

## **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry\***

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

### **Abstract**

This paper which is entitled “Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry” focuses on Breeze (1957 -), as the originator of what is known as “Women’s domestic dub” which criticizes the racially marginalized status of black women. She has contributed a new poetic genre known as “meta-dub”, which is free from the reggae rhythm. Nancy of the Maroons is a Jamaican warrior whose struggle against post-colonialism and slavery is portrayed in Breeze’s dub poetry. The spirit of black feminism in the 1970s and 1980s encouraged Jean ‘Binta’ Breeze to develop African rhyming beats such as calypso, quadrille, mento and European folk songs.

## جين بنتا بريز: التعددية الثقافية وشعر موسيقى ما بعد الضب

نيفين ضياء الدين حسن

### ملخص

يشتمل هذا البحث وعنوانه: "جين بنتا بريز: التعددية الثقافية وشعر موسيقى ما بعد الضب" على تحليل ودراسة قصائد جين بنتا بريز وهي تُعتبر مؤسسة تيار "ما بعد شعر موسيقى الضب" وهو تيار متحرر من ألحان الراجي الأفريقية. وقد تميزت الشاعرة بنتا بريز بإحياء الأساطير الأفريقية، الجاميكية كأسطورة نانسي الماررونية التي دافعت عن ثقافتها الأفريقية في وجه الاستعمار البريطاني، والأنجلوساكسوني، وكذلك تناولت تأثير التعددية الثقافية على الهوية. وقد تأثرت بنتا بريز بتيار الحركة النسائية السوداء في فترة السبعينات والثمانينات مما دفعها لإدخال إيقاعات متنوعة على قصائدها مثل إيقاعات الكاليسو، والكوادريل والمنتو، وأغاني الفلكلور الأوروبي. كما تصور قصائد بريز تياراً يُعرف باسم "شعر موسيقى الضب النسائي المنزلي". ومن بين الأفكار التي تتناولها بريز، الاستغلال الاقتصادي للحضارة الأفريقية كما في قصيدتها "نهار عادي"، والبحث عن الهوية وذلك من خلال استعراض حياة خمسة أجيال نسائية من أسرة إفريقية واحدة في ديوانها الشعري والنثري المعروف باسم "الطرف الخامس". ويجد القارئ الصدى النقدي لكرستيفا في بعض قصائد بريز، كما يتعرف على نظريتي الهجين الثقافي والذاكرة المتنقلة عبر الأجيال عند كابلان.

### Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry

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One culture's 'knowledge' is another's 'noise'. The metonymy of blood and bone embodies the text, the marrow of literary tradition assuming a particularized cultural character. The artist as *griot* transmits a body of knowledge that is the accreted wisdom of generations. [...] Assumed by the in-group, this figure of speech denotes a genealogy of ideas, a blood-line of beliefs and practices that are transmitted in the body, in oral discourse (Cooper 4).

#### Prologue:

According to her biographers, the Jamaican poet, Jean 'Binta' Breeze, (1956 -) was born in Patty Hill, a village in the countryside of Hanover, spent her time in both her homeland and London holding her first performative concert in 1985. As a meta-dub poet and a performative artist, Breeze started her theatrical performances with Mutabaruka. Her poetic career began in the 1970s, and extended world-wide with the help of Linton Kwesi Johnson in 1985. She spent her time between London and Hanover in Kingston, where she brought up her children. As a meta-dub poet whose poetic career achieved worldwide fame, she also acknowledged herself as an actress and a narrator of childhood's memories of homeland. Later on, she joined the editorial staff of the *Critical Quaterly*, writing scripts of a number of plays and films. At the present time, she gives lectures on creative writing and drama.

Besides defying the dominant male-centered dub poetry of her day and asserting her equality as a meta-dub female poet, Breeze has also attempted the sub-genre of "women's domestic dub". As Jenny Sharpe says, "Women's domestic dub" relates obstacles that face unemployed, bourgeois black women to their ethnic, socio-political and economic status in a multicultural society (612). Breeze's poem, "Ordinary Mawning", is a good example of this sub-genre. In Breeze's meta-dub poetry, diverse musical rhythms, such as that of gospel songs, blues, quadrille, mento and European folk songs, bring into prominence black culture in the midst of a diversity of cultures, and also help to collectively envision black culture in the memory of Jamaicans. In Breeze's poetry, as in the poem "Riddym Ravings", the repeated rhythm in the headphones of a woman's radio, reinvisions and reverbalizes black culture through memory-retrospection. This

### **Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

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view is stressed by Edouard Glissant in "Caribbean Discourse", in which he discusses the role of memory-retrospection as a means of recollecting aspects of black culture and history (26). Like Louise Bennett, Breeze's meta-dub poetry makes use of Creole, not only to revive memory of colonial black history, but also to forge the existence of black culture. Though Breeze breaks off the tradition of reggae dub poetry, she manipulates other aspects such as radio symbolism and dramatic monologues, which are dubbed or added, and are accompanied with polyphonic rhythms of her poems by which reader and listener can detect the existence of African culture.

Because Breeze is a specialist in writing women's domestic and meta-dub poetry, her work depicts a female subjective perspective, defying the oppressed status of black women, both in Jamaica and in the diaspora. Having studied Jamaican drama in school, Breeze performed her poetry in 1983 in Kingston. Her early dub poetry was affected by that of Oku Onuora, Mikael Smith and Mutabaruka whom she knew during her study in Kingston. In 1985, influenced by Linton Kwesi Johnson, she travelled to London where she gave a number of her meta-dub performances. Following in the steps of Louise Bennett, Breeze's performative poetry is written and dramatized in Creole with some linguistic shifts to standard English. Her literary works include the poetic volumes, *Riddym Ravings and Other Poems* (1988), *Spring Cleaning* (1992), *Song Lines* (1997), *On the Edge of an Island* (1997), a book of diverse verses and short stories, *The Arrival of Brighteye and Other Poems* (2000), and *The Fifth Figure* (2006). As an early dub poet, Breeze went on many travels with reggae musicians to diverse countries. She then proclaimed herself a meta-dub poet whose poetry shifts away from the heavy beat of reggae music, in revolt against restrictions imposed upon women dub concerts. Dynamic celebration of diverse rhythms mark Breeze's meta-dub poetry. For instance, her poem, "Third World Blues (For Grenada)", is marked by its use of the blues music, while the poem, "Spring Cleaning", is composed to a rhythm that is sprung from the household life of a wife. Both Breeze's poems, "Riding the Riddym" and "Riddym Ravings", are marked by their diversity of rhythms besides manipulation of the conventional dub reggae beat in the latter. In an interview with Breeze, Chistian Habekost recognizes Breeze as a meta-dub poet

### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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whom (she confesses) she "had to get out of the confines of dub poetry" (45). Breeze believes that Creole which is accompanied by a reggae beat does not encourage freedom of speech.

