



The 2019
LUCILLE MATHURIN MAIR
PUBLIC LECTURE

Lucille Mathurin Mair:
The Opinions and Philosophy
of a Rebel Woman

By
Professor Verene A. Shepherd

Institute for Gender and Development Studies Mona Campus Unit



Dr. the Honourable Lucille Mathurin Mair, O.J.

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– Profile –

PROFESSOR VERENE A. SHEPHERD

Social Historian, Professor Verene A. Shepherd is a graduate of The University of the West (The UWI) and the University of Cambridge. She holds the Bachelor of Arts and Master of Philosophy degrees in History from The UWI Mona Campus, and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in History from the University of Cambridge. As a graduate of the University of Cambridge, she holds the title of Fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society. After graduating from the University of Cambridge, she was hired as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of History and quickly moved up the ranks to become a Professor in 2001.

Professor Shepherd has given distinguished service to The UWI in the areas of teaching and learning, graduate enhancement and has sat on various Boards and Committees, representing The UWI abroad. She also served as University Director of the UWI's Institute for Gender and Development Studies and now the Director of The UWI's Centre for Reparation Research.

Her areas of academic specialization are Asian Migration Studies, African Enslavement, Jamaican Economic History in the 18th and 19th Centuries, and Gender discourses in Caribbean History. She has published extensively on these areas of specialization, and is editor/compiler, author, co-author and co-editor of some 16 important books, among them: *The Gibson Relays: History & Impact on Jamaica's Sports Culture and Social Development*; *Engendering Caribbean History: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*; *Livestock, Sugar & Slavery: Contested Terrain in Colonial Jamaica* (2009); *I Want to Disturb My Neighbours: Lectures on Slavery, Emancipation and Postcolonial Jamaica* (2007); and *Maharani's*



PROFESSOR VERENE A. SHEPHERD, OD, Ph.D, FCCS

Misery: Narratives of a Passage from India to the Caribbean (2002); *Transients to Settlers: The History of Indians in Jamaica* (1994). In addition to books, she has published numerous articles in several peer-reviewed Journals, and is on the Editorial Board of *Atlantic Studies*, *Small Axe*, *Slavery and Abolition*, *Caribbean Quarterly*, *Jamaica Journal* and *The Journal of Caribbean History*.

She is a past President of the Association of Caribbean Historians. A scholar activist, Professor Shepherd is host of “Talking History” on Nationwide 90 FM – the only dedicated history programme on Jamaican radio. She is an Honorary member of the International Women’s Forum (Jamaica branch), Former Chair of the United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Co-Chair of the National Council on Reparation in Jamaica, a Vice Chair of the CARICOM Reparation Commission, and in 2015, was elected to the United Nation’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which monitors States’ implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. She is the first CARICOM citizen to be elected to the CERD and her candidature was endorsed by all CARICOM Heads of Government. At the June 2015 elections she gained the highest number of votes.

A much sought after public speaker, she has delivered lectures on her various areas of interests on all continents, including Africa, where in 2004, at South African President Thabo Mbeki’s invitation, she delivered an address to a sub-committee of Parliament as well as spoke at the ANC’s women’s dinner in the same year.

She has also appeared in many documentaries on Caribbean History, including the UNESCO/CTV’s documentary series “Haiti: Struggles & Victories” (2004); a documentary on Indians in Jamaica (Rahman Film Co., the Netherlands, 2001); the Channel 4 TV Documentary, “Britain’s Slave Trade”, aired in the UK, 10th

October 1999); and was a resource person for a BBC Documentary “History File” on slavery.

She has been the recipient of several awards, among them the Order of Distinction, Commander Class, from the Government of Jamaica for her work in History and Gender Studies; the Jamaica National Heritage Trust Award for her work in History and Heritage; the National Council for Indian Culture in Jamaica’s award for research on slavery and indentureship (2002); Kiwanis Woman of Excellence Award (2011); and the Africana Studies distinguished Award from Florida International University. Her most recent award is the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Public Service for her outreach activities which have helped to raise the profile of The UWI in the international community.

She is married to Trinidadian, Bramwell Shepherd and has 2 sons, Duane and Deane, both campus babies.

Professor Shepherd shares Lucille Mathurin Mair’s views that “There are stages in your life when you have to pay tribute to those who, in offering guidance, inspiration and encouragement made things possible for you” and therefore remains grateful for the mentors in her academic life as well as the unwavering support of her family and friends.

INTRODUCTION

The Lucille Mathurin Mair Public Lecture Series is hosted biennially by the Mona Unit of UWI's Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS). The 9th lecture in the Series was delivered by Professor Verene Shepherd on April 18 2019 at The UWI Regional Headquarters. Titled '*Lucille Mathurin Mair: The Opinions and Philosophy of a Rebel Woman*', it was presented in partnership with the Institute for Gender and Development's (IGDS) Regional Coordinating Office (RCO). Professor Shepherd is the former University Director for the Regional Co-ordinating Office and is the currently Director of The UWI's Centre for Reparations Research. The Mona Unit was pleased to welcome Professor Shepherd, who, among other things, co-edited, with Professor Hilary Beckles, the PhD thesis of Dr Mathurin Mair, entitled "*A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica:1655-1844.*"

Background

The lecture series honours the life and work of a phenomenal Caribbean woman, Dr. Lucille Mathurin Mair, who was the founder and first Programme Coordinator of the Centre that has become the IGDS. Her strategic leadership was also to be experienced much wider afield as her influence expanded to the global sphere.

Her distinguished career as a diplomat includes her service as Jamaica's Representative to the United Nations. She played a pivotal role in the UN's observance of the Decade for Women 1975-1985 and her vision, leadership and insight made a profound impact on the international community. She

contributed to the establishment of several institutions, policies and programmes to promote women's rights and gender equality and justice for all.

Her transformational work has given visibility to global inequalities and provided opportunities for change. Her seminal influence was evident in the crafting of the UN Millennium Development Goals (2010–2015), and in promotion of gender equality in the design of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030).

At personal and community levels, Lucille's legacy includes her ability to balance her reproductive, productive and community management roles. As a single mother and female head of household, she raised her three small children, following the untimely death of her husband when she was in her 30s. Her productive and community management roles are reflected in her distinguished professional career as a passionate advocate, scholar and activist for gender justice and equality.

