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Revitalising Jamaican Culture by Restructuring Jamaican History:

V. S. Reid's Nationalist Ambitions in *New Day* and *The Young Warriors*

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Abstract

In this article, the framework that V.S. Reid implements in his historical narratives, *New Day* and *The Young Warriors*, is analysed to reveal the extent to which his culture-building campaign is influenced by his nationalist ideology. Reid's advancement of his national awakening project through his use of violence, cultural legacies, and the pedagogical form demonstrates this principle. This article's primary methodology is to discuss the historical background and cultural implications of these texts to highlight the extent to which Reid's nationalist ideology is woven into his work. Reid's experimentation with pedagogical historical fiction to transform Jamaica's cultural identity is the core indicator of his nationalist perspective. The violence and trauma in these narratives are included by Reid to further depict the damaged national consciousness. By prioritising the emotional perspective of the characters towards this violence, Reid encourages the reader to adopt his established nationalist mindset. Reid includes cultural motifs and allusions to folktales in his novels to promote his nationalist view of a strong, independent Jamaican culture with a long legacy of cultural perseverance. His incorporation of this legacy and his use of patois and idioms enrich his own fiction while simultaneously canonising expressions of Jamaican identity. In considering these arguments, the literature of V.S. Reid illustrates the impact that historical perspectives have on building a new nationalist culture. This article will discuss the effectiveness of his narratives in developing this concept through outlining their potential ethical downfalls and by scrutinising his techniques and the novels' content.

Keywords: V.S Reid, Jamaica, historical fiction, *New Day*, *The Young Warriors*.

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Daniel James Fay is originally from Cavan town. He is a recent graduate of DCU, where he studied English and History, and was on the Dean's Honors list 2025, a fitting conclusion to an invigorating and exciting educational experience. In my free time, he enjoys hiking, sailing, surfing, swimming and socializing with his friends. He has a particular passion for historical fiction, revolutionary periods, and the environment; all of these were driving forces for his article. Currently, he is doing his PME placement in Cavan and travelling up and down to Dublin for lectures at DCU. In the future, he hopes to sail around the Caribbean and pursue a research master's degree.

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Introduction

History and culture influence each other heavily, cultural beliefs dominate how we view history, and historical perceptions fuel our culture. In the realm of postcolonial literature, history plays a monumental part in culture-building and the way it is harnessed by an author conveys their ideology and ambitions. A perfect demonstration of this principle is the work of V.S. Reid, a key author in the Jamaican canon. Reid embarked on a reclamation of Jamaican identity through his writing of historical fiction and expression of cultural traditions. Reid, through his novels' pedagogical narratives attempts to invoke an awakening of a new national consciousness and establish a cultural legacy for and of Jamaica. This article explores V.S. Reid's literary approach to culture-building and legacy creation in two of his novels: *New Day* and *The Young Warriors*.

Contemporary attitudes towards how history is utilised for nationalist aims recontextualise Reid's literature and his mission of inspiring a cultural resurgence. The political context of the novels and the perceptions of postcolonial critics help reveal the ideology of Reid and his motivation for writing historical fiction. The role of history in formulating culture and inspiring an independent consciousness is a fascinating topic within literature. Franz Fanon states in his seminal essay "On Native Culture" that "a national culture under colonial domination is a contested culture whose destruction is sought in systematic fashion" (Fanon 46). In considering this observation, the aim of Reid's restructuring of history in *The Young Warriors* and *New Day* is to devalue colonial perceptions and to build a unique non-colonial Jamaican canon. To properly analyse the cultural significance of Reid's historical novels this article will scrutinise how he wields pedagogical history as a nationalist tool, inspires a national consciousness through the history of violence, and ultimately fosters a legacy of cultural survival.

