

**A READER IN LATINA  
FEMINIST THEOLOGY  
RELIGION AND JUSTICE**

MARÍA PILAR AQUINO,  
DAISY L. MACHADO,  
JEANETTE RODRÍGUEZ  
*Editors*



**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS**  
AUSTIN

Copyright © 2002 by the University of Texas Press

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

First edition, 2002

Requests for permission to reproduce material from this work should be sent to Permissions, University of Texas Press, Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819.

© The paper used in this book meets the minimum requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (RI997) (Permanence of Paper).

**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA**

A reader in Latina feminist theology : religion and justice / María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, Jeanette Rodríguez, editors.—1st ed.

p. cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN 0-292-70509-3 (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-292-70512-3 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Feminist theology 2. Mujerista theology.  
3. Hispanic American women—Religious life.  
I. Aquino, María Pilar. II. Machado, Daisy L.  
III. Rodríguez, Jeanette, 1954–

BT83.55—R39 2002  
230'.082—dc21

2001041439

We dedicate this book to all women and men who struggle everywhere to overcome all forms of kyriarchal domination and violence.

To all Latina women who have preceded us in the struggles for *un mundo nuevo*, a new creation. *Ustedes nos han heredado visiones de justicia y liberación.*

To all Latina feminists, *campesinas y escritoras, afanadoras y poetas, cocineras y maestras, estudiantes y activistas, secretarias y analistas, catequistas y sanadoras, amantes y pensadoras, madres y comadres, y muchas más* who inspire and encourage our theological commitments.

*A nuestras compañeras latinoamericanas que luchan a diario contra la pobreza y la exclusión. Con ustedes, nuestro empeño no conoce fronteras.*

# CONTENTS

Foreword by Olga Villa Parra ix

Introduction xiii

<b>PART I</b>	<b>SOURCES, THOUGHT, AND PRAXIS OF LATINA FEMINIST INSIGHT 1</b>
CHAPTER 1	MICHELLE A. GONZÁLEZ 3 Seeing Beauty within Torment: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the Baroque in New Spain
CHAPTER 2	TERESA DELGADO 23 Prophesy Freedom: Puerto Rican Women's Literature as a Source for Latina Feminist Theology
CHAPTER 3	GAIL PÉREZ 53 Ana Castillo as <i>Santera</i> : Reconstructing Popular Religious Praxis
CHAPTER 4	LETICIA A. GUARDIOLA-SÁENZ 80 Reading from Ourselves: Identity and Hermeneutics among Mexican-American Feminists
CHAPTER 5	ANNA ADAMS 98 Perception Matters: Pentecostal Latinas in Allentown, Pennsylvania
CHAPTER 6	JEANETTE RODRÍGUEZ 114 Latina Activists: Toward an Inclusive Spirituality of Being in the World

<b>PART II</b>	<b>U.S. LATINA FEMINIST THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT 131</b>
CHAPTER 7	MARÍA PILAR AQUINO 133 Latina Feminist Theology: Central Features
CHAPTER 8	DAISY L. MACHADO 161 The Unnamed Woman: Justice, Feminists, and the Undocumented Woman
CHAPTER 9	CARMEN MARIE NANKO 177 Justice Crosses the Border: The Preferential Option for the Poor in the United States
CHAPTER 10	NORA O. LOZANO-DÍAZ 204 Ignored Virgin or Unaware Women: A Mexican-American Protestant Reflection on the Virgin of Guadalupe
CHAPTER 11	GLORIA INÉS LOYA 217 Pathways to a <i>Mestiza</i> Feminist Theology
CHAPTER 12	NANCY PINEDA-MADRID 241 Notes Toward a ChicanaFeminist Epistemology (and Why It Is Important for Latina Feminist Theologies)
	Selected Bibliography 267
	Contributors 283
	Index 287

## FOREWORD

OLGA  
VILLA PARRA

It is indeed an honor for me to write this foreword. About thirty-five years ago, when I gave one of my first Latina feminist talks at a small college in Iowa, I declared, "We are going to look into the future of Latinas and imagine many voices contributing to our understanding of God, justice, and feminism. We Latinas cannot be divided and scattered into many pieces and still be Latinas, Christian, and committed to justice." Little did I understand that one day I was going to be asked to write a foreword for what will become a powerful set of conversations in the theological world, particularly for Latinas.

Latinas in the United States performing ministry carry out their baptismal call with profound, quiet spirituality and endurance in environments often plagued with challenges, obstacles, and contradictions. Today, fresh new voices of Latinas doing critical analysis and scholarship in theological and intellectual arenas are emerging. These Latina scholars bring to the table of scholarship an understanding of liberation that is integral and holistic. To some it may appear as a sense of *bendito coraje*, or "blessed anger." At the same time there is a sense of deep, reflective feminist spirituality which is a mixture of new and old perspectives. This includes a fresh and vibrant analysis which both challenges and inspires us to see things in new

## INTRODUCTION

MARÍA PILAR  
AQUINO,

DAISY L.  
MACHADO,

AND JEANETTE  
RODRÍGUEZ

This collection of original articles represents the critical reflections and voices of Latinas engaged in theology in the United States of America. Other well-known feminist anthologies have brought together and identified the "experiences of women." However, the experiences presented in those anthologies continue to be dominated almost exclusively by Euro-American or Afro-American women. This collection is an attempt to add the perspectives of U.S. Latinas to that feminist religious intellectual construction. This reader includes contributions from Latinas who live all around the United States of America, who are not only ethnically diverse but ecclesiologicaly diverse as well, and as such they are representative of the Latina mosaic that is a reality in our communities. We lift our voices to share the variety of issues that interest us, trouble us, challenge us, and motivate us. We are aware of how important it is for women to hear one another's voices to enhance the work that needs to be done. The addition of our Latina voices, as expressed in our diverse methodologies and approaches, provides to the national tapestry of "women's experiences" the missing textures, colors, shapes, and shades that are created by our Latina context. By adding the experiences of Latinas we seek to transform and enlarge that tapestry and create

a bridge that connects to the work of our feminist and womanist sisters. In this anthology we not only acknowledge the great diversity of approaches to the feminist religious language but also the unity of themes found among U.S. Latina feminists.

This is a feminist Latina reader. This collection articulates the theological reflection of Latinas in the United States of America on the realities, struggles, and spirituality of women. We understand theology as a dynamic and critical language with which we express our religious vision of a new paradigm of civilization that is free of systemic injustice and violence due to kyriarchal domination.<sup>1</sup> Empowered by this language, we seek to affirm new models of social relationships that are capable of fully sustaining human dignity and the integrity of creation. Beginning with the religious practices and imagination of our Latina communities, the feminist religious language allows us to say who we are and how we seek to affect the present and future direction of society, culture, churches, and the academy. As women engaged in theology, whether in the church or in the academy, we acknowledge the importance of claiming a space for our voices to be heard and for collaboration among women to be achieved. With the emergence and growth of the feminist theologies of liberation, we no longer wait for others to define or validate our experience of life and faith. Women, and in fact all who are in a constant struggle against oppression, have decided to interpret and to name themselves. We want to express in our own words our plural ways of experiencing God and our plural ways of living our faith. And these ways have a liberative tone. In the midst of a reality in which "women of color" continue to be excluded, as noted by M. P. Aquino, doing theology "is not a luxury, but a necessity and a right to be claimed."<sup>2</sup>

The task of theological reflection is never done in a vacuum, and it builds on the reflections and learnings of other women who journey with us. That is why we acknowledge the important work and contributions of Ada María Isasi-Díaz in developing what she has defined as *mujerista* theology.<sup>3</sup> However, we have opted to name ourselves Latina feminists. Since the power of self-naming is so crucial to the experience of women, particularly non-white women of grassroots provenance, this decision represents our effort at self-identity in the public sphere.<sup>4</sup> It also represents our effort at establishing conversation with the rich tradition of Latina/Chicana feminism in the United States of America. As Latina feminists, what we offer in this

reader is what Cherríe Moraga has called "a theory in the flesh," which because of the "physical realities of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings—all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity."<sup>5</sup> This theory in the flesh is also plural and multivocal. Because the Latina community in the United States of America is a *culturally plural* and a *mestizo/a* community present in all colors of the human rainbow,<sup>6</sup> the articles in this reader also represent the variety of voices and realities of *Chicanas* (or *Xicanismas*), *Puertorriqueñas*, *Cubanas*, *Mexicanas*, and *Sur Americanas*. Our common bond is that we live in the United States of America (our physical reality), where we have all experienced racism, sexism, devaluation, and exclusion by a culture and a society that cannot seem to move beyond the white/black focus of its national discourse on race and national identity.

As Latina feminists, we are presenting a critical framework from which we analyze the realities of Latinas in the United States of America. In doing this, we examine inequalities along lines of race, class, poverty, citizenship, gender, and religion as they affect us and our communities. With these articles we hope to challenge Euro-American feminists and womanists to rethink the issues that directly relate to the ongoing and developing discourse of women in both the secular world and the theological academy. We understand that the dominant feminism, Euro-American and womanist, in the United States of America represents only one type of what Chéla Sandoval calls "oppositional consciousness,"<sup>7</sup> also found in other liberation movements and ideologies. Therefore what we bring to the feminist and womanist discourse is a pluralism that goes beyond the white/black agenda. The articles in this reader focus on issues that are relevant and pertinent to Latinas yet are also of concern to our national agenda. The articles in this collection reflect on the themes of the Latina reality, whether it be the issue of identity or the importance of popular religion in Latina communities or the situation of undocumented women who live within U.S. borders. We find in this collection of writings evidence that what Ivone Gebara has said is true for Latinas in the United States of America: "Feminist theological expression always starts from what has been lived, from what is experienced in the present."<sup>8</sup>

The theology in this reader is one that takes seriously the relative autonomy as well as the integration of theory and practice while reflecting on life. As a result, it is a theology that is in the process of

redefining reason itself. Our task as Latina scholars is not to give up reason or neglect skill development in favor of social justice, but to demonstrate that *how* we think counts as reason. How we think arises from our plural practices and lived experiences. We want to be able to tell our own history and speak about our condition and our expectations. That is why the Latina feminist language we are presenting cannot overlook or dismiss the issues of nationalism and the geopolitical configurations of the nation-state as analytical categories. The history of Latinas is interconnected with the history of conquest and domination of the southwestern reaches of this country, as well as of the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, by an ever-evolving United States of America. This is a national story as well as an international one in which the United States of America would seek to dominate an entire hemisphere—militarily, economically, and racially.

