

NEW DAY

ALSO BY V.S. REID

The Leopard

Sixty-Five

The Young Warriors

Peter of Mount Ephraim

The Jamaicans

Nanny-Town

The Horses of the Morning: A Life of Norman Washington Manley

NEW DAY

V.S. REID

INTRODUCTION BY

JEREMY POYNTING



P E E P A L T R E E

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To Robert Herring, Bryher, Frederic Wakeman, Bob
Lightbourne, Norman Manley, Phyllis Bottome, and all
those others who helped, I offer a hearty *thankie*.

And to all these and

TO MY WIFE

I dedicate this book.

JEREMY POYNTING

NEW DAY, EPIC OF JAMAICA

1. *Reputation: New Day Over 67 Years*

This is the third appearance of *New Day* since 1949. At its first publication, Philip Sherlock found “Beauty and inspiration”.¹ Two decades later, Kenneth Ramchand’s *The West Indian Novel and its Background* (1970) established its status as a pioneering text in the West Indian canon as a novel that forged a language of narration that was significantly Caribbean in tone.² It was reissued in the Heinemann Caribbean Writers series in 1973, with an introduction by Mervyn Morris that reminds us that it is Reid’s character, Johnny Campbell, and not Reid who narrates the events of the novel, and that Campbell has a point of view related to his colour, class and age.³ A decade later Neville Dawes offered the best case for *New Day* as a Jamaican epic, despite its ideological flaws, about which, from a Marxist perspective, he is sharply and wittily disparaging. He regarded *New Day* as self-deceiving in treating 1944 as a real break with the past,⁴ a view also expressed in Sylvia Wynter’s “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation”.⁵ Dawes locates *New Day*’s claim to be a national epic in its sensual celebration of the Jamaican natural world, and of ways of seeing embedded in Jamaica’s language. As George Lamming’s character Mark Kennedy declares, nation is about “the private feeling you experience of possessing and being possessed by the whole landscape of the place where you were born”,⁶ and Reid, Dawes suggests, creates that “whole landscape” and celebrates it as a resource for all races, all classes – however unequal their access. More recently, though, Victor Chang wants to sweep *New Day* from its position of respect in the Caribbean canon, on the grounds that “it was a novel of its time, filled with idealism and dream but now it seems antiquarian and dated”.⁷

New Day is a flawed novel, and in some respects a novel of its time, limited by its masculinism, its social conservatism and failure to reflect the political and cultural existence of the black majority, but it is also an ambitious novel with a living core. It has been read primarily as a work of historical and political fiction – inevitably since this was how it was presented – but this has diverted attention from what is most achieved in the novel. Rather than as a narrative primarily about the Morant Bay rebellion, about Davie Campbell’s commune and Garth

Campbell's performance as a politician, what is most enduring in *New Day* is found by a reading that adjusts the focus: this is not just the story *told* by John Campbell, but the story the book tells *about* John Campbell and his changing ways of seeing the world. This narrative tracks a tragic loss of vision, whose trajectory cannot be other than downhill, as the intensity of Campbell's childhood experience fades into a dull and comfortable middle age and an old age lived vicariously. This is more than an echo of Wordsworth's perception that with childhood "hath passed away a glory from the earth". There is a coarsening of his sensibilities – most manifest in his treatment of Lucille – that runs parallel to his increasing reluctance to question his perspective as a near-white man of wealth. This narrative runs counter to the novel's overt upward trajectory from defeat in 1865 to victory in 1944, and it raises doubts about Reid's reputed acquiescence in the bourgeois nationalist agenda.

The intensity of Campbell's childhood comes from the novel's concentration on the human body and its connections with the animate and inanimate worlds of nature. The young Campbell not only feels *in* his body but thinks *with* his body and deduces the thoughts and feelings of others in that way. In this focus, *New Day* expresses a vision of ecological possibility for the human place in the natural world and how it may be lost. It anticipates recent work in embodied naturalist philosophy and cognitive science,⁸ and the turn towards the body in contemporary literary and cultural criticism.⁹

New Day is also ambitious in a hitherto unrecognised way as being almost certainly the first Anglophone Caribbean novel to engage intertextually with the legacy of the ancient and established classics – Virgil's *Aeneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* – relationships seeking epic resonances that have mixed consequences for the novel.