It is essential to recognise that Reid's work came as both a product and as a response to a time of political upheaval in Jamaica. In *The Young Warriors* Reid celebrates and memorialises the maroons' victories as they act as a symbolic proto-nationalist movement from his perspective. However, in *New Day* he takes a different approach by foregrounding the struggles and hardships of Jamaica's journey to greater sovereignty and independence. It is vital to consider the correlation between the drastically different events of the novels and the socio-political history of Jamaica. Written in 1949 before Jamaica was granted full independence, *New Day* focuses on the history of the proto-nationalist struggle and glorifies persevering against a colonial authority. This is depicted to invigorate the nationalist cause. Contrastingly, *The Young Warriors* was written in 1967 after Jamaica gained its independence in 1962, therefore this novel becomes a celebration of the struggle against colonial authority and a development of the postcolonial Jamaican cultural identity. Reid's historical fiction's settings and promotion of culture is heavily entwined with his nationalist ideology, and they are certainly influenced by the pivotal advances towards independence of his time. In recognising this relationship, this paper will investigate the cultural allusions and pedagogical methods Reid utilizes in these historical narratives in aid of awakening a national consciousness. This paper will be structured into three sections that discuss the role of history in culture building, each one focusing on a different aspect or attribute of this process. The first chapter will scrutinize how these historical narratives are used by Reid as a nationalist teaching vessel. The second will evaluate the role of violence

and trauma in awakening a national consciousness. The concluding chapter will explore the cultural legacy of Jamaica charted by Reid. Through investigating these concepts, this paper demonstrates how Reid helped to inspire a new independent Jamaican cultural identity through depicting a nationalist perspective on Jamaican history.

1. Pedagogical History as a Nationalist Tool

V.S. Reid's literature written in a time of political uncertainty and change attempts to rebuild and heal the cultural damage created by colonial oppression. This chapter will evaluate the cultural impact of Reid's novels *The Young Warriors* (1967) and *New Day* (1949), their historical settings and narratives. By applying theories on historical fiction to these novels, it becomes evident that these settings were implemented by Reid to achieve his nationalist ambitions. Reid's goal with his literature is to strip the racist colonial narratives and conventions from the national consciousness and promote a cultural identity that celebrates Jamaica's individuality and freedom. The pedagogical historical fiction form is the perfect vessel for Reid's cultural mission; he passionately uses the form's teaching abilities to dismantle the embedded colonial perspectives of key events and ethnic groups in both novels. V.S. Reid's nationalist mindset shines through in his "rewriting" of the past and the ethical repercussions of this perspective will be investigated. This chapter will analyse the depiction of the Morant Bay Rebellion in *New Day* and the characterization of the maroon communities in *The Young Warriors* to evaluate the effectiveness of Reid's wielding of pedagogical fiction as a nationalist tool for culture-building.

The setting and the glorification of the maroons and their colonial struggles in *The Young Warriors* makes it an excellent example of a culture-building text. Susan Mabel and Karah Hemachandran characterise V.S. Reid "as a Jamaican who carried the legacy of slavery, colonialism, and revolutions" in his writing of pedagogical fiction. In their analysis they reveal how Reid passionately resists "the idea that history was already given and written by the oppressor" (8). Reid achieves this by expertly elevating the maroon's cultural and historical significance in the Jamaican identity. A key method in this glorification is his depiction of the maroons' survival and independence in a harsh environment. In this setting, the maroons successfully survive on the mountains of Jamaica while being hunted by redcoats; Tommy the protagonist contributes this success to the maroons becoming "like the bush" and winning their battles "by being smart" (*Young Warriors* 8). Reid's characterisation of the maroons as incredibly capable and independent in a precarious setting informs the reader of the complexity of the maroon community. The young maroon boy's success in hiding from the redcoats demonstrates the ingenuity and complexity of the maroon's style of camouflage and acts as an embracement of their learned heritage. Gordon Rohlehr surmises that a substantial amount of West Indian literature "challenges conventional notions of history" to "relocate the submerged cultures" (Rohlehr 15). *The Young Warriors* effectively adheres to this principle with Reid focusing on teaching the intricacies of maroon culture and their self-assured independence to the reader. The juxtaposition between the maroon's capabilities and the redcoats is further ratified by the comments of David who claims that if redcoats "ever depended on hunting for their food they would starve to death" (*Young Warriors* 53). The novel through its setting and characterisation

of groups celebrates Jamaica's rich heritage and deconstructs colonial perceptions of the maroons as an uncivilised rebel tribe.

