Creating the roadmap of Elder Voice lineage is a
dynamic process. There are no ‘just’ prescriptions for
doing so, for this roadmap is in the doing and the har-
vesting of the doing is cumulative.

Elder Voice Lineage, by its very name, rejects the fool-
ishness of starting anew. It presents its inheritors with a
task — that being, to receive their inheritance. Having
received it, what will they do with it? To whom do they
deliver it? On whose behalf do they receive it and what are
the accompanying responsibilities?

Put simply, the basis of ‘voice’ inheritance means that the
whole is the basis of the people’s ‘Story’, their ‘voice’,
their worldview. Their perpetuation as a people is
dependent on the wholesomeness of The Story being passed on
and being received.

It is this very wholesomeness that James claims to look for
and attempt to rescue from among the work of
Caribbean artists. In an interview recalling of
Caribbean society, that wholesomeness lends ‘The Story’
authenticity. James points that the work of Caribbean
writers will show the difference between wholesomeness
(authenticity) and the fractured self. He is confident that
wholesomeness will come to be given more ‘voice’ in the liter-
cature from the area. He shows that the involvement
of British hegemony created the danger of losing the real
self as it became submerged in favours of what he calls
‘the code’ of British culture.

It is important and ironic to note that even as he
makes a case for wholesomeness and authenticity, James pre-
sents a fractured view of the very people he seeks to res-
cue. He excludes from his discussion the ‘voice’
of women and the ‘voice’ of Caribbean people of East
Indian descent. Even though he does discuss the work of
two East Indian novelists, he does so without examining
whether or not the fact that these two writers are East
Indians has anything to do with their ability to find
their authentic voice. The question of authenticity then
requires further clarification for whole voices.

The exclusion of women from James’s discussion on
authenticity is as curious as the exclusion of East
Indians, for women are the overwhelming majority in
Caribbean populations. In Trinidad, East Indians make
up just under fifty percent of the population and in
Guyana, just over fifty percent of the population.

It is interesting to note too, that there were at least
two women authors who had wide popular support at
the time that James presented his discussion of The
Mighty Sparrow. James can only be described as a prod-
cut of his time. For his particular situation meant the
exclusion of women’s voices. To be too him, it
should be remembered that he operated in the
Caribbean particular, within the political vision of the
united forces of East Indians and African workers.

James shows, in an autobiographical work using
writing as a metaphor for the incarceration of hegemony,
that his upbringing was identical to that of an English
boy’s, with the added dimension of African Caribbean
culture. Young James makes a choice to adopt the
British code, sublimating his African-Caribbeanness
along the way. He writes retrospectively about his
socialization and its juxtaposition with his authentic
voice, stating that the things he did not notice and took
for granted were “… the racist British middle class, Puritanism inane, of the middle
of the nineteenth century.” He points out that juxtaposed to this British
Puritanism is the Caribbean creole culture which mani-
fests behaviour that is quite the opposite of the imposed
culture.

Wholesomeness clearly demands the inclusion of women
writers in this discussion of authenticity. I will examine
whether or not their work manifests the authenticity that
James searches for so diligently in the work of male writ-
ers and male colouphasons.

The coming West Indian novelists will show
the clash between the native tampered environment,
and this doctrine from a sternier clime. [Beyond A Boundary]

Applying the Jamaican notion of authenticity to the work
of the three Caribbean women writers opens up the dis-
cussion of ways to read James as a theorist for
Caribbean epistemology.

**Elder Man and Elder Woman in Trotman’s Fiction**

In my series of children’s stories, I look to release the
voice of the Elder men and women as a means of
sources for survival in a system of plantation slavery in
Antigua. Embodied in Mother Sillid, the Elder woman
and Papa Buggins, the Elder man. Elder Voice Lineage
is explored through the telling of The Story. Mother Sillid
beaches ways of birthing, healing, praying, planting,
growing, living, loving and learning. Creation and pro-
creation are her special areas of knowledge and she
takes great pains to impart them to the people on
the estate and to the children in particular.

Mother Sillah's knowledge of 'The Story' enables her
to help others do other than not. She knows for instance,
when the large-scale slave revolt has been betrayed
and seeks to put her knowledge into the hands of the
leaders of the children.

Finally, her pronouncement on life to a young inher-
itor of 'The Story' is:

'Is just so it is wid life childs...what you put in, you
get back out. It don matter how lowd it seem; if you
put good things out of it. Look and see how dis lead
parchick, parchick. All you put is one little seed
in dat dusty ground on you get big tree with
parchick head. Eh chile, you see how it go, you
see how de earth is plentiful?'

Mother Sillah makes sure that people understand the
connection between the spirit world and the physical
world as a 'living' connection. She cautions:

You must not be afraid of others people things.