Dr Mathurin Mair's contribution to the government and people of Jamaica include her service as a Senator, Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and as the first Director of the Women's Desk in Jamaica which she helped to establish with the support of Dr Peggy Antrobus and others. This agency is today the Bureau of Gender Affairs. Lucille paved the way for Jamaican women in the Diplomatic Corps and worked closely with other Jamaican women diplomats. These include the late Angela King who led the UN's team for the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 and the late Ambassador Patricia Durrant, who was the first UN Ombudsman and Deputy UN Secretary General.

Reflections of the Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture Series

The year 2020 marks the 22nd anniversary of this Lecture Series. It also marks the 27th anniversary of the IGDS and 72 years since

The UWI was established. Below are the presenters for the nine lectures hosted by the IGDS Mona Unit:

1. 1998 – Professor Joycelin Massiah entitled: ‘On the Brink of the New Millennium: Are Caribbean Women Prepared?’
2. 2000 – Dr Peggy Antrobus entitled: ‘*The Rise and Fall of Feminist Politics in the Caribbean Women’s Movement 1975–1995.*’
3. 2002 – Andaiye entitled: ‘*The Angle You Look From Determines What You See: Towards a Critique of Feminist Politics in the Caribbean.*’
4. 2004 – Professor Michael Kimmel entitled: ‘*Men, Masculinities and Development.*’
5. 2006 – Hon. Madame Justice Desiree Bernard entitled: ‘*Confronting Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean.*’
6. 2008 – Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie, entitled: ‘*The UWI Glass Ceiling: Splinters, Cracks and Scratches.*’
7. 2012 – Mrs Beverly Anderson-Duncan entitled: ‘*Rebel Women: Engendering Transformation*’.
8. 2015 – Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma entitled ‘*The African Year of Women & 20 Years after Beijing*’.
9. 2019 – Professor Verene Shepherd entitled: *Lucille Mathurin Mair: The Opinions and Philosophy of a Rebel Woman.*

The published lectures have been an invaluable resource for our three main areas of work: teaching gender courses in the Major (BSc in Gender and Development) and the Minor in Gender and Development Studies; Gender focused applied research; and outreach including policy advocacy, public education and training programmes delivered within and outside The UWI. This has included training members of the Mona Campus’ student leaders, training doctors in the Faculty of Medicine; training The UWI Mona’s Security Guards as part of the Gender Mainstreaming programme and public education outreach to secondary school students in Jamaica. These initiatives honour the memory of one whose life was dedicated to people and public service.

Tributes Celebrating Her Life: Dr Lucille Mathurin Mair

1924–2009

In 2009 the Institute paid tribute on the passing of Dr Lucille Mathurin Mair, after a period of illness. We mourned her death and also celebrated her life and work as our institutional pioneer and founder. Heads and staff from all four IGDS Units joined her family, friends and well-wishers from various countries and sectors who had been impacted by Lucille's extraordinary life, and her selfless contribution to promoting gender equality and human development.

Among her accolades were: the prestigious CARICOM Triennial Award in 1996, the OAS Women of Distinction Award in 1987 and Jamaica's national awards of Commander of the Order of Distinction and Member of the Order of Jamaica. She was also conferred with Honorary Doctorates from three universities: The University of the West Indies, the University of Florida and the University of Ulster in Ireland. In all these awards, it was not only her outstanding work that was being lauded but also the sterling qualities of her character and values.

Some of the tributes presented at her funeral are highlighted here as they captured the essence of this extraordinary women. The late Professor the Hon Rex Nettleford OJ, former UWI Vice-Chancellor, described her as "a woman with dignified detachment and a well cultivated appearance of invincibility and unflappable charm". Ambassador Patricia Durrant, former UN Ombudsman stated that she "combined grace, charm, wit, steely determination, independence and open mindedness."

In the same vein, I draw on the 2012 lecture by Beverley Anderson-Duncan which captured Lucille's vision of an engendered society. Like Lucille, Beverly envisaged a Jamaica as "a space within which women and men work together for transformation; to overturn subordination wherever it exists; a space within which

women and men, as partners, experience extraordinary relationships and create a system of equality and equity, across race, class and gender, leading to sustainable development for everyone.”

As I write this introduction, I must reflect on the reality that 2020 also brings to a close my 14 years of service as the Head of the IGDS Mona Unit. It was my pleasure to serve the Institute, The UWI and the cause of gender equity that Lucille Mathurin Mair held so dear. As I depart, I thank all those who have laid the foundation or have facilitated my journey. We have together lifted IGDS to new heights. Special thanks to Professor Barbara Bailey, Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie and Professor Verene Shepherd, all former University Directors of the IGDS. I also extend special thanks to Professor Patricia Mohammed, of the MCU who organised the Mathurin Mair Lectures and publications between 1998 and 2004.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the Mathurin Mair family for their generous contributions to these observances and for sharing her with us. These include her children: her daughter, Ambassador Gail Mathurin and her sons, Mr David Mathurin and Mr Adrian Mathurin and scores of cousins and members of her extended family.

The Mona campus leadership and a wide range of colleagues have also contributed to the success of the nine lectures so far, and we thank them profoundly. These include successive Principals, Campus Registrars and other Senior members of The UWI Mona Campus Administration, and Security personnel, who have enabled us to host these lectures. Special thanks to the private sector companies (Jamaica National Group, the Victoria Mutual Foundation, the Jamaica Money Market Group, the Grace Kennedy Group, media companies (RJR/Gleaner Group), and individuals who have generously contributed resources to host the event and publish the lectures.

The success of these events would also not have been possible without the support of those behind the scenes, some of whom

are no longer with us including the late Ambassador Eleanor Felix. Thanks also to Dr Carrol Edwards, Dr June Degia who assisted in Marketing and Mr Robert Harris who designed the cover and typeset the publications. Staff of the IGDS Regional Office including Dr Dalea Bean and Mrs Suzanne Charles Watson who have produced graphics and content and helped to plan some of the events. Ms Ingrid Nicely, Mrs Kimberly Carr-Tobias and Ms Thalia Ellis and Dr Adwoa Onuo of the IGDS Mona Unit have been part of the core team in planning these lectures with support from BSc Gender students and the Gender Society serving as volunteers.

As the IGDS builds on Dr Mathurin Mair's legacy, it is recognised that there is still more work to be done. The themes and issues addressed by each of our distinguished presenters, remain relevant and will no doubt form part of the IGDS' gender agenda for the 21st century and beyond.