2. *What Happens in New Day*

John Campbell's narrative begins in 1944 when, as an old man, on the eve of a new Jamaican constitution, he reflects on his life.

Part One, when he is eight, focuses on the consequences of the 1865 Morant Bay rebellion for his near-white family, whose relative prosperity keeps them from the sufferings of the people of Stoney Gut. It deals with the conflict between his father, Pa John, a pious Anglican who disapproves strongly of Paul Bogle as a Native Baptist and challenger of the colonial status quo, and his second son, Davie, who supports Bogle's campaign. When Davie is arrested, Pa John is about to disown him until he learns that his son will be flogged like a

black “yam thief”. He is so outraged that he signs the Stoney Gut petition, and then as a signatory is forced to flee to the mountains with his wife and children, to escape from the state pogrom that follows the violence outside the Morant Bay Courthouse. A mixture of piety and a misplaced faith in British justice leads to his death when he is shot by the redcoats. In Part One, Johnny plays the role of messenger between Davie and the people of Stoney Gut and witness to events at home, at Stoney Gut and outside the court house. Part One also establishes his friendship with Timothy M’Laren, and ends with the flight of Davie, Lucille Dubois (a white creole who is also a supporter of Bogle) and Johnny to one of the cays off Morant Bay.

The second part covers the years from 1865 to 1882 in some detail, and then very briefly until 1907. On the cay where Johnny, Davie and Lucille have escaped, they are joined by other Morant Bay survivors. Davie sets up a religious commune, “Zion”, and changes from being a life-loving fighter for social justice to a pleasure-denying sectarian zealot. Zion ends with Davie’s death and Lucille’s disappearance in a hurricane in 1882. Later, Johnny, now in his mid-twenties, ignores a letter from Lucille begging for help because he thinks she has betrayed his brother. Belatedly, he goes to Jamaica to find that she has been driven into prostitution. When he goes back to look for her on his second day in Kingston, she has died in the fire that sweeps the city.

The years between 1882 and 1907 see the commune becoming a conventional capitalist enterprise. Following the earthquake of 1907, the survivors return to Jamaica.

By Part Three, John Campbell is a prosperous business man. The years before 1925 are compressed into an account of the rise of Davie’s and Lucille’s son, John Creary, an entrepreneurial capitalist who develops the business, marries a white woman and becomes part of the Europhile elite. The years between 1925 and 1944 focus on the relationship between John Campbell and his nephew, Garth, whom he and Timothy rescue when cholera kills his mother and father. John sees the spirit of Davie in Garth, and invests in his education, sending him to England to study law, encouraging his nationalist spirit with stories of 1865, but cautioning him not to repeat Bogle’s mistakes. When Garth returns from England, he becomes a successful barrister who discovers “his people”, the leader of an ill-organised trade union action, and then a reformist politician. Part Three mixes a mythic narrative in which a scion of the Campbell family is destined to become the national leader, and a fictive version of the actual events of the immediate pre-war years, in particular the workers’ uprising of 1938.

3. John Campbell's Voices and Those of Others

It is with John Campbell's voice and story that the reader should start – or rather voices, since *New Day* is a *multi-vocal* work. There is the child witness of Morant Bay; the youth who sees the decline of Davie; the prosperous man who lives through his nephew Garth; and the old man looking back on his life. Each sees differently, and Reid is at pains to distinguish between the remembering old man and the narrating boy who relives his experience, a shift usually signalled by the movement from the historic to the present tense. Occasionally those voices collide: “I am no’ the only one shrieking. How could it be me one a-shriek? You ha’ not heard say that forty o’ we people fell when militiamen muskets talked the first time?” (153, refs. this edition).

There is also an authorial voice that carries a level of understanding beyond the young narrator's years. Sometimes it intrudes as a slip in plausibility – for instance Johnny's over-sophisticated response to Gourzong's inane question “What exactly are they petitioning for?": “But what a fool-fool mulatto-man, that! [...] Then people are not starving? And don't they must pay tax...?” (125). Mostly, though, the authorial voice emerges at those points where the novel draws attention to the limitations of John Campbell's perspectives.