The maroon's effective guerilla tactics and understanding of their revolutionary history is harnessed by Reid to reiterate that independence and revolutionary activity is a foundational part of Jamaica's history and culture. Barry Chevannes notes that "Jamaica, ... is credited with one of the highest rates of slave revolts and conspiracies in the history of any slave society" ("Introducing the Native Religions of Jamaica" 1). Rebellion and resisting authority have been a critical part of Jamaica's history and Reid's choice of setting of a period where there was an active resistance against the British authority reflects this sentiment. Reid bolsters the strength of the maroons and displays their superiority to the redcoats through their connection to the environment and their historical knowledge. Mabel and Karah state that there are specific points where Reid in *New Day* calls "attention to its educational moments" (Mabel; Karah 41) and this technique is implemented in *The Young Warriors*. The very first chapter of the novel "The questions" situates the maroon's revolutionary history as a crucial part of the readers experience and a key part of Jamaica's culture. By having Chief Philip ask, "Why did the King of Spain give us this golden band?" and Johnny proudly replying "Because we showed that we were true Jamaicans. We fought for our country" (*Young Warriors* 9) Reid compels the reader to appreciate the value in the historical struggle and encourages them to consider this history to inform their reading. The chief's questions and the young warriors' responses are not just a lazy exposition dump by Reid; they are rather a precise declaration of what should be considered important to the reader's perception of the maroons. Reid emphasises the maroon's military capability and their extensive knowledge of their history to express their agency and independence; through this veneration Reid vehemently campaigns for the maroons to have a more pivotal position within Jamaican history and the cultural sphere.

The glorification of fighting against British tyranny can be criticised despite the cultural-building intent of Reid. The maroon's political and social relationship with Britain is far more complex than the long-lasting struggle against oppression that is suggested by *The Young Warriors'* narratives. The maroons in the past have been identified as a sovereign and separate political identity to the rest of Jamaica throughout history. The maroons have even supported the British forces against independence movements. Ann Lawson Lucas notes perceptions of distant history often become "simplified but also magnified in grandeur" (Lucas xvi) and this principle could be applied to Reid's misrepresentation of history. However, oddly enough the political nuance of the maroons is acknowledged by Reid in *New Day* with Johnny recounting with anxiety and fear that the "Now here there! The Maroons are no' with Bogle!" (*New Day* 182). Therefore, it becomes evident that a major factor in Reid framing the maroons differently in *The Young Warriors* is the younger and more impressionable audience that he is appealing to. The lack of historical understanding that the youth has is arguably exploited by Reid as he romanticises the brave fighting of young male warriors against colonial authority. This idea is epitomised by the young character of Charlie literally and symbolically slipping through the grips of colonial authority. Charlie escaping as "Swift as a coney" (*Young Warriors* 143) after the death of his captor is dramatic and exhilarating. Reid's grand adventure novel undoubtedly draws in and influences the young teenage boy audience into believing in a prolonged legacy of a

cultural and political battle for independence. As Lawson concludes historical fiction that is aimed at the youth is not only written for pedagogical means and these narratives often come with “a present hidden agenda” (Lawson xvii). In considering this, by targeting this demographic through pedagogical history, Reid is influencing the youth with his nationalist ideology. The aim of this style of writing is morally ambiguous due to its political undertones.

In *New Day*, Reid creates historical connections between the setting of the Morant Bay Rebellion and the descriptions of Garth Campbell’s trade unions marches to argue that the Jamaican independence movement was always festering under the surface. Jana Gohrisch explains that “the concomitant ambivalence of values is the basis on which the novel rests its ideological refashioning of the aims and interests of the Morant Bay protesters” (Gohrisch 71). Reid in fostering these connections with his nationalist mindset that Gohrisch describes is striving to bend the historical setting to his will and establish an overarching narrative of independence. The character of Davie in *New Day* personifies Reid’s proto-nationalist characterisation of history. His ideology is arguably anti-colonial in tone with his condemnation of the British government's actions in the courtroom statement scene resembling in a meta way the very style of Reid. In his antislavery rant to the Commissioners, he surmises that men “had been marching for two hundred years” (*New Day* 220), and slavery’s injustice did not stop after emancipation. This is emphasised by the economic inequality of the period which came as a result of “buckra” only giving former slaves “some acres of rock and cactus” (*New Day* 221). Davie endeavours to relay a pedagogical history lesson of slavery to the courtroom to correlate the injustices of the past to the tyranny of the present. This style of argument adheres to Reid’s form of historical analogy. Garth Campbell argues with a similar invective by stating that “gems o’ Empire must ha never been on the polishers table” and that the present societal issues have roots in the “archaic system of Crown government” (*New Day* 347). Garth’s nationalist view like Davie’s is informed by the past with him learning (as Reid wants the reader to) about the struggle for sovereignty. Reid in his literary depiction of an “independence legacy” argues that Jamaican culture was not utterly oppressed throughout history, but rather that the culture was in a constant state of trying to break free of its colonial restrictions.