Breeze tackles diverse issues in her poetry, including Western manipulation of the economic sources of developing countries whose culture is demeaned. This motif is foregrounded in her poem, "Big Time Tief", one of her early poems, composed with a reggae background. Breeze freed herself from the burdens of dub poetry and its raga sub-rhythm, regarding dub performances of women as sexual in nature. However, the critic, Carolyn Cooper, regards Jamaican women's dub performance (which is looked down upon) as a social revolution against the confinements imposed upon the marginalized black culture(141). Dub poetry which is subject to the burdens of reggae rhythm, reflects restrictions imposed not only on women dub poets, but also on black cultural identity as a whole. Judith Butler points out that the recurrence of exact movements in dub poetry reveals certain formalities imposed on gender, especially the female one, and the cultural ideology of any nation, especially a black one (140,141). The poetic identity of women dub poets is imprisoned not only within burdens of the female gender, but also within the constrains of white culture. In her essay, "Can a Dub Poet be a Woman?" (1990), Breeze asserts her revolt against being regarded as a traditional female dub poet whose poetic cultural and gender identity are restricted. She stresses that her "work has advanced beyond the confines of dub poetry, ... achieving as much as other women writers in conventional poetry" (49). She attacks the confinement of the reggae rhythm which does not allow her to present a dramatic performance that views the spontaneity of the female body as symbolical of black cultural identity. According to her, the reggae rhythm is "as constraining in its rhythms as the iambic pentameter" (498). In "A Round-Table Discussion on Poetry in Performance" (1999), Breeze confirmed that she prefers "performing solo to performing with a reggae band" because of the subjectivity of her poetry (40). Breeze discusses the role of personality or subjectivity in her poetry as a framework for tackling socio-cultural dilemmas of her own community, or to encapsulate memory of her suppressed trauma culture. She points out that her "politics were shaped by [her] personal experiences and those of the [ black] people around [her] in their day-

to-day concerns [...] lost the need to teach or preach, especially to audiences already converted", or by the medium of her Creole, which addresses a black audience (Breeze 499). One aspect of Breeze's meta-dub poetic technique is the dynamic diversity of rhythms representing memory of her culture. This view is discussed by Michael Bucknor in "Body-Vibes", in which he regards rhythm and voice-intonations as "body-memory poetics" and "verbal vibrations" reflecting one's nation and aspects of culture (301-302). In Breeze's poetry, social and political dilemmas are personalized, and related to the subjective viewpoint of feminine sexuality, as in her poem "Ordinary Mawning". The minute details in the life of a mother which are related to her daily routines with her children and neighborhood are mutually related to her retrospections of her South African homeland and its economic exploitation, as reflected in the high price of sugar. Breeze's dramatization of social and political dilemmas from a personalized, subjectively feminine view, may be considered an attempt to break through the conventional, socio-political form of a dub poem, imposed upon the female dub poet.

• **"Riddym Ravings", a Meta- Dub Poem :**

Breeze's poem, "Riddym Ravings", published in *On the Edge of an Island* (1997), is a performative poem, rather than a dub one. In spite of the reggae rhythmic refrain, the poem is not composed to a reggae background. Audiences and readers are not addressed in a politically straightforward manner, as is usual in a dub poem. Breeze assumes that urban life in the Jamaican city of Kingston is characterized by a mania of cultural identity-loss. This socio-cultural dilemma can be understood, or symbolically detected, through the subjective feminine narration of a simple story of an apparently mad woman. This strategy of detection marks the difference between the dub and performative style of the poem. As a meta-dub poem, the mad woman directly addresses audiences or readers in her own words, without any added interpretation, narrating the psychological shocks, dilemmas, obstacles, and experiences which face her in her life in Kingston:

de fus time dem kar me go a Bellevue  
was fit di dactar an de landlord operate

an tek de radio outa mi head  
(Breeze 58).

The mad woman's mania symbolizes the one which exists in the life of Jamaicans who have come to regard white cultural norms as signs of urbanity and civilization. The auditory noises of "de radio" can be interpreted symbolically as standing for the deplorable situation of being culturally lost, though Jamaicans should be "landlords" of their own country (Breeze 58). The only reggae rhymed refrain magnifies the pain which the mad woman endures in her own homeland (Kingston), by living according to the norms of a foreign, white culture. The D. J., or the radio sounds in her ears, echo her own personal screams:

Eh, Eh  
No feel no way  
town is a place dat ah really kean stay  
dem kudda – ribbit mi han  
eh- ribbit mi toe  
mi waan go a country go look mango  
(Breeze 58).

In this refrain, the mad woman asserts that the "town is a place dat ah really kean stay," making her physically exhausted enduring pains of her own "han" and "toe" (Breeze 58). This partly can refer to the hypothetical ideals of cultural diversity which make her "country go look mango" without having a definite black cultural ideology (Breeze 58). The metaphor, in "a country go look mango", transnationally hints to the countryside, black culture which is entrapped in the multicultural city of Kingston, and the state of the woman whose culture is lost (Breeze 58). Therefore, instead of being acculturated to the main multicultural atmosphere, she pretends madness to preserve her own culture. This equation between the personal story of a mad woman and the socio-political dilemma of being culturally lost, is a revolution against the strict form of the dub poem, not only in its written form, but also in audio and stage forms. Even certain dramatic features in the performance of the poem assert its meta-dub nature. For instance, Breeze, or the mad woman, proficiently narrates her story in a basilect Creole, without moving her hands or betraying any

excessive political enthusiasm, different from the viewpoint of Habekost's dub poetry. The stage dramatization of the mad woman is marked by an effective proficiency with the ability to make precision of the minutiae physical gestures and event-reactions. The crafted skills and dramatic proficiency have been acquired from Breeze's education in the Kingston School of Drama. This contradicts Habekost's belief that the acting of a dub poet should be naturally unplanned or unpremeditated (45). Even in the cassette of the poem, the voice is completely assimilated to the stage dramatization of the events of the poem. Unlike what happens in dub poems, the female persona does not comment on the story, or the situation of the mad woman, but leaves readers and audiences to identify with the woman's psychological disorders and turbulences. This direct experience shared between the mad woman and the listeners or readers, helps them to reach the conclusion that the reason behind the woman's madness is her sense of being culturally estranged. In this meta-dub poem, various electronic rhythms are created in the concluding lines of the poem, as in "Murther /Pull up Missa Operator!" (Breeze 60). These electronic rhythms equate between the noises standing for the foreign culture (the mania imposed on the woman) and her insistence not to move the sounds of the radio heads from her own "eena mi belly" (Breeze 60). This feminine subjective personalization of the motif of being culturally lost enhances the poem as meta-dub. The use of pun in the final lines of the poem symbolically refers to the socio-political oppression which is practised upon the mad woman's black culture by both the white culture and the atmosphere of multiculturalism in Jamaica which seeks to brainwash members of her culture. Breeze manipulates the use of pun in the word "murther", referring to the murder not only of her personality but also of her mother culture (Breeze 61). Another pun is the word "operator", referring to both the doctor and the dj operator of her dub reggae culture as murderers. By taking off the head phones of the radio from her ears, the doctor representing the multicultural atmosphere, or law-system, murders her own distinctive cultural identity. Similarly, the dancehall reggae dub culture<sup>1</sup> restricts Breeze's female, subjective personality, and undermines her dub shows, regarded as characterized by sexual slackness.



