pointed out that celebrating this vision of a mixed, creole society plays into the hands of various nationalist ideologies of the postcolonial period. While we may broadly support the project of forging national identity and encouraging positive national identification among citizens of Caribbean societies, we must also take care to distinguish between genuinely justice-oriented nationalisms and those that merely justify or paper over inequality and group-based oppression. Along these lines, scholars working across the Caribbean have cautioned that, to use Leela Tanikella's words, "[h]ybridity celebrated as a trope of nationality in Caribbean nation states produces the nation as homogenous and diverse, which begs the question whether discourses of hybridity have become master narratives of containment" (156). For Tanikella, then, hybridity discourse, in the context of official national ideologies, may actually foreclose on other, more productive ways of envisioning the nation. Similarly, Aisha Khan's article "Good to Think: Creolization, Optimism, and Agency" reconsiders theories of creolization as employed in the discipline of anthropology and includes a case study of national ideology in Trinidad and Tobago, in which she asserts that the official Trinidadian vision of Trinidad and Tobago as a "callaloo nation" (656) has served to recognize the cultural contributions of Afro-Trinidadians at the same time as it has discouraged identification with racial groups as a fundamentally political concern (657). Ultimately, Khan writes: "the cultural schema of the state purports to protect the cultural heritages of its constituent social groups but does not undermine the material structures of privilege on which the state rests" (657). Turning to Jamaica, Khan observes that the ideology of creole nationalism has found less success there, in part because a poor black majority has pushed back against a state-sanctioned understanding of Jamaican identity that devalues "black subjectivity" in favor of a "'multicultural' representation of the nation" (657). As Khan notes, Deborah A. Thomas inaugurates many of these critiques in *Modern Blackness*, her study of nationalism and the politics of representation in modern Jamaica. Thomas argues that, in the years after independence, Jamaican leaders focused on forging a national identity that emphasized "respectability" and celebrated the practices of rural Afro-Jamaicans to the detriment of urban blacks (5). In the final account, "many twentieth century political and cultural nationalist elites have tended to reproduce colonial hierarchies of power, even as they

agitated against colonial rule” (Thomas 6).¹ While official culture has largely ignored or devalued the culture and lifeways of urban Afro-Jamaicans, it has not gone unchallenged. Thomas notes that official Jamaican ideology “was in constant tension with other, more explicitly racialized visions and values” that serve “alternative, and possibly counterhegemonic” purposes. Thus, the history of multiculturalism and creolization as Jamaican national ideology has not been one of untrammelled success, and this ideology has always competed with others for hegemony in Jamaica.

Nevertheless, creole ideology has still exercised substantial influence, and, as Thomas observes, has enjoyed state support, particularly in the 1950s and the post-independence 1960s. Rex Nettleford, writing in 1965, summed up the government position on racial discrimination in Jamaica:

Jamaican leaders make non-racialism into an important national symbol by declaring at home and abroad that Jamaica and the West Indies are made up of peoples drawn from all over the world, predominantly Negro or of mixed blood, but also with large numbers of others, and nowhere in the world has more progress been made in developing a non-racial society in which also colour is not psychologically significant. (62)

Nettleford rightly notes that these pronouncements arise, in part, from the necessity of securing foreign investment in Jamaica from the outside world, pursuant to an economic policy of “industrialization by invitation” pursued by both parties (Dunkley 6), and, as such, this positive, largely denialist portrayal of race relations in Jamaica is consistent with the pro-development aims of the 1960s Jamaica Labour Party government. Nevertheless, the official government position that Jamaica had transcended its race- and color-based animosities and barriers to advancement served as a key touchstone of the creole national identity that post-independence Jamaican leaders sought to establish, and it recalls Jamaica’s much-quoted national motto, “Out of Many, One People.” Indeed, Nettleford himself fundamentally supports creole identity in his article, lamenting only that “it is the ‘many’ in the motto and not the ‘one’ that tend to get the emphasis” (63). This official state policy, combined with support among both the middle-class and Jamaican intellectuals, experienced a period of at least ideological dominance during the 1950s and 60s.