You must not be afraid of spirits. Each person
have some of day foollings in day things chile. Only
use your own things, or if somebody you close
to offer you something, or unless somebody you care
bout dead and love you something. Den day spirit
can't yours link up between death an life an all
right, but only if it somebody you close to, who you
love an who love you. Otherwise it can have bad
link-up between death and life too.

In another story (How The Mosquito Got Its Sting),
Mother Sillah tells a story to two girls about the precious
value of freedom. She says, commenting on the mosqui-
to's desire for freedom, that 'all living creatures like to
be free, mosquito is no different'. Mother Sillah in this
story creates a real and tangible image of the African-Antiguans,
a part of whose reality includes emancipation. "All living
creatures" include the children and the entire African
population in Antigua at the time.

Mother Sillah, a teacher, taught the children about
women's power, the Elder man, Papa Buggia, spirit's
persuasion, courage, discipline, metamorphosis and
physical survival. This adequately complements the
woman's role as a companion to the boy.

Papa Buggia tells his portion of 'The Story', teaching
some of the physical tools of survival. He tells a fable to
a group of children on a sugar estate about a man who
decided to tumble down to the earth and do nothing but
lie idly all day. Soon, he lost his shine and when the
rainy season came, was washed away along with the
debits on this footpath - to the sea.

Papa Buggia seeks in his fable to give the children
hope, even those who wish to avoid the work of the
estate. For the star's underground metamorphosis and is
able to survive in the sea by becoming a fish. The
message is clear: to manage the environment in a way
that enables one's survival is to triumph over any
difficulty.

Like Mother Sillah, Papa Buggia adds to 'The Story' his
own, individual act of rebellion. He gives the children
more food than they are supposed to receive, allows
them to take long rests and nurture their spirit with
Elder love and kindness. In him, the author sees an
opportunity to make sense of the realities of the survival
of the African in the Caribbean. The image of the obes-
ous 'male slave' says "yes" to the "no" of the 'male
slave'. The old image of docility is contradicted by the
realities of survival of Spirit and consciousness of the
African.

The 'male slaves' are further received in 'The Story' by
the man who is detailed to whip Mother Sillah. He is
reluctant to do so, but recognizes the need for survival.
The author relieves him of the violence in the role.

Mother Sillah got lashes for sending the warning,
but even they put to beat her would not hit her
hand. He could not disobey the everwise or he would
have received lashes himself, but he made sure that
the old woman whom he so respected didn't suffer too
much.

MELE HODGE, MYSTICISM AND ELDER VOICE LINEAGE

By MELE HODGE

In her novel of childhood, Crick Crick Monkey, Mele
Hodge, demonstrates on Elder woman's voice working
its teaching magic in the socialization of the young. She
looks at the teachings that the Elder woman impart to
the children during food preparation. Sometimes they
use a proliferation of proverbs to pass on 'The Story' to
the children:

Who 'us
Don't get
Who don't ask
don't want
Who don't get

Who don't care.

The focalism in that proverbs was not lost on the chil-
dren. They found other proverbs and sayings more
rational and useful as life lessons:

Them that walketh in the path of
corruption will live to kick day
case.

Tea experiences a certain
duality as she
moves between the
prostitutes of the
middle class and the
vibrancy and richness
of the work-
ing class. 'The Story' straddles both socio-economic
spaces. With Ms. 'The Story' is spiritually nurturing,
yet not limited to the private realm. She can be seen
as important because of interrelations, creation and
transformation, embodiment and survival. The story,
does not indeed exist in a cultural vacuum; it is dynam-
ic and reflects the environment in which its tellers live.

JAMAICA KINCAID ON LEGEMONY AND HER
QUEST FOR AUTHENTICITY

For African novelist Jamaica Kincaid, 'The Story' was
told to her in a way that a particular child (Kincaid),
its receiver, finds oppressive when her
mother inexplicably withdraws her all-encompassing
love from the child. The complications and the tensions
between the child and the older's love for them, her
mother, are unbearable to the child. Before the break in
the bond of love between them, the child accepted the pro-
scriptions for life which she inherits. For example, in
Annie John the links between the spirit world and the
physical world is clearly defined as they are in my
children's stories and in Hodge's novel.
In the mother's telling of 'The Story,' the ineffability of the spirit world can be contrasted with several methods. Kincaid recounts one method which the child experienced with the mother and which utilizes both herbal and psycho-spiritual means.