Latinas share a common history of *conquista* and *reconquista*, of colonization and domination. We know what it means to be seen as intruder and alien on our own land; we know what life is like as a daily cultural, social, and racial "border crosser." It is this national/international reality that is unique and important to the Latina feminist, while it also serves to focus our writings on relations of power. In these relations of power the Latina uses her social position as well as her gender and cultural location (language and skin color) as the place to begin her analysis. The result is a process that empowers and decolonizes. That is why the issue of justice remains central to our analysis. As a result of our shared history of conquest and colonization, Latina feminists use their theological reflection to move in new and liberating directions in which justice is also interpreted as a Christian vision of a new humanity in a new social order. The quest for justice, for social transformation, gives Latinas the power to challenge the dominant culture's devaluation of our own culture, language, and indigenous intellectual legacy while affirming our self-worth.

As Latina feminists we are also trying to formulate what can be called "marginal" theories because they are partially outside and partially inside the Western frame of reference. We are articulating new positions that examine the "in-betweenness" of Latinas who live in this country. As Gloria Anzaldúa says, the Latina lives in a "borderland world of ethnic communities and academies, feminist and job worlds."<sup>9</sup> In this in-between existence we move across racial, cultural, economic, and idiomatic boundaries. We may be citizens, but

we continue to have outsider status. We may be a part of the academy, but our research interests continue to be labeled "special topics." We may be members of a parish, but our styles of worship continue to be considered nontraditional and ethnic. The ministries to our communities continue to be underfunded and overlooked in denominational planning. We are daily border-crossers who must learn early on to interpret life on both sides—life in the dominant culture and life in the Latina community—in order to survive. The pages of this book give the reader a glimpse into the experiences and patterns of life we have uncovered, and we offer our own theories to help understand and interpret a reality that touches the lives of the more than thirty-five million Latina/os living in this country. In our reflection/writing there is also an obligation and a sense that our primary responsibility, accountability, is to our people, our communities, our children. Therefore, we challenge the prevailing view of scholarship as a fundamentally individual activity undertaken in isolation from community. We further question the mind-set that too readily pits the individual against society, affect against intellect, subjectivity against objectivity, science against theology, and faith against religion. Our faith is at the root of our struggle *and* our reflection.

This collection is divided into two sections. The first contains six articles that focus on the source or locus of Latina thought and insight: religious practice. Beginning with historical contextualization, Michelle González writes about Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and her legacy of writings, which provide a clear example of how the religious practice of Latinas does have a feminist intellectual history. The article by Teresa Delgado examines the writings of Puerto Rican women as they struggle with their national reality as *colonia* and how those writers offer a new source for feminist liberation theology. Gail Pérez examines the *cuentos* of Chicana writer Ana Castillo, arguing that she uses the popular religion/folklore of Chicanas as a tool to interpret the reality of class, race, and oppression. Leticia Guardiola-Sáenz explores the concept of identity and the ways it is used as a hermeneutical lens for a liberating reading strategy. Anna Adams focuses on Latina Pentecostals, a rapidly growing group, by examining the context of one geographic setting, Allentown, Pennsylvania. In the final article of this section, Jeanette Rodríguez looks at the context in which Latinas live out their faith and how that faith fuels their commitment to justice.

The second section has as its focus the methods and insights of

Latina feminists on two levels. The six articles in this section not only establish a deliberate yet critical conversation with the existent U.S. Latina feminism, but they also examine the reality of Latina life. María Pilar Aquino's article explores the central features of our theological activity, including its understandings and orientations, context of reality, preconditions and characteristics, key principles, and its major tasks. Daisy L. Machado writes about the undocumented women who live in this country, using the biblical image of the Levite's concubine to examine relations of power and nationhood. Carmen Nanko examines how the Latina/o theologian must rethink the concept of a "preferential option for the poor" that is central to Latin American liberation theology, so that such an option can give voice to the reality of the U.S. Latina community. Nora Lozano-Díaz writes about the Virgin of Guadalupe from a Protestant perspective; she examines whether *la virgencita* has been ignored by Protestant Latinas. Gloria Loya explores the many contributions of Latinas to what she calls "an ever-evolving *mestiza* feminist theology." And finally, Nancy Pineda-Madrid develops a "ChicanaFeminist epistemology," describing the major themes of this epistemology and their importance for the intellectual work being produced by Latina theologians.

Before closing this introduction, we would like to say a little about the journey of Latinas in theology. The reality is that Latina/o theology is just beginning to take hold within the academy and the Church as a result of the books and articles that the Latina/os in the theological community have produced in the past decade. We are an emerging community that has only recently begun to give voice to our theological reflection and experience. This anthology has Roman Catholic and Protestant contributors, and while we may struggle together, each denominational community also has had its own particular journey and realities. The Roman Catholic U.S. Latinas trace their first steps as a group to the creation of ACHTUS (Academy of Catholic Hispanics in the United States), which officially began in 1988. Five years later, María Pilar Aquino became the first female president of ACHTUS, giving evidence that Latinas have been integral to the burgeoning Roman Catholic Latino/a theology right from the beginning. Protestant Latinas, while still fewer in number than their Catholic sisters, are also making great strides and creating a much-needed space for their theological voices. As a minority within a minority, Protestant Latinas have forged friendships and crossed boundaries with their Roman Catholic Latina sisters, which has created an

awareness of the value of both perspectives as well as the importance of all our contributions to theological activity.

And now some words of gratitude. The editors want to say a heartfelt "thank you" to our colleagues who also contributed to the realization of this project. They offered their work with a sense of selfless giving, knowing that we did not have any kind of funding to compensate them for their work. Their goal was to make their voices heard by a larger and more diverse audience. These writers also represent a newly emerging community of younger Latina scholars, many of whom have only recently entered the academy. *A cada una de ustedes, ¡Muchas gracias, hermanas!* This book is the realization of a dream, of OUR dream. María Pilar Aquino's work in the editorial process and her chapter in this book were possible thanks to the Louisville Institute, which, through its Christian Faith and Life Sabbatical Grants Program, allowed her the time to participate in this project. We thank the Louisville Institute for its support. We are especially grateful to Theresa J. May, assistant director and editor-in-chief of the University of Texas Press, for making the publication of this book possible, and to the readers involved in this project for their helpful suggestions. We are also grateful to our colleagues at the University of San Diego, Brite Divinity School, and Seattle University for their support.

Our hope with this anthology is to offer a collection of articles written by Latinas in our search for innovative intercultural explorations for feminist theological methods. We came together driven by our desire to actualize our "anthological imagination." It has taken more than three years for this project to come to fruition, but we celebrate the journey, and we hope that this book will be a bridge to a more open and diverse feminist/womanist dialogue. As Cherríe Moraga has said, "We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words."<sup>10</sup>

#### NOTES

1. On the meaning of *kyriarchy* as analytical category, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies*, 5-6, and *Jesus Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet. Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*, 14.
2. María Pilar Aquino, *Our Cry for Life: Feminist Theology from Latin America*, 68.
3. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha. In the Struggle: Elaborating a*

*Mujerista Theology and Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century.*

4. As editors of this book we acknowledge that the term *mujerista* was coined in Peru as the name for a sectarian gynocentric group that, inspired by an essentialist ideology about women, turned away from the powerful Peruvian feminist movement in the late 1970s and gradually disappeared in the late 1980s. See Documento Final, "Del amor a la necesidad. A Julieta Kirkwood. IV Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe. Taller: La política feminista en América Latina hoy," in *Caminando: Luchas y Estrategias de las Mujeres. Tercer Mundo*, María Antonieta Saa, Isis Internacional, Ediciones de las Mujeres, vol. 11 (1989): 9-13.

5. Cherríe Moraga, "Entering the Lives of Others. Theory in the Flesh," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 23.

6. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*; Daisy L. Machado, "Latino Church History: A Haunting Memory," *Perspectivas*, Hispanic Theological Initiative, no. 1 (fall 1998): 22-34; Jeanette Rodríguez, "U.S. Hispanic/Latino Theology: Context and Challenge," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 5:3 (1998): 6-15; María Pilar Aquino, "Directions and Foundations of Hispanic/Latino Theology: Toward a Mestiza Theology of Liberation," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 1:1 (1993): 5-21.

7. Chéla Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo, 355, 359; and "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," *Genders*, no. 10 (spring 1991): 1-36.

8. See Ivone Gebara, "Women Doing Theology in Latin America," in *Feminist Theology from the Third World: A Reader*, ed. Ursula King, 55.

9. Gloria Anzaldúa's introduction ("Haciendo caras, una entrada") in *Making Face, Making Soul. Haciendo Caras. Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa, xxvi.