Leith Dunn PhD

Senior Lecturer/Head, IGDS Mona Campus Unit

LUCILLE MATHURIN MAIR: The Opinions and Philosophy of a Rebel Woman¹

PROFESSOR VERENE A. SHEPHERD

Thank you very much Dr. Onoura. As everyone has already been welcomed, identified and introduced, allow me to say simply a very good afternoon to this distinguished audience and express my appreciation to Dr Leith Dunn, Head of the Mona Unit of the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) for inviting me to deliver this Lecture, which has the support of the Regional Coordinating Office (RCO) of the IGDS. It is a signal honour for me to speak about a woman, who over the course of her life embraced the multiple roles of professional Historian, wife, mother, mentor, diplomat, international speaker and women's rights activist; a woman who, through her scholar activism successfully embodied and promoted the principles of justice and equality for women, especially women of the Global South.

Before going any further I wish to greet members of the Mathurin family who are here or watching the livestream; and express my appreciation to Adrian, David and Gail Mathurin, and Nadeen Spence of Mary Seacole Hall of The University of the West Indies (The UWI), for allowing Research Assistant Stephanie Sewell, and me, access to Lucille Mathurin Mair's under-utilised papers. With this treasure trove of documentation, along with oral history sources, the task of getting access to the philosophy and opinions of this rebel woman was not very difficult. As an aside, let me say that my title (and here I am thinking about the

firestorm that Buju Banton's use of *Long Walk to Freedom*, so associated with Nelson Mandela, caused) was not meant to rival the title of Amy Jacques Garvey's legendary book on Marcus Garvey². But I wanted to showcase Mathurin Mair's thinking about the issues of her time and ours and present her as more than a diplomat engaged in ritualistic United Nations' (UN) interactive dialogues. In any case, what is a philosophy but an overall vision of, or attitude toward life and the purpose of life? What is an opinion but a view or judgement formed about something?

Now, when I shared the title of this Lecture with a UN colleague, she asked me why I saw Lucille Mathurin Mair as a "rebel woman". She had interacted briefly with her at a UN conference and knew the effectiveness of her work in the organisation but did not know if she would have called a diplomat a rebel woman. Clearly, she did not know the total woman that was Lucille Mathurin Mair, nor understand that resistance to all forms of domination and marginalisation constitutes political action. She was deceived by Mathurin Mair's outwardly quiet demeanour and elegance and did not see what the former UWI public orator saw in her – the resilient steel in her make-up; "not rough iron but fine and finely tempered steel", according to Edward Baugh's citation when The UWI conferred an Honorary Doctorate on Mathurin Mair in 1993.³ Neither did my friend know about the body of work surrounding using History to change society and Mathurin Mair's dedication to leaving no stone unturned until patriarchal ideology and gender injustice no longer characterised post-colonial societies.

You see, my colleague was more used to "rebel women" who march, brandish placards and disrupt events. Those are legitimate strategies; but Mathurin Mair's rebellion was manifested differently and was no less effective and legitimate. There are rebel women who engage in other forms of resistance to orthodoxy and destabilise neo-colonialism, which is why George Frederickson and Christopher Lasch redefined resistance as an intentional

political action to alter power structures”.⁴ In fact, as I told my colleague, who by the end of our conversation agreed with my title, it was Mathurin Mair herself who said:

In some cases, the activism may be intellectual and conceptual . . . an activism designed to free SELF from the circumscription, and even guilt, of the domestic . . . and – professional place, from the judgement of an established male hierarchy, even her peers, among whom she remains the unequal among equals. She is demanding a new structure to replace the old hierarchical ones which function in most disciplines.⁵

After wading through her papers in the process of writing her Biography to be published by The UWI Press in 2020, if I can manage it, I can safely say that Lucille Mathurin Mair had an opinion about every issue under the sun; and the philosophical underpinnings of those opinions were quite evident. For the purposes of this Lecture though, and conscious that I am not presenting her Biography this afternoon, I have chosen to highlight her opinions on **SIX** themes, not necessarily presented chronologically and some more fulsomely than others:

- The role of History and History education in understanding women’s experiences and post-colonial societies; in other words, how the past is connected to the present
- Feminism, Patriarchy & Women’s Rights
- Racism & Anti-Apartheid
- Regionalism & Internationalism
- Development, Underdevelopment, Structural Adjustment and its impact on women of the so-called “Third World”, including the role of the UN and its relationship with the global South; and finally
- Challenges to the Environment/Climate Change.

What I leave out will be in the Biography, so do not panic if the issues about which you wanted to hear are not covered this time around.

Influences on Her Opinions and Philosophy

But first, what factors shaped her opinions and philosophy? Well, first, her identification as a Caribbean person and citizen of the world was shaped by her family background. She was born in Jamaica to Edith Cadogan from Cadogan Hill in Hanover, who came from a family of Barbadian small farmers, members of whom moved to Jamaica in search of land in the 19th century. Her father, Eric Derwent Walrond ((1898–1966) was born in Georgetown, Guyana but spent part of his youth with his Barbadian family. His family later moved to Panama and then to New York. Both her father and step-father were pan-Africanists, with her father identifying himself as a Garveyite and member of the New Negro Renaissance of the 1920s. Indeed, the peak of Eric Walrond’s career was during the Harlem Renaissance. Although she did not grow up with her biological father as her parents separated before she was born and eventually divorced, she read her father’s critically acclaimed *Tropic Death*, published in 1926, a book of stories set in Panama, which, among other issues, addressed skin colour and class.⁶ She may have resented his absence from her life, meeting him only when she was 22 years old on the steps of the British Museum, but Mathurin Mair would later admit that she inherited some of his creative talents.