Eventually, the girl leaves the island, Antigua, but takes with her the kernel of 'The Story' told her by her mother. She seeks to build on it, constructing for herself a more dynamic version of it, grounded in the physical realities she experiences. Her construction extends her mother's telling of 'The Story': As she prepares to leave Antigua, she starts to make conscious choices about those things that she will keep and those she will leave behind. She holds some things in a treasured place in her heart, but others, she consciously determines will be discarded. So begins for this one girl, the editing, the reshaping, the continuance of 'The Story':

I bathed quickly in some warm bath water that my mother had prepared for me. I put on my underwear - all of these white and all of them smelling funny. Along with my earrings, my neck chain, and my bracelets, all made of gold from British Guiana, my underwear had been sent to my mother's obesh woman, and whatever she had done to my jewelry and underwear would help protect me from evil spirits and away kind of misfortune. The things I never wanted to see or hear or do again now made up at least three weeks' worth of grocery lists. I placed a mark against obesh women, jewelry and white underwear.

In a later work of Kincaid's, 'Lucy,' the main character seeks to construct a social reality in which she is comfortable. Kincaid moves beyond a role of passivity to the next step which años refers to as "... the language to express and chart this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom.

For Kincaid, the step from receiving 'The Story' to charting the new language takes time. This is the process that is described by her as "the dream and vision...the skeleton architecture of our lives...the foundations for a future of change...a bridge across our fears of what has never been before...action now."

In Lucy, Kincaid demonstrates the need for reconstituting reality, the charting of the new road map. She takes the reader through her character's processing something as mundane and yet as important as a change in the weather, being moved from Antigua to New England. 'The Story' received in Antiguad had not included differences in weather. 'The Story' had fit 'The Island' and had included a relationship with the physical environment as well as the metaphysical one.

Kincaid describes the charting of the new road map as Lucy comes to terms, not just with her new physical location, but also with a whole difference in hegemony and race. This new reality appears to be more than just about weather. This new reality appears to be about knowing and not knowing, being and not being. As Kincaid concludes, "I felt that I wanted to be back where I came from. I understood it. I knew where I stood there."

Lucy, anger at the dominant British hegemony washes over the main character when she recalls a poem about daffodils, a flower that is foreign to the Caribbean.

I remember an old poem I had been made to memorize:

when I was ten years old and a pupil at Queen Victoria Girls' School. I had been made to memorize it, worse after verse, and then had recited the whole poem to an audience full of parents, teachers, and my fellow pupils. After I was done, everybody stood up and applauded with an enthusiasm that surprised me, and later they told me how nicely I had pronounced every word, how I had placed just the right amount of special emphasis in places where that was needed, and how proud the poet, now long dead, would have been to hear his words ringing out of my mouth. I was then at the height of my two-years-old. that is, outside I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true. And so I made pleasant little noises that showed both modesty and appreciation, but inside I was making a vow to come from my mind, line by line, every word of that poem.

She tells her white American employer who now takes her to see a field of daffodils, "Mariah, do you realize that at ten years of age I had to learn by heart a long poem about some flowers I never would see in real life until I was nineteen?" Her strong resentment, rather than her continued acceptance of this imposition, is the character's step towards reclaiming the soil.

RESCUING JAMES FROM INAUTHENTIC EXCLUSION OF WOMEN'S VOICE

bell hooks, an African-American critic, suggests in 'Troubling Race like James, that the process of telling 'The Story' is the method by which an authenticating experience can take place.

...symbolically a gesture of longing to recover the past in such a way that one experiences both a sense of reunion and a sense of release.

bell hooks tells of the telling of the individual, personal story, but makes the connection between the personal and the collective and the importance of telling
The [collective] Story.' She goes on to describe the act of telling 'The Story' as 'liberating.'

In the work of the time Caribbean women writers we have examined here, we see what could be considered individual, personal stories. They tell 'The Story' from various perspectives - similar, yet not the same. Each writer has received 'The Story' and has undertaken the task of passing it on, adding her interpretation. All three are alike in that they provide both the storytellers and the receivers of 'The Story' with material for the construction of an authentic worldview.

C.L.R. James's description of what constitutes writing within an authentic framework seems adequately to fit the work of these three Caribbean women. Their use of language, the context, the undertaking itself, demonstrates that quality which James in The Birth of A Nation describes as "... people...in charge of their own reality...." Perhaps he would have described them, as he did two male African-Caribbean writers, Michael Antonio and Earl Lovelook, as "...active and national in a sense that the previous generation is not."

James searched diligently among male Caribbean writers and calypsonians for what exists quite abundantly in the work of Caribbean women writers. It is useful to note here that the work of several other Caribbean women demonstrates the qualities which James suggests make a work "authentic." It would seem, then, that James, while suggesting that there is consciousness missing that needs to be done by Caribbean people, actually demonstrates, by his exclusion of Caribbean women writers, that he too needed to work on the same task. He did not identify the issue of sexism or something to which attention would have to be paid if womanliness is to be accomplished by all members of Caribbean society. His exclusion of Caribbean women writers demonstrates a problem for his discussion of authenticity and womanliness. It is difficult to conceive of wholesomeness without the voices of such large segments of Caribbean society.

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Illustrations by Grace Channer.

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