The ethical effect of Reid’s pedagogical historical fiction has massive ramifications for his culture building mission. While *The Young Warriors’* slight misrepresentation of the maroons to a young audience is morally dubious, his restructuring of historical narratives in *New Day* is argued by Gohrisch to “result in an aporia” (Gohrisch 90). This controversial narrative choice is embodied by the depiction of Paul Bogle; Bogle’s cries of secession, his exclams of “Is it war or peace *buckra* is looking?” (*New Day* 110) and his killing of Custos have, as Poynting argues, “absolutely no historical evidence” (Poynting 25). The inclusion of Paul Bogle and his defiant speeches of anti-colonial sentiments inspire nationalist agency; nevertheless, they are an undeniable distortion of the historical truth. Poynting argues that this historical change is utilised to satisfy “Reid’s desire to create linkages between Davie in Part One and Garth in Part Three” (Poynting 25). In considering this, history acts a device to support the nationalist narrative and teaching mode that is essential in Reid’s culture restructuring. Despite this moral discrepancy of the historical inaccuracies, it is still hard to ignore how effective Reid’s use of pedagogical history is in his cultural-building mission. If the reader was not informed of the historical

inaccuracies the inclusion of a famous figure like Bogle inspires a sense of legitimacy to the nationalist cause and Reid's rebellion legacy. History being entwined with an emerging independent culture strengthens its foundations even though this nationalist concept is built upon blatant lies. Taking this into account, Reid's culture building motivated by his nationalist agenda and his desire to right the wrongs of the past clash dramatically with his hypocritical misrepresentation of history.

In conclusion, this chapter argues that Reid deconstructs old colonial perceptions through pedagogical historical fiction to advance a new cultural identity. Reid's choice of multiple historical settings that reflect Jamaica's turbulent political history are utilised to display and teach his nationalist ideology. The attitudes of both the maroons in *The Young Warriors* and the protestors in *New Day* are purposely shown to have traits that correlate with nationalist beliefs such as self-governance and rejection of authority. Reid in his appropriation of history and rewriting of motivations and allegiances through new perspectives muddles and transgresses the moral justification of using historical fiction for the aim of culture building. Nevertheless, Reid, by displaying Jamaica's rebellious past in his novels, creates compelling narratives that effectively promote a new non-colonial Jamaican culture.

2. Awakening a National Consciousness through the History of Violence

Reid in his novels seeks to not only depict the complexities of history but also its violence. This chapter will scrutinize this depiction of violence and trauma and discuss how Reid harnesses it to spark a national consciousness that captivates the reader. The humanisation of the complicated history of political struggle in Jamaica boils down its intricacies into an emotional truth rather than a factual account. The intense violence creates an emotional tension within Reid's novels and through depicting the character's traumatic response he pulls historical settings and events together. Through this method Reid inspires a national consciousness that was born out of trauma. The ideas of Fanon on cultural awakening through acknowledging and overcoming the trauma of the past will be incorporated into this argument to further contextualise these claims. The impact of the violence inflicted on the characters is elevated beyond the confines of their historical setting to engage the readers in the island's blood soaked past and to renew their perception of Jamaica.

