

Abstract

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Daughters of the nation: Confronting gender complexities and celebrating Caribbean girlhood in Jean 'Binta' Breeze's *Third World Girl: Selected Poems*.

Caribbean poetry for children and adolescents in Caribbean and diasporic regions plays a significant role in helping to engage children with powerful representations of themselves and their experiences through narratives and images. Known as one of the leading Caribbean female dub poets in Caribbean Poetry, Jean 'Binta' Breeze has lived both in Jamaica and the United Kingdom and as a result has been able to produce 'riddim ravings' which articulate the marginal realities of the Caribbean black female child who has been constructed through, and has to respond to, third world realities which include slavery, colonialism and globalization. Through the stylistic features of dub poetry, Breeze articulates the power of this genre to provide deep levels of engagement with political and gender discourses framing the identity of the black female child and constructing the experience of girlhood, both in local and diasporic spaces. She highlights the female child's negotiation with oppressive and destructive physical, social and psychological realities which span not simply the historically and politically marginal space the third world has occupied globally, but also the marginal spaces present within the third world space itself, where the black, female child embodies multiple experiences of 'otherness', her innocence tainted by colonial and patriarchal silences and erasures. The beauty of Breeze's *Third World Girl* lies in the way she intertwines these harsh realities with a collection of poetic narratives that celebrate the identity and sexuality of Caribbean black girls across the world.