In spite of Yang Pao’s support for the People’s National Party (PNP) and the socialist government of Michael Manley, which walked back creole

¹ Specifically, I am concerned with the Jamaican racial hierarchy, in which a white upper class rules over a brown middle class and a Black lower class. Chinese Jamaicans have traditionally been part of the brown middle class.

nationalism in favor of a more Afrocentric cultural policy (Dunkley 12), he clearly identifies with the goals of advancing a creolized national identity, reflecting on Jamaican independence day: “That day was our future, and it was full of the hope that out of the many, that the British bring from all corners of the world to serve them, we could be one people” (Young 114). Early on in the novel, Pao confronts strong doubts about whether a new Jamaican identity can emerge from the mix of people living in 1940s Jamaica, and Pao’s brother Xiuquan confides in Pao his fears that “maybe one day the blacks going raise up and just come murder every one of us as we sleeping in our bed at night. The Indians, the Chinese, the Jews, the whites” (Young 41). Pao dismisses these concerns, and, as Xiuquan leaves Jamaica for the United States, Pao comes to the realization that, for better or worse, he has committed to Jamaica as his permanent home. This understanding of Jamaican identity as composed of a mix of different cultural elements extends to Pao’s personal preferences (he likes Jamaican food, and Chinese food, but prefers Jamaican music to Chinese music), but more importantly, shapes his vision of racial conflict in Jamaica.

Nevertheless, the ease with which Pao enters the criminal profession, contrasted with the doubts his brother Xiuquan feels about the way their family earns money, provides a key to understanding Pao’s personal politics that Young does not explicitly discuss in the novel. Xiuquan cannot make himself comfortable with an existence made possible by criminal activity, and expresses a strong desire to “do something honest” with his life. He describes his revulsion to Zhang and Pao’s business directly and asks Pao, “What do you call this?” to which Pao replies, “I call it life.” At heart, Pao makes his decisions based on a strong sense of pragmatism, and he tends to justify them after the fact. Since landing in Jamaica and immediately going to work for Zhang, the established crime boss of Chinatown and an old friend of his father, Pao has never seriously questioned his good fortune or the morality of his lifestyle, and he does not do so here either, brushing away Xiuquan’s qualms about a robbery they are planning by declaring: “The whole thing ain’t nothing more than shifting a few boxes” (Young 43). Pao’s pragmatism guides his political calculus as well, and Pao’s enigmatic political orientation has its origins in his tendency to do whatever seems most convenient to him at any given moment.

Importantly, Pao arrives in Jamaica around the birth of the institutionalized nationalist movement in 1938, suggesting that Kerry Young intends for Pao’s life in Jamaica to track the developmental lifespan of Jamaican nationalism exactly. Darrell E. Levi identifies four major tendencies in Jamaican nationalism during this period: “middle-class creole nationalism, Afro-Jamaican religious nationalism, Afro-Jamaican secular nationalism, and Marxist nationalism” (413). Middle-class nationalism encompassed the establishment

ideology at the time of Jamaican independence and Levi highlights the national motto as a succinct expression of its cultural program. At the same time, its economic policies reflected the consensus neocolonial “industrialization by invitation” policies of the 1960s. Set against creole nationalism, Marxist nationalism emerged from a radical element within the moderate-left PNP, and, despite a reinvigoration of the left wing of the PNP that occurred during Michael Manley’s democratic-socialist administration of the 1970s, never gained much of a popular base. The most serious challenge to creole nationalism came from Afro-Jamaican nationalism, and particularly the religious Afro-Jamaican nationalism represented by adherents of the Rastafarian faith, who “assaulted the cultural base of late colonial and neocolonial Jamaica, attacking the establishment’s Eurocentricity and inability to relieve the crushing poverty of the majority” (Levi 415-16). Yang Pao does not fit neatly into any of these camps: while he seems to identify with multiculturalism, he claims not to support the neocolonial policies of development that represent the other half of the middle-class nationalist program. On the other hand, Pao’s criminal enterprise, his association with lumpen elements of Jamaican society, and his eventual establishment of a legitimate business empire belie his professed Marxism. Finally, his Chinese identity essentially negates any possibility of identifying with an Afro-Jamaican nationalism, which was constituted as an ideology by and for the black majority, and had some ties to nativism and xenophobia.