By scrutinising the role of violence in *The Young Warriors* and how it addresses the younger audience, the technique of enthralling of the reader through the history of bloodshed becomes clear. Paula T. Connolly notes that violence in children's historical literature lies in a precarious position as the author does not want to "alienate or terrify" the audience however they also obligated to not "mitigate the atrocity itself" (Connolly 107). Due to the simplified and slightly sanitised style needed to depict armed conflict in children's literature, the mental impact of the loss and the historical trauma are emphasised in *The Young Warriors* rather than the gory or gruesome details; in doing so Reid combats Connolly's conundrum. In the ambush at the end of the novel, both soldiers and maroons are killed however in the moment, the narrator only notes that "Many of them lay still" (*Young Warriors* 143). This discounts and downplays the

physical effects of violence and through this neglect of the physical the text exacerbates the mental anguish of previous losses on the shared consciousness of the maroons. The role of shared trauma on the psyche is a critical part of the novel, with the destruction of Nanny town being called back upon and being referred to as “one of the saddest events in the history of the maroons” (*Young Warriors* 58). These constant references are employed to reaffirm the emotional and mental reverberations the massacre had upon the entire maroon community. The trauma that accompanies violent turmoil underlies the mentality and culture of the maroons and is an ever-present part of their day to day. Reid by focusing on this argues that Jamaica’s violent history and loss is a structural part of the country’s collective memory. The way Reid tackles violence in this children’s narrative through emphasising loss and trauma simplifies the framework he implemented in *New Day* to depict violence and its influence on the societal consciousness of Jamaica.

In *New Day*, Reid utilizes the tension created by historical violence and inherited trauma to create a more personal history that speaks to the internal national identity of Jamaica. This is achieved through the expert humanisation of history. Through his inclusion of a first-person narrative which relies on the narrator’s memory on the violent history of the Morant Bay Rebellion, Reid involves the reader within the tense atmosphere promoted by trauma. Fanon is of the belief that “well before the political or fighting phase of the national movement an attentive spectator can thus feel and see the manifestation of new vigour” (Fanon 49). This cultural atmosphere manifests in Reid’s narrative and his retelling of the Morant Bay Massacre. As the younger Johnny recounts the buildup to the violence, he recognizes the escalation by fearfully acknowledging that “the gap ‘tween judgment day and me draw a shorter” (*New Day* 148). Through this description, a thick foreboding atmosphere is weaved into *New Day*. The intense aggression of the colonial authority stretches this atmosphere out and creates an overwhelming tension in this historical setting that captivates the reader. The inclusion of the reader in the emotional turmoil also immerses them in the struggles of the Campbells. The use of a traumatised first-person narrator who was present at the event acts as both an effective counter-narrative to colonial accounts of the Morant Bay Rebellion and an aggressive reclamation of the Jamaica cultural identity.

The traumatized narrative perspective of John Campbell shows the far-reaching effects of political violence on the psyche and makes the historical narrative appear more human and sympathetic. The technique of amplifying tension through narration is implemented early in the novel with the older John acknowledging “memories are a-shake me tonight” (*New Day* 55) during a political parade. Through further reading of the novel, it becomes obvious that John’s anxieties towards political change and protest are due to his preconceptions that a failure of protest can lead to calamitous tragedy such as the deaths of his father and brother. The violence of the deaths of his family gave John Campbell a deeply scarred and fearful perspective. His emotive description of how the “musket talk sharp to me-one time-two times-three times- And Father is no’ standing any more” (*New Day* 188) reveals the abrupt violence and terror inflicted on the young Johnny. The correlation fostered between the old, haunted John at the beginning and the young and frightened Johnny later in the novel conveys the real-world anxieties of how revolutionary activity can fail and cause mass suffering. The manner in which this narrative

voice is dominated and informed by the political oppression of the past indicates that trauma responses infect the very lives of the Campbells. Reid by simplifying the complex generational trauma encourages contemporary readers to confront the historical violence of the Jamaica and realise that it is deeply embedded in the public imagination. The violence humanises history and makes it more understandable to the emotionally invested reader, but this also has the drawback of violence completely dominates people's perceptions.

