

The 2012
Lucille Mathurin Mair Public Lecture



REBEL WOMEN:

Engendering Transformation

By

Beverley Anderson-Duncan

Institute for Gender and Development Studies Mona Unit



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MRS BEVERLEY ANDERSON-DUNCAN

Beverley-Anderson-Duncan, has been a leading activist in the struggle for women's and children's rights, gender equality and social transformation since the 1970's. She spent her early years in Linstead St Catherine, attended Rose Duncan's Prep School and later the St Hugh's High School for Girls in Kingston. She is a graduate of The University of the West Indies (B.A; MSc Political Science) and also studied at Howard University in Washington DC. Beverley has been a Visiting Professor and Guest Lecturer at several universities in the USA and was the Distinguished Carnegie International Fellow at Radcliffe/Harvard in the fall of 1990 where she conducted research on gender issues. She has also conducted research at Howard, Cornell and Harvard (Bunting Institute) Universities.

As former First Lady of Jamaica and President of the People's National Party Women's Movement, she was instrumental in the establishment of the Bureau of Women's Affairs (1975), one of the earliest such institutions in the world. To advance women's strategic needs, she contributed to the passing of important legislation for women's empowerment: The Employment (Equal Pay for Men and Women) Act December 1, 1975; the Maternity Leave Act December 31, 1979 and the National Minimum Wage Order 1975. She promoted women's interests as Jamaica's Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the Organization of American States (OAS/CIM) and was a Vice President of the Third World Foundation in Chicago. She supported women's practical needs by establishing a Day Care Programme for Jamaican children among other achievements.

Mrs Anderson-Duncan has also been a Gender Consultant to several international, regional and local organisations including the United Nations Research Institute for Development (UNRISD); the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and UNICEF. As a Trainer in Organisational Development and Transformation, she has conducted workshops in corporate Jamaica and with community groups.

As a Broadcaster and Communications Specialist, Mrs Anderson-Duncan co-produced/co-presented the popular current affairs radio discussion programme – 'The Breakfast Club' for many years. She later conceptualised and hosted 'Today with Beverley Anderson-Manley' focusing on development and transformation. She has authored several papers on socio-economic and political issues in the Third World. In her most recent publication *The Manley Memoires* (2007) she reflects on her childhood experiences and on her later political involvement as a rebel woman during Jamaica's post-independence period. Beverley is married to Dr. D. K Duncan, is the biological mother of Natasha and David Manley, and mother to many others. She is strongly committed to family, friends, and to engendering and transforming society.

Introduction

“**Rebel Women: Engendering Transformation**”, is the theme for the 2012 Lucille Mathurin Mair Public Lecture to be delivered by Mrs Beverley Anderson-Duncan. This year’s distinguished guest speaker is a gender and transformational leadership trainer and activist, and a popular talk show host, a former first lady of Jamaica, a mother and author.

This year 2012 marks the milestone of 50 years of political independence for countries like Jamaica and some other Caribbean countries. The lecture therefore, also sought to link Jamaica’s 50th Anniversary celebrations and UWI’s 50th anniversary as an independent degree granting institution, the first of its kind in the region, capable of granting its own degrees. Having the Lucille Mathurin Mair Public lecture in March, the month in which International Women’s Day is celebrated is also significant at several levels.

This Lucille Mathurin Mair Public Lecture Series was inaugurated in 1998 to celebrate and honour the contribution of Dr Lucille Mathurin Mair, a well-known Jamaican historian, author, teacher, activist and diplomat. Dr Mathurin Mair died in 2009, taught at this campus of the University of the West Indies for several years and has been honoured for her work in the field of international relations and women’s rights. She was the first Regional Coordinator of the Institute (formerly Centre) for Gender and Development Studies. For her outstanding service as a diplomat, scholar and women’s rights activist, she was accorded the highly deserved honour of being the fifth recipient of the CARICOM Triennial Award in 1996. She also served as the Executive Director of the Bureau of Women’s Affairs and as Jamaica’s Ambassador to the United Nations. Unfortunately, Dr

Mathurin Mair died in January 2009 but the IGDS Mona Unit is committed to continuing this lecture series to celebrate and honour her memory and work.

Dr Mathurin Mair’s 1994 PhD thesis entitled *A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655–1844*, edited and introduced by Professors Hilary McD. Beckles and Verene A. Shepherd, has been co-published by the UWI Press with the Institute (formerly Centre) for Gender and Development Studies.

Mrs Anderson-Duncan focuses on the historical significance of the achievements and contributions of Dr Lucille Mathurin Mair to gender equality, empowerment and sustainable development. She traces the distinguished legacy of Dr Mair, as a Rebel Historian who gave women of all classes, races and ethnicities, visibility and voice to articulate their needs and rights. Anderson-Duncan convincingly argues the strategic need to mainstream gender in all policies and programmes within and outside the UWI.

The symbol of rebel women in this seventh lecture facilitates reflections on the contribution of Mair and the many other rebel women, to shaping the country’s political development from a female perspective. Anderson-Duncan, an activist since the 1970s, provides a personal insight into Lucille Mathurin Mair’s contribution to social transformation. She outlines her vision and challenges her audience to envision a future characterized by development that is equitable, transparent, inclusive, accountable and participatory, and acknowledges the importance of women’s voice and agency. She argues that gender must be mainstreamed in national policies and programmes to achieve gender equality in political leadership and social transformation.