There is also a collective, commenting voice of “epic apostrophe” that steps out of time to connect present and past, which is discussed below in the context of *New Day's* relationship to Virgil's *Aeneid*.

In Part One, Reid emphasises Johnny's childishness. He smirks during prayers, pinches his sister's backside and plays with a captured crab in church. He is prone to *schadenfreude*, pleased that someone else is getting a paternal whipping (58). He admits: “though I am tall for my years, eight-year-old can no' be long without sleep” and recalls how he has to be picked up sleeping from the road (168).

His life is framed by paternal violence and maternal tenderness; the images of the whip and the breast form key constructs in his perceptions of adult behaviour. He sees Pa John lashing Davie (twice) and Moses and Aaron Dacre, and even knocking his mother down. The breast, maternal, sexualised, and sometimes both, is the counter construct. Johnny speaks of how when he wakes from a nightmare, “Mother hugs you [...] and her breasts are a-kiss your face and there is peace on you” (67). Later, these feelings are transferred to Lucille, when “all of a sudden I am in her arms, and soft are her breasts on my face” (195). Breasts are also signs of the munificence of nature (“you must open your arms wide and feed on the breast o' the new day), a feeling Johnny associates with the

moment “when I first saw Lucille”. He is well aware of the sexual role of breasts, noting how “Every time Ruthie sees Moses smiling his white-teeth smile at her, her hands must go to her breast” (108). Reid’s treatment of John Campbell’s evanescent sexuality (with its roots in his childhood relationship to Lucille) is a curious element in the novel that hints at themes Reid drew back from developing.¹⁰

Johnny’s feelings for Davie veer between these two poles. There are the maternal images of being in Davie’s arms (“There is everything settling in its right place and quietness there inside of you” (135)), but when he witnesses Davie’s anger over the suffering at Stoney Gut, it is the whip he hears: “You ever take a bull-whip and throw the lash forward and bring it back quick so the cowskin fringe curls up and talks sharp to you? Is so Davie’s voice” (70).

Reid also locates Johnny’s attitudes in his family’s near-whiteness, as people who are looked up to by their black neighbours, and on social – though not equal – terms with the real “buckra” whites. When he walks out with Davie, he neither wants to talk to the barrack people (71), nor understands Davie’s reproof:

“They will say we are playing like buckra,” says Davie.

Is not bad, that? Then why Davie serious so? I am a-think that buckra are great people; for ride, they ride horses all the time and do not walk like negroes and poor whites. [...] (75)

His alarm over Davie’s vehemence in support of Bogle is aestheticized between images of white beauty and gentleness, and black (and Jewish) ugliness and terror:

Is not the beauty of Davie this I see. I can no’ see his broad forehead brown under the hair o’ sea-flax. I do no’ see the west sky before sun-up that is the colour of his eyes. [...]

Like Paul Bogle’s and herring-Jew’s was Davie’s face when he said: *Who it runs over, it runs over!* (37)

And when he’s at Stoney Gut, Johnny’s images of Bogle are those of a child who has heard the scaremongering talk. His fear, when he is on Mr Abram’s back, that “if I fall, down I will be on Deacon’s big teeth” (159) make the analysis of *New Day* as an historical novel *about* the Morant Bay rebellion rather beside the point.

But Johnny is also open to learning of a bodily kind. Buffeted by the crowds on the street, he resents that his whiteness is not acknowledged, but then realises that this is how black children are treated, “No softness is on the stones for street Arab” (96). When the militia men charge, he is initially pleased, because he sees the black

crowd as the enemy: "Ride them down, soldier men! Ride them down!" (97). Only when he realises that they will ride him down too does his attitude change.

At one level, this is a boy's adventure story, with echoes of *Treasure Island* and the apple barrel, when for instance he listens "to big people talk" from under the barbecue (119), about the danger brewing in Stoney Gut. But as Reid acutely observes, Johnny is soon bored by this talk, and diverts his attention to watching a mule walk by, observing how the "hind-legs glide and roll behind like sugar-boat men who have just come ashore" (122). His role as messenger is a Tom Sawyerish game. He enjoys being "Bro' John" (99), or "Johnny Newsmonger" as Ruthie calls him, because of the attention he gets – and the chance to irritate his sister ("Poor Naomi, nobody has ever called her *Sis* Naomi" (99)). Johnny's juvenile sexism persists throughout the novel, and it has to be said that *New Day's* gender politics scarcely goes beyond the observation that this is a man's world.