**Multicultural Estrangement in the volume, *Riddym Ravings*:**

In "Cartographies of Globalization", Jenny Sharpe points out that Breeze's poetic volume, *Riddym Ravings and Other Poems* (1988), conveys the socio-cultural and economic dilemmas and sufferings of bourgeois black women, both in foreign countries, and in their own homeland (446). Unlike Breeze's early poems in which the reader or listener feels the existence of a female persona whose identity is interwoven with the motif of the poem, the poems of that volume are marked by the use of dramatic monologue to capture the black female feelings of cultural indifference and estrangement, even in her own so-called "multicultural" homeland. The poem, "Riddym Ravings", depicts countryside life in Kingston which is culturally unspoiled by the British colonial culture. This is evident in the account of the unemployed, penniless countryside woman who aimlessly wanders in the streets, muttering incohesive words symbolizing her own plight of being culturally displaced, even in her urban culture. Breeze reunites the apparently slack body of a mad woman, a result of her pregnancy, with the musical rhythms splashing from the headphones of the radio. This parallels the dramatic monologue of the mad woman, addressed to her own self, conveying not only her personal plight, but also the plight of members of her black community who are alienated, uprooted and displaced in urban Jamaica. Though the mad woman is apparently "ribbit" or imprisoned in urban Jamaica, the radio head phones which she refuses to take off recall her black culture. The word "ribbit" refers to the idea of entrapment (Breeze 58). The mad woman who wants to earn her living in the city of Kingston, mainly because her countryside is economically exploited by the procedures of the International Monetary Fund, is personally lost. In other words, her identity is "ribbit" or lost and torn between her black culture and the multicultural atmosphere or "parade" of Kingston which promotes cultural diversity (Breeze 59). Because she is culturally alienated, she has been socially excluded from the white cultural mainstream, and now resides in the mental hospital of Bellevue. Paul Gilroy, like Toni Morrison, sees that madness can be a masque behind which a person endures new forms of enslavement (76, 221). This is evident in the case of the woman who goes "stark raving mad" as she metaphorically carries the "breadfruit" of her uprooted

culture (Breeze 59):

an a ongle one ting tap mi fram go stark raving  
mad  
a wen mi siddung eena Parade  
a tear up newspaper fi talk to  
sometime dem roll up  
an tun eena one a Uncle But sweet saaf  
yellow heart breadfruit  
wid piece a roas saailfish side a i  
(Breeze 59).<sup>2</sup>

The mad woman is socially ridiculed, criticized, and unrespected because of her alien black norms. Being socio-culturally marginalized and penniless, she is forced by “de conductor bwoy”, though he is Jamaican, to “kum affa de bus” and even pick up her food from the rubbish of a girl (Breeze 59). Finally, she is regarded and treated as abnormal, and sent to the hospital of Bellevue because she has taken a bath in an open place. At the bath, she is forced to take off the head phones of her radio, symbolizing her oral, black culture which has been uprooted in urban Jamaica, and replaced by the white, British culture:

an sometime mi a try board de bus  
an de conductor bwoy a halla out seh  
'duttu gal, kum affa de bus'  
an troo im no hear de riddym eena mi head  
same as de tape weh de bus driva a play, seh  
(Breeze 59).

Though she is forced by the doctor to take off the head phones of the radio from her ears, she insists that her "baby 'must' know dis yah riddym" of her oral black culture, and preserve traditions even before she is "bawn" (born) (Breeze 60). This idea of culture-rerootedness and culture-transmission to the new-born Jamaican generations is stressed in these lines:

fah even if mi nuh mek i  
me waan my baby know dis yah riddym yah  
fram before she bawn

(Breeze 60).

The focus on the metaphor of the radio is part of the woman's attempt to turn her nation into transmitters, abiding by their own black, pure countryside culture in face of cultural dualism which calls for compiling traits of white Western culture along with the black one. The image also initiates a dramatic monologue addressed by the mad woman to her nation.

### **Creole Symbolism in the Poetry of Louise Bennett and Jean 'Binta' Breeze:**

Bennett's Creole is womanly, associated with Tantie and her gossiping. She adopts the French feminist concept of an excess language. This is mainly because her Creole and performances are marked by both linguistic and physical excess, denoting empowerment of her African culture. From a French feminist viewpoint, Bennett's poetic Creole shows are characterized by their linguistic and physical excess, reflected in her use of repeated terms, mimicry, exaggerated images, physical gestures, facial expressions and farcical criticism. Unlike standard English, her Creole, representing her empowering culture, encaptures Edward Kamau Brathwaite's definition of the nation's language in *History of the Voice* (1993), in which he states that "nation language ...is the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of slaves and labourers" (260). Even her use of light-hearted mimicry shows that she is inspired both by Brathwaite's national language, and by his comment on dialect or Creole:

Dialect is the language when you want to make fun of someone. Caricature speaks in dialect. Dialect has a long history coming from the plantation where people's dignity was distorted through their languages and the descriptions which the dialect gave to them. Nation language, on the other hand, is the submerged area of that dialect [Creole] that is much more closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean. It may be in English, but often it is in English which is like a howl, or a shout, or a

machine-gun, or the wind or a wave. (Braithwate 266).

Bennett's use of dialect, or Creole which is marked by its linguistic excess, is like "a shout, or a machine-gun", defending her national language as an indicator of African cultural self-pride and identity. According to Antonio Benitez-Rojo, Bennett's work exemplifies the chaos theory which postulates that culture is encoded in repeated actions and terms (10). Thus, Bennett's manipulation of repetition encodes her Creole, African culture.

On the other hand, as a meta-dub poet, Breeze's Creole and performances are not marked by the same sense of linguistic and physical excess that we find in Bennett. Instead, Breeze is interested in complete assimilation between sound or rhythm and its related event. We find in Breeze's poems what Julia Kristeva's calls the "collective imagery", representing African culture as the "lost mother", (cited by Narain 92). This, along with her advocacy of rhythm diversity and her dramatic performances which are marked by some kind of sexual laxity, are all a reemodiment of her lost African oral culture, or mother-figure. She connects with Braithwate in his definition of poetry as being related to "the noise ... of the spoken word" through her focus on rhythm diversity (271). Braithwate asserts that "the poetry ... is based as much on sound as it is on song. That is to say, the noise that it makes is part of the meaning, and if you ignore the noise (or what you would think of as noise, ...) then you lose part of the meaning" (271). In Breeze's poetry, the female persona does not comment on the events, but leaves the reader or listener to detect the performative "noise" not only of the "spoken word" but also of the rhythm variations, related to her African culture. The poetry of both Bennett and Breeze depicts "the culture itself" in two different manners. Both Breeze and Bennett perform and write Creole poetry presenting white culture as textually empowered by the black one.

They also create what Cooper calls "polyphonic sounds" in the shift from standard English to Creole, and vice versa, thus defying the canonized white culture, and reimposing the identity of their own black culture (141). Cooper believes that Breeze's Creole is united with her apparently sexual slack body as an attempt to initiate a

### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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physical-revolution against the social customs, traditions and standards of the oppressive white culture which are imposed on blacks, especially women (141). According to Cooper, Breeze's slackness is "a metaphorical revolt" against the law and order of white culture (141).