Yang Pao’s personal politics amount to a synthesis of elements from all of these discrete ideologies; Pao’s political views are themselves creolized. On the one hand, Pao advocates for people of color to understand themselves as a coalition of the oppressed against whites, saying that whites associate with Jamaicans of color “when they got some little job need doing that they don’t want to soil they little white hands over. Is 1963, we independent, but we still servicing them” (Young 125). This assertion has some clear resonances with Afro-Jamaican nationalism, with its rejection of European norms and belief that whites should relinquish (or be made to relinquish) their positions of power in Jamaica. Similarly, he offers a Marxist critique of street violence in Kingston that places the blame for poverty and unemployment squarely on the shoulders of powerful whites and imperialists overseas: “Killing your neighbor not going to solve unemployment and all the misery that go with that. Their enemy not their neighbor. Their enemy is the masa that is making himself rich while all them boys bleeding to death in the street” (Young 156). Of course, Pao readily rationalizes his involvement with imperialist elements when his own ability to enrich himself and grow his business is at stake, and for years he does a brisk business in US Navy surplus. In another notable instance of political reflection, Pao’s granddaughter, Sunita, the product of his daughter Esther’s marriage with an Indian Jamaican, becomes the most prominent symbol of the kind of creole

Jamaican identity that Pao longs for amid the declining social cohesion of 1980s Jamaica. Relating the story of her birth, he says, “I look at this tiny little African, Chinese, Indian baby, and I think to myself, 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). The birth of his granddaughter reflects the possibility of a society in which different races mix harmoniously, and create a new, creolized hybrid culture and a hybrid people to inhabit it. At the same time, Pao’s assertion that Sunita will not have any homeland besides Jamaica to return to reflects his dismay at the numbers of people he sees leaving Jamaica during the years of the Manley government, and so echoes a common anti-PNP refrain of “brain drain.” Throughout the novel, Pao seems most concerned with looking out for the well-being of his friends and family, including his black Jamaican associates, Hampton and Finley; Sergeant Brown, the corrupt police official who protects Pao’s operations from police interference; and Dr. Morrison, the Scottish physician whose gambling debts have landed him in Pao’s criminal circle. Significantly, this group represents a cross-section of Jamaican society, including urban blacks (Hampton and Finley), members of the middle class (Brown and Pao), and a white professional (Morrison). In this sense, *Pao* seems to suggest that, if harmonious, racially mixed associations are at all possible, they occur in situations of mutual dependence and mutual implication.

Nevertheless, Pao’s organization is not a completely egalitarian one. Pao retains a great deal of power and ultimately has the final say over decisions that affect the whole group. Though Hampton’s and Finley’s roles in the enterprise are incredibly central to its day-to-day operations, Pao’s criminal empire, which he inherited from Zhang, remains fundamentally Chinese, and neither of Pao’s associates can advance to become bosses themselves. Still, they manage a comfortable existence and profit from Pao’s paternalistic generosity. The structure of such an organized criminal venture probably makes paternalism inevitable—indeed, it is likely impossible to imagine organized crime without it. Nevertheless, the racialized distinctions between Pao as the head of the organization and Hampton and Finley as his underlings reproduce some aspects of the class structure in Jamaica in microcosm.

Among black characters in *Pao*, however, Hampton and Finley do quite well for themselves, and particularly when compared to most of the novel’s black women. Pao sees his granddaughter Sunita as a potent symbol for the kind of multicultural Jamaican society he hopes for, but he glosses over the many privileges that Sunita will have from birth. This points to a major failure in Pao’s political understanding, a failure that the book’s treatment of black female characters exposes. Simply put, many Jamaicans do not share Sunita’s mixed background or financial resources. As much as Pao may wish to imagine her as a

representative Jamaican, she possesses many advantages that separate her from much of Jamaican society and particularly from the black laboring masses. Despite Pao's wishes for Sunita, his socialist politics, and his feelings of solidarity with black Jamaicans, his political analysis largely ignores Sunita's class and color privilege and more expansively, the extent to which brown, Chinese, and Indian Jamaicans help to perpetuate a political and economic system that circumscribes the social and economic opportunities of black Jamaicans.