By the third part of the novel, violence is perceived as being intrinsic to the cultural psyche of Jamaica. However, through depicting the perseverance of Garth in challenging this trauma, Reid revolutionizes the national consciousness. In this cultural rebirth, the new psyche recognizes the role of violence in history but is not dominated by it. Garth, through his passion for campaigning for greater independence overcomes the violent history experienced by his ancestors and John Campbell. A key feature in both formulating his world view and seeking closure from this trauma is Garth's direct confrontation of the violence of the past. This battle against the history of violence is epitomised in his powerful language and his rhetorical questions that refer to the violent repercussions of the constitutional movement's failures: "Secession was what Bogle asked for- and what he got? Constitution taken away" (*New Day* 279). The framing of his argument in this cynical tone indicates that Garth will not let the violence of the past control him. Reid by introducing this emboldened character challenges the traumatised perspective of John Campbell and encourages the emotionally invested reader to be optimistic for the cultural transformation of Jamaica.

By introducing independence as a natural progression from a violent past Reid is not just pushing his nationalist agenda onto the reader, he is developing the cultural consciousness beyond just a response to the violence of the past. It is indicated at the end of the novel that the buildup of suspense inspired by the intense marches and violence will eventually culminate into greater sovereignty and agency for Jamaica. An impassioned Garth Campbell who is "thundering in the finish of his race" breaks the traumatic mold created by John Campbell in the first two parts. John admires the political progress of Garth and appreciates that "mighty things ha' gone into his conception" (*New Day* 354). The story of John Campbell's trauma and how it acts as a multi-generational experience is the basis on which Reid began to construct a uniquely Jamaican consciousness. By demonstrating John's acceptance of the past through his love for Garth, Reid demonstrates how society can conquer historical violence's influence on culture. Reid, by intertwining the two historical settings and the tense atmospheres of the marches together, indicates that a fundamental change to the political landscape and the lives of the Campbells has occurred. The historical settings binding together show the interconnected nature of generational trauma and by having Garth push the envelope in honor of the fallen, Reid encourages the reader to look towards the future prospect of independence. Through humanizing the characters' response to history, Reid triggers the creation of a national identity that was born out of violence; by depicting a triumph over this trauma he illustrates to the reader that a "new day" is coming that requires a new societal mindset.

Through deconstructing the generational trauma caused from a long history of violence, Reid illustrates that national consciousness can evolve beyond its violent past and strive towards

internal reconciliation. Reid's approach to violence in *The Young Warriors* highlights the emotional response of the maroons rather than the details of the actual violence. This is done to reiterate the lasting psychological impact of trauma on the cultural psyche. Violence is presented in a comparable way in *New Day* with Reid creating friction in the narrative through violence and building an atmosphere that reflects the emotional weight of the characters' struggles and their inherited trauma. In *New Day*, the reader becomes immersed in Jamaica's past through the first-person narration which humanises the history of violence. Overall, in his portrayal of violence and the characters' traumatised perspective, Reid cultivates a newly independent cultural consciousness that is both self-aware and capable of healing.

3. The Legacy of Cultural Survival

This chapter deconstructs how V.S. Reid endeavours to establish a legacy of cultural resistance in his novels. Reid's goal in his writing of these historical fiction novels is to inspire a cultural awakening and rationalise his nationalist views. These ideals are realised through his creation of an overarching Jamaican cultural legacy. He achieves this through his empowering execution of stylistic features that epitomise cultural survival. Reid's implementation of patois, textual allusions, references to Jamaican heritage and inherited African culture are mobilized to illustrate the longevity and strengths of Jamaican cultural expression. An in-depth analysis of these elements is necessary as they are critical in understanding how Reid views contemporary Jamaican culture and the Jamaican experience. Through the neglect of colonial conventions Reid embraces the distinctive Jamaican beliefs and traditions that accompany colloquialisms, folk stories, and language. The narratives being historical reiterate that these elements of culture are foundational and were repressed by the colonial government. Reid by reintroducing them into historical narrative is preserving their place within Jamaican culture and illustrating their longevity.