- **Economic Exploitation and Cultural Submission in Breeze's Poems "Aid Travels With a Bomb" and "To Plant ":**

In "Cartographies of Globalization", as Sharpe points out, the early poetry of 'Binta' Breeze bears socio-political criticism attacking the economic treaty of 1978, between the Jamaican Prime minister Michael Manley and the European International Monetary Fund, as indicating the economic exploitation of Jamaica by the white culture (445). For instance, in the poem, "Aid Travels With a Bomb" published in *Answers* (1983), Breeze attacks this treatment, as it aims at making colonial profits out of her country's economy. In the following lines, Breeze points out how the Integrated Market aims at colonially "investing" in her "country's" economy in order to make a great economic "profit", leaving the Jamaican culture completely destructed, merely "upholding a racket":

They want to invest  
But your country don't get  
When it come to the test  
Dem gone home wid all de profit  
Your government left  
Upholding a racket  
(Breeze 14).

Breeze points out that part of the black culture's submission is consenting to the burial of nuclear waste in her country's land. The use of the third person pronoun, "your", initiates a dramatic monologue as the female persona addresses her nation and those in authority, asking them to reject this treaty which allows their economy to be exploited and their culture to be demeaned. Hence, the significance of the poem's title, asserting that this treaty does not lead to economic cooperation, but acts as a "bomb" devastating the national economy.

### **Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

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Similarly, in the poem, "To Plant", published in *Answers* (1983), Breeze attacks this treaty's economic manipulation of her country's economy. In other words, procedures of the European International Monetary Fund do not support her own country or culture's economy, but export her country's national economic sources and crops, leaving her nation to face starvation and an economic crisis. This treaty of the International Monetary Fund is behind the deterioration of Jamaican economy, which has lost its status in the world market, and has also led to "food" shortage, and to the increasing "prices" which are metaphorically "getting steeper" (Breeze 8). Finally, her culture or "lan space" is turned into a heap of "waste" (Breeze 8). This is figuratively indicated in the following lines :

An<sup>3</sup> de food is growing scarce  
De prices getting steeper  
De lan space jus kean waste  
(Breeze 8).

- **Breeze's "Ordinary Mawning":**

The poem, "Ordinary Mawning" published in *Riddym Ravings* (1988), relates the personal story of a woman to the international, socio-political arena and to the economic status of both South Africa and Jamaica. Affected by black feminism, and writing in the manner of domestic dub poetry (one of Breeze's main concerns since the 1980s), Breeze equates between the inescapable household duties of a bourgeois woman, the international political plight of the Palestinians whom she daily hears on the radio, and the economic crisis in South Africa. The situation of the black woman and her acceptance of the state of her daily household chores, exposes the socio-political and economic oppression of South-Africa, or the black culture, by the white one as represented by the International Monetary Fund. These lines taken from the poem are figuratively significant:

de<sup>4</sup> sun did a shine same way  
an a cool breeze  
jus a brush een aff de sea  
and de mawning news  
was jus de same as ever

two shot dead  
truck lick one  
Israel  
still a bruck up  
Palestine  
And South Africa still have de whole world han  
twist back a dem  
no  
it wasn't no duppy frighten mi  
mek mi jump outa mi sleep  
eena bad mood  
nor no neighbor bring first  
quarrel  
to mi door  
wasn't de price rise upon bus fare an milk an  
sugar  
was jus anadda  
same way mawning  
anadda clean up de mess  
after dem lef mawning  
(Breeze 49).

The feminine subjective account of the woman's daily chores, is concerned with the economic crisis in South Africa as well as with the dilemma of unemployment as in Jamaica, turning the struggles of Jamaicans into a daily chore. Hence, the significance of the metaphor in "de sun" which "did a shine same way an a cool breeze" (Breeze 49). "Duppy" could be a personification of her dead black culture. It also personifies the treaty of International Monetary Fund, picturing it as one of the OBEAH practitioners who practise a spell upon their victim (or the black culture and its economic sources), removing its power. The personal details in the life of the woman (her daily routine of "quarrell[ing]" with her "neighbor" to "clean up de mess") are interwoven with the economic crisis (Breeze 49). This economic crisis is metaphorically reflected in the raising of "de price" of "bus fare an milk an sugar", hinting at the economic exploitation of the woman's country, and the submission of her black culture (Breeze 49). The account of the woman's story stresses that her country's economy has

deteriorated, and that her culture has been submitted by the white culture's procedures and treaties. Finally, the repeated "mawning", or mourning of the woman, indicates not only white culture's colonial exploitation of her black culture, but also the enslavement of the bourgeois unemployed Jamaicans whose country's economic sources serve the interests of that Western culture. Thus, the treaty signed with the International Monetary Fund is a byproduct of the Jamaican multicultural atmosphere, metaphorically leading both to an economic "lick" or an exploitative stroke of Jamaica, and to a state of culture-submission (Breeze 49).

- **Dramatic Monologue and Textual Structure of Breeze's "Ordinary Mawning":**

In "Ordinary Mawning", Breeze employs the technique of dramatic monologue to figure out the oppressed status of a black female mother on the one hand, and the whole black culture on the other hand. As Cornelia Grabner has pointed out, the dramatic monologue is structured in a one angle of address, as the female persona takes the role of the speaker who presents both her personal plight and that of her nation, and receives no answer (190,194). She is also the addressee, her Jamaican nation that should detect its economic and cultural subjugated status under the manipulating white culture. According to F. Grabner, Breeze as a meta-dub poet who performs her poems on the stage, depicts the role of the narrator-persona or the black mother who indulges in a dialogue with her own self, instead of directly addressing her audience, as in dub political poems (191). However, she is self-divided between her own personality and that of the narrative persona. By setting the poem to a musical background of blues, she not only reflects the repetitive, daily-routine life of a black mother, but also symbolically foreshadows the motif of the poem, namely the economic manipulation and racial subjugation, as well as postcolonial enslavement of Jamaicans, as conveyed by the burdens that face the unemployed mother. The poem is marked by its systematic utterance of words, or an enunciatively poetic style, encouraging the audience to take part in the dramatic monologue. This style envisions the existence of a mob even in the written version of the poem. This view is supported by Michael Warner in *Publics and*



### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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*Counterpublics*, in which he states that "a public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself. It exists *by virtue of being addressed*" (50). The performative discourse of the poem is formed by the interests of the Jamaican public, addressed by the female persona invoking detection of the main dilemma raised in the poem. In the manner of domestic dub poetry, the poem reveals socio-economic oppression as one of the consequences of multiculturalism. The burdens that face a black mother are the same as those of a whole nation.

### **Body and Rhythm in Cultural-Resistance and a Black Culture's Memory:**

Being culturally lost as a black slave, the body acts both as an embodiment of a culture's memory, and as a medium of revolution. While working in the farms, the slaves' rhythmical dancing performances carry out beats of a folkloric culture that enhances its presence. In *A Genealogy of Resistance*, Marlene NourbeSe Philip asserts this idea of the "bodymemory" which stands for the "African body" (91). Both the act of dancing and the decision to stand still in disobedience to the white master's orders, initiate a cultural revolution. This was obvious in 1792, in the incident of Isacc Cruikshank, a black slave, who was exposed to severe torture because of his insistence not to be a means of amusement. Hence, the slave's body, rhythm and dance act as aspects of their black culture's memory and history. The revolutionary aspect is enhanced by the rhythmic beating of drums. In *The Black Atlantic*, Paul Gilroy points out that in Caribbean poetry, drumming beats "animate the basic desire-- to be free and to be oneself-- that are revealed in this [black] counterculture's unique conjunction of body and music" (76). In the face of a white, colonial culture which seeks to brainwash the memory of black culture in the minds of Africans, folkloric rhythms and dancing beats reawaken this lost culture. Breeze's poems, "Riddym Ravings" and "Riding on de Riddym", are examples of the use of rhythm to indicate a culture's memory, and also as a means of resisting cultural oppression.