10. Moraga, "Entering the Lives of Others," 23.

## SOURCES, THOUGHT, AND PRAXIS OF LATINA FEMINIST INSIGHT

**LATINA FEMINIST THEOLOGY**  
CENTRAL FEATURES

MARÍA PILAR  
AQUINO

We have not one movement but many . . . Ours are individual and small group *movidas*, unpublicized *movimientos*—movements not of media stars or popular authors but of small groups or single *mujeres*, many of whom have not written books or spoken at national conferences . . . Now here, now there, *aquí y allá*, we and our *movimientos* are firmly committed to transforming all our cultures. GLORIA ANZALDÚA

We are the feminists among the people of our culture.  
CHERRÍE MORAGA

The social movements acting today in the global space are carriers of projects and specific agendas related to millennial discriminations—of gender, of ethnicity, of sexual orientation—and to problems that are increasingly global: environment, peace, human rights, etc. In this ambivalent, contradictory space still in process of being constructed . . . globalization is a new “field of dispute” (*terreno de disputa*) for the world feminisms to impel new rights and new transnational, multicultural connections recreating the diversity of feminist outlooks, and nourishing a new vision of what human living could be. GINA VARGAS

I am opening my contribution to this book with the words of three feminists of Latin American ancestry to clearly indicate its focus and direction.<sup>1</sup> The growth and development of the pow-

erful tradition of Latina/Chicana<sup>2</sup> feminist theories correspond to the contemporary growth and development of a plural sociopolitical movement and of a plural sociopolitical subject, both constituted as a new sociopolitical force for the achievement of justice, equality, human rights, true democracy, and a greater quality of life for all, which together can be summarized in the term *liberation*. This social force irrupted across the Americas in the second half of the twentieth century and continues to generate a plural and consistent process of critical action and insight for the transformation of the current dominant paradigm of social living.

The formal articulation of Latina/Chicana feminist thought is intrinsically connected with these historical movements. It did not emerge as a body of metaphysical convictions removed from real sociopolitical subjects. As noted in a 1971 conference report, from its early stages this thought asserted that liberation is not authentic if the elimination of kyriarchal<sup>3</sup> domination is overlooked or dismissed: "We are in a struggle for the liberation of our people. In this struggle, we must recognize that there are many forms of oppression. There is class, race, and women's oppression, which is tied into the same thing—capitalism. We cannot just separate these types of oppression and leave them separated."<sup>4</sup> The Latina feminist struggle of women and men against all forms of the kyriarchal hegemony has been, and continues to be, plural in its expressions and in its spaces of social insertion. Because feminist thought is constitutive of our *movidias*, or movements, it involves and evolves everywhere, in rural and urban areas, in the kitchen and the streets, in our minds and our communities, in schools, hospitals, and churches, *entre sábanas y libros*. C. Orozco simply says, "Feminism is necessary for liberation."<sup>5</sup> Latina feminist theology is also developing in the context of these plural sociopolitical subjects and movements for transformation. It did not come to light based on a metaphysical subject that exists only in one's mind, but in connection with historical movements and subjects. As the cognitive space of our religious experiences for justice and liberation, this theology contributes to the aims of that sociopolitical force that is bringing about new visions of an alternative paradigm for social living.

Consequently, the purpose of my chapter is threefold.<sup>6</sup> First, arguing against the myth that feminism is a foreign concept and experience for Latinas, I present some understandings and orientations shared in common by Latina/Chicana feminism and Latina feminist

theology as historical background of their evolving conversation. Second, by including *indicative* data to describe the current context of reality, I want to bring to light the chilling panorama confronted by Latina/Chicana feminism and Latina feminist theology, so that we engage in changing that context from our various locations and activities. Third, I seek to describe the central features of Latina feminist theology, including its major methodological characteristics, principles, and tasks. **From my perspective, I suggest that this theology can and should be characterized as an *intercultural* activity.**

#### CENTRAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND ORIENTATIONS

The Latina feminist tradition has exposed the monocultural character of dominant Euro-American feminism.<sup>7</sup> The very active myth in the minds of many scholars that feminism is nonexistent among Latinas is just that: a myth.

This myth can only survive in the minds of those who claim to "know" reality but ignore that such "knowledge" is only the expression of monocultural experiences, traditions, symbols, and languages. In a similar manner, what M. S. Copeland says about black theologians can be equally applied to Latinos/as: "Black theology must expunge the myth that feminist concerns are white women's concerns."<sup>8</sup> Those Latinos/as who operate with kyriarchal ideologies simply ignore the plural dynamics of feminism among Latina grass-root movements. The reality, however, is that Latina/Chicana and Latin American feminisms have been denied visibility and influence in the dominant theoretical construction of both U.S. feminism and Latino/a culture. V. Ruíz points out that

Survey texts and relevant specialized monographs in U.S. Women's history overlook Chicana feminism. Although scholars recognize the 1960s and 1970s as the era of the modern feminist movement, they have left Chicanas out of their stories. Countering these chilling silences, a growing body of scholarly studies and literary works offer eloquent testimonies of Chicana feminist thought inside and outside the academy.<sup>9</sup>

A brief look at the pioneers of Latina/Chicana feminism shows how strongly they fought against the belief held by many that feminism does not have a Latina/Chicana cradle. They rejected the idea that Latina feminists are merely a tainted copy, a bad replica of white upper- and middle-class feminism. For example, A. Castillo notes that "there indeed existed a solid initiative toward Chicana feminist

thought . . . as early on as the late 1960s."<sup>10</sup> C. Sandoval asserts that "by 1971, grassroots organizations of 'U.S. third world feminists' began to form across the United States."<sup>11</sup> In 1973, M. Cotera wrote that "research and detailed analysis of our cultural patterns and traditions of strong women prove that we have a long, beautiful history of Mexicano/Chicano feminism which is not Anglo-inspired, imposed, or oriented. In fact, the entire community should be proud of the feminists in our history."<sup>12</sup> In 1974, A. NietoGómez stated that "*feministas* uphold that feminism is a very dynamic aspect of the Chicana's heritage and not at all foreign to her nature."<sup>13</sup> In 1976, NietoGómez wrote against those who believed that feminism is a foreign notion for Latinas: "I resent the usual remark that if you're a feminist you have somehow become an Anglo or been influenced by Anglos . . . Why? Because of what it is saying—that you, as a Chicana, a Chicana woman, don't have the mentality to think for yourself!"<sup>14</sup> Along the same lines, four feminist scholars wrote a beautiful article in the early 1990s "not only to trace the growth of Latin American feminisms . . . but also to dispel the myth that Latin American women do not *define themselves as feminists*." These authors stated that "not only is the Latin American [feminist] model unique in its organization of women, but it has also garnered a political base that could, and most certainly should, be the envy of feminists elsewhere."<sup>15</sup>

This brief look at the irruption of contemporary Latina/Chicana feminism is the historical basis of the prescriptive title coined by B. Pesquera and D. Segura for their essay: "There Is No Going Back: Chicanas and Feminism."<sup>16</sup> In my case, as a Latina Catholic woman born in Mexico of grassroot migrant farmworker parents, with many years of experience and involvement with various feminist movements throughout the Americas, I find these perspectives inspiring and empowering for all in society, and in the churches.

In this article, I want to highlight several understandings and orientations of Latina/Chicana feminism. It is a *mestiza* theory, method, spirituality, and praxis that has egalitarian social relations in everyday life as its principle of coherence, and it seeks to intervene in concrete reality for the historical actualization of social justice.<sup>17</sup> Latina/Chicana feminism is a critical framework to analyze systemic injustice, both locally and globally, to determine effective strategies for its elimination and the actualization of authentic justice. The critically reflective daily life experiences of grassroot, working-class La-

tina women are the starting point for our *mestiza* feminist theories and transformative practices.

Latina/Chicana feminism is a plural and often conflictive reality that, in its struggle against inequality among women and between women and men, has built a *common sense* about social relationships of power.<sup>18</sup> It is both a goal and a process, and it is also a personal quest and struggle. Its goal is the transformation of the hegemonic kyriarchal relationships of domination. It is a process because it engages in the continuing challenge of male privilege and in decolonizing ourselves by engendering an oppositional feminist consciousness.<sup>19</sup>

Another constitutive element of our struggle is the reappropriation and exercise of our right to be subjects of knowledge and of theoretical construction. We cannot afford to leave this task in the hands of those who oppress us with their excluding theories and ideologies.<sup>20</sup> In today's context, Latina scholars are called to expand our analytical views, to move beyond the limited U.S. literary criticism to critical systemic analyses of geopolitical, geocultural, and geoeconomic reach. Speaking of Chicana feminism, B. Harlow says that it has become "exemplary in important ways for the history of the United States women's movement more generally."<sup>21</sup> In sum, we have an evolving tradition that continues to inspire our feminist theories, methods, spiritualities, and socio-ecclesial practices.

Many of us Christian women, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, have nurtured our faith experience and spirituality within the space created by contemporary feminist liberation theologies. Many of us Catholic women of Latin American roots grew up influenced by these theologies in the context of the church of Medellín.<sup>22</sup>

From Medellín we learned that the people of God are the true church, whose mission—consistent with the gospel of liberation—is to eliminate the sins of oppression, exploitation, violence, and dehumanization.<sup>23</sup> With Medellín, we understood that the historical dimension of Christian faith is the praxis of liberation, that the church's identity has a sociopolitical dimension, and that the social and the epistemic location of the faith is the world of the poor and oppressed. Medellín did not suffocate the sociopolitical forces that seek new egalitarian cultures, new social relationships, and greater social justice. For many of us, the space opened by Medellín led us to engage in the feminist struggle for the transformation of kyriarchal churches and religions and allowed us to claim our space as subjects of theological construction and imagination.<sup>24</sup>

If today Latina feminist theologians are still few in number, we were "invisible" thirty years ago! We "were not there" and we could not "be there" as partners in dialogue with the pioneers of Latina/Chicana feminism. But we cannot say the same at the present time. In C. Moraga's words, *We are here*, "we are the feminists among the people" of God within our cultures.

Along the same lines, M. Lagarde's words eloquently express our present reality when she says,

Feminism also occurs quietly. It takes place not only in public struggles but also in new forms of human sharing and of everyday life. It happens around coal stoves and kitchen tables, in the food markets, in hospitals, and in churches. It is found in classrooms, in concert halls, and in productive projects . . . To associate the entire cause with only a few prominent feminists makes invisible millions of other feminists.<sup>25</sup>

Latina feminist theology adopts the understandings and orientations of Latina/Chicana feminism. This theology explicitly acknowledges the feminist struggles of the Latina community. It is internally connected with the history, the legacy, and the current developments of the feminist sociopolitical and ecclesial subjects and movements on both sides of the border. We take seriously the basic premise of all liberation theologies, according to which theological thought emerges from the actual political actors and social movements for social transformation.