Reid pays homage to maroon cultural perceptions of masculinity and the unique Jamaican survival mindset to foster a new Jamaican identity. Throughout *The Young Warriors* the reader is exposed to the complex culture and hierarchy of the maroons of Mountain Top. Reid especially emphasises the importance of their expressions of self-sufficiency and independence. The young warriors' missions symbolise the maroons' core beliefs surrounding Jamaica and self-reliance. Tommy's mother enquires about Tommy's confidence on hunting without his father and asks, "Will you remember all the things he has taught you?" (*Young Warriors* 28). Reid is posing a similar question to the reader; will the new Jamaica acknowledge its capability of self-sufficiency as the maroons have done in the past? The answer to this question comes in the form of the protagonist's actions. Tommy effectively leads the young warriors at the Coney ground and acknowledges that "In the past, we had our fathers to think for us. Tonight, we must think for ourselves" (*Young Warriors* 41). Tommy's strength of character and self-assertive persona while hunting is admirable and is harnessed by Reid to illustrate that Jamaica as an independent state can survive and thrive just as the maroons did. In his ethnographic research on working class Caribbean masculinity, Barry Chevannes argues that the values of physical strength and survival are passed on through father-son relationships and are fundamental part of the male Jamaican identity ("Learning to be a Man" 225). The resistance and survival instincts of the

young warriors are put on a pedestal by Reid to display that cultural resistance should be both admired and celebrated within Jamaican society.

The stylistic choice that has received the most scholarly research and attention in *New Day* is Reid's pioneering language that incorporates Jamaican expressions, colloquialisms, and a revised rendition of Jamaican patois. This novel was the first of its kind with its integration of Jamaican rhythms and patois language structures and as Mervyn Norris notes it remained as the only Jamaican novel in which this hybrid Jamaican language style was utilized till after Reid's death (Norris n.p). Reid's nationalist beliefs were once again a monumental reason for the introduction of this core element of his work; Reid argues in "The Cultural Revolution in Jamaica after 1938" that the colonial regime forced Jamaican artists to repress the "trace of the rhythm that synthesizes our Caribbean cultural forms" (Reid 1978; 178). Therefore, the language utilized by Johnny Campbell in *New Day* is Reid's attempt to stray away from the colonial pressures and restrictions that come with the standard English writing styles. In this rejection of classic English, Reid reaffirms the cultural resistance of patois in Jamaican society and reinvigorates its cultural role.

Idioms are a compelling and integral part of the patois language style. The Jamaican idioms are uncommon to the non-Jamaican reader however through their constant repetition Reid enthralls the reader and effectively guides them through the intricacies of Jamaican speech. "Our eyes; make four" which refers to staring is the most prevalent phrase in *New Day* with the idiom and its variations being mentioned over three hundred times (Poynting 15). Through the poetry of the Jamaican dialect the "eyes making four" establishes a far deeper connection emotional connection than basic eye contact would suggest; this is shown in Johnny recognizing that there was a stronger emotional bond between Lucille and Davie when their "eyes made four" (*New Day* 103). The importance of Lucille and Davie's relationship is further demonstrated in the progression of the narrative with the two characters becoming closer when they run away together. Their connection is not solely romantical as they are united in their mission of survival and their relationship itself is symbolic of the divide between classical literature and Reid's cultural ambitions. Lucille, with her extensive education and upper-class upbringing, is representative of classic English conventions. Contrastingly, Davie's aggression and passionate views on history and justice is representative of Reid's goal of cultural resurrection. The two characters' eyes by "making four" bridges the gap between these disciplines to reinvigorate the cultural legacy of Jamaica and carve out a path for *New Day* to be respected in the wider literary canon. Reid in his introduction of these colloquialisms stimulates the readers engagement with the Jamaican dialect and he advocates for a greater appreciation of the nuances of the text. Through this interaction with the reader Reid forces them to reevaluate their colonial expectations. This technique encourages the culturally underrepresented Jamaicans to see themselves within Reid's work and the language style itself actively promotes a distinct national identity that includes the reader in the impressive legacy of patois.