- **Rhythm, Memory and Culture: Revolution in Breeze's Poem, "Soun de Abeng fi Nanny":**

The story of Nanny, a cultural idol of the Jamaican Maroons and a fighter who is said to have faced British colonizers and fought against them, is orally celebrated in the African folkloric tradition. The poem, "Soun de Abeng fi Nanny", published in *Riddym Ravings and Other Poems* (1988), directly creates a transhistorical link between the past history of British colonialism and the present neocolonial period in the life of blacks in the Caribbean homeland, and in foreign societies. The use of polyphonic sounds, mento rhythm, and Breeze's body performance of the poem enact memory of black culture, and the transhistorical struggle of Nanny, physically manipulating her buttocks to counter-attack the gun shoots of British colonizers. The account of Nanny's struggle helps the reader or listener to realize that the past colonial history of blacks does not differ from their present neo-colonial life in a supposedly multicultural society. Therefore, the call for revolution against colonial multiculturalism is essential. The use of polyphonic rhythms to be assimilated with natural elements and to help Nancy of the Maroons to disguise herself from British colonizers, initiate techniques and tactics of culture resistance. The following lines are significant:

Nanny siddung pon a rack  
a plan a new attack  
puffin pon a red clay pipe  
an de cricket an de treefrog  
crackle telegram  
an she wet er battam lip fi decode  
wid de fervour of freedom  
dat stap de ceaseless itching  
of de sugar cane  
we sey wi nah tun back  
we a bus a new track  
dutty tough  
but is enuff  
fi a bite  
fi wi fight

an ebery shake of a leaf  
mek dem quiver  
mek dem shiver  
fa dem lose dem night sight  
an de daylight too bright  
an we movin like de creatures  
of de wile  
so mek wi soun de abeng  
fi Nanny  
(Breeze 45).<sup>5</sup>

Throughout the poem, the use of mento rhythm and polyphonic natural sounds, as in "Nanny siddung pon a rack / a plan a new attack", " de cricket an de treefrog crackle telegram / de ceaseless itching of de sugar cane" and "ebery shake of a leaf", verbalize Nanny's national resistance against colonialism, and also manifest a national spirit against the neocolonial image of multiculturalism (Breeze 45). The role of rhythm, as symbolizing black culture's memory, is evoked by the choice of "abeng" or the cow's horn in the title of the poem. On the surface level of meaning, the "abeng" is a transhistorical reference to the slave masters who used to call the slaves to work by using an "abeng" (Breeze 45). On the symbolic level of meaning, the rhythmic beating of the "abeng" or the cow's horn stands for an expected revolution (Breeze 45). Throughout the poem, the use of mento rhythm creates a dramatic monologue addressed by Breeze to the black colonial culture of the past. It also creates another monologue between her and Jamaicans whose culture has been stolen under the guise of multiculturalism.

• **Migration and Identity Formation in Breeze's "Testament":**

Breeze's "Testament", published in *Spring Cleaning* (1982), is in three segments, each consisting of eleven stanzas. As Renate Papke has remarked, the lines depict racial dilemmas related to three female members belonging to the same family: a mother, a daughter and a grandmother (146). Each part of the poem is separated by the refrain "sing girl sing / dere's more to you /dan skin", pointing to the main

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

---

motif of racial identity-formation in the white society (Breeze 7). As a member of an ethnic minority living in the British diaspora, the mother attempts to reroot the identity of her children within African cultural norms. In the first part, she introduces racial dilemmas of oppression by giving a detailed description of her physical weaknesses and frailty, partly because of her old age, but mainly as a result of working in mean jobs such as "cleaning corners where brush an dustpan couldn' reach some han" (Breeze 7). Though this mother is looked down upon as a negro who should undertake mean, humble jobs, she has a sense of self-pride, asserted in the metaphorical image of "dustpan/ use[d] to plait yuh hair wid pride" (Breeze 7). This oppressive dehumanization has caused the female persona to become an old woman whose "fingers witlow ", "eye turn weh " and the "cole does bad tings to [her] knee " but also to acquire wisdom as a trustworthy person who should bring up her daughter in association with their African culture (Breeze 7,11) :

sing <sup>6</sup>girl  
sing  
dere's more to you  
dan skin  
my fingers witlow  
from years of cleaning corners  
where brush an dustpan  
could'n reach  
same han  
use to plait yuh hair  
wid pride  
ah see yuh eye turn weh  
anytime yuh see mi han  
an at my age  
an de cole does bad tings  
to mi knee  
(Breeze 7,11).

The poem brings together details of motherhood and socio-cultural domains, figuring out race-struggle between black and white cultures as an issue that should not be related to the physical characteristics of

### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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blacks. The nursery-rhyming technique is reflected in the rhythmic refrain "sing girl sing /dere's more to you dan skin" which encapsulates the main motif of a racial-cultural conflict (Breeze 7,11). However, the poem also points to a clash between the adolescent daughter who wants to be acculturated to the western norms, rejecting the oppressed life of her parents as a matter of stupidity, and the mother who takes pride in her African roots. The poem succeeds in depicting the daughter's fears of being socially unacceptable in the view of her "frens" or friends who should racially despise her because of her humble, social conditions (Breeze 7, 11). She is "embarrass[ed]" to bring her "frens home" because of her father's work in "de London trains" and his working clothes which are filled up with an "oil smell "(Breeze 7, 11):

ah can feel it  
now yug gettin older  
steppin pas my likkle learning  
dat yuh tink ah stupid  
ah see how yuh fadda  
embarrass yuh frens  
wid im smell a oil  
from de London trains  
so yuh now stop bringing dem home  
(Breeze 7,11).

The daughter even resents her mother's Creole language, and therefore, avoids indulging with her in a conversation "outside" their "house" (Breeze 7,11). Embodying the white, racist viewpoint, the daughter refuses to speak in her mother's Creole language, pretending "never" to "have time" (Breeze 7,11). This is mainly because Creole is socially rebuffed as an unofficial language (Breeze7,11):

ah don't talk to yuh much no more  
outside de house  
ah never did have time  
to soun de soun  
a de madda tongue  
(Breeze 7,11).

In a supposedly multicultural society, racial indifference generates a

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

---

sense of shame in the viewpoint of the girl who sides with the white mainstream. The mother goes on to relate her nostalgia for "memories of" her homeland, asserting her citizenship rights on British soil (Breeze 7,11). She assures her daughter that they should be regarded as citizens equal to the whites, mainly because she bled while giving birth to her daughter "in de shadow [of] Big Ben" (Breeze 7,11) :

we memories of black home  
we is jus wat we is  
watching you grow  
into dis place  
an ah want yuh to know  
dis is yuh own  
we done bleed fi it  
yuh born here  
in de shadow a Big Ben  
(Breeze 7,11).