The choice of Anderson-Duncan to deliver the 2012 lecture, is not coincidental.

A review of our news media confirms that several areas of gender inequality remain which adversely affect the basic human rights and development of both females and males. Increasingly, therefore, there are demands to ensure that courses and programmes are relevant and responsive to emerging gender and devel-

opment issues. This lecture comes against the background of the action research agenda of the IGDS Mona Campus Unit which addresses gender dimensions of the national project – Vision 2030 Jamaica.

Anderson-Duncan's reminder in the lecture is timely, given the gap between commitments and practice. She argues for a review of policy progress since political independence as well as strategies to address the systemic and patriarchic inequality that undermines actions and commitments to achieve the goals of equality and social justice for all citizens. Although there is global consensus on the need to integrate a gender perspective in all development policies, programmes and strategies, gender inequality persists, and there is need to break the cycle of imbalance. Women are 50% of the population but are underrepresented in the political sphere at the highest levels of decision-making. Eliminating sex and occupational stereotypes remains an imperative. Occupational choices, education and political participation are tomes among others.

The vision of the IGDS Mona Campus Unit and FES Jamaica is to produce and disseminate knowledge on gender related issues in the Caribbean in support of a shared mission to enhance Caribbean development. We thank our institutional partner, Jamaica Money Market Brokers for their support which enabled us to host the 2012 lecture and to produce this publication. We thank members of Dr Mathurin Mair's family for continuing to partner with us in hosting this event. Our expectation is that reading this volume will inspire and encourage other rebel women and men who support gender equality, to mainstream gender and transform societies.

Leith Dunn PhD
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And

Judith Wedderburn
Director, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean

REBEL WOMEN:

Engendering Transformation

BEVERLEY ANDERSON-DUNCAN

Good Evening Sisters and Brothers

What a privilege and a wonderful opportunity to be chosen to give the Lucille Mathurin Mair Lecture in 2012 – this historically significant year in which we celebrate fifty years of political independence. I say this because Lucille is one of our remarkable women of substance and scholarship who shared her gifts with the world during the half century. She was an extraordinary woman – a true pioneer. It is therefore not surprising that her pioneering research and her work to promote gender equality in development, included research and a publication on the great leader, warrior and military strategist, Nanny of the Maroons. It is also not surprising that Lucille called that affirmation of Nanny, who up until then was a mythical figure, **The Rebel Woman**. The controversy around Nanny still exists: was she mythical or was she real? Lucille's historical research established that she was real. Here, then was one Rebel Woman mirroring another.

Overview of the Lecture

The theme of this lecture “Rebel Women: Engendering Transformation” is not coincidental. It builds on Lucille’s visionary outlook and I am asking that you listen to this lecture from a certain place, from the following perspective:

The Vision for an engendered society – where Jamaica is seen 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.

This vision is based on some core Principles of Transformation. These include: Active listening. Being a Visionary and having a clear idea of the society we want to create. Honesty. Accountability. Participation. Taking Action. These are some of the principles that reflect what we stand for.

Today I therefore ask you to listen, be a visionary and take action to create the kind of society you envision. Yes we can.

This Lecture traces some of the landmarks, achievements and challenges that have occurred during Jamaica’s history since Independence towards Gender Equality and the empowerment of women. This journey has been at times often traumatic, with many conflicts, but also with joyous celebrations. My reflections provide insights into the journey, the strategies used, and reveal many breakthroughs and achievements, as well as the difficult challenges – some of which remain today and still need to be overcome. My reflections provide **insights into lessons** learnt from Dr Lucille Mathurin Mair, herself a Rebel Woman, and many others, whose lives and work demonstrate their courage and resilience.

In reflecting on Jamaica’s 50 years of political independ-

ence, the Lecture asserts that in order for the women’s movement to advance to another level, women must take action that is transformational at personal, institutional and national levels. It also argues that in order to achieve this goal, we need to ‘wipe the slate clean’ and in that pure, sacred space, create the engendered society that we really want for ourselves and future generations. In ‘wiping the slate clean’, we also need to take a systemic approach, and radically confront patriarchy as a system of male domination which fosters inequality and underdevelopment. Patriarchy is an ideology that affords power, status and privilege to men. It can be accepted by both males and females as the norm, as previously noted. It is very deeply entrenched in our society. Because of this, it is in our own interest to find, agree and adopt new and more effective ways of negotiating gender equality and the empowerment of women inside of that system.

As we actively listen and reflect on 50 years of political independence, we will realise that the system of patriarchy has provided some benefits. For example, there have been several legal reforms to support the advancement of women, but this is not enough. And why is this not enough? The ideas of gender inequality have not changed radically and both women and men accept patriarchy as the norm. A review of our statistical data, a reading of our newspapers, and reflecting on information in the mass media, provide clear evidence of the reality that despite the gains, many unequal structures remain. These deny the majority of women equal rights as well as equal access to and benefits from the process of development. People’s access to basic human rights are influenced by factors such as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and rural/urban divisions among other factors. Legal changes have not by themselves provided a sufficient basis for women’s equality. Stereotypes and attitudes persist which influence behaviour. To build a

new Jamaica, women and men must work together for gender equality.