Many of us Latina/Chicana *mestizas* who struggle everywhere for justice and liberation have called ourselves *feminists*. The main reason we have chosen deliberately not to call ourselves *mujeristas*, as Ada María Isasi-Díaz does in her theological perspective,<sup>26</sup> is that there are no *mujerista* sociopolitical and ecclesial subjects or movements in the United States or in Latin America. Puerto Rican feminist theologian R. Rodríguez notes that "'mujerismo' has negative connotations for the Latin American feminist movement."<sup>27</sup> A theory with no real, self-aware sociopolitical subject leads to what M. Lamas in her criticism of *mujerista* thought calls "a sectarian group that glorifies difference," producing "discursive dislocations and false oppositions" that weaken the political force of feminism.<sup>28</sup>

As a prominent feminist anthropologist in Latin America, M. Lamas has defined *mujerismo* as an essential conceptualization of women that "idealizes the 'natural' conditions of women and ex-

alts the relationships among them" sacralizing the woman's being.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the continent and the Caribbean, the *mujerista* position is indisputably understood as an ideology rooted in both the assumption of a homogeneous identity of women and a unitarian and unifying women's strategy for change. In general, due to their lack of knowledge and of exposure to critical feminist theories in Latin America, many U.S. theologians have naively and erroneously asserted that *mujerista theology* is "the" unitarian expression of the U.S. Latinas' theological activity. However, it is necessary to dispel this myth and to correct this error. Given the long-standing political meaning that such ideology has for Latin American feminists, and in view of its countermoving effects, I suggest that our theology must be clearly characterized by a *non-mujerista* orientation.

Those of us who self-identify as Latina feminist theologians, therefore, consciously seek to develop our theological languages in dynamic conversation with the plural feminist experience and thought of Latinas/Chicanas. We seek to accompany the spiritual experience of the grassroot Latina feminist women and men who struggle for authentic liberation in view of a new civilization based on justice, equality, and integrity for all. This position also differs from that of L. Martell Otero, who, writing from the Protestant *evangélica* perspective, argues that the *mujeres evangélicas* do not relate with feminist nor *mujerista* theologies because both are "predicated on *teología de liberación*. Most *evangélicas* look upon this theology with some suspicion, especially those who come from a politically conservative viewpoint."<sup>30</sup> The Latina feminist theologian, developing critically the reflective language of faith, wants to use the power of theology with its liberating traditions as a religious force which contributes to personal and social transformation and to the elimination of suffering born of violence and social injustice.<sup>31</sup>

But let us now briefly look at the social context of our theological activity.

#### CURRENT CONTEXT OF REALITY

Latina feminist theology expresses, in religious language, our commitment and vision "of a new model of society and of civilization free of systemic injustice and violence due to patriarchal domination. It seeks to affirm new paradigms of social relationships that are capable to fully sustain human dignity and the integrity of creation."<sup>32</sup> The

relevance and urgency of this language can be appreciated better in relation to the context of reality where our theological activity takes place. This context determines the methodological characteristics, the principles of theologizing, and the tasks ahead for Latina feminist theology.

What factors might reflect the true face of our present reality? I have given priority to *indicators* related to people's quality of life, their access to goods, to knowledge, and to social inclusion, as these benefit or harm the various social subjects at the global and local levels. I have chosen this route because I want to *provide specific data* supporting the recent orientation of feminist theory and theology toward what S. Saldívar-Hull calls "material geopolitical issues that redirect feminist discourse,"<sup>33</sup> what C. Sandoval calls "another kind of critical apparatus" that attends to "global-geopolitical struggles,"<sup>34</sup> and what E. Schüssler Fiorenza calls "a critical systemic analysis of domination."<sup>35</sup> I simply want to show, based on an honest look at quantitative material, the naked facts that cry out for the reconstruction of the feminist critical apparatus.

At the end of the twentieth century, much of the available information demonstrates that the four most prominent characteristics of the global reality are in unceasing growth: poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and social insecurity. We have begun the twenty-first century, therefore, with major questions about the possible contributions of religions in general, and of feminist theologies in particular, to the historical actualization of social justice, equality, human rights, and the well-being of all around the globe. These characteristics are the product and consequence of the current capitalist, neoliberal global economic paradigm.

As I have noted elsewhere, this paradigm "presents itself as the ultimate response to the human search for happiness and humanization. It not only imposes itself as the dominant force of geoeconomic, of geopolitical, and of geocultural reach, but also carries a particular conception of civilization, of understanding humanity, and of what social relations should be."<sup>36</sup> A. M. Ezcurra observes that although this dominant paradigm is mobile and changing, its invariable thesis is that the capitalist market constitutes the optimum instrument for human development and for the sustainable management of ecological resources.<sup>37</sup> The current capitalist market, as Jesuit scholar X. Gorostiaga indicates, "attempts to present as unavoidable a homo-

geneous and neoliberal globalization of the world market based on privatization, on competition, and on liberalization of the economies, under the aegis of the international financial institutions,"<sup>38</sup> especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The market's globalization project contains a rhetoric of "democratic values" and a "firm internationalist will" for a "global democratization."<sup>39</sup> Its communications technology is globalizing a culture that promotes individualistic values of competition and self-gratification. However, in terms of real human development, of democratic participation, and of ecologically responsible management, the naked facts prove that such a project is failing dramatically. The driving law of perfecting technology so that it can save money by reducing employment is resulting in massive human exclusion. F. Morales-Pérez rightly notes that "long ago, misery, hunger, institutionalized violence, injustice, and oppression were globalized for three-fourths of humanity."<sup>40</sup>

The unceasing deterioration of the quality of life for the majority of humans, the growing violence, the fragmentation and polarization of societies, and the continuing exclusion of women can be seen in the following data. I must stress from the outset that I use and present data *only as indicative* of the conflicting locations, positions, and experiences of the various social subjects, not as statistics "carved in stone."

#### THE WORLD'S PANORAMA<sup>41</sup>

The dream of the capitalist neoliberal global economy to establish global integration through global markets, global technology, global ideas, and global well-being has truly become a nightmare for the majority of the world's population. According to the United Nations 1999 Human Development Report, the globalization of markets, instead of resulting in global integration, has deepened and expanded economic imbalance and social inequality. In this global paradigm, it is the world's rich who benefit most at the expense of the poor, most of whom are women and children. Such a paradigm is controlled by the world's seven richest countries, led by the United States of America, by the transnational banks and corporations, and by the new mega-billionaires. According to X. Gorostiaga, these are the hegemonic subjects of the capitalist neoliberal global economy.<sup>42</sup> These subjects can be further identified as a *kyriarchal power elite* who, as

rightly pointed out by E. Schüssler Fiorenza, maintain "an overarching system of male domination."<sup>43</sup> These subjects are also directly responsible for the "complex multiplicative interstructuring of gender, race, class, and colonial dominations and their imbrication with each other."<sup>44</sup> In a mobile *kyriarchal paradigm*, the poor countries and oppressed peoples have little influence and little voice in today's global policy-making forums.

For example, in terms of population, the United Nations celebrated the "Day of Six Billion" on October 12, 1999. Of this population figure, 19 percent are located in the affluent countries of the Northern and 81 percent in the poor countries of the Southern Hemisphere. As of April 2000, the United States represented only 4.53 percent of the world's population yet consumed 25 percent of the world's resources. In global terms of distribution of goods and resources, by the late 1990s the one-fifth of the world's people living in the highest-income countries had 86 percent of the world's products and resources, while the bottom one-fifth had just 1 percent. Of the 82 percent of world export markets, the bottom one-fifth had just 1 percent. Of the 68 percent of foreign direct investment, the bottom one-fifth had just 1 percent. Of the 74 percent of world telephone lines, today's basic means of communication, the bottom one-fifth had just 1.5 percent. The world's richest countries, with only 19 percent of the global population, have 71 percent of global trade in goods and services and 58 percent of foreign direct investment. Infant mortality in 1998 (calculated as 1 infant death per 1,000 live births) were: 6 in Western Europe, 6 in North America, 33 in Latin America and the Caribbean, 51 in the Near East and North Africa, 59 in Asia, and 92 in sub-Saharan Africa. A baby born in sub-Saharan Africa is far more likely to die in infancy than a child born anywhere else. A child born in Latin America or Asia can expect to live between seven and thirteen fewer years, respectively, than a child born in one of the world's more affluent regions.

More than a quarter of the 4.5 billion people in developing countries still do not have some of life's most basic choices: survival beyond age 40, access to knowledge, and minimum private and public services. In the poor countries, one in seven children of primary school age is out of school, and nearly 1.3 billion people do not have access to clean water. About 840 million are malnourished. An estimated 1.3 billion people live on incomes of less than \$1 a day. In

contrast, the world's 200 richest people more than doubled their net worth in the four years prior to 1998, to more than \$1 trillion. The assets of the top 3 billionaires are more than the combined assets of all the least developed countries and their 600 million people.

These imbalances are more alarming given the environmental degradation that threatens people worldwide and undercuts the livelihoods of at least a half-billion people. Deforestation benefits the one-fifth of the world's people who live in the richest countries because they consume 84 percent of the world's paper.

As for distribution of workload in the family and resources for advancement, high levels of inequality prevail in terms of gender.<sup>45</sup> At the world level, women have fewer opportunities to access advanced education and positions of influence. The global market economy gives few incentives and few rewards for it. Everywhere in the world, societies have allocated women much of the responsibility and the burden for household care. Women spend two-thirds of their work in unpaid activities, while men only one-fourth. Families, nations, and corporations have long counted on free or underpaid caregiver services from a female labor force. Women increasingly participate in labor markets, yet they continue to carry the burden of unpaid caregiver services. In addition, the traffic of women and girls for sexual exploitation—500,000 a year in Western Europe alone—is one of the most heinous violations of human rights, estimated to be a \$7 billion business.