Metaphorically, after "years of" spiritual bleeding, undertaking mean jobs, "feeling de damp "and watching her girl growing as a "seed" planted in this "new [British] groun", they should be regarded as equal in citizenship rights to whites (Breeze 7,11):

wid years of breaking bark  
feeling de damp  
yuh is seed  
burstin new groun  
(Breeze 7,11).

Throughout the poem, the refrain forms the concluding lines of each part, hinting to the transhistorical destiny of blacks who have been racially segregated and dehumanized, partly because of their physical characteristics or "skin" colour, but mainly because of their being regarded as members of ethnic minorities :

so sing girl  
sing  
dere's more to you  
dan skin

**Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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(Breeze 7,11).

The mother, embodying black culture, has acquired a sense of indifference both to the Anglo-Saxon society, and to her daughter who resents their African roots. Because of her daughter's attitude, the mother has lost faith in her African culture in which her daughter is no longer interested. The mother assures her daughter that she does not want her to "feel sorry" as a member of an ethnic minority who is socially excluded (Breeze 7, 11). The daughter, representing the Anglo-Saxon multicultural viewpoint, should accept the other, or her mother who stands for the black race, and who "come as far as" they "can" as part of the atmosphere of cultural diversity (Breeze 7, 11) :

ah nat trying to mek yuh feel sorry  
believe me  
ah just want yuh to understand  
dat we come as far as we can  
(Breeze 7,11).

Despite the negative vision and demeaning of the mother's black culture, she has a sense of "honour" and pride not only in her personality but also in her cultural roots (Breeze 7,11). The mother draws her daughter's attention to the idea that she should not resent her, simply because she has "to scrub de bath" and fix up "de cooker" (Breeze 7,11). Since both her domestic and working domains are the same, the daughter or the white culture should not look down on her African culture and her mean working career. Hence, the significance of the following lines:

every thought is a prayer  
dat de pot won't bwoil over  
while ah pull myself upstairs  
to scrub de bath  
dat de cooker  
won't start play up  
an de smell a gas  
come leaking troo  
dat something teacha sey  
would register  
to de honour a yuh work

(Breeze 7,11).

At the end of the second segment, the refrain introduces the figure of Nana, or Nancy of the Maroons, the African grandmother who has spent her life in fighting against British colonial enslavement of blacks and manipulation of power. The "long hard" journey of the mother is compared to that of "granmadda Nana" (Breeze 7,11). Similarly, as Nana has spent her life "fighting" for the liberation of her African homeland, and digging a "corn" symbolizing struggle and resistance in her "piece" of land, the mother who mixes "corn" with the "flour" asserts her citizenship rights in this British "lan" or land (Breeze 7,11). The pun on the noun "corn", the image of "we done pay de dues" or taxes and the metaphor of the daughter whose "navel string" is "cut" on British soil, assert the citizenship rights of blacks (Breeze 7,11). The third segment of the poem ends with the rhymed refrain as a part of the nursery rhyming technique, to lull or compensate the daughter who should resign to the transhistorical facts, indicating suffering of blacks both in the past as represented by the character of "Nana" and in the present by the image of the mother (Breeze 7,11). Indeed, the daughter should be proud of her mother's life, modeled on the career of "Nana". These ideas are metaphorically portrayed in the concluding lines:

yuh granmadda  
was Nana  
mountain strong  
fighting pon er piece a lan  
she plant er corn  
one one  
two two  
a likkle pool a dirt  
between hard cockpit stone  
reap big ears  
er grata was sharp  
use to talk dry corn  
to flour  
needed for de trail  
de long hard journey  
carving out somewhere



jus like we come here  
we done pay de dues  
but don't tink nobody  
owe yuh nutten  
jus stan yuh groun  
is juh born lan  
yuh navel string cut yah  
so sing girl sing  
dere's more to you  
dan skin  
(Breeze 7,11).

The poem tackles the motif of race, culture-struggle and identity-formation in the Anglo-Saxon multicultural society, as portrayed in the family-life of a mother and her daughter. The personal and the domestic domains of a family's racial dilemma of identity-formation reflects the socio-cultural situation of blacks in the cosmic one, living as racially oppressed in the diasporic life. Thus, Breeze's domestic meta-dub poetry addresses socio-cultural, political and economic oppression of the black ethnic minority.

- **Breeze's Intergenerational Trauma, and Memory/ Rhythm in *the Fifth Figure* (2006):**

According to E. A Kaplan, hybrid duality of cultural identity, the transnational memory of the lost African culture (or the<sup>7</sup> *Terra Incognita*), and racial suppression of one's cultural norms are the main issues forming trauma culture as a concept that basically results from the diasporic experience of immigration. Hall agrees with Kaplan that both trauma culture and the experience of intergenerational or transgenerational trauma, are formed by the duality of cultural identity or diasporic cultural hybridity (435,438). He points out that " heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference"(435-438). Kaplan and Manolachi add that the experience of transgenerational trauma is caused by the sense of cultural and ethnic-racial indifference

(3, 4). In this viewpoint, the traumatic experiences that are related to cultural-indifference are unresolved as portrayed in the poetic works of Caribbean poets.

The concept of culture trauma is conveyed through the intergenerational experience of a cultural indifference that is shared between five generations of the same family in Breeze's *The Fifth Figure* (2006). Breeze's manipulation of Creole, her depiction of the dynamic diversity of Afro-Caribbean rhythms, daily life activities of black mothers and social gatherings at funerals and birth-celebrations, constitute the main bulk of her domestic dub poetry. They are all framed within the transgenerational trauma of cultural-loss, shared in the memory of her race.

In *The Fifth Figure*, intergenerational trauma shared between five generations of the same African-British family is caused by the cultural diversity of their ethnic roots and the multicultural atmosphere which leads to racial suppression. Throughout this prose poetic volume, Breeze uses the concept of trauma culture by focusing on the oral nature of her culture as implied in rhythms of the quadrille dance, started by the head of the family or the early grandmother in the nineteenth century, and is shared by later granddaughters symbolizing their life-journey in an intergenerational trauma of cultural hybridity. Socio-economic and ethnic-racial oppression, depicted in the course of life-details of each granddaughter, constitute an accumulated intergenerational traumatic experience. The narrative persona depicts an intergenerational trauma of her homeland culture's decline, reflected in the choice of imagery, such as that of the dead baby's ghost walking aimlessly and going astray in the forest. This confusing image symbolizes the concept of trauma culture referring to the spiritual death of the persona's culture, a sense of cultural indifference and identity-loss. Finally, causes leading to the traumatic experience include nostalgia for homeland, severed family relationships, lost cultural norms, and memory of culture. These are consciously depicted in Breeze's poems, "Testament" and "Ridding on de Riddym" (8).

There are also other issues related to nationality, existence and aloneness in the white culture, as well as hybrid cultural duality. Self-

### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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endorsement of one's homeland, cultural identity, and racial resistance of, or counter-attack against, the process of acculturation are causes of traumatic experience. Cultural hybrid identity, or duality of cultural identity, is a diasporic, transgenerational trauma shared between members of the same diaspora and reflected in their collective memory of the trauma culture in the midst of the new, foreign culture.