As we critically assess the state of our country and celebrate 50 years of political independence, we must be motivated to move more quickly along the continuum from Reform to Transformation. Only then can we achieve the gender equality for which Lucille worked very hard in the region and when she was Jamaica's representative to the United Nations.

This lecture provides a space for reflection for all Rebel Women and the supportive men who accept gender equality as a basic human right and a strategy for development. However, we must first look at ourselves, our belief systems and our assumptions. We must examine the deepest aspects of our Being and recognise that the transformation process begins with ourselves. We must take responsibility for our thoughts and actions. We must envision an alternative future and work to transform ourselves. This active transformation process will then extend into all our relationships and help to transform our country.

This lecture explores various facets of Lucille as a Rebel Woman and other Rebel Women who have made a significant contribution to understanding gender inequality and have taken action to research and analyse, the country's experience of enslavement, struggles for political independence and for women's emancipation and empowerment.

Lucille Mathurin Mair: the Rebel Woman as Historian

Lucille Mathurin Mair's doctoral thesis reflects her identity as a Rebel Woman. Her thesis was completed in 1974 and was entitled: "A Historical Study of Women in Jamaica 1655-1844". This seminal work influenced the research on women in the Caribbean and our understanding of gender relations. Lucille's pioneering study challenged women's

invisibility in historical scholarship and shed light on our role and contribution to emancipation and development. Mair's thesis gave visibility to Rebel Women of different racial and class groups, and concluded that, in plantation society, black women laboured, brown women served and white women consumed. Her work laid the foundation on which many other scholars built their academic careers and documented women's role in Caribbean history. Her work helped to establish social history as a sub-discipline, and also highlighted the importance of gender as a tool of historical and social analysis. Her thesis, edited by Professors Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd, was published in 2006 by the Institute (then Centre) for Gender and Development Studies Mona Unit and the University of the West Indies Press.

As a feminist historian her documentation of the history of women shows that she was particularly aware of the environment of post slavery, colonial societies and their legacies. In particular, she was aware of what it took for our Ancestors, women and men, to merely survive. Having documented and affirmed women's contribution to the struggles for independence Lucille then used this knowledge as a tool to raise awareness about inequalities between women and men, to establish institutions and structures to transform society and to struggle for the rights of women to succeed. As an activist and diplomat, she helped to establish and change institutions to promote gender equality, nationally and globally.

Lucille the Rebel Woman as a Visionary Leader

Lucille was a visionary leader who had no problems in seeing beyond present circumstances to create a future filled with possibilities. To this extent, she can also be described as a Transformational Leader. This visionary Rebel Woman was a leader, in the most challenging of movements: the movement

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envelope” as the Rebel Woman Lucille Mathurin Mair often did. It is imperative that we recognise and understand patriarchy as a system that oppresses both women and men. Therefore, we must move on from tinkering with the system to transformation of the system to enable our country to develop. We must continue to raise awareness and understanding of how systems impact on us and how we can influence them, as women and men. Having developed this understanding – this awareness – we can then proceed to stretch the system to its limits by looking at the nature of the relationships in the system. We must critically examine the roles and responsibilities assigned to women and men; how power is negotiated and distributed; the conversations that take place inside the system, and the collusion between both dominant and subordinate groups that help to perpetuate the system.

The Rebel Women as Transformational Leaders

Rebel Women as Transformational Leaders must begin by recognising that they have to be **“the change they want to see in the world”** – as Gandhi so aptly put it. Firstly, apart from anything else, this means an ongoing process of self-reflection and the willingness to transform ourselves very much in the way we want others to transform themselves. This also requires us to rid ourselves of any prejudices, privileges and assumptions that can act against our vision for engendering transformation. Rebel Women as leaders of transformational processes, must therefore first lead by example and encourage team members to engage in this process of self reflection to change our mindset.

Secondly, we have to be visionaries, with the capacity to motivate others to share our vision. Transformational leaders bring the future into the present and choose that as a place

from which to live and also allow the vision to determine our lives.

Thirdly, we have to develop the capacity to listen from places we choose, so that our articulation is effective in terms of getting the results we want.

Fourthly, we must encourage and enable others to participate. We must also hold ourselves and others accountable and therefore take responsibility for our actions.

Fifthly, as transformational leaders our actions must be guided and informed by research and analysis of sex disaggregated data to identify the specific and differential needs and interests of both sexes and to better understand these relationships.

Finally, transformational leaders must be unapologetically feminist, recognising the subordination of women as a group and organising to achieve equal rights for all women and vulnerable groups. This requires exceptional confidence, courage, resilience and determination. Women will need to be willing to take a stand for what they believe in, and will have to understand that the personal is indeed political.

Sisters and Brothers, in completing the past, we look to the future, bring that future into the present, and allow it to determine our lives. We end as we started with the following vision:

Jamaica is 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

Thank you.