Pao has foundational relationships with Cicely Wong and Gloria Campbell, black Jamaican women who challenge the optimistic creole vision of Jamaican identity that he maintains through the novel. Young uses these women's perspectives and life experiences to push back against creole nationalism and Pao's largely unreflexive pragmatism. Significantly, these experiences lead both women to take political positions to Pao's right and to his left, respectively. His mother-in-law, Cicely Wong, grew up on a plantation and, despite her dark complexion, became wealthy through an advantageous marriage to a Chinese husband. Cicely, who has always identified strongly with Britain and Jamaica's status as part of the British Empire, explains her rationale for taking this position on her deathbed: she has attempted to prevent her sons from embodying negative stereotypes about blacks in Jamaica: "I worried that [...] they would turn out to be bad black men, and they would end up proving white people right [...] And I called on Almighty God when I got frightened that we were going to give white people any reason to believe that they were right about us being wicked heathens" (Young 255). Up to this point, the novel has presented Cicely's obsession with class and status as, at best, an affectation and, at worst, a vain obsession that she foists on other characters through her maternal authority and economic dominance. Cicely's deathbed confession, though, reveals that her perceived Anglophilia constitutes a coping strategy designed to manage the perceptions of whites in a society that continues to devalue black life. Seen through this lens, her desperation to keep her son Kenneth away from criminal activity responds to a reality in which white and, to a lesser extent, Chinese Jamaicans can relatively safely profit from criminal enterprises because black Jamaicans do much of the fighting and bear much of the cost on behalf of their superiors.

Similarly, Pao's longtime girlfriend Gloria, a prostitute from a poor background, attempts to persuade Pao that Jamaica remains deeply divided along class, race, color, and cultural lines, and that a Jamaica that offers equality—or even equality of opportunity—remains a long way off. Gloria appears on the novel's first page, when she comes to Pao's shop because her sister, Marcia, has suffered a brutal beating at the hands of a white sailor: "He beat her. He beat her so bad I can hardly recognize her, my own sister" (Young 1). Gloria runs a brothel at which Marcia works, and Marcia has received this beating from a john. Gloria asks Pao to visit her sister in the hopes that he will have his men track

down the sailor responsible and administer justice, which he does readily. This episode sets up Pao and Gloria's future association with one another—he continues to provide protection for her business and they become lovers—but it also illustrates the extent to which the women working in this brothel cannot depend on the intervention of the authorities or the goodwill of their customers to ensure their well-being. Marcia directly addresses this position of powerlessness, saying, “Men think that just because we a house of women they can come there and do whatever they want. That’s how come what happen to Marcia” (Young 3). In this instance, a gendered power differential augments the racial power disparity between Marcia and the white sailor. Men generally, and white foreign men in particular, are a source of business but also an ever-present threat from whom only a gang leader like Pao can offer protection. Nevertheless, as Gloria makes clear later in the novel, prostitution still represents, in her mind, a surer and more autonomous way for a black woman to earn a wage than domestic service, the other professional option available to her.

Pao and Gloria, and the women who work at her house, have very different perspectives on the efficacy and the goals of electoral politics, and these perspectives reflect the vast difference between the choices and opportunities available to them. When Pao first begins visiting Gloria's house, he remarks on the women's passionate opinions about the newly created Jamaican House of Representatives: “[A]fter three hundred years of British rule the Queen decide she going let us go vote but the House of Representatives we elect didn't have no power to do nothing. [...] I call it a stupid waste of time. But these women take it all serious, like they think all this going actually make a difference to something” (Young 4). For Pao, self-government for Jamaica seems a wished-for ideal, but for Gloria and her employees, Jamaican economic self-determination offers hope to which they cling passionately. Pao's criminal enterprises and pragmatic approach to moneymaking ensure that he will be able to do business no matter who wields power in Jamaica. For the women in Gloria's house, on the other hand, independence seems to hold out the promise that other careers might become available to them in a self-determining Jamaica that makes social and economic change a reality. The stakes of electoral politics are therefore extremely different for Pao and for the women.