*The Fifth Figure*, as a book, is written in the form of a mento rhythmic quadrille, or oral prose, poetic style of writing based on the female voice of each woman persona or protagonist, shifting between presence and absence. It is a narrative volume of verse which centers around the enforcement of post-colonial culture on the life of five generations of Jamaican family. It is a collection of family diaries in the nineteenth century tracing the life of Jamaican women farmers. Bamboo and sticks are the main Jamaican musical tools used by Breeze to add a "fifth figure" to the quadrille dance, adapting it to the mento rhythms. The prose-poetic style of writing the book's chapters is characterized by memory-retrospection in the life of each persona. This process helps Sarah, the fifth persona, to initiate a dramatic monologue about her dilemma of identity-quest. Both British colonization of Jamaica and multiculturalism promote racial oppression. Transhistorically, the life of her Jamaican grandmothers whose black culture was colonially demeaned, is similar to her own life as a visible minority migrant whose culture has been uprooted in a foreign society. The insertion of Creole and of Jamaican folk songs throughout the prose poetic chapters of the book, imply that in spite of Sarah's (or Breeze's) cultural, hybrid identity as a migrant, her true personality is rooted in her black, Jamaican culture. The narrative persona refers to the idea of religious discrimination. This is indicated in the choice of the "white" colour-symbolism in "Sunday was Christian /and white as the snow" referring to the "white" culture which celebrates "Sunday" as an official religious holiday (Breeze 65). On the other hand, black Muslims and Jews cannot celebrate their religious days, "Friday" and "Saturday", as part of an ethnic, religious oppression. Symbolically, there is a transnational nostalgia in the choice of the "mento yard" standing for the African oral culture (Breeze 65). It acts as the lost mother in the view of Kristeva lulling the narrative persona to be rooted in the family "yard", gathering the

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

---

five generations together (Breeze 65). The following lines are significant:

I was tempted  
by the music playing outside  
I couldn't resist mento yard  
...  
So Sunday was Christian  
And white as the snow  
Friday and Saturday were sin  
(Breeze 65).

The metaphorical choice of "mento music" is part of the association of ideas, and is framed within the stream of consciousness technique, uniting the dilemma of being racially suppressed that faced the early grandmothers, with the state of the last female figure, Sarah, or Breeze herself (Breeze 65). Both Sarah as a migrant, and her family, suffer from the enforcement of the European, post-colonial culture on their Jamaican roots. These feelings are conveyed through the focus on colour-symbolism which dominates the grandmother's dramatic monologue. Throughout the poem, rhyming and dancing beats foreground the subjective feelings of the female protagonists in a narrative style. The use of flash-back spiritually unites the life of five generations, drawing a portrait of their shared plight of being ethnically lost under the multicultural policy. The great grandmother's dramatic monologue is marked by a colour-grade symbolism which stands for her identity-quest, and her state of being culturally lost as a migrant, robbed of her culture:

I was eaten up by green.  
Lush green like it was burning  
where it flowered into red  
and the shocking nature of the scenery  
left me feeling quite numb.  
I, so overwhelmed by colour,  
Felt completely naked in the sun.  
(Breeze 69).

Metaphorically, the "green scenery" stands for the seeds of her black culture generating her soul, as she wishes to "be eaten" by it (Breeze

### Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry

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69). This "green scenery" or seed, which can stand for the persona's soul, acquires a reddish colour that is shattered in the multicultural society. Consequently, she becomes totally "naked" in the "sun" as she has lost her cultural identity and is victimized by the mainstream of cultural diversity, that implied by the colour mixture which succumbs her (Breeze 69). All five female personas have hybrid identities, torn between their Black Nationalism and enforced colonial culture. Sarah, the fifth figure, retrospectively contemplates the life of one of her early grandmothers, Susu, who represents the Jamaican countryside culture in the following lines:

I walk home quick  
As soon as the school bell ring  
But a group of boys from the common  
Now following me all the way  
They shout at me  
They pull my hair  
They throw my books in the bush  
One day as I reach the gate  
I pick up a stone and fling  
Just like I use to fling in Hillside  
Fling pon the mango tree  
(Breeze 69).

Susu struggles to preserve her cultural identity, using a "stone" just as her grandmother, Nancy of the Maroons, who used to "fling" British colonizers and fight them (Breeze 69). There is a pun on her union with the "mango tree" as it can stand for her unity with her African culture and soil, though she is forced to abide by white cultural norms (Breeze 69). At the same time, Sarah tries to regain her lost cultural roots, though she is accustomed to the hybrid dualities of her identity. The "mango" image exposes the fake nature of cultural diversity as a concept (Breeze 69).

- **Memory, and Trauma in Breeze's "Riding on de Riddym":**

"Riding on de Riddym" (1996), (recorded in a cassette, released by *57 Productions*) is centered on the idea of a relationship between

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

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rhythm diversity and culture's memory in the diasporic community. Diverse African rhythms reflect a state of culture trauma felt by the female persona who lives in a white society that depreciates her own cultural identity. The following lines are figurative:

the muse now say she comin live  
she didn't like how her influence get prioritize  
wid de five percent ah like demself and  
aestheticize  
an de majority doan even realize  
dat is dem retain de culture dat keep har alive  
[...]  
so she jump off ah de page  
jump up pon de stage  
mongst de dejay, dance hall,  
de jazz, de blues, de graze

The poetic "muse", embedded in the beats of rhythms, help the female persona to be "comin live". In other words, diverse African rhythms of "jazz" and blues that stem from the African culture of the "dance hall", not only preserve the memory of Jamaican culture now lost, but also recapture the female persona's well-being and cultural identity. Loss of native, African culture in the mainstream white society is a transgenerational trauma felt by Jamaicans in the African diasporic communities. The female persona yearns to "retain de culture /dat keep har alive ". By celebrating beats of African rhythms, the female persona regains or "retain[s]" oral, folkloric "culture" that is racially oppressed figuring out an image of a trauma culture. Collective memory of African culture, shared between the female persona and her Jamaican race, is "ridding on de riddym a wi time". Cultural repression depicts a dilemma of a culture trauma felt by the female persona whose "cap couldn't fit". The French language cannot culturally express the female persona's cultural ideology. By "riding on de riddym a wi time" or by focusing on "riddym" of African Creole, the female persona rescues herself from cultural loss in the midst of cultural diversity. The poem's internal rhythm generated in the refrain, and the focus on "riddym" as a depiction of African culture, help to revive cultural identity, and also to relate members of

### **Jean 'Binta' Breeze : Multiculturalism and Meta-Dub Poetry**

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the black diaspora to their own homeland. Hence, the significance of the following refrain:

riding on de riddym a wi time  
sortin out de questions on wi mind  
weder wi hustlin on street corna or white collared  
in de corridor  
wi own images wi seeking to define.