Reid galvanizes the cultural significance of his literature by rooting African cultural motifs into his novels that have historically had a colossal effect on the black Jamaican spirit. Victor L. Chang highlights that a primary concern of Reid in his literature is the "revaluing of the

African and black experience” (Chang 169) and the way he relates to this demographic is through the allusions to common cultural phrases and folktales. By embedding these stories within his narratives Reid is preserving their place within the new Jamaican canon and illustrates their importance within the Jamaican cultural identity. The fluid oral Anancy stories of *The Young Warriors* which are of African origin form a central part of the narrative. The Anancy tale is described by Pascale De Souza as “a form of expression not only shaped, but deshaped and reshaped by cultural influences” and “whose every occurrence is a new creation” (De Souza 340). The young warrior, David manipulates the ceaseless style of an “endless story about an endless hurricane” (*Young Warriors* 131) to sustain his distraction of the redcoats which protected him and his fellow warriors. These anancy stories are availed of by the young warriors for survival and Reid, by including the stories in his narratives, is securing their societal endurance. In his inclusion of these phrases and legends in a historical setting he establishes that these folk tales and stories are a structural part of Jamaica's culture. This sentiment is not unjustified or clouded by nationalist ambitions, as Ana Nenadović surmises that “enslaved Africans transferred parts of their cultures to the Caribbean, creating dynamic creolised cultural processes” (Nenadović 6). With the British Caribbean plantations receiving almost a million and a half-enslaved Africans between 1701-1810 (Knight 26), these African stories had a massive influence on the spoken word culture and oral history of black Jamaicans. These folktales, by being written down and recorded by Reid, simultaneously solidify their place in the cultural psyche and uplift Reid’s own work. In creating these links and establishing a legacy between Africa and Jamaica, Reid creates a defiant celebration of Jamaica.

Reid’s language and allusions to ancient cultural traditions from Africa and Jamaica in these novels revitalizes cultural links between an underrepresented Jamaican society and popular literature. While Jeremy Poynting argues that there is limited evidence and expression of the African Jamaican element in *New Day* (Poynting 43), this is not entirely true. Johnny’s references to Jack Mandora have a massive impact on his narrative voice. Jack Mandora is a critical part of the Anancy story mythos, and his name is invoked as an idiomatic expression to shirk responsibility. Johnny usually refers to him and the phrase when he is making quick survival decisions like jumping into the mango crop to seek safety (*New Day* 101). These black Jamaican and African idioms are a critical part of his worldview with them remaining in his subconscious until they are needed. These phrases form a massive part of how Johnny and in a wider sense young Jamaicans understand the world. The allusions to these idiomatic expressions are flaunted by Reid to humanise the characters in the historical setting and display how these cultural cliché are a foundational aspect of Jamaica’s culture that circumvented colonial repression.

In conclusion, V. S Reid’s cultural reformation and reconstruction project is motivated through the expression of cultural resistance and endurance. By expressing the power and self-sustaining nature of the language, idioms and folk tales, Reid secures their legacy within the newly independent Jamaican culture. Social and cultural hardships pervade the Jamaica throughout history, Reid acknowledges this phenomenon and highlights that cultural expression, inherited mentalities, and societal norms have formed a fundamental part of the Jamaican mindset for centuries. The historical setting and the importance these cultural motifs hold in the

narrative reaffirms their place within the Jamaican identity and highlights their massive cultural footprint. This cultural legacy imposes over the old colonial Jamaican canon and makes the reader reevaluate their perceptions and prejudices of the past.

Conclusion

V.S. Reid in his novels, *The Young Warriors* and *New Day*, creates absorbing historical narratives that utilise violence, Jamaican motifs, cultural legacies, and the pedagogical form to instil nationalist sentiments into his work. By giving ample contextualisation, this article has uncovered the nationalist undertones and aims of his “reclamation of history”. Reid motivated by these ideals created these novels as culture-building and national awakening projects. This article in its arguments prioritized analyzing the historical background and cultural impact of these texts in Jamaica to garner a deeper understanding of Reid’s ideology. History and culture influence each other heavily, cultural beliefs dominate how we view history, and historical perceptions fuel our culture; this is illustrated by Reid’s work with history’s role underpinning the new nationalist culture. In summation, as evidenced in the discussion above, V.S. Reid’s pedagogical approach to culture building through history in *New Day* and *The Young Warriors* is motivated by his nationalist ideals of inspiring a new independent Jamaican cultural identity. Reid reaffirms a legacy of cultural survival and political struggle to reinvigorate the national consciousness and to achieve his goal of writing historical fiction that compliments the new Jamaican canon.

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