Pao and Gloria's divergent political orientations and life experiences come to a head when Gloria argues with Pao over where their daughter, Esther, will attend school. While Pao does not want Esther to attend the same prestigious school as his legitimate children, Gloria wants to ensure that Esther receives every possible opportunity, telling Pao, “I know you think Independence done change everything, but honest to god, Pao, sometimes I think you just live in your own little world [...] Jamaica look good on the surface, but unless you make sure you daughter get a good education she is going to end up with the same choices I had”

(Young 118-9).² Gloria has strong leftist sympathies and, during the democratic-socialist 1970s, looks to the example of Cuba in seeking a more radical direction for Jamaica. Pao, by contrast, supports only a modest democratic-socialist state despite his anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, and even welcomes economic liberalization in the 1980s as a way to bring foreign investment into Jamaica and expand his business opportunities. While he and Gloria go many years without another conflict over their different views of Jamaican society, Gloria's frustration with Pao's idealism again surfaces near the end of the novel, when she calls attention to the great divide between the beliefs that Pao espouses and his absence of political engagement: "You want to talk 'bout revolution, but this was never your revolution. You never been poor [...] you never had to find yourself a job or put a roof over your head. [...] You were never made to feel degraded or ignorant or worthless because of the colour of your skin, and have to stand there like a damn fool while them shut every door in your face" (Young 245). Though Pao has modeled his political rhetoric on that of his stepfather Zhang, a Mao sympathizer, he has selectively ignored the aspects of Jamaican society that implicate him in an exploitative economic and social system, or else has explained them away by assigning responsibility to the forces of imperialism, or neocolonialist capitalism, or the unwillingness of the people to take their political fates into their own hands. Indeed, immediately after the conversation with Gloria, which begins when Pao informs Gloria of his decision to move out of downtown Kingston and into a tony suburb, Pao rationalizes his choice, taking recourse, again, to the pragmatism that has served him so well throughout his life. Though he can admit Gloria may have a point, he cannot see himself having done anything differently, since "the only involvement yu could have was to either run for government or pick up a gun" (Young 247). Readers here must question the ease with which Pao shrugs off Gloria's concerns, and, in this way, the politics of *Pao* become much more complex than Yang Pao's personal politics.

Fay Wong, finally, suffers terribly as Pao's wife, and his treatment of her constitutes the novel's strongest indictment of his worldview and his ability to reflect seriously on his place in Jamaican society. Despite having grown up with economic and color privilege as the daughter of Cicely and Mr. Wong, Fay has no choice but to marry Pao, whom she never really comes to trust, let alone love. She refuses to integrate into Pao's distinctively Chinese household in the Chinatown neighborhood of Kingston: "According to Ma, Fay still waiting for some housemaid to make her bed and tidy up the place, [...] and clear up when she finish eat because her whole life Fay never even do so much as pick up a chopstick to feed herself because Miss Cicely always have them use a knife and fork, English style" (Young 72). Fay's upbringing has not prepared her for life in

² Here Gloria means the previously discussed choice between sex work and domestic service.