History education further shaped her consciousness and ideology. In her words: “I had no question in my mind that History was going to be my subject.” That is because of the early influence of her History teacher at Wolmers’ Girls, Ms Minnie Forbes. At a prize-giving ceremony at Wolmer’s Girls in 1990 she said,

Out of my own school years came the decision to make a career in history. That decision had a lot to do with the person who really introduced me to history and who generously communicated to me her own passionate interest in the subject, and here I pay a tribute to Miss Minnie Forbes, a legendary teacher who belongs in that

procession of great Wolmer's teachers . . . who gave their lives to the education of Jamaican girls, and above all to Wolmerians.⁷

At the same time, she encountered skin colour prejudice and elitism at that very school. An early headmistress, Miss Cowper, was described as "elitist and prejudiced", and allegedly asked a black girl who wanted to enter for the Jamaica Scholarship "what she wanted to do with the degree."⁸ She recalled that there were very few black persons at Wolmer's Girls in the early years and that for several years, she had never been taught by someone of her own complexion. When she spoke at the school's graduation exercises in 1990, Mathurin Mair told the students that in her time, "the very content of our syllabuses . . . geography, history, literature – had little or nothing to do with the Caribbean in which I lived."⁹ Her high school experience seemed to reflect all that was described in Olive Senior's poem, "Colonial Girls School".¹⁰

Borrowed images
willed our skins pale
muffled our laughter
lowered our voice
let out our hems
dekinked our hair
denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers
harnessed our voices to madrigals
and genteel airs
yoked our minds to declensions in Latin
and the language of Shakespeare
Told us nothing about ourselves
There was nothing about us at all

Her stepfather, the dentist Egbert Evans, encouraged this interest in History and she gave him credit for encouraging her and ensuring that she pursued her BA in History at London University.

Her views on colonialism, development and women's rights were formed during conversations on her maternal grandfather's

veranda, meetings with the West Indian Student's Union in London, and a political grouping formed after the 1967 General Elections in Jamaica that met at Mackville Terrace in Red Hills with people like Mavis Gilmour, Gloria Cumper, former Attorney General Leacroft Robinson and Leo and Irena Cousins. The group was heavily influenced by the views and ideology of Norman Manley. At the University of London she shared ideas and perspectives with other great thinkers, including Elsa Goveia (first Professor of History at the UCWI), Errol Barrow (first Prime Minister of Barbados), Leslie Robinson, (First Principal of the Mona Campus of The UWI), Eric Williams (first Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago), Forbes Burnham (first Prime Minister of Guyana) and Michael Manley (fourth Prime Minister of Jamaica). They studied in a period where there was a heightened cultural and regional awareness among young people, concerned about their regional identity, questions of colonialism and independence. These were all prepared to return to the Caribbean to fight against the injustices, discrimination and oppression of the poor and vulnerable, which characterised the colonialist regimes. The time spent with these great thinkers fermented her motive to fight the barriers of colonialism, poverty, inequity, exclusion and injustice.

Mathurin Mair was also influenced by the deep philosophical conversations she had with brilliant minds on the Mona campus. She was particularly impressed with, and motivated by, the words and beliefs of, Walter Rodney (whom she knew and admired for his brilliance and passion for black consciousness) and other writers in the black power movement, fuelled by calls for pan-Africanism, black empowerment and social equality.

She became active with the People's National Party (PNP) women's movement because of the direct influence of Beverley Manley and was asked by then Prime Minister Michael Manley to do research on "Women and Social Change", which would help

to drive policy directed at improving the conditions of women in Jamaica.

I turn now to the ways in which these influences shaped her opinions and philosophy under the six headings I outlined earlier, starting with History and History education.

1. Historical Writings/Publications

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the knowledge gained from the process of writing her 1974 PhD Thesis, *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655–1844* – and her keen insight into the ways in which contemporary societies were affected by the past, informed her views and actions. Mathurin Mair demonstrated the usefulness and revolutionising potential of the methodology of ‘women’s history’, in the process “rescuing the female ghosts of slavery from an improper burial,” to use Jenny Sharpe’s formulation.¹¹ One does not have to speculate about her motivation, objectives and challenges for researching and writing that Thesis. In a 1990 speech she recounted:

In the early 1960s, I started to seek out the women of Jamaica’s past during the period of slavery, women of all classes and of all colours, black, brown, white . . . There was almost nothing to guide such a search. There was, in fact, nothing in modern historical scholarship about the women who came before me. But this was not surprising, for historiography, which has for centuries been a male academic preserve, has been stunningly devoid of a consciousness of women as significant beings.¹²

The academic culture at the time seemed assured that there was no urgency to research issues surrounding the experiences of women in any way other than the most general. The manner in which their history had an impact on popular perceptions and institutional determinations with respect to their ascribed second-class citizenship was understood but not discerned as a crisis of the post-colonial nationalism. Few scholars were willing to argue

that this posture was a formidable part of the eruptive male intellectual leadership; and fewer still offered generalisations about the role of historiography within the reproduction of the patriarchal machinery of domination and exploitation. The few were female, and Lucille Mathurin Mair was one of them.

Lucille Mathurin Mair historicised all topics she covered in her numerous lectures, speeches and opinion pieces and passed on the importance of history education to students and all those seeking a more liberating narrative of self. She was pleased that other Historians were influenced by her pioneering work and greatly admired the work of leading Caribbean Economic Historian and now Vice Chancellor of The UWI, Sir Hilary Beckles. On February 9, 1990, she received a letter from Kimberley Murray, Advertising and Publicity Manager at Rutgers University Press, enclosing a copy of Beckles' *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados*,¹³ which he had requested his publishers to send to her. Interestingly enough, in the cover letter that accompanied Beckles' book, Ms Murray made a curious error, as follows:

Dear Dr Mair,

Hilary Beckles suggested we send you a copy of her book *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* just published by Rutgers University Press. The book is enclosed with her compliments, as well as ours. Please feel free to promote her book to friends, journals and relevant media.

Cordially,

Kimberley Murray"

Mathurin Mair may have been too polite to point out this "gender blunder;" but Ms Murray should have gotten the message from her February 27, 1990 response in which she expressed her delight at having received a copy of the book, as well as the view that "his research and publications are making a major contribution to Caribbean scholarship on slavery and this new

work of his is another significant landmark which I shall be happy to promote."¹⁴ She was not among those feminists who were peeved that such a fantastic work of scholarship on women had been written by a male Historian. In a speech at the opening of an exhibition on women curated by Brian Lanker, she said on the topic of Beckles' book, which she referenced in her speech: "the fact that Hilary Beckles of The University of the West Indies and one of the region's most outstanding Historians happens to be a man is quite irrelevant."¹⁵