As for communications technology, the Internet plays a significant role in the globalization of markets and of global conversations.<sup>46</sup> However, 88 percent of users live in industrialized countries that collectively represent just 17 percent of the world's population. English prevails in almost 80 percent of all Web sites, yet less than one in ten people worldwide speaks it. The literally well-connected have an overpowering advantage over the unconnected poor, whose voices and concerns are being left out of the global conversation. In terms of gender, men prevail as Internet users worldwide: 93 percent in China, 84 percent in Russia, 83 percent in Japan, 75 percent in Brazil, and 62 percent in the United States of America. The gap in the production of knowledge is greater than the gap in distribution of income and resources: 96 percent of the world's research is concentrated in the 19 percent of highest-income countries, and half of it is centralized in the United States.

## THE U.S. PANORAMA

Although the United States is the leading subject of the capitalist neoliberal global economy, poverty affects the lives of millions of its people. As of April 1, 2000, the United States had nearly 275.6 million inhabitants, of whom about 134.8 million were male and 140.8 million were female. The total Latino/a population was well over 35 million at the beginning of the twenty-first century, given the March 1997 total documented at 29.7 million. The Latino/a population was further identified by national/ethnic descent in millions as approximately: 18.8 Mexican; 3.2 Puerto Rican; 1.3 Cuban; 4.3 Central and South American; and 2.2 "other Hispanic." The population of Mexican descent remains the largest group and continues to expand. Between 1980 and 1997, the Mexican share of U.S. Latino/as rose from 59 percent to 64 percent. In terms of poverty by race in 1997, white non-Latinos/as showed the lowest percentages at 8.8 percent, followed by 17.3 percent for Cubans, 21 percent for Central and South Americans, 28.4 percent for black non-Latinos/as, 30 percent for "other Hispanics," 31.2 percent for Mexicans, and 36.1 percent for Puerto Ricans.<sup>47</sup> Numbers show that U.S. pets are treated better than humans: in 1998, there were 64.1 million cats and 63.8 million dogs in the United States, while only 1 percent of legally blind people used guide dogs; U.S. pet owners spent \$9.3 billion on cat and dog food, \$100 million on cat treats, and \$1 billion on dog treats.<sup>48</sup> These amounts could have provided better human nutrition, health, and education for the poor around the world.

Current documentation shows that the poverty rates for children, minorities, and families headed by women are well above the average of all U.S. people. Of the 12.2 million U.S. households maintained by women in 1995, 1.5 million were headed by Latinas. Data from the year 2000 are expected to show a significant increase in households maintained by Latinas. Women continue to earn less than men, in part because of differences in educational levels and years of work experience, but also because of traditional gender bias in salary levels. Poor women heads of families with dependent children have limited opportunities to attend school, which further obstructs employment opportunities.

Latina women are one of the fastest-growing population groups in the nation. Of these, by the end of 1996, the largest subgroup was women of Mexican origin (5.7 million), followed by women of Puerto Rican origin (1.1 million), and women of Cuban origin (485,000). The

remaining 2.3 million were of other Hispanic descent. The highest rate of unemployment, however, continued to plague women of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent in 1996. White Cuban-American women, who generally have higher educational attainment than the non-white Latinas, have a lower unemployment rate. Most non-white Latinas (*mestizas*, blacks, and Native Americans) are exploited in job categories that require few skills and little training, offer low wages, and give no opportunities to attend school.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of age and education,<sup>50</sup> data demonstrate that the Latino/a population in the United States is young. It is estimated that 50 percent are under the age of 26, and only 4 percent of Latinos/as are over the age of 65. This represents a higher school-age population and a trend of *what the future workforce will be* in the United States. Among the nation's population ages 25 and over in 1995, 83 percent were at least high school graduates and 24 percent had at least a bachelor's degree. In the Latino/a community, however, 53.7 percent were high school graduates and only 9.3 percent held a bachelor's degree or higher.

Among younger adults, Latinos/as have the lowest educational level, while non-Latino/a whites and Asians have the highest. Nearly 40 percent of Latinos/as ages 25 to 44 in 1998 never finished high school, compared with 18 percent of Native Americans, 14 percent of blacks, 10 percent of Asians, and 7 percent of non-Latino/a whites. The unemployment rate for teenage Latinas was 25.1 percent in 1996. Contributing to this is their higher high school dropout rate and generally greater difficulty communicating in English.

Poor non-white Latinas are less likely than other minority groups to attend or graduate from college. U.S. Native Americans also have a relatively low likelihood of graduating from high school or college. Poverty, uneven access to good schools and cultural and linguistic barriers explain some of this lower educational attainment among Latinos/as and Native Americans. In light of this general panorama, I believe that further critical analysis is needed to examine the widening gap among Latinas along lines of socioeconomic status, race, and ethnicity.

## LATINA WOMEN IN THE U.S. THEOLOGICAL PANORAMA

We begin the twenty-first century with the conscious determination of continuing our struggles against the exclusion of Latina women from the theological activity. Our capacity and ability to articulate

the epistemic rationality and conceptual theological language have been denied to Latina women, especially to *mestizas*, blacks, and Native Americans. The fact that we are very few women theologians throughout the Americas is not due to our lack of will or vocation, but to the impact on our lives of the interlocking systemic forces of colonization, of racist and sexist exclusion, and of socioeconomic injustice. A. Castillo notes that "because we have been historically barred from the writing profession [it is assumed] that we have nothing of interest, much less of value to contribute."<sup>51</sup> Latina women in the United States, notably the non-white poor, are perceived to be "excellent" for occupations such as cashiers, janitors, dry cleaners, maids, textile operators, cooks, harvesting *campesinas*,<sup>52</sup> and so on, but rarely are we pictured as university professors, scientists, researchers, or any other professions that involve the pursuit of knowledge. In this context, T. Córdoba rightfully calls us to acknowledge that "colonization is the historical legacy that continues to haunt us, even today . . . the University is an unfriendly place for us."<sup>53</sup> This call demands that we undertake a critical and rigorous feminist analysis of the power forces that prevent Latinas from access to higher education. The truth is, as D. González notes, that "our situation in the academy is not improving radically or rapidly."<sup>54</sup> Such analysis cannot overlook the analytical tradition of Chicana feminism, noted by A. García, of the connection between capitalism, racism, and kyriarchy.<sup>55</sup> I could not agree more with S. Saldivar-Hull when she says that "the realities of women of color under capitalism in the United States urge the Latina women to write."<sup>56</sup>

For Latina theologians, intellectual activity certainly requires the radical transformation of the theological academic space through a concerted effort of U.S. theologians and churches everywhere. We need to bring about effective means and resources to support the contribution of Latina women to the theological construction in general and to feminist theology in particular. In support of this, I want to present the current *indicative* data of the situation of Latinas in the U.S. theological arena. I am focusing on the most prominent theological organizations in the United States.<sup>57</sup>

Before I proceed, I need to clarify several points. My objective in this section is not an exhaustive study but rather an initial approach to the percentages that indicate the involvement of Latinas in the U.S. theological arena. To my knowledge, this is the first such attempt in the history of U.S. Christianity. I want to clarify that in my view, the generic term "Latina" proved insufficient or limited in ex-

ploring how the majority of *non-white* Latinas are affected in our access to theology. By way of further clarification of this section I must point out that the data provided by some theological organizations represent only estimates due to the absence in their documentation of declarative categories of race and of ethnicity. And finally, in my focus on percentages, I am not including the membership policies of the theological organizations that I address next.

1. *The American Academy of Religion (AAR)*. As of March 2000, AAR records indicated a total membership of 10,238. Of the 8,866 who declared gender, 65.55 percent were male and 34.45 percent were female. Latinos/as represented only 1.58 percent of the total membership, 1.09 percent male and 0.49 percent female. This 0.49 percent included Protestant and Roman Catholic Latinas.
2. *The Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA)*. As of March 2000, the CTSA records indicated an estimated total membership of 1,400. Of this total, 76.07 percent were male and 23.93 percent were female. Latinos/as represented only 1.29 percent of the total membership, 0.86 percent male and 0.43 percent female.
3. *The College Theology Society (CTS)*. As of January 2000, the CTS records indicated a total membership of 879. Of this total, 62.68 percent were male and 37.32 percent were female. Latinos/as were estimated to represent only 1.48 percent of the total membership, 0.79 percent male and 0.69 percent female.
4. *The Black Catholic Theological Symposium (BCTS)*. The situation of U.S. black Catholic theologians is very similar to that of Latinas/os. Their general number is very low, and their contributions are easily dismissed by the hegemonic theological academy. As is the case of Latinas (both white and non-white), the number of black female theologians is disproportionately low compared to that of males. Also, in spite of the growing number of black Latinas (many of whom are of Puerto Rican and of Cuban descent), no BCTS member is of Latino/a origin or descent. As of March 2000, the BCTS total membership was documented at 71. Of this total, 69.01 percent were male and 30.99 percent were female. In the three existing membership categories, 50 were full members, 68 percent of them male and 32 percent female; 12 were associate members, 75 percent of them male and 25 percent female; 9 were affiliate members, 67 percent of them male and 33 percent female.
5. *The Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS)*. As of April 2000, ACHTUS records indicated 90 as its total membership. Of this total, 58 percent were Latinos, 24 percent were Lati-

nas, and 18 percent were non-Latinos/as. In the four existing membership categories, 35 were active members, 77 percent of them male and 23 percent female; 37 were associate members, 70 percent of them male and 30 percent female; 4 were honorary members, 100 percent of them male; and 14 were affiliate members, 50 percent of them male and 50 percent female. In the active membership category (those who hold doctoral degrees in theology, scriptures, ministry, or religious studies), only 8 of us are active Catholic women theologians. Of these 8 Latinas, who include whites and *mestizas*, 3 are of Cuban descent, 2 of Mexican descent, 1 of Ecuadorian descent, 1 of Salvadorean descent, and 1 of other Hispanic descent. There are no blacks or Native Americans in the ACHTUS membership. In terms of academic position, only 3 Latinas hold the associate rank, and 1 holds the assistant rank.