Reid does observe the authoritarian patriarchy of Pa Campbell's household, including his violence towards his wife. He shows how such gendered roles are learnt early in Johnny's desire for "man-talk" with his brothers, and his contempt for his sickly brother Zekiel, whose weakness is a coded euphemism for effeminacy, who helps with "women work" in the house. At best, Reid's portrayal of Naomi in Part Three suggests that he recognises this is not the natural order of things. Naomi is now a determined woman who speaks her mind very forcibly, dismissing John's cautiousness and his tedious old world metaphors as "man-foolishness", a nice inversion of the "man-talk" that used to exclude her. Later, when Naomi refuses to leave a demonstration despite the danger, John asks her if she wants "To play street-Arab woman and pass up bricks for men when fighting starts?" She ripostes: "If I was no respectable, help, I would help toss rockstone... (294)"¹¹ But though John admits his sister to honorary manhood, he still reflects "Funny how when time comes like this, Zekiel does no' seem a Campbell" (294). Naomi's ire over Garth's defeatism after the debacle of the strike is one of the points where an forceful alternative to the dominant narrative is expressed.

Where Reid excels is in providing Johnny with vivid and psychologically plausible accounts of his inner feelings, which draw on his previous experiences. When Johnny is brought face-to-face with death at Morant Bay, his account catches his relief, his emptiness:

I am sitting on the ground inside Humphrey's church, not thinking of anything at all.

I call to mind that one time at Salt Savannah, Timothy and Quackoo and me were sporting in a morning sea, riding on a bamboo raft. We did no' notice that the sea was coming up till we were 'way beyond the blue-water mark. [...] But race as we could race, a heavy sea caught up with us, and up we are gone and down again, down to sea-bottom. And then there was a struggle at sea-bottom, with sand a-fill our ears and nostrils, and water pounding out our breaths. When well bruised and full o' aches we crawled out on to the shore, gasping like groupers in net, we just lay flat on the sand, a-think on nothing at all, at all.

So, is how I stay now, my back leaning on Humphrey's wall. (154)

5. *An Embodied Narrative*

But what Reid achieves in this first part of the novel is much more than vivid imagery and intimacy of observation. The *more* lies in the foregrounding of the body-focusedness of Johnny's narration, the embodiment of his mental processes and the use of metaphors drawn from the natural world in which he leads his life. This is what is most original and achieved in *New Day*. From the focus on eyes (as one would expect in a narrative of witness), on ears, mouths, throats, noses, hearts, feet and so on, Reid provides Johnny with a rich psychology of perception. For instance, observing his father's response to Dr Creary's advice to quit their home, Johnny records:

Father looks around on we, *his eyes walks away and goes to long distance*. Still Doctor Creary talks to him, but his eyes are *gone away to think*. They come back to look at us to see if he is thinking right; he looks away again, and when he comes back to Doctor Creary his eyes say the doctor is right. *But alocs thick at his throat*. (176, my italics)

This is prose that is alive, where the reader is placed in the active, interpreting position of the child.

To see just how committed Reid is to networks of embodiment, particularly in Part One, consider a few statistics. *New Day* has over 322 iterations of *heads*, 300 of *eyes*, 99 of *throats*, 89 of *shoulders*, 81 of *feet*, 75 of *bellies* and *stomachs*; 62 references to *blood*, 47 to *hearts*, 36 to *noses* and *nostrils*, 30 to *ears*, 16 to *lips*, 14 to *mouths*, 12 to *sweat*. There is only one reference to *brain*, and whilst there are 47 references to *mind*, these treat mental operations in thoroughly embodied ways. To give one example of the distribution of bodily reference in the novel: of the 89 iterations of *shoulders*, 68 are in Part One. By contrast, Roger Mais's *The Hills Were Joyful Together* (1953), a novel of similar length, with a close focus on the physical existence of Kingston yard-dwellers, has

roughly half the iterations of body parts (152 heads, 127 eyes, 37 throats, 50 shoulders, 45 bellies, 15 ears). The only reference that exceeds *New Day* in frequency is to feet (88 references), which is not surprising in a novel that has a thematic focus on pursuit and flight.

