

CIRCLE OF ACCORD:

WOMEN WEAVE THE FABRIC OF THE FUTURE

by Stephanie Hiller

Every time I sit down to write a review of *Fabric of the Future*, I re-open the book to find some essay I had skipped, or some passage I liked before, and I start reading it again! This collection of 40 essays by visionary women, written just prior to the millennium, will remain relevant for many years to come -- at least until we see the outcome of the profound transition the world is currently going through.

It's a tremendous book. Here are women from many divergent paths: Angeles Arrien, Starhawk, Margaret J. Wheatley, Jean Houston, Shakti Gawain, Brooke Medicine Eagle, Caroline Myss, Gloria Steinem and many more, all addressing the same questions: Where are we going, and what's the best way to get there? Their individual answers show remarkable accord, threads woven into a single tapestry which depicts the dilemma -- and the wisdom -- of our extraordinary time. Faced with extinction, how do we survive?

Editor M.J. Ryan wanted how she could participate to make the breakthrough happen, "what I could do to join my individual life to the great stream of consciousness that is flowing into the future." To find out about the "evolving state of our psyches" she chose teachers "skilled in the psychospiritual realms" because she believes that for change to occur, it must begin in the soul. And she asked women:

My emphasis on women was not because I wished to promote separation, but rather because I had the sense that it is primarily women who are learning the way of this social and cultural transformation, and women who are most actively in search of help in the process.

On the whole, this is an immensely hopeful book. These women have not failed to see the threat with which we are faced, nor are they foolish enough to promise a happy conclusion. But they perceive the possibility of cultural transformation, and the evolution of a truly brave new world. Writes systems analyst Margaret J. Wheatley, "*it is time for the new story. Our old one, with its alienating myths, is eating away at us from the inside, rotting from its core.*" It's what Joanna Macy has called the "Great Turning". We can't predict, "*We can't tell which will happen first, the final unraveling of life on Earth, or the moment when the elements of a sustainable world cohere and catch hold.*" But we can vouch for the desired outcome. Brooke Medicine Eagle sees a wave of light that is coming towards us: "*Whether it is called the photon belt, the pillar of celestial fire, or wakanti, there is a tremendous amount of vital life-energy cresting and rolling our way. It will eventually bring a golden time to Lady Gaia.*" We might assume that the energy is all good. But "*It is not. It is simply energy-- titanic waves of energy. What it becomes as we call it into manifestation on earth is up to us.*"

Marion Woodman puts it another way: "we are now responsible for bringing our grief and fear and love to consciousness, for re-creating them and integrating them into our lives."

How? "*Reclaiming the belly-laugh can cure a world of woes,*" writes Jamie Sams, seriously, in a marvelous essay invoking the wisdom of the Clan Mothers. "*Worry about the future keeps us from being present in the now. When we worry, we leak life-force on nonexistent woes and we project our fears into a future time and place that has not yet appeared on the horizon. Life-force is precious...*" She too speaks of rising levels of electricity on the planet, assuring us that "*we are now beginning a new era of time that is called the Fifth World of Illumination and Peace.*" Earth Mother is changing her shape, "*and we are being given the opportunity to change ours.*"

This is the kind of book to keep by your bedside for the down times when you cannot see the forest for the thick fog that has descended on your vision--for times of illness and despair, when the many tasks of life seem overwhelming. Each reader will choose different favorites. For some it will be Jean Houston's essay about creating our future myths or Riane Eisler's cheerful reclaiming of sacred pleasure by replacing the old dominator syndrome with the partnership model. For others it will be Luisah Teish, reminding us that "*shifting the paradigm requires a conscience as well as a consciousness. The shift must carry a sense of responsibility for correcting the injustices of the past...*" Her somewhat acerbic essay, "*Sister, Can You Paradigm?*" is one of the few pieces that reminds us that racism and war trail us into this "new age":

I maintain that the biggest challenge in the new millennium could be a change of habit. We could change from a dominating commodity culture into one of true exchange in which we learn from each other in humility and respect. I do think it's possible. But it's up to us.

STEPHANIE HILLER – WOMEN WEAVE THE FABRIC OF THE FUTURE

As Teish reminds us, it's very difficult, in these troubling times, to keep a clear perspective, one which balances the possibility with the danger, the rising tide of awakening consciousness with the horrible reality of Western technocracy's march across the planet. She is a lone voice. But if this book does not succeed in maintaining the balance, but it does do a very good job of keeping the beacon lit. There must be some way out of here, and we know what it is, if only we are destined to choose it. Without inspiration & emdash; there is certainly no hope.

What's most rewarding about this fat juicy book is the sense that these women, writing separately in their separate locations, are members of a circle in which we all take part, a unified field of awareness, if you will, in which agreement independently holds its sway over discord.

This book tells us that we have a vision. It does not tell us how to realize that vision. That's what we have to figure out in the years to come. We face unprecedented danger on this green planet. We must find ways to avert the danger before it overcomes us. Soul has definitely reawakened. Now is the time for us to act.

Fabric of the Future is published by Conari. Order it from Powell's Independent Bookstore! You'll be glad you did. - <http://www.awakenedwoman.com/future.htm>

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(F) = also in French available; (D) = also in German available

BENJAMIN CHRIST:

- « Let's create 'Heaven on Earth' » (D, E)