2. Now To Feminism and the Critique of Patriarchal Ideologies and Practices

The question has been asked if it was feminism that brought Mathurin Mair to the topic of her PhD Thesis, which was supervised by her friend from the University of London days, Elsa Goveia. That does not appear to be so, for Mathurin Mair did not at first define herself as a feminist. In other words, she did not initially admit or recognise the political nature of her work in the interest of gender justice. In describing her motivation for choosing to do her thesis on women, she admitted that when she embarked on researching and writing women back into History: "I had no feminist motivation, or at least none that I recognized. I was motivated mainly by intellectual inquisitiveness, the usual ambition of the doctoral candidate to investigate virgin territory, which it was at that time".¹⁶

However, what Mathurin Mair found in the pages of history as she tried to "decode the mysteries of the black female condition"¹⁷ would not only outrage her and make her wonder at what previous historians had ignored, but forced her to become a feminist, as her life after 1974 demonstrated. By her own admission, "wonderful things happened on the journey into that rebel past; I can only briefly indicate the personal process of self-growth it meant; no-one could spend so many years in the

company of such women and remain the same. The expansion of one's emotional and intellectual resources, the deepened pride in one's inheritance, and in one's womanhood were inevitable . . . "I was engulfed with a sense of pride about what I learnt about those women who came before us".¹⁸

She was impressed by the evidence in the archival records of the rebel woman who did not sit back and endure her condition uncomplainingly and herself became one. She went further, working with Kamau Brathwaite to provide the Jamaican government with firm historical data that determined that Nanny of the Maroons would join the pantheon of National Heroes in Jamaica in 1975. She saw this almost as the triumph of her academic life. "More relevant was the great occasion when a personal conviction about Nanny's profound significance to the Jamaican psyche became a public reality", she admitted.¹⁹

She also found parallels in Nanny's life and the lived experiences of other 'Rebel Women'. For example, in March 1990, she attended the luncheon at the Devonshire Restaurant in Kingston, Jamaica, for Winnie Mandela. She praised the work done by Mrs Mandela, remarking:

Your rebel spirit summons up for us the spirit of our African ancestral national heroine, Nanny. Nearly three centuries ago Nanny ruled our Portland mountains, [during] the terror of a white regime, which would, if it could, put chains on the minds and bodies of every man and woman of this island who was of African descent. (. . .) Today we celebrate your defiance of the twentieth century version of such a regime . . .²⁰

She never tried to convert anyone to feminism, but she was impatient with people who declared they did not associate themselves with women's liberation without justifiable reasons and a clear understanding of what feminism was. She expressed as much to the Business and Professional Women's Club of Jamaica in a speech on 21st January 1974, urging those in the Club

who refused to be labelled feminists to ensure they knew why they did so, telling the attendees:

The fact that I happen to be absolutely comfortable being called a feminist or a supporter of Women's Liberation (assuming I have to be called something), does not mean I am presumptuous enough to suggest or recommend that other women must be equally comfortable with those labels. What I do, however, suggest, is that a woman or a group that consciously rejects association with anything named Women's Liberation owes it to herself as a thinking being, owes it to her organization, to understand clearly the process of rejection")²¹

When it was necessary she was not afraid to call out men for gender bias. For example, she related the case of a female friend of hers who was writing for a local communication media. Her friend submitted, among other ideas, a situation which revolved around feminism. But the male head of the organization responded ". . . I would be grateful if you would refrain from introducing the subject of women's liberation into this firm. We do not wish to import any sick, North American phenomenon into our island especially as Jamaican women have always held such a special elevated position". Mair's wry reply to this was

women, not you Mr Media, should define what women are. They should say if they hold the position you say they hold. (. . .) A new deal for women in Jamaica must start here – self-definition. We trot out the matriarch and female head of household in Jamaica and equate that with power. Look at the jobs they do to maintain their households? They are not high paying but mainly service/low pay. Whether at University or [in] firms high roles go to the men.²²

Not even the story of Annie Palmer, the alleged white witch of Rose Hall²³ escaped her feminist critique! In a *Jamaica Gleaner* piece, "Was Annie's unorthodoxy then a frantic bid for recognition as person, not plaything?" she asked: "and in daring to do what her menfolk had always done, did she become a victim of masculine outrage? "And there is another important practical

side to this legend; when the male power structure cannot beat the feminists, it commercializes them”.

According to her,

like Annie Palmer there were other female mavericks who jumped the gun . . . Cubah, Queen of Kingston who men shipped out of the island but who found her way back and was executed; Teresa Constantine Phillips, “Con”, bright and literate and part of the discourse about whether Spanish Town should remain the capital city of Jamaica (and who nearly went to jail for it), who Governor Sir Henry Moore made a cross between a jester and a Minister of Culture; and Queen Nanny, who unlike Annie Palmer is firmly evidenced/ located in the records. She was betrayed by black men who only got hand me down clothes as reward – a few yards of calico and 2 devalued pounds”. [But]“Nanny had the last word – heroine – even if undeclared.”²⁴

In the same article Mathurin Mair continued, if acerbically: “Or, on second thoughts, considering our long history of liberated women, it could be that a more urgent project would be to liberate the men, starting with today’s soul brothers of Nanny’s reactionary male chauvinist assassin whose name no-body remembers”.²⁵

The matter of gender justice and gender equality infused her speeches and actions inside and outside of Jamaica and the Caribbean region. She argued that, for the most part, on paper and in Constitutions and certainly since 1944 in the case of Jamaica, gender equality existed, but that the reality of what women experienced was far from what was promised. In her Human Rights Day Lecture in 1974, she made this controversial statement: “if we look at women’s roles historically we see that they played a far more important role than their present roles would suggest. So decolonization has in some ways turned back their pre-independence importance. Those who would seek to confine women to a certain sphere, despite their historic contributions should let history lead them.”²⁶

Lucille Mathurin Mair was particularly concerned about the economic status of women who had played such a fundamental role in the economics of slavery and emancipation but in the post-slavery period experienced economic and social, in addition to political, marginalization. It was clear to her that a New Deal for women was needed in the post-colonial period. This “New Deal” for women, which she admitted she did not pioneer but about which she had her own ideas, was three pronged – identification, improvement, integration. Her opinion was that “women’s economic condition is critically determined by the overall structure of society, in particular, their economic condition is determined by the level of national development which in our increasingly inter-dependent world is also a reflection of global economic relationships”.²⁷