6. *The Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology (JHLT)*. Jean-Pierre Ruíz, the journal's editor, states that "by the conclusion of this volume year [2000], we will have published more than 92 articles by 69 different authors—50 men and 19 women."<sup>58</sup> Of the 19 women authors, 11 are Latinas, 3 are blacks, and 5 are European-Americans.

For J. P. Ruíz, the historical exclusion of Latina women from the theological activity is a challenge of primary importance that must be addressed. For him, "the numbers speak clearly about the real and pressing need to hear the voices of women . . . If our theologies are going to make a difference in redressing the multiple structural and institutional oppression of women, then we must do more, lest we continue to be even unwittingly complicit through silence and neglect. At the same time, our advocacy must avoid the sort of patronizing behavior by which Latino male theologians claim to speak for Latinas in ways that keep them from speaking for themselves."<sup>59</sup>

### CENTRAL FEATURES OF LATINA FEMINIST THEOLOGY

For many of us grassroot Latina, black, and Native American women, access to higher education and to intellectual life is a struggle, not a luxury or a given. This is true for Roman Catholics and for Protestants alike. Latina feminist theology as reflective religious language, as conceptual elaboration, as cognitive space, as intellectual process, as critical reflection on our faith experiences, and as systematic articulation of our socioreligious practices seeking justice, becomes for us a key language with which we say who we are and how we seek to affect the present and future direction of society, culture, academy, and the churches. In M. S. Copeland's words, "In conformity with our baptismal vocation, we are naming ourselves as church—not some-

thing to which we belong, but who *we are*."<sup>60</sup> In the present context of a globalized *kyriarchal paradigm* where unceasing growth of poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and social insecurity prevail, G. Anzaldúa's remarks become more central: "We need theories that examine the implications of situations and look at what's behind them . . . We need to de-academize theory and to connect the community to the academy."<sup>61</sup> Our theological activity and religious experience, as Orlando Espín ably suggests, can and should become a "prophetic critique" of such globalization and a space of "fierce defense of local rights."<sup>62</sup> Our activity stands as a constitutive "knot" of the global feminist network that strengthens the sociopolitical and ecclesial forces seeking, as E. Schüssler Fiorenza insists, "not just to understand but to change relations of marginalization and domination."<sup>63</sup> With this in mind, I want to present a brief sketch of the foundations of Latina feminist theology. I have chosen to speak of foundations because the following aspects are the primary conditions for the existence of this theology; they determine its direction, its methodological characteristics, its principles of articulation, and its future tasks.

### PRECONDITIONS OF THEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTION<sup>64</sup>

Latina feminist theology understands that if the whole of theology is to make an impact on today's reality, at least five preconditions are required of theologians everywhere: entering *Nepantla*; fostering *la facultad*; honesty with the real; *empapamiento* of hope; and an *evolving* truth. *Nepantla* refers to our willingness to infuse our theologies with an authentic dialogical dimension. It means that we choose to enter, as Orlando Espín suggests, "there where abundant dialogue occurs," "there where relationships happen," or "there where we are 'both-and.'"<sup>65</sup>

In this new era of globalization, entering *Nepantla* means for theologians that we are willing to engage in new explorations about God and ourselves from the creative "border" locations. According to G. Anzaldúa, "*Nepantla* is the Nahuatl word for an in-between state, that uncertain terrain one crosses when moving from one place to another, when changing from one class, race, or gender position to another, when traveling from the present identity into a new identity."<sup>66</sup>

Elaborating on Anzaldúa's notion of *la facultad*, Chela Sandoval explains this term as "a developed subjectivity capable of transformation and relocation, movement guided by the learned capacity to

read, renovate, and make signs on behalf of the dispossessed."<sup>67</sup> As theologians confronting our lived realities with the Gospel's message, we need consistency in our efforts at cultivating our powers of *la facultad* for theology to maintain its vitality and dynamism.

*Honesty* with the real is a deliberate option for seeing our world as it is, marred by suffering born out of social injustice. For us, the most honest way to deal with this suffering is by joining others in a common effort against social injustice.<sup>68</sup>

*Empapamiento* refers to our ability of "saturating ourselves," of "imbuing ourselves," of "permeating ourselves" with hope so that we explore more freely the open possibilities of our reality and bring about the open possibilities of our transforming imagination.

An *evolving-becoming* truth as a precondition refers to our understanding of "truth" not as a finished product created by Western monocultural kyriarchal ideologies and religions, but as an evolving process of egalitarian exchange of *culturally plural truths*. Only through dialogical engagement do we all become contributors to the "truth process."<sup>69</sup> These preconditions indicate that our activity needs to continue developing in the direction of *intercultural* theological construction.

#### MAJOR METHODOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS

This theology articulates our vision of justice and liberation from within the plural and dynamic reality of our *mestiza* intercultural communities. It gathers in a systematic way the motives, reasons, beliefs, values, and perceptions that both validate and challenge our existence. In the words of Olga Villa-Parra, "We are always hungry for understanding, we engage in the eternal human search for reason, for grouping things together so that we make sense of them. We want to understand what drives us in life."<sup>70</sup>

Consequently, the methodological characteristics of this theology include the historicity of the personal and communal reality that we *are*, which gives us the freedom to open hopeful possibilities and to deal courageously with limitations. It also focuses on the daily-life plural experiences of excluded Latina women as the starting point of critical reflection. The anthological imagination as a *modus operandis* deliberately exercises "what we have come to call *teología de conjunto*."<sup>71</sup> Latina feminist theology apprehends the intercultural nature of our being, our knowledges, theories, and experiences,<sup>72</sup> and

our analyses in theological construction adopt an interdisciplinary approach.

#### KEY PRINCIPLES<sup>73</sup>

Like any other Christian theology, Latina feminist theology has the reality of divine revelation as its fundamental principle of knowledge and discernment. Such revelation always takes place and is interpreted in historical terms. The core content and ultimate finality of God's revelation is resumed in the term *salvation*. As the most precious gift of God to humans and to the world around us, salvation is understood by Latina feminist theology as liberation from every oppression.<sup>74</sup> Thus the historical process of liberation from poverty, social injustice, and exclusion becomes the most effective and credible manifestation of God's salvation.<sup>75</sup> This salvation/liberation, as E. Schüssler Fiorenza stresses, "is not possible outside the world or without the world. G\*d's vision of a renewed creation entails not only a 'new' heaven but also a 'renewed,' qualitatively different earth freed from kyriarchal exploitation and dehumanization."<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, our perception and discernment of God's revelation and salvation/liberation are guided by egalitarian grounding principles.

The faith of the people in popular religion is evident in the religious imagination that permeates the everyday life of the Latino/a community. There is no doubt that the majority of practicing Protestants and Roman Catholics in this community are women. There is no doubt that our communities, whether by culture, by personal conviction, or by the mere human orientation to the transcendent, are constituted by a deep sense of the sacred. This sense involves the whole of our everyday lives. There is no doubt that religious faith is a major dimension in the life of grassroot Latinas. Due to the blending of kyriarchal European religious colonization with the kyriarchal indigenous religious traditions, religious faith has contributed to deepen our oppression and exclusion. However, there is no doubt either that throughout our history, popular religion has provided the liberating principles of Christian faith to support and validate the grassroot people's struggles of resistance and emancipation. Grassroot women are both the majority and the primary carriers or subjects of popular religion,<sup>77</sup> and their various movements speak of their articulation of a religious faith aimed at the transformation of kyriarchal domination. In this sense, the term "popular" becomes an analytical category because it not only refers to the grassroot majorities, but also

to socio-ecclesial groups that organize and mobilize themselves to change oppression and exclusion.<sup>78</sup> Critically aware of its force in furthering liberating purposes, Latina feminist theology takes the faith experience of women and men in popular religion as its principle of coherence.

The feminist option for the poor and oppressed also underlies this theology. As the indicative percentages of the previous section show, the everyday life of grassroots Latinas is marked by sociopolitical, economic, cultural, academic, ecclesial, and theological exclusion. In the present context, we should not and cannot give up an explicit option of standing with poor and oppressed women. In feminist terms, this is an option for the authentic life and humanization of all, an option for the life-giving cause of popular social groups, an option for ourselves as excluded humanity struggling for justice. For many of us, this option is not only the most honest course in a context of widespread exclusion, but also the most coherent way of being authentically Christian.

In its transformative practice for liberation, Latina feminist theology seeks to join efforts to eliminate the systemic kyriarchal forces that daily erode the dignity of women and of those around us. Consequently, it is from within our plural practices for transformation aimed at justice and liberation that we discern, recognize, and name God's revelation. There may be other languages that reflect critically on our practices, but what makes Latina thought *theological* is that it formally focuses on our day-to-day practices sustained by the liberating visions and traditions of Christian religion and faith.<sup>79</sup> There may be other religious languages that reflect on our religious customs and traditions, but what makes Latina thought *liberative* is that it deliberately focuses on our daily activities aimed at transformation toward greater justice. Our theological activity starts from these plural endeavors seeking justice and liberation and returns to them in a fecund and a creative tension. With this principle, we are asserting that theology's identity and meaning are only found in the very content and finality of God's revelation, which is liberation. We aim our theological endeavors at the systemic transformation of kyriarchal domination for a new way of living so that God's liberation is actualized.

Socio-ecclesial equality is likewise a guiding principle of Latina feminist theology. The sociopolitical principle of *equality* is a moral and a theological imperative for us in our current context. The consequences of inequality are lived only by us, the "despised identi-

ties"<sup>80</sup> of society, of the theological academy, and of the churches. Therefore, the struggle for equality must give coherence to our theories, theologies, methodologies, and practices.