It is not just the frequency of reference (some simply point to body parts in naturalistic ways – as do almost all the references in Mais’s novel), but how the body is given agency. Eyes, for instance, don’t just see, they make four or don’t make four; deep thinking goes on back o’ them; they watch thoughts inside, walk over, roll, stumble, laugh, go to bed, a-hide, a-dance. Reid’s location of Johnny’s perceptions *in* the natural world is discussed below, but there are also ackee pod eyes, young moon eyes, eyes like glass marbles, fish-eyes, yellow-snake eyes, mouse eyes. Johnny describes Davie’s hate-filled eyes as being like a yellow snake’s, whilst Davie accuses Johnny of being like “a two-day tweet-to-whit with two eyes that are no’ opened yet” (72). Within this network of reference, Johnny’s personification of “Day is just rubbing sleep out o’ his eyes” (174) hardly seems fanciful.

Other organs of sense are either active or beset by action. Ears cock, are deaf, ring, and are torn at by loud sounds. Noses are looked down, spoken down, picked, have Saturday night put on them (i.e. go red with drink), and body scent is rank in nostrils.

Organs associated with feelings are brought into vivid play. Hearts pump and pump, beat strong, go bump, bump, bump; a-leap, come up to the mouth, jump; be a-swelled by pain; feel like trace leather has been fastened around them; batter against the walls of the chest. The physicality of these descriptions reanimate such dead metaphors as *know it by heart*, *singleness of heart*, *hardness of heart*, with *heartiness* and being *hearty*. Similarly, bellies are heavy, fattened, filled with air, kiss ribs, feel pain, fear; cymbals crash inside them; they are the source of laughter, hiccups; they creak up and down, can be deep in thought (“talking away the full of his belly”), and can be lost – as in Ruthie’s “lost belly” when she loses her baby.

Perhaps even richer in descriptive variety are the organs of communication – though in Johnny’s narration no part of the body does not speak. So, heads toss leader-bull fashion, shake, are raised, lowered, turn, are held high, look over, bob, jerk, twist, nod, beat in time to tunes; are like a wild boar’s, are flatheads, long-heads, hot-heads, scratched, rubbed, held proud, can make head nor tail o’, are thrust forward, bent, scattered (confused), are young, bald, old, grey.

Mouths open like macca-back fish, like rat-trap, like a shored

mullet; are pot-mouths, blabber-mouths, heavy mouths; Davie is “two-mouthed” (deceitful); gourd-mouth Johnny is told not to blab; Lucille’s mouth is like a two-day kling-kling a-beg for air; a woman is blah-blah mouthed; hearts jump through mouths; one character is a “water-mouth man who must flow and flow”, another’s mouth went too far before him, whilst Naomi “tucks in her mouth”, but also utters crudely proverbial saying when she tells her nephew, Garth, “*Cover your mouth!* You blabbing like the bottom o’ sick barrack people who ha’ taken castor oil!” (303).¹² There are *lips* o’ stiffness, lips that suck at a blood-plum (Lucille has red lips); someone has no fullness to his lips, another has no lips to his mouth, whilst Mr. Abram has lips to his mouth – he is talking enough-plenty! Before words reach the mouth and lips, *throats* and the sounds coming from them are often the most reliable sign of meaning. Throats have molasses in, treacle in, iron in, aloes in (frequently); thunder rolls in them; Davie talks with teeth in his throat; throats have croaks in, spittle in, dryness in, music in; they a-tremble like humming bird, fear whistles in them, john-to-whit [sounds] bubble in them, happiness is thick in, eye water is in them; they are filled with slime, thirsty men suck at their throats; a shriek is a bubble in John’s throat, whilst sorrow a-tear through it. When Davie is dying: he “whispered with his throat like how the dying do when their lips die first” and on the last morning of the novel: “deep-running water is the song that pours from their throats to greet this new day” (355).

