

white?) nonchalantly powerful women does not change the conditions they faced in the group to begin with. Rather, it is a white fantasy about earning unity. It is just these intermediate steps, dealing with the differences among us, that we need to envision and address. As the Combahee River Collective stated in 1977, "If black women were free"—and today they might include other women of color—"it would mean that everyone else would have to be free, since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of *all* systems of oppression."²² White feminists must ask themselves what prevents women from acting on this knowledge, for that constitutes participation in oppression and destructive divisions among women. And women of color will continue on their own.

Today, the most dynamic and strategically empowering vision comes from women, primarily lesbians of color. Gloria Anzaldúa creates a powerful synthesis between the healing spirituality of her grandmother and the materialist analysis of the left, establishing a vital basis for unity. "I build my own universe, *El Mundo Zurdo*," she writes in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*²³—a brilliant and moving feminist work, calling for an international feminism based on the recognition of the right of the colonized, including third world women in the United States, to form independent movements:

But ultimately, we must struggle together. *Together* we form a vision which spans from the self-love of our colored skins, to the respect of our foremothers who kept the embers of revolution burning, to our reverence for the trees—the final reminder of our rightful place on this planet.

The change evoked on these pages is material as well as psychic. Change requires a lot of heat. It requires both the alchemist and the welder, the magician and the laborer, the witch and the warrior, the myth-smasher and the myth-maker.

Hand in hand, we brew and forge a revolution.²⁴

NOTES

1. Joanna Russ, *The Female Man* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), p. 208.

2. See my article, "Lesbianism and the Social Function of Taboo," in *The Future of Difference*, Eisenstein and Jardine, eds. (New York: G. K. Hall, 1980).
3. See, for example, "Passing Women," in *Gay American History*, Jonathan Katz, ed. (New York: Crowell, 1975).
4. Joanna Russ, "Interview," *Quest* 2, No. 1 (Summer, 1975), pp. 45, 47.
5. Elmina Drake Slenker wrote *The Darwins: A Domestic Radical Romance* (1879), *John's Way: A Domestic Radical Story* (1877, 1884); *The Handsomest Woman* (1885).
6. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979). First published serially in *The Forerunner*, 1915.
7. See my paper, "Sex, Sexuality and Love Among Women Around the Turn of the Century." Forthcoming.
8. See, for example, Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendships and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: William Morrow, 1981).
9. E. M. Forster to Virginia Woolf in 1928, during the trial of Radclyffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness*. See my paper, "Azalea Bushes and Asparagus Beds: Virginia Stephen Woolf and the Medical Backlash." Forthcoming.
10. Virginia Stephen Woolf, *Three Guineas* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1936).
11. Jill Johnston, *Lesbian Nation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973), reprint of her articles from *The Village Voice*.
12. Judy Grahn, *A Woman Is Talking to Death* (Oakland: Diana Press, 1974).
13. Monique Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, trans. LeVay (New York: The Viking Press, 1971).
14. "They speak together of the threat they have constituted towards authority, they tell how they were burned on pyres to prevent them from assembling in the future. . . . Then they chant the famous song that begins, Despite all the evils they wished to crush me with/I remain as steady as the three legged cauldron" (pp. 89-90).
15. Audre Lorde, "Poems Are Not Luxuries," *Chrysalis* 3 (1977), p. 8.
16. A science fiction writer who raises some fundamental questions in terms of gender and race (while staying outside explicit feminist and lesbian thought) is Octavia Butler. Her ulti-

mate male power figure survives by a murderous dependence on the lives of others; neither his human and genetic experimentation nor the exercise of his authority is bound by "human values." Her ultimate female power is a healer. Can she either convert or defeat him? Without jeopardy to her offspring? The two characters are pitted against and bound to each other through centuries of genetic development, accounting for vast differences among humans. Arising from realities of living in a dark skin, Butler's fictions are compelling, though her vision of patterning raises doubts about non-biological social change.

17. Sally Miller Gearhart, *The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women* (Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1978). The history of this alliance is brilliantly treated in Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

18. Elizabeth Lynn's *Northern Girl* (New York: Berkley, 1980), third novel in a trilogy, while not exactly a utopian novel, also creates a past peopled with strong women, who can do anything that the men can do (except impregnate and rape). Although showing some fluidity among the characters of different classes, this is the only work discussed here not abolishing antagonistic class relations as a matter of course. Structured around the power of the old Tarot, the novel exhibits ambivalence about the use of violence. The spiritual and material are combined as forces, and while good city governance might require a ban on swords, the old dance-defense included them, and the ban exiled people of wisdom and spiritual strength. How to reconnect and achieve a balance of forces?

19. Donna J. Young, *Retreat: As It Was! A Fantasy* (Weatherby Lake, Mo.: Naiad Press, 1978).

20. Suzy McKee Charnas, *Motherlines* (New York: Berkley, 1978). Another non-lesbian writer, Marge Piercy, depicted a technological form of reproduction in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, adding a biological equalization of birthing and nurturing child-care work between males and females, without which, presumably, sex equality in Mattapoissett could not have been envisioned as a possible future. It is one, moreover, founded upon a continuing military war.

21. Rochelle Singer, *Demeter Flower* (New York: St. Martin's, 1980).

22. Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist State-

ment," in *Power, Oppression and the Politics of Culture*, eds. Farley, Jensen, Goodman, Lorde, Smith (New York: Goodman, 1978). Reprinted in *This Bridge Called My Back*, Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. (Watertown, Mass.: Persephone Press, 1981), p. 172.

23. Gloria Anzaldúa, from "Toward a Construction of El Mundo Zurdo," *This Bridge*, p. 209.

24. Anzaldúa, "El Mundo Zurdo: The Vision," *This Bridge*, p. 196.