She included rural women and creative women among her concerns, reiterating two essential points in a 1980 speech: 1] the need for action for creative women and 2] the need for such women to create a new view of self-affirmation and social affirmation, rather than solely attending to preferred tasks. In her view, “The creative woman of the Third World must discover and define self within the context of defining and discovering or re-discovering the cultural and political formations with which she functions. Changing societies is not for her a peripheral but a central concern. It is even more urgent for black women whose ancestors’ enslavers tried to erase from memory, but whose stories survived and aided creative women attempting to change culture and society.”²⁸

For Lucille Mathurin Mair, there were certain women who represented the embodiment of the creative woman insistent on changing their societies: Louise Bennett who was attempting to influence nation language; Margaret Walker who put down roots and celebrated them long before Alex Haley; Brazilian slum dweller Carolina Maria de Jesus “who on scavenged scraps of paper could affirm black hair is good hair” or, “when I die I want to

come back as a negro". "For the Third World Woman, then, she concluded, creativity is a tool of liberation for herself and her society; the bridge of beyond which she invested with the spirit of survival."²⁹

The education of girls also attracted her attention. She is quoted as saying, "Dr Errol Miller has his hands full with the boys [so] somebody has to zero in on the educational statistics as they relate to the girls to see what are their special concerns and special remedies".³⁰ She asked rhetorically "what happened to the larger number of girls demanding places?" She was referring to the fact that in the period 1965–1970 more girls than boys sat the common entrance examinations, but approximately the same number of boys as girls passed.

Reproductive Rights

Owing to its topical nature now, I also wish to mention Mathurin Mair's opinion on women's reproductive rights as part of her feminist activism. Reproductive rights, she admitted "occup[ied] a central place in any woman's search for justice and claims of self-determination". But she blamed "foreign propaganda and religious groups for daring to inform women about what was good for us". In 1989 she published "Commentary on the Ethics of Induced Abortion from a Feminist Perspective" in the *International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics*.³¹ In that publication, Mathurin Mair condemned popular perspectives on women's reproductive rights, based on "jingoistic emotionalism" and "rigid dogmatism".³² She located it within the context of the "institutionalisation of gender inequalities"³³, as a result of the prioritisation of production over reproduction and a relegation of the latter. In, perhaps, one of her most prolific, and forward-thinking views at the time, Mathurin Mair said, "Reproductive rights, in fact, are the least negotiable items on women's agenda of rights."³⁴

While she acknowledged the role that dominant faiths play in

advancing or expanding women's status, she still considered religious fundamentalism a hindrance to the progress of women in seeking equality and in the full enjoyment of their fundamental human rights including reproductive rights.

Views on Men

Mathurin Mair was always insistent that her deep concern for women and for the advancement of women's and girls' rights should never be confused with extremism or anti-male sentiments. She once said:

if I could say something briefly about the role of men vis a vis the creative woman, my own view is very simple. I know from experience of the profound misogyny (dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women) of many men and in particular of many competitive, creative men. However, I would also like to say that some of the most supportive and most inspiring creative persons of my acquaintance are also men, whose creative range and generosity are a source of both stimulation and support. And I feel that if as women we need to have man the enemy as a foil for our creativity, we may well be creating another trap for ourselves.³⁵

Among the men for whom she expressed admiration were her step-father, and Norman and Michael Manley. She was hard-hit by Michael's death, reflecting on their time in London when: "We also shared our hopes for and our commitment to that new independent Jamaica being pioneered by Norman Manley". She stressed that: "The life and work of father and son (Norman and Michael Manley) were inspired by passionate commitment to justice and to the equality of all human beings, regardless of class, nationality, race or sex. They both challenged imperialism, colonialism, racism, sexism. Yes, sexism, that virtually universal phenomenon who labelled women second sex, and regions around the world established her status as such."³⁶

Women's Studies

It was natural that Lucille Mathurin Mair should have become the first Consultant Regional Coordinator for Women and Development Studies at The University of the West Indies and that she spent the years 1985 to 1989 helping to pave the way for the establishment of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, now the Institute for Gender and Development Studies [IGDS]. It was fitting that she played this role because by then she had established herself as a powerhouse in the field of Caribbean Women's History and Caribbean Feminist Studies. She knew that the task of integrating Women and Development Studies at The UWI was going to be a difficult one, but tried to calm the opponents by telling them that: "Women's Studies seeks to adjust the parameters of knowledge and should be seen neither as threat nor nuisance."³⁷

In an undated speech on Women's Studies in the academy she said "Women's Studies in the Caribbean constitutes one of the most challenging dynamic and potentially rich areas of research and scholarship in the region. It could not be otherwise for it is a collective enterprise with a group of Caribbean women and men, nearly all of them bright, creative and quite wonderful. Before they are all through, what a difference they will make to what we teach and how we teach on the campuses of Mona, Cave Hill and St Augustine, and what we carry into society"³⁸.

What a difference indeed!!

3. Racism

Lucille Mathurin Mair was as intolerant of racism as she was of sexism. In a February (11) 1973 speech during the Decade for Action to combat Racism³⁹ she made a statement that is as relevant now as in 1973: "The elimination of racism is the most

intractable problem facing the international family today.”⁴⁰ She often spoke about the colonial legacies that allowed racism to fester. The constructs of Eurocentricity used to poison and colonise Africa and Africans never penetrated Lucille Mathurin Mair’s mind, as, through her own inner consciousness, and through her continued research on pre-colonial African society, she discovered and spread the truth. In her publication, “The Arrival of the Black Woman”, she wrote: “If, indeed, as has been argued, their ancient culture was ‘the shield which frustrated the efforts of Europeans to dehumanise Africans through servitude’ it can also be argued that it was the African woman’s perception of herself within that culture, which accompanied her across the Middle Passage, and which helped to preserve her from total defeminisation in the New World.”⁴¹

Her uncompromising opposition to colonialism and its racist legacies made her an anti-Apartheid activist. In 1977 she represented Jamaica at the International Conference Against Apartheid in Nairobi, Kenya. In 1979 she became a member of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid. During May 22–25, 1979 there was a special session of the Committee against Apartheid held in Kingston. Among those who attended were CLR James, Prof John Henrick Clarke, Ken Hall (SUNY); Josie Fanon wife of Frantz Fanon; Mrs Nurse Courant, daughter of George Padmore (born Malcolm Ivan Meredith Nurse), and Ruth Sinclair, niece of Marcus Garvey. Her presentation at a 1980 Seminar in Montreal on “Women and Apartheid” provided an insight into the role of western women in the anti-apartheid movement and the experiences of South African women victims, some of whom attended the seminar so they could speak to the attendees directly. She addressed the need to raise awareness to their conditions.