Much the same can be shown in Reid’s treatment of the limbs of action – feet, arms, hands – but the role of shoulders will suffice. In earlier chapters, they are the passive recipients of the beatings (and are proverbially the bearers of burdens), but in *New Day* they become the principal metonym for the militant actions of the Stoney Gut men:

“Shoulders, shoulders are all I see; but ha’ shoulders ever talked to you like how they talk to me this day? Men are ploughing there up courthouse way, and their shoulders talk back to me [...]

“They plough and plough and plough. Presently they have stopped working, and the shoulders move away. I can see they had been ploughing at death.” (154)

The conjunction of shoulders and ploughing is one of the places where *New Day* echoes the *Aeneid*, which reiterates references to shoulders 74 times, mostly in scenes of war. Robert Fagles’ translation has the lines (2/448-450): “so through spears, through enemy ranks we plow/ to certain death”.¹³ Bogle was also recorded in the Royal

Commission (which Reid studied and used) as saying his people would be “compelled to put shoulders to the wheel” if matters got any worse.¹⁴ But if shoulders signify the actions of the hitherto powerless entering history with their bodies, the image also suggests, more ambivalently, that it is the shoulders that act rather than conscious minds. “Morant Bay men are coming with their shoulders ready to talk”:

[...]Then I do no’ see Custos any more, for he is gone to his knees. Men say he prayed then to Deacon; but from where I am, *Deacon shoulders worked in conversation*. When they stopped talking, redder was his cutlass.

Then all the *shoulders* are standing straight now and turning back to us, finished. (164)

If the body thinks, feels and perceives, *mind* is also embodied. For instance, *mind* turns back, walks back, jumps, has gone on, has gone long distance, is working hard, is *carried* by perceptions, is looking on, talks of secret things; Johnny speaks *from* his mind (ie inadvertently); mind goes from them; memory is pricking, knocks at minds; minds are sealed; things ... ha’ lately grown in my mind; mind reads of things not written, says right, has stood up, and many more.

What Reid achieves in Part One, is a reliteralisation of the dead metaphors of embodiment buried in language. He does this through foregrounding their literal physicality, by revisiting the proverbial speech of older, rural Jamaican patwa, and by using more consciously modernist defamiliarisation strategies – actually traditional rhetorical devices such as *anthymeria* (using one part of speech as if it was another) as in Davie’s question “Is that what will bacon we, wine we?” (64); or *anastrophe* (a reversal of the usual syntactic order) such as “Buttoned is his coat” (127), or *prosopopoeia* (personification) such as “Quill has finished scratching on paper now” (126).

6. Nature Within and Without

Embodiment is frequently associated with external nature – with Jamaica’s flora and fauna, weather and food. The associations identify particular characters and their similarities to or differences from others. In its totality, the network of human-animal linkages presents the young John Campbell’s way of seeing the world and, by implication, Reid’s vision of nation that exists in all its physicality, if not yet in its political and social arrangements. And as Paul Gilroy

argues, “a sense of the body’s place in the natural world can provide [...] a social ecology and an alternative rationality that articulate a cultural and moral challenge to the exploitation and domination of “the nature within us and without us”.¹⁵

Animal images constitute the most numerous and significant elements of connection. Again, there are significant differences of frequency and mode of use between Part One and Parts Two and Three, and whilst the change diminishes the novel’s textual richness, it does indicate Reid’s creative realisation that his adult narrator has lost the heightened vision he had as a child.

The most striking presence is the horse – an iconic image for Reid. It references Edna Manley’s epochal sculpture, *Horse of the Morning* (1943), which Reid also uses in the title of his biography of Norman Manley, *Horses of the Morning* (1985), and the fact that the Manleys rode and bred horses at Drumblair.¹⁶ In *New Day*, the horse is an Homeric epithet for Davie who is seen “railing and prancing like colt-horse” and “goes to his feet like a yearling” (68). Whilst Pa John’s shoulders are “like stallions”, and though “colt horse can no’ have shoulders like stallions”, when Davie carries Johnny, “Stallion eagerness is a-ripple against me shoulder” (84) and he is “a young stallion a-stride without fear” (116). By contrast, “Red is the Inspector’s face as he champs his moustache like pasture horse mouthing dry grass” (143); Martha, the innkeeper, is described by Davie as “a payable mare” and later in the novel, John Campbell disparages his nephew John Creary, son of Davie and Lucille, when he says, “Two high-bred colts ha’ mated and brought a good cart-horse” (262). Horses and carts also provide proverbial sayings such as “young men must be strong like boar and quick like goat and with breath like racehorse of St Dorothy’s parish” (130). By Part Three, though, the sayings have become markedly “old-school” and sententious: “You teach young colt to haul a logso he knows how to brace to the pull” (277), or “young colt that does no’ frisk will be no good for the long pull ahead” (327).