Pao's home, and she believes her mother has married her off to Pao as punishment. Pao, meanwhile, cannot understand Fay's rejection of her Chinese ethnic background. "You forget you Chinese," he tells her, noting her lack of filial piety. Before walking out of the room, Fay angrily responds, "You think I am Chinese?" (Young 64). Despite having Chinese blood, Fay does not identify with Chineseness, and particularly not with the traditional Chinese home that Pao maintains on Mathews Lane. Fay does not have the option to disown her Chineseness, however much she may refuse to identify with it. Her life with Pao means that she will forever be expected to conform to his expectations of proper behavior from a Chinese wife, mother, and daughter-in-law. Chinese cultural expectations comprise the latest in a long line of ethnic and racialized identities that authority figures have forced Fay to adopt, and she explains to Pao, "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 [...] And where me being Chinese came into all of this for her I don't know" (Young 115). Though she no longer lives under Cicely's roof, Fay cannot escape the weight of others' expectations of her identity. Cicely's confession that she decided to raise her children to identify with Englishness in order to protect them from their blackness only crystallizes the extent to which Fay has never had any say over her own identity. Ultimately, Fay's rejection of her Chineseness means that she becomes a victim at Pao's hands, and he rapes her, causing her to become pregnant with their second child, Mui. Pao's refusal to accept or understand Fay's dislike for him causes him to perpetrate the same kinds of evils he finds so scandalous in the white sailor at the beginning of the novel. Though Pao regrets his actions, as the novel's narrator, he does not dwell upon his guilt in any significant way, and he continues to expect that Fay will come around to performing her role as his wife more satisfactorily. Fay flees to England with her children, but not before becoming a tragic victim of the ways in which Pao's personal politics do not seriously consider black and female subjective experiences. Though Pao imagines a harmonious creole society, his imagination does not go so far as to allow for Fay's freedom of choice to identify with or disown her ethnic Chinese heritage.

The critiques of Jamaican society that both Cicely and Gloria offer, combined with the stark victimization that Marcia and Fay experience, substantiate many of the concerns advanced about the enthusiasm with which both anthropologists and other scholars have embraced creolization and its related concepts (*dougl*, *mestizaje*, *metissage*, and others). While creolization discourse may offer some utility for scholars of Caribbean culture and other mixed societies, it has its disadvantages as well. As Khan notes, it tends, for example, to reify cultural difference between its "source" cultures: "the very notion of 'mixed' [...] is necessarily premised on its relational opposite, 'pure'" (659). As Brathwaite observes, the Africa from which slaves came to Jamaica was not homogenous, but

rather comprised a range of different West African societies. Similarly, the China from which Chinese Jamaicans came was also divided along ethnic and class lines. The search for an undifferentiated 'pure' culture can go on forever. In this way, a too-simple conception of creolization tends to hinder and not advance analysis. Similarly, creolization narratives can, as Khan cautions, become prescriptive rather than descriptive, "describing what things *ought* to be rather than what they *are*" (664). To that extent, black women in *Pao* serve as the novel's true conscience. Whatever Pao may wish Jamaican society to be or to become, the reader cannot ignore the deeply uncomfortable state of things as they are. Yang Pao confuses prescriptivism and descriptivism in his pragmatic and creolized analysis of Jamaican culture and politics, which remains a hopeful if not an entirely accurate one. Finally, Khan argues, scholars must take care not to assume creolization in culture is necessarily liberatory or a form of progressive resistance (661), since, as Khan demonstrates in her study of Trinidad, and as Nettleford, Thomas, and *Pao* demonstrate in the case of Jamaica, a creolized culture can remain a racist, colorist, and unjust one.

Kingston's historical Chinatown has all but disappeared, and with it, much of the world in which *Pao* takes place. Throughout the novel, Kerry Young thinks through Jamaica's history and its potential future, and, in doing so, she engages with competing visions of Jamaican national identity. While the concept of cultural creolization has helped scholars to theorize Jamaican and other Caribbean societies, it cannot explain or account for the totality of Jamaican experience, and neither can the biography or worldview of any one literary character. For this reason, though Yang Pao's voice dominates the novel, the novel's politics are not coextensive with Pao's own. In this respect, the experiences and perspectives of Fay and Cicely Wong, and Marcia and Gloria Campbell, as black women from varied backgrounds, serve as crucial correctives to the optimistic ideal of a creole society and a creolized national identity that Yang Pao espouses for Jamaica. These women's voices complicate the portrait of Jamaica that Young presents in the novel and call attention to some of the ways in which creolization succeeds, and falls short, in helping scholars to understand such Jamaican literature.

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