During the time that she was in the Senate, (1989–1992) she included in her presentations issues relating to the on-going Apartheid regime in South Africa and the independence

movement in Namibia, which, at the time, was under threat from South African imperialism.

4. Regionalism & The Non-Aligned Movement

Mathurin Mair was both a nationalist and a committed regionalist. She saw no conflict and her background made it necessary. She demonstrated a devout sense of loyalty to Jamaica's neighbours and allies, especially in cases of national crises, namely those that had occurred in Haiti and across Latin America in the eighties and nineties. In a speech delivered at the opening of the exhibition "Explorations in Clay and Bronze" in 1988, she said: "we have no choice but to pool our resources and convert our theses and declarations on the benefits of regional integration into a functioning strategy, to give bite and teeth to the provision of the Treaty of Chaguaramas; to make CARICOM a truly effective instrument of integration. Her interventions in the Senate also cemented the well-known fact that she was an ardent supporter of the regional agenda, and believed that the Caribbean as one region stood taller and stronger in the international arena and suggested that relationships with CARICOM member states should be the cornerstone of foreign policy of the nineties. Why? "We have a commonality of interest which is shaped by our colonial past and cemented by considerable coincidence of interest, and not to mention geographical proximity." She viewed CARICOM as the "springboard for multilateral effectiveness", and expressed frequently a desire for Jamaica to prioritise relationship with organisations such as CARICOM, G-77 and the Commonwealth."⁴²

She was also committed to the non-aligned movement and was never afraid to speak out in support of Cuba and Palestine and against US actions towards them. While serving as Jamaica's Ambassador to Cuba (1978–1979), she met a virtual who's who of the non-aligned/socialist and communist movements, people

from Algeria and Ethiopia (e.g. President Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia⁴³), Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe (e.g. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia). In her notes of a rally at which Mengistu Haile Mariam spoke, she questioned whether Cuba would stand with Ethiopia against Eritrea separatists. She was also anxious about Jamaica's commitment to Ethiopia. In a letter to P.J. Patterson, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Jamaica dated 29th May 1978, she discussed the growing concern in Cuba that Jamaica planned to close its Embassy in Ethiopia. She cautioned that, if true, this act could be interpreted as Jamaica opposing the Ethiopian government. She reiterated that the USA was hostile to Cuba's presence in Africa. She also mentioned the bad press coming out of Washington and Belgrade over concerns of Cuba's Africa policy and future actions contemplated in Angola, and rumours of Cuba's role in Zaire. She also highlighted the growing anti-imperialist sentiment growing in Africa and hinted to P.J. Patterson that some members of the non-aligned movement wished to divert attention away from anti-imperialist objectives. Nevertheless, she defended Cuba's actions in the anti-imperialist movement as principled.⁴⁴

She routinely sent articles which appeared in *Granma* relating to her work and responses to it in Cuba, as well as general international affairs; such as her views on the Ethiopia/Somali war, Cuba/Africa relations and US opposition to Cuba's presence in Africa. She wrote on the views of Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and their appreciation of Jamaica's support for the decolonization struggle, including that of Rhodesia and support for the Patriotic Front. She was also vehement on the matter of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and left no-one in any doubt about her pro-Palestine stance, even after the Secretary-General of the UN had appointed her Secretary-General of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1982.

She firmly believed that the question of Palestine was “essentially the saga of a people in pursuit of home and country. The 4.4 to 5 million who live either under Israeli occupation or in a far-spread diaspora, like the majority of the world’s men and women are convinced that only home and country can endow true identity.”⁴⁵ At the Geneva Conference, she openly supported the inalienable right of Palestinians to self-determination, and supported the establishment of an independent State of Palestine.

The Question of Palestine was a Mandate responsibility of the League of Nations (. . .) which was explicitly returned in 1947 to a successor organisation, the United Nations. It was one of the “sacred trusts of humanity”, to quote the words of Count Carlo Sforza of Italy, and as such, it is a continuing moral responsibility of the highest order to all who cherish the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter and the universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Question of Palestine is central to the future of the United Nations; and this, is not surprising. Palestine is ultimately something other than a place on earth with special geopolitical importance. It is a corner of the globe endowed with meaning – the land of the prophets, the birthplace of Judaism and Christianity, and a region that is deeply cherished by Muslims throughout the world. Sacred geography makes it compelling for the community of nations to adopt more forcefully the cause of peace.⁴⁶

5. Development & Underdevelopment, Structural Adjustment, the Third World and Globalization/role of the UN

Mathurin Mair turned her critical lens on development, more specifically international development and the auspices under which it should be considered and achieved. She supported a search for New-Development Models that were appropriate to post-colonial societies in the South, that is, models that did not overlook human and political development in the interest of trade barriers and international debt. She understood that political development was

necessary for human development so that people could be afforded the chance to choose those who handled resources and ultimately help achieve human development. But that meant putting in place responsible governments to steer the ship; in this regard she constantly argued for greater representation of women in representational politics.

Mathurin Mair always criticised International Financial Institutions, which, as partners to the UN, had the responsibility to address *inter alia*, poverty and unemployment. She argued strongly that these institutions should pay attention to the social content of their fiscal policies of structural adjustment. She believed that even security should be redefined to include the human element rather than just the militaristic element. She was clear that focus should be placed on disarmament and spending on social amenities in order to achieve human security. She used every opportunity to express the view point that since the classical age of colonization the condition in the South had not changed much.⁴⁷ On the contrary, the structure of the world economy had crippled the South. She constantly appealed for an understanding of global interdependence, alternative development strategies and the post-colonial condition.

In a speech at Medgar Evers College she spoke of the challenges being faced in the 1990s, among them, how to have stable, sound economic growth and economic and social equity in a world of gross North-South inequities, massive diversion of resources to militarism and deterioration of the economy.⁴⁸ Also that despite the mantra of globalisation/interdependence, the rich were exercising political and economic power over poor, defeating the rhetoric of global partners. In any event she was conscious that “interdependence and globalisation do not imply equality.” East/West divisions disappear but North/South persist and the South bears the brunt of structural adjustment”.