#### CONCLUSION: FOUR MAJOR TASKS

I want to close my contribution to this book by highlighting some of the urgent tasks faced by Latina feminist theology in the present and future. I would argue that the first task is precisely that of continuing to develop in a consistent and a systematic way the various aspects involved in its theological foundations. This task must include a feminist critical approach to our sources of theological construction, such as *mestizaje*, popular religion, Scripture and Magisterium, interdisciplinary studies, and intercultural theories and philosophical hermeneutics. All these contemporary and traditional sources must be expanded and enriched from the lived experiences of grassroots Latinas in our privileged space of *la vida cotidiana*. As for *mestizaje*, I want to mention the importance of continuing to explore the provocative reflections suggested by Z. Glass not only for black theology but for our entire theological activity.<sup>81</sup> As for Scripture as a traditional source of religious insight, with no doubt, I believe that *la biblia* occupies a central place in our religious identity, and it is important for Latina grassroots women. Because of these, I want to emphasize the urgency we have of encouraging and supporting the development of Latina feminist biblical hermeneutics. As for related studies and theories, I want to note the increasing pertinence of Latina/o and Chicana/o literature as a key source in our feminist theological activity.

The second task is that of continuing to claim our right to theological intellectual construction. This is a requirement not only to confront neocolonization, but more importantly to empower the socio-ecclesial popular forces committed to bringing about new realities in which equality, true democracy, and justice prevail. In this vein, I find no justification, no rational explanation, no acceptable excuse for maintaining such a low number of Latina theologians in Roman Catholicism and in Protestantism. In the case of Roman Catholics, which I know best, according to the bishops' own documentation, "80 percent of U.S. Hispanics are Catholic . . . [and] . . . by the second decade of the next century, the Church in the United States will very likely be over 50 percent Hispanic."<sup>82</sup> Facing this reality, I believe that the Roman Catholic bishops can and must take the responsibility of providing effective means and resources for the

theological education of Latinas. But their contribution must accept that this needed formal education of Latinas is for the development of a theology that both affirms justice and liberation and overcomes kyriarchal theologies. This responsibility extends to the bishops and their equivalents in the Protestant churches' hierarchies. No Christian church leader is excused from this responsibility.

The third task is that of more deeply connecting theology and spirituality in feminist terms. The feminist articulation of theology and spirituality is particularly urgent for several reasons, including the continuing self-alienation of grassroot Latina women that is maintained through their daily exposure to kyriarchal Christianity and religion; the growth of diverse Christian groups that promote among oppressed Latina women a metaphysical religious experience characterized by a naive, individualistic, and irrational religiosity that conceals the integral meaning of freedom and self-determination; and the need we have in the grassroot ministerial setting for educational processes that sustain the intellectual and reasoned dimensions of religious faith. Feminist spirituality provides creative spaces and conceptual frameworks for a critical interpretation and celebration of our faith experiences in tune with our liberating traditions.

The fourth task that I want to suggest is that of continuing our critical theological analyses of the impact of capitalist neoliberal globalization on the everyday life of grassroot Latinas. If salvation is to have any meaning in our lives, theology must help us to discern how that impact advances or prohibits justice, liberation, and human dignity. In facing these tasks, the collaborative work between Protestant and Roman Catholic Latina feminists is a must. In the final analysis, as faith seeking understanding, our theological activity is nothing more than our critical appropriation of the possibilities opened by God's revelation in our lives and our faith response to it seeking to actualize historically the possibilities of salvation.

## NOTES

1. See Gloria Anzaldúa, "Haciendo Caras, una entrada. An Introduction," in *Making Face, Making Soul Haciendo Caras. Creative and Critical Perspectives of Feminists of Color*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa, xxvii; Cherríe Moraga, "Entering the Lives of Others: Theory in the Flesh," in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, ed. Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, 23; and Gina Vargas, "Nuevas dinámicas de la globalización," in

Feminismos Plurales: VIII Encuentro Feminista Latinoamericano y del Caribe, by Women-Mujeres ALAI, Area de Mujeres, at <http://www.alainet.org/mujeres/feminismos/011.html>. My translation from Spanish.

2. I use the term Latinos/as for persons "born or raised in the United States of Latin American ancestry." See glossary in *From the Heart of Our People. Latino/a Explorations in Catholic Systematic Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espín and Miguel H. Díaz, 262. The term Chicanas/os is referred to as "persons of Mexican descent born or residing in the United States" in the preface to *Between Borders: Essays on Mexican/Chicana History*, ed. Adelaida R. del Castillo, vi. I use the term Latina/Chicana to indicate that not all Latinas are of Mexican ancestry. See also "The Basics: Who are Chicanas?" in *Making Face, Making Soul, a Chicana Feminist Homepage*, at <http://www.chicanas.com/whowhat.html#Who>.

3. On the meaning of this contemporary term which replaces the term "patriarchal/patriarchy" see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said. Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation*, 7-8, and *Jesus Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet. Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*, 14.

4. Sandra Ugarte, "Chicana Regional Conference," in *Chicana Feminist Thought. The Basic Historical Writings*, ed. Alma M. García, 155.

5. Cynthia Orozco, "Sexism in Chicano Studies and the Community," in *Chicana Voices: Intersections of Class, Race, and Gender*, ed. Teresa Córdova et al., 14.

6. My thanks to the Louisville Institute's Christian Faith and Life Sabbatical Grants Program for making possible my research for this chapter.

7. For a study of monocultural/intercultural philosophies see Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, *Hacia una filosofía intercultural latinoamericana and Interculturalidad y Globalización. Ejercicios de Crítica Filosófica Intercultural en el Contexto de la Globalización Neoliberal*. For a discussion of monocultural theories and theologies see María Pilar Aquino, "Theological Method in U.S. Latino/a Theology: Toward an Intercultural Theology for the Third Millennium," in *From the Heart of Our People*, ed. Orlando Espín and Miguel H. Díaz, 6-48.

8. M. Shawn Copeland, "Black, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American Theologies," in *The Modern Theologians. An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David F. Ford, 366.

9. Vicky L. Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows. Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America*, 100.

10. Ana Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers. Essays on Xicanisma*, 35.

11. Chela Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method: Feminists-of-Color Challenge the Canon," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Carla Trujillo, 356.

12. Martha P. Cotera, *The Chicana Feminist*, 9.

13. Anna NietoGómez, "La Feminista," in *Chicana Feminist Thought*, ed. Alma M. García, 89.

14. Anna NietoGómez, "Chicana Feminism," *Chicana Feminist Thought*, ed. A. M. García, 53.

15. Nancy Saporta Sternbach, Marysa Navarro-Aranguren, Patricia Chuchryk, and Sonia E. Alvarez, "Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to

San Bernardo," in *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*, ed. Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez, 209. My italics.

16. Beatriz M. Pesquera and Denise A. Segura, "There Is No Going Back: Chicanas and Feminism," in *Chicana Critical Issues. Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social*, ed. Norma Alarcón et al., 95–115.

17. See Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method," 352–370; and Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands. La Frontera. The New Mestiza*, 352–370.

18. See Sonia E. Alvarez, "Estados Unidos: Feminismos Diversos y Desplazamientos Desiguales," *Fempres*, Red de Comunicación Alternativa de la Mujer, at <http://www.fempres.cl/base/fem/alvarez.html>.

19. This understanding is from Cynthia Orozco, "Crónica Feminista," *La Gente* (February–March 1983): 8. My thanks to Professor Orozco for sending me hard-to-find pioneering materials of Latina/Chicana feminist thought.

20. See Anzaldúa, "Haciendo Caras, una entrada," xxv–xxvi.

21. Barbara Harlow, "Sites of Struggle: Immigration, Deportation, Prison, and Exile," in *Criticism in the Borderlands. Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture, and Ideology*, ed. Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar, 156.

22. This expression refers to the conclusions of the Latin American Catholic Bishops conference which took place in Medellín, Colombia, from August 26 to September 6, 1968. See Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops, *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council*, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1973).

23. See for example Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*; and Ignacio Ellacuría, *Conversión de la Iglesia al Pueblo de Dios. Para Anunciarlo y Realizarlo en la Historia*.

24. See for example María Pilar Aquino, "Presencia de la mujer en la tradición profética," *Servir* 88–89 (1980): 535–558; Aquino, "Women's Participation in the Church. A Catholic Perspective," in *With Passion and Compassion. Third World Women Doing Theology*, ed. Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 159–164; and Aquino, "La Visión Liberadora de Medellín en la Teología Feminista," *Teología con Rostro de Mujer*, edited by José Luis Burget and Rafael Aragón, *Alternativas* 16/17. Managua, Nicaragua: Editorial Lascasiana, 2000, 141–172.

25. Marcela Lagarde, "Claves Éticas para el Tercer Milenio," *Fempres*, at <http://www.fempres.cl/base/fem/lagarde.html>. My translation from Spanish.

26. See Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* and *En la Lucha. In the Struggle: Elaborating a Mujerista Theology*. See also my criticism of *mujerismo/mujerista* in "Teología Feminista Latinoamericana," a chapter of the excellent book *El Siglo de las Mujeres*, ed. Ana María Portugal and Carmen Torres, 233–251.

27. Raquel Rodríguez, "La Marcha de las Mujeres. Apuntes en torno al movimiento de mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe," *Revista Pasos*, no. 34 (1991): 11, note 6. My translation from Spanish.

28. Marta Lamas, "Ampliar la Acción Ciudadana," *Fempres*, at <http://www.fempres.cl/base/fem/lamas.html>. My translation from Spanish.

29. Marta Lamas, "De la identidad a la ciudadanía. Transformaciones en el imaginario político feminista," Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Chile, March 2000, at <http://rehue.csociales.uchile.cl/publicaciones/moebio/07/>. My translation from Spanish.

30. Loida Martell Otero, "Women Doing Theology: Una Perspectiva Evangélica," *Apuntes* 14/3 (1994): 72–73.

31. María Pilar Aquino, "Construyendo la Misión Evangelizadora de la Iglesia. Inculturación y Violencia Hacia las Mujeres," in *Entre la Indignación y la Esperanza. Teología Feminista Latinoamericana*, ed. Ana María Tepedino and María Pilar Aquino, 63–91.

32. See María Pilar Aquino, "Feminist Theologies," in *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, ed. Virginia Fabella and R. S. Sugirtharajah, 88–89.

33. Sonia Saldívar-Hull, "Feminism on the Border: From Gender Politics to Geopolitics," in *Criticism in the Borderlands*, ed. Calderón and J. Saldívar, 208.

34. Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method," 352, 355.

35. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam's Child*, 12.

36. María Pilar Aquino, "Economic Violence in Latin American Perspective," in *Women Resisting Violence. Spirituality for Life*, ed. Mary John Manzan and Mercy Amba Oduyoye et al., 102.

37. Ana María Ezcurra, "El neoliberalismo es un paradigma cambiante," *Revista Electrónica Latinoamericana de Teología*, at <http://www.uca.edu.ni/koinonia/relat/204.htm>.

38. Xabier Gorostiaga, S.J., "Mezcla ingobernable de Somalia y Taiwán o puente socialmente estable entre el norte y el sur del continente, entre el Atlántico y el Pacífico," Segundo Encuentro Mesoamericano de Filosofía, Universidad Centroamericana, at <http://www.uca.ni/ellacuria/ozgoros.htm>.

39. Ezcurra, "El neoliberalismo."

40. Francisco A. Morales-Pérez, "Lo globalizado como clave hermenéutica para una historización de la globalización desde América Latina," Segundo Encuentro Mesoamericano de Filosofía, at <http://www.uca.edu.ni/ellacuria/morales.htm>.

41. This section is based on *The United Nations Human Development Report 1999*, at <http://www.undp.org/hdro/report.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "Notes on the World POPClock and World Vital Events," at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/popwnote.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "World Population Profile: 1998–Highlights," at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/wp98001.html>; U.S. Department of Commerce Economics and Statistics Administration, "World Population at a Glance: 1998 and Beyond International Brief," at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/wp98.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "International Data Base (IDB)," at <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbnew.html>.

42. Xabier Gorostiaga, S.J., "Análisis Socioeconómico de América Latina y el Caribe," conference paper presented at the Latin American Encounter "Amerindia," Guatemala City, Guatemala, February 7–12, 2000.

43. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Ties That Bind: Domestic Violence against Women," in *Women Resisting Violence*, ed. Manzan and Oduyoye, 43.

44. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic. The Politics of Biblical Studies*, 5.

45. U.N. *Human Development Report 1999*.

46. See Xabier Gorostiaga, S.J., "La Civilización de la Copa de Champagne. Hechos," handout distributed during his conference presentation at the Latin American Encounter "Amerindia"; U.N. *Human Development Report 1999*; Emilio de Benito, "Internet agrava la distancia entre Ricos y Pobres," *El País Digital*, no. 1165, July 12, 1999, and "E-Muro," *El País Digital*, no. 1167, July 14, 1999, at <http://www.elpais.es/>. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, the disparity of Internet usage by gender in the United States is coming closer to disappearing. See U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and Economics and Information Administration, "Falling through the Net: Toward Digital Inclusion," October 16, 2000, at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/fttnoo/Falling.htm#33>.

47. On this paragraph see U.S. Population Reference Bureau, "A New Look at Poverty in America," September 1996, at [http://www.prb.org/topics/poverty\\_welfare.htm](http://www.prb.org/topics/poverty_welfare.htm); U.S. Census Bureau, "Demographic Indicators: 2000," at <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popcl.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "Detailed Tables," at <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/Hispanic/h097-1-05.html>; U.S. Census Bureau, "Poverty by Race/Ethnicity," Internet release date August 7, 1998, at <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/Hispanic/cps97/tab05-4.txt>.

48. John MacIntyre, "Amount That Americans Spend on Pets Each Year," *Southwest Airlines' Magazine, Spirit* (June 1998): 157; Gorostiaga, "La Copa de Champagne."

49. On this paragraph see U.S. Population Reference Bureau, "New Look at Poverty"; U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, "Facts on Working Women, Women of Hispanic Origin in the Labor Force," at [http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb\\_pubs/hisp97.htm](http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/hisp97.htm).

50. National Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, "Demographics," at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/hispanicaffairs/demo.htm>; U.S. Population Reference Bureau, "America's Racial and Ethnic Minorities," at <http://www.prb.org/pubs/bulletin/bu54-3/part5.htm#edu>; U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau.

51. Castillo, *Massacre of the Dreamers*, 4.

52. See the list of "leading occupations for Latina women," in U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau, "Facts on Working Women."

53. Teresa Córdova, "Power and Knowledge: Colonialism in the Academy," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Trujillo, 15, 20.

54. Deena J. González, "Speaking Secrets: Living Chicana Theory," in *Living Chicana Theory*, ed. Trujillo, 47.

55. Alma M. García, "The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse, 1970-1980," *Gender and Society* 3, no. 2 (June 1989): 217-238.

56. Saldívar-Hull, "Feminism on the Border," 207.

57. I want to thank the following persons for providing me with the data included in this section: Joe DeRose from the AAR Membership Services; Mary Ann Hinsdale, Executive Secretary of the CTSA; Brother Alexis Doval,

Executive Secretary of the CTS; M. Shawn Copeland, from the BCTS; Francisco Lozada, Executive Secretary of ACHTUS; and Jean-Pierre Ruíz, Head Editor of the JHLT. A word of special thanks to Carmen Nanko, the Treasurer of ACHTUS, for the most updated information on the ACHTUS membership and to my colleague Lance Nelson at the University of San Diego for creating the percentages spreadsheet of the theological organizations that I researched.

58. Jean-Pierre Ruíz, "The Current State of Latina/o Theological Research: A Catholic Perspective. From *We Are a People* to *From the Heart of Our People*" [paper presented at "Grounding the Next American Century: A National Conference on Funding Latino/a Theological Research," Center for the Study of Popular Catholicism, University of San Diego, February 25-26, 2000], p. 15.

59. *Ibid.*, 16.

60. M. Shawn Copeland, "Method in Emerging Black Catholic Theology," in *Taking Down Our Harps. Black Catholics in the United States*, 122.

61. Anzaldúa, "Haciendo Caras, una entrada," xxv-xxvi.

62. Orlando O. Espín, "La Experiencia religiosa en el contexto de la globalización," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 7, no. 2 (November 1999): 26-28.

63. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Rhetoric and Ethic*, 7.

64. For additional theological background on this paragraph see my "Theological Method," 20-23.

65. Orlando O. Espín, "Immigration, Territory, and Globalization: Theological Reflections," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 7, no. 3 (2000): 56.

66. Gloria Anzaldúa, "Chicana Artists: Exploring nepantla, el lugar de la frontera," *NACLA Report on the Americas* no. 1, vol. 27 (1993): 39.

67. See Sandoval, "Mestizaje as Method," 359. See also Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 38-39.

68. Jon Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy. Taking the Crucified People from the Cross*, 35-36.

69. On this notion of "truth" see Fernet-Betancourt, *Hacia una filosofía intercultural*, 23-25.

70. Olga Villa-Parra (speech delivered at "Grounding the Next American Century" conference, University of San Diego).

71. This insight comes from Jean-Pierre Ruíz, 8. The "anthological imagination" is also clearly visible among Latina/Chicana feminist scholars who cooperate to assemble reflections and books. On the term *teología de conjunto*, see the glossary in *From the Heart of Our People*, ed. Espín and Díaz, 263.

72. See Fernet-Betancourt, *Hacia una filosofía intercultural*.

73. For additional theological background on this paragraph see my "Theological Method," 23-32.

74. María Pilar Aquino, "Salvation/Liberation," in *Our Theology: Manual de Teología Latina en los EE.UU.*, ed. Allan Figueroa Deck, Ismael García et al.

75. For further reading on "salvation" as "liberation" see Ignacio Ellacuría, "The Historicity of Christian Salvation," in *Mysterium Liberationis. Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J., and

Jon Sobrino, S.J., 251–289; and Ignacio Ellacuría, “Salvación en la Historia,” in *Conceptos Fundamentales del Cristianismo*, ed. Casiano Floristán and Juan José Tamayo, 1252–1274.

76. Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam's Child*, 27.

77. Orlando O. Espín, *The Faith of the People. Theological Reflections on Popular Catholicism*, 4–5, and “An Exploration into the Theology of Grace and Sin,” in *From the Heart of Our People*, ed. Espín and Díaz, 127–132.

78. On the term “popular” as analytical category see Helio Gallardo, “Notas sobre la sociedad civil,” *Revista Pasos* 57 (1995): 24.

79. María Pilar Aquino, “Perspectives on a Latina’s Feminist Liberation Theology,” in *Frontiers of Hispanic Theology in the United States*, ed. Allan Figueroa Deck, 23–40.

80. Copeland, “Method in Emerging Black Catholic Theology,” 121.

81. Zipporah G. Glass, “The Language of Mestizaje in a Renewed Rhetoric of Black Theology,” *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology* 7, no. 2 (November 1999): 32–42.

82. National Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, “Demographics.”

## CHAPTER 8

## THE UNNAMED WOMAN

## JUSTICE, FEMINISTS, AND THE UNDOCUMENTED WOMAN

DAISY L.  
MACHADO

The person of Hagar in the Genesis narrative has been used as a symbol by womanists. Delores Williams finds similarities between the story of Hagar and the reality of African-American women, especially Hagar’s role as slave who is sexually used by her master and is mistreated by the master’s wife.<sup>1</sup> The story of Hagar is one filled with pain and human failing. It is a multi-vocal story that speaks to the reader on many levels, and the tale it tells is one that encompasses gender, race, abuse of power, shame, cultural values, and social roles.

Yet when speaking from my social and geographic location, as a Latina who lives in the borderlands of Texas, I discover in the narrative of the *unnamed woman* found in Judges 19 a biblical paradigm that talks about the reality of the world in which I live and in which the *undocumented woman* can be found.<sup>2</sup> In my own reading, Hagar is not only a slave, she is also a foreigner, alien, outsider whose outside legal status only increases her vulnerability.

The concubine of the Judges narrative shows us the horrors of violence inflicted upon a woman who, though not a slave, is, like Hagar, a foreigner, outsider. The marginal legal status of the concubine leaves her defenseless, voiceless, and ultimately meaningless. I do not intend the biblical narrative to parallel the thousands