As depicted in the refrain, rhythm which generates memory of African culture, is the medium by which members of the black diaspora "define" their "own images", or construct their lost cultural norms. The metaphorical images in "wi hustlin on street corna" and "white collared in de corridor" are indicative of social marginalization and cultural-ethnic oppression reminiscent of black slavery. "White collared" or "collared swift" is defined as "the broad white band around the neck" symbolizing black cultural identity-repression and enslavement caused by the white culture (Cassidy and Le Page 115). This cultural repression constitutes the transgenerational trauma of identity crisis in the white society. Rhythm that is allied with Creole, the language of black social gatherings, is reminiscent of the racial and cultural collective memory of African diaspora-members. Both diverse African rhythms and "riddym" of Creole fill the void gap of African cultural existence, or "de questions" related to the female persona's sense of a cultural void by creating an analogy with the oral, folkloric, African tradition. Rhythm revives the memory of lost African culture, conveying a homeland picture of diaspora-members. It also reroots Jamaicans within their lost culture. The mixing of syllables, as in "doan" (i.e. doing) revives an image of Creole culture in the mind of the female persona who suffers from culture-trauma.

#### **To sum up:**

As a meta-dub poet, Breeze does not stick to the dub poetic structure and formalities which restrict her female identity. Instead of relying only on reggae rhythm, her poetry is marked by a dynamic diversity of rhythms which vary between mento, blues, quadrille, gospel and other rhythms which change to suit her personal, subjective mode of writing, while dealing with socio-political, economic and

**Neveen Diaa El Deen Hassan**

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racial dilemmas. Unlike the political revolutionary tone of her earlier poems, Breeze's later meta-dub poetry does not directly address cultural or economic issues in a political tone. This is exemplified in her domestic dub poetry. As a meta-dub poet, she is interested in conveying the negative consequences of national, multicultural, Jamaican policy on her race through dealing with a personal, subjective story of a black woman or a group of women. Furthermore, instead of giving conclusions or inserting direct comments, Breeze's poetry helps the reader/audience to detect the fake, illusory nature of multiculturalism as a policy that simply leads to the economic exploitation of Jamaica. This is indicated in attacking the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as white organizations which do not offer an economic, co-operative support for the Jamaican nation. Breeze's meta-dub and domestic dub poetry offers a personal, feminine, comprehensive viewpoint of the racial dilemma of Jamaicans who either live in postcolonial Jamaica or in diasporic, foreign countries. Breeze is a migrant, spending her life between Jamaica and Britain. Her meta-dub poetry which tackles the negative consequences of the so-called "multicultural" policy has acquired a worldwide reputation.



## Endnote

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\* This is a chapter in a Ph.D dissertation entitled "Multiculturalism in the Poetry of Lillian Allen, Louise Bennett, Jean 'Binta' Breeze and Marlene Nourbese Philip" under the supervision of Prof. Mary May Massoud & Prof. Samira Basta. The dissertation is not finished yet; it is still in progress

<sup>1</sup> According to Jenny Sharpe, dancehall culture originally referred to the transmission of black rhythms throughout Jamaican cities. In the 1980s; the dancehall reggae culture was famous in America and Britain (446).

<sup>2</sup> According to *D J E*, Fus-Fus : " adjective dialect. First, the very first " (192);

Kar or Karakara: "adjective and substantive dialect. Something rough or rocky "(257);

Kuda or Kudae and Ku: " interjection dialect; probably reduced < come, which is often pronounced in dialect "(266);

Ongle : " see precke ; next " (362);

Tap: "see stop, interjection. An exclamation of surprise, puzzlement, or the like: Hold on a minute! "(425) ;

Siddung : " verb phrase dialect. Common spelling among dialect writers to represent /sidong / pronunciation of sit down " ( 408);

Tun : " see ton- ton substantive dialect ; i. e turn, indicating repeated action "(448);

Roas or roast plantain: "verb phrase. To prepare to benefit by someone's downfall; by implication, to plot or scheme to bring this about "(383);

Ai: "see Aye, eye "(6);

Halla out: dialect spelling of holla "(218);

Yah:" particle dialect; < (you) hear?. Dialect spelling yah, yaw. "(483);

Nuh: "see no" (324).

<sup>3</sup> According to *D J E* , Kean: "see can't "(258).

Racket or rack tone: "see rock –stone "(372).

<sup>4</sup> According to *D J E*, Lick: " substantive and verb; A. Substantive: I. A stroke, a blow. B. verb: I. To hit, strike, beat " (273);

Truck or trick: " adjective dialect; for tricky. Tricky, trickify " (450);

Eena or iina, Ina and iin: " preposition dialect; spelt in a, een; eena. A common variant of inn: in, to, into "(234);

Bruck up or broke up: " verb phrase dialect; < Broke, break-up. G "(72);

Aff : " see off " (1) ;

Duppy : " 1774 duppie, 1868 duppe : compare Bub dupe, ghost. 1. The spirit of the dead, believed to be capable of returning to aid or (more often) harm living beings, directly or indirectly ; they are also believed subject to

the power of OBEAH and its practitioners who can 'set' or 'put' a duppy upon a victim and 'take off' their influence. 2. Personified as Brother Duppy in Anancy Stories "(164);

Mess –mess, messy –messy: " adjective dialect; < mess substantive and messy adjective; compare adjective. Sloppy, wet, muddy " (300).

<sup>5</sup> According to *D J E* , Abeng: "substantive dialect; a cow's horn used as a musical instrument and for signaling, especially among the Maroons" (2);

Fi or fo: " possessive particle dialect; in dialect writing usually spelt fe, for, < for preceding a pronoun, or a person's name or identifying phrase, and closely joined to it. Belonging to "(176);

Siddung or sidun : "verb phrase dialect. Common spelling among dialect writers to represent pronunciation of sit down " (408);

Rack or rake: "substantive dialect slang; rake-off. A 'hunch ', an intuitive notion or impulse. A tricky device; a misleading answer that hides the truth of a situation "(373);

Cricket: " lizard, named from some association with the cricket" (130);

Crackle or cracker (cane): " substantive dialect. A popular name for a variety of sugar – cane, because it cracks easily "(128);

Nah or na : " conjunction dialect ; < Scots na, nor, than. With the comparative degree : than. With the positive degree as "(314);

Bus: "interjection and substantive generally; echoic. A sounds imitating the effect of something falling with" (83);

Fi : " / fi, fo / preposition dialect ; for " (176);

Wi : " see we, with, will " ( 473 ) ;

Wile: " verb dialect; rare. To trick, befool "(478).

<sup>6</sup> According to *D J E* , Weh : "see 'way. Adverb dialect ; aphetic form of away, very commonly used "(466);

Yuh: "dialect spelling for /yu/ you "(489);

Likl or likkle : " adverb dialect. Little by little, bit by bit, in small quantities "(275);

Teacha or tache : " substantive obsolete ; compare OED. Unrecorded spellings :1788-90 teach ; 1803 teache, taitch (433);

Cockpit : "substantive, also attributive. 1. A valley, often 500 deep, with very steep sides usually heavily wooded and difficult of access- the characteristic terrain in South –western Trelawny and South –eastern St James. 2. In a sugar –mill house :the area in which the mill is placed, circular and below the main level "(111);

Grata, gratteau, gratto, grato or gato : "1. A name applied to various kinds of cake, bread or biscuit "(1950).

In “Strategies of Sharing Trauma”, Monica Manolachi points out the *Terra Incognita* is an ancient name that stands for the dimness or darkness of Africa as a continent (2).

<sup>7</sup> In “Strategies of Sharing Trauma”, Monica Manolachi points out the *Terra Incognita* is an ancient name that stands for the dimness or darkness of Africa as a continent (2).

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