Not surprisingly she expressed the view that women should not be marginalised in the process of development. In a memorandum

that was sent to Michael Manley, entitled “Women and Social Change” she painted a clear picture of what her ideology was with regard to women’s economic welfare. She did not believe that it was possible (or wise) to construct a nation or seek development status without the input of women, especially as more and more, women were given- and took – opportunities to explore the “upper levels of education” – not only completing secondary school, but also pursuing tertiary education.⁴⁹ Overall, she used her platform as a means of lobbying for women’s rights, and for the prioritisation of women’s affairs to be including in the development agenda.

Quoting the Executive Director of UNICEF at a meeting of the Social Committee of ECOSOC in 1981, she reminded her audience:

A woman’s right to share whatever fruits the process of economic development has to offer is absolutely fundamental to all her roles. It is her poverty above all which is making her an “inadequate mother’, not her social behaviour, her illiteracy, her limited horizons or her exhausting workload, all of which are merely factors of that poverty.⁵⁰

Role of The UN

Even though she was a member of the United Nations family, held various diplomatic positions there, and recognised the Organisation’s benefits, for example as a platform for women from across the world to meet, discuss, and bring forth the issues they faced in developing countries and issues that are typically left on the back burner, Lucille Mathurin Mair was not afraid to criticise the UN when necessary. She openly criticised the organization for its failure to ensure gender representation, especially at the policy-making level; and its inefficiency in achieving its objectives. One such occasion was a statement at the substantive meeting of the Economic & Social Council [ECOSOC], in New York, where

she made her usual comment that women paid a disproportionate price for current macro-economic policies designed to address the critical state of the world economy characterised by budget deficits, slow growth, trade imbalances and massive debt burden in developing countries and lamented the disproportionate suffering from structural adjustment. She also critiqued policies with tight fiscal growth oriented objectives which were applied as solutions: e.g., heavy cuts in public expenditure in non-productive sectors.⁵¹

Changes in the economic order, in the 1970s and 1980s saw the United Nations and nations generally spending more and more on security, while spending less on critical social services and on advancing the multilateral trade agenda, to the detriment of the South. Security budgets of the world's leading developed countries expanded significantly to include additional resources for military defence, but countries failed to acknowledge the potential threat posed by the worsening situations in lesser developed countries. She argued that crises in lesser developed countries such as the non-military, socio-economic issues and resources needs, as well as territorial disputes, indebtedness, environmental degradation, drug terrorism, HIV/AIDS and mass migration constituted a relevant threat to the more developed countries, but were in fact a silent war, when compared to the effort and resources that are allocated to military issues.

She claimed that the UN itself had not adhered to the principles of equality that are outlined in the UN Charter and had not achieved the objectives that it set out to do. Her main basis for this argument was the strong belief in the importance of the protection of universal and inalienable human rights.⁵²

6. The Environment and Climate Change

Finally, many people will be happy to know that Mathurin Mair cared about the environment and was concerned about climate

change. In her 1990 State of the Nation speech in the Jamaican Parliament she expressed concern with pollutants which affected communities living near industrial complexes. She spoke on the impact of deforestation, combustion of fossil fuels and the introduction of carbon compounds that changed the atmosphere. She reflected on how these changes would affect rainfall and temperature throughout the world and cause havoc in agricultural production. She also correctly alluded to the imminent rising sea levels due to increasing melting of ice caps, as well as dangerous threats to marine life and coastal areas.

In a speech at a ceremony to commemorate the International Day of Peace- September 17, 1991, Mathurin Mair made an unusual link between peace and security and the environment in Third World countries:

Analyses of today's threats take more and more into account those non-military, socio-economic issues such as resource needs of water, land, oil, movements of people, demands for human rights, which constitute a "silent war" and underline the fact that security in the modern world can neither be completely defined in military terms nor can it be insured through military means. (. . .) with a fundamental shift in our definition of security, which now includes the destabilising consequences of environmental degradation, famine, drought, displacement of people, and we should add the new interstate disease, AIDS, the UN must accordingly adjust its priorities and its modus operandi.⁵³

During a conference held in Hague in 1993, Mathurin Mair also communicated her strong views on the topic of population control, the environment and women:

Women had been brought in as it were through the back door into a global environment debate and presented as largely responsible for environmental degradation. This is the population issue, the thesis of the dangerous pressure of too many people, particularly of the third world, on the earth's fragile resources. Women, however, refuse to be cast as the villains of the piece and challenge the thesis that

excessive third world birth rates accounts for environmental decay. On the contrary, women of the third world have a greater role in subsistence agriculture than any other group in their society."⁵⁴

Conclusion

As I end, I reiterate the importance of this rebel woman, who, over the course of her life, worked her heart out for the cause of Caribbean freedom; who popularized the power of History education for all those seeking a more liberating narrative of self; who participated in the work needed for the institutionalization of Gender Studies at The UWI; who was never afraid to speak truth to power and stand her ground, especially as a Senator and at the UN; who lobbied for gender justice for all women, social justice for those who occupy the spaces in the global South and representation at the diplomatic level for a new development model.

I am so grateful to have been introduced to her opinions and philosophy and will ensure that they become second skin as I popularise the notion of using the ideas of our indigenous thinkers and philosophers to guide our future.

In a cruel twist of fate, she forgot her importance towards the end of her life. On visiting her in the days before her condition worsened and she was felled by Alzheimers, Peggy Antrobus spoke to her about the "good ole days" and of all the work they had done together. As Peggy recalls: "She looked at me and said, 'Peggy you mean I did all that?'" She had forgotten. But we remember. The admiration that so many of us hold for this rebel woman was echoed in Prof Alissa Trotz's tribute to her when she wrote this in *Stabroek News* in Guyana on February 9, 2009:

When we look at the Caribbean today it is very easy to feel despair, but Mair's example reminds us to always believe in the horizon of possibility, a belief that must respond to two questions: What are we

going to do about it? And who are we going to do it with? We should commit to ensuring that the amnesia about our collective history that she fought so hard to combat should not threaten an ongoing appreciation of her own life . . . Let us pay tribute to Lucille Mathurin-Mair not just in words but in our efforts to continually strive for that horizon [in which] she so steadfastly had faith.”⁵⁵

I give the last words to Lucille, though, because she too believed firmly in paying tribute to mentors and influencers: “There are stages in your life when you have to pay tribute to those who, in offering guidance, inspiration and encouragement made things possible for you.” (Lucille Mathurin Mair, 1996)

This is a life lesson for all of us.

May we embrace it and reflect it in our own lives.

I thank you!

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