Bulls/steers and cows provide another source of reference. Pa John’s Homeric epithet is “leader bull”, though when he is in a bad temper he is “a bad steer coming from the branding pen”. When he leads his family to presumed safety after the defeat of the rebellion, “My father has the strength of ten; a leader-bull is he, leading his herd to the high places” (179), and Davie is sure that the rest of his family will be safe after his death, since, “they will no’ harm the herd since leader-bull is dead” (190). Steers (castrated bulls) are of course frequently yoked, and when Davie is arrested, “Constables have

turned my bro' Davie into a cotter-head plough-steer" (116); chained with Mr Abram, and two Morant Bay men "all are joined together by a long iron bar 'twixt them", an image that also recalls the slave coffle. When the crowd releases the men, they are like plough steers "racing for clear pastures" (117). The metaphor of emasculation is also one that John Campbell attaches to his weakly brother Zekiel, in the rather obvious innuendo that he has been unhappy in marriage "for he was no' born with the cut of a leader-bull" (259). Bovines also provide images for insult as in Johnny's description of the Whites at Dr Creary's dinner party: "You red-faced back-draw bulls and your stringy cows!" (229), whilst leader bulls contrast with biddable "heavy belly pasture bulls" (the other estate owners) whom Garth's persuasion fits "with nose rings" (324).

Mules have a slightly less prominent metaphoric presence, though Pa John is a "stubborn hamper-mule", Mr Abram "is broad in the back like penny-a-ride donkey at Morant Bay Fair" and Naomi curses Garth for his caution/cowardice as a "Dam' mongrel mule".

Dogs feature as images of both aggression and victimhood. The angry Davie's voice "sounds like a butcher-dog... when it can get no scrap meat" (82), and the disappointed Aaron Dacre is like "a strayed dog in a strange town watching the sun set and night come with rainclouds" (80). Whilst Deacon Bogle has the ferocity of a "hunter-dog", other canine images are of vulnerability. When the redcoats are ready to "shoot we down like dogs", when they are "thick around the Bay like fleas on a mangy dog", all Pa John can manage is watchfulness, "his head held like a pointer dog", and when he and Manuel are slain, "we run in little circles like wounded hound-dogs" (189). Later, when Lucille reproves Davie's self-indulgence when he rejects Creary's suggestion that he should give evidence to the Commission, "My bro' is like a house dog what has been slapped" (212). The most extended dog/hound metaphor comes in Davie's explosion of rage over what he sees as the Commission's hypocrisy:

Down on other people go the hounds o' Britain, running without leash, savaging and mauling the poor ones who have been sinful 'cause they talked for freedom. Then when we bowels ha' been ripped out, Mother England plays like soft and begin to holler that she did no' want it so; that the well-trained hounds she has sent out ha' only gone mad because they scented blood. (212).

Creatures of the small peasantry such as hogs and lambs provide paired comparisons. When Davie unwillingly kneels for family prayers, he looks to Johnny like an "overgrown lambkin", so when

he describes his shock over Davie's anger, the images of boar and lamb readily connect. Gone are the "two spring lambs what dance at his mouth every time my bro' laughs" and in their place "teeth are wild boar's tearing down Wareika Mount." (75). Porcine images connect the overfed, parvenu black empire loyalist Zaccy O'Gilvie who "slops his coffee like hog at buttery door" (124) to the fat German Custos who orders the Morant Bay shootings, though, at Bogle's hands, the German boar becomes a sacrificial lamb. Here, the description (whilst metaphorically ingenious in describing Bogle as if he was the shepherd of a myalist cult – which he was not) is quite implausibly complex in Johnny's mouth: "Shepherd Bogle's German lamb comes. Fat he is, fed on young spring grass and running water 'gainst the time when he must come to Bogle" (164). But if this does not sound like Johnny, it shows how determined Reid is to rift the texture of *New Day* with the ore of human-animal reference.

Other images drawn from Jamaica's fauna draw on more conventional constructs of higher and lower orders of nature, with birds as symbols of beauty, fragility, and sometimes warning, whilst snakes, worms, insects and fish represent the furthest point from the divine. The angry Davie's face is like that of a yellow snake with "two eyes like glass marbles" (72), and "Nanka snake hissing from stonehole is Davie" (191). In the crowds pressing in on him in front of the Morant Bay courthouse, Johnny is "a worm in a calaloo field" (140), whilst hiding from the Maroons on Morant Cay he is a "tumblebug in the mud" (197) ... "a congo worm in a farmyard thick with moulting hens. I do no' know what I am" (198). And when the hurricane devastates the Cay, the survivors become "a long snake o' humans grovelling along in the dark" (247).

The corrupt Pastor Humphrey is "a tall and pale conger eel" with "fish-eyes a-star" (85); giving his sermon, his "long neck shot out, then drew back into his cassock like iguana in stonehole"; "pigeon a-coo in his voice, but yellow snake looking out o' his eyes" (89). Johnny both applies such negative images to himself ("oyster at rock-bottom, me, my mouth pouting" (105) and records those turned against him, such as Naomi's put-down for playing force-ripe man: "Johnny Piper turned Kingfish" (114), or Ma Tamah's "Coo here! [...] When since kling-kling turn into hawk-bird? *Heh!*" Johnny reflects: "Good it is to hear her laugh, but when Mother says *heh!* like that, all of your manhood is gone, and smaller than calaloo worm you feel. Is funny it how your breeches drop off any time Mother says *heh!*" (177). Part One has a good deal of that kind of witty (and suggestive) earthiness.

Birds provide perhaps the most frequent and varied source of metaphor, making *New Day* a rich aviary of Jamaican reference: nightingales, parrots, kling-klings, hawks, ploves, screech owls, man-o-war birds, solitaires, pitcharries, gaulins, hopping dicks; sultanas, bitterns, carrion crows, Johncrows, blackbirds, yellowthroat warbler (whose whistle is Davie's signal when the family is on the mountain), green-back mallards, pelicans, noddies, sooty terns. Birds are Lucille's epithet: nightingale, hummingbird, and after her dissension with Davie, "the weep of a lost *kling-kling*" is in her voice (239).

As one would expect, the natural forces of weather – hurricane, drought, earthquake and flood – join with quasi-natural forces such as fire to provide the bedrock of human existence in *New Day*. They provide crucial triggers to plot action – the Stoney Gut rebellion, Davie's death and the end of the Salt Savannah Cay experiment – as well as reminding that nature is not to be sentimentalised. There are moments of a naturalistic pantheism as when "Down in the Bay the sea kneels on the shore" (177); or of the "twisty lignum-vitae shaking hands over our heads. Pitcharries whistle howdy-do to we..." (178) – though both images are ironic since they precede Pa John's and Manuel's deaths – but in general *New Day* is clear that nature both gives and takes. After the drought, floods come:

Yallahs and Morant and Plantain Garden rivers heavy so, until you do not know where rivers end and land begins. That was the time when an alligator swam clear up to the barrack and took away my friend Timothy's baby bro'. (83)

As well as being direct forces in the novel, thunder, hurricane and fire are frequent sources of metaphorical comparison – and another connection between the Jamaican natural world and the epic world of the *Aeneid*. For instance, there are 40 references to thunder/thunderheads in the *Aeneid*, 41 instances in *New Day*, and though Reid's novel does not have quite the ubiquity of fire as the *Aeneid* (75 against 160 instances), fire is central to *New Day*, when "not until men's habitations from the Bay to the foot of the great mountain ha' been put to fire did Governor Eyre stay his hand" (208). And there is, of course, Lucille's Didoesque death by fire. Elsewhere there are multiple references to fire in eyes, and to hell, fire and brimstone.

Reid is doing several things with these networks that locate the human body both *in* and *of* nature. In the first place, they provide Reid with psychologically plausible sources of moral analogy for the boy's descriptions of the human behaviour he witnesses. In this,