

Resurrection of the Dreamers



In an infinite universe, every point can be regarded as the center.

—STEPHEN HAWKING, *A Brief History of Time*

IN COMPILING THESE ESSAYS, I sought to speak about millions of women who live on both sides of the border and whose lives for generations have been reduced to the level of dehumanized utilities. I have not always spoken from my personal experience because unlike millions of women, as a writer I have a voice that can be heard. This fact has marked my life as indisputably distinct from those who do not. I spotlighted that which has been deemed traditional and therefore, sacred in most of our lives, the Christian God, mothers, men, and the preservation of Mexican customs. In doing so, I found that our lives are guided by a deep religiosity that transcends male-constructed theologies.

What Europeans added to the subjugation of women in Mesoamerica was racism. Ethnocentrism already existed among the pre-Conquest nations. The Aztecs, the most powerful people in Mesoamerica at the time of the Conquest, had already entered the systematic process of controlling women, a factor of imperialism. To illustrate the point, we have only to remember the most famous *india* in Mexican history, Malintzin. Born of royalty, she was sold by her mother into slavery so that her inheritance would be given instead to her brother. Malintzin was later given as a gift to Cortés. In México giving birth to the son of the Conqueror of México made her be viewed as a traitor, although she was a girl and a slave. Cortés married her to one of his men. Her life at all times was one of property—to be sold or given away.

Throughout Western history two schools of thought have rivaled each other to help society make meaning: the rational and the intuitive. The first relies on the premise that an individual can be detached from his subject and can make empirical conclusions based on measures, qualification, and linear deductions. The subject is objectified and the investigator maintains the position of being detached. Intuitive thought (the realm of the poet) is associated with mysticism and is devalued by Western culture. Faith (evoking powers that cannot be rationalized) was legitimized by rational society in the way of institutionalized religion (giving credibility to faith by offering material evidence: i.e., the Bible or miracles when validated by the church). Intuition in scientific and academic research is often referred to as a “hunch” but is only convincing when qualified by external measurements.

In poetry (which relies on intuition), any statement may be made and go undisputed. Irrational-seeming verses can be explained as metaphors or whimsies of the poet. The essay form doesn't forgive such deviations from what most people accept as basic truths. Since there are so many aspects of our lives that at any given moment only we acknowledge, and yet no “legitimate” source verifies our perceptions, at times a reliance on intuition has been necessary for me in this book. Nevertheless, as the authors of *Hispanic Women's Theology* state, “The self-definition of a vast number of persons is an intricate element of reality.”¹ In our experience with dominant intellectual society, both within and outside of academia, women—especially women of color—are often dismissed for our attempts to use personal experiences and perceptions as the basis of theories. Because of the assumptions of “objectivity” in traditional scholarship, our deductions are viewed as biased and therefore invalid when we base them on our experiences and perceptions.

By the same token, liberal attitudes toward the philosophical beliefs of indigenas that rely heavily on oral history, mythology, and dreams are often patronizing. The “noble savage” in tune with nature is seen by the mainstream as the mystical, dark Other. Learning about Other is okay, but appropriating the Other is not. Yet learning may happen when the investigator does not see herself entirely separate from her subject.

Mestizas in academia are not interpreted as noble savages. Most do not lay claim to any specific Native American group. From a historical perspective the facts are that of all the ethnic groups in the United States, Mexicans and Indians have passed from conquest, annexation, purchase, and into economic colonization. For Mexicans, their subject population status is the result of having provided land and labor for 166 years to a national dominant subcultural group of Anglo-Saxons.²

Despite the history and struggles for social justice that we share with Native Americans, our indigena heritage is questioned. While in México it is assumed that most who are descendents of the Conquest carry indigenous blood, the indigenous populations view us as Westernized. We may call ourselves what we prefer (and today, “white” is the Census Bureau's category for the “Hispanic,” unless s/he identifies as black), but we are mestizas. In this color-conscious

society, shade and hue may cause each of us to experience our indigenous lineage differently. In other words, the more india we look the more poor we may actually be and the more gravely we experience the differentiated negative treatment of white dominant culture. I would like to note that indigenas have and continue to suffer the ethnocentrism of their respective countries throughout the Americas. While México boasts a superficial pride regarding its native populations, other governments such as Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Guatemala, and the United States tried to eradicate their native populations. While there is no recognition of the mestizo, per se, in the United States, the mestizo in México became the national model; however, there, too, economic privilege and color are crucial criteria for determining the social status of the individual.

THE DANGERS OF ARMCHAIR FEMINISM

During the Reagan era many people became convinced of a big, white lie that there was an advantage to being a woman of color seeking a position in a university. Many individuals (certainly not women of color) were under the misconception that because of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission policies, whites, particularly men, were being driven away from any new university posts they were qualified for and disregarded simply because of their race and gender. This allegation went unproven. While some universities may have succumbed to pressure to provide one or two slots especially earmarked for token hiring of people of color, they were usually conditional hirings. Currently yet, only about 4 percent of total faculty in higher education are Hispanic.³

Being placed at the bottom, on the sidelines, or as an afterthought of society's social strata, we have been dependent on representatives who might not authenticate our existence in real ways. In these reflections, while I have made some general statements about our experiences, I have also refrained from being emphatic. While millions of women share certain circumstances, no one lives a duplicate life of another. In addition, we must be aware that nothing is static; just as society changes (albeit reluctantly), the individual changes throughout the course of her life. Not only are the deductions made by one generation challenged by the next, but we ourselves reevaluate our perceptions from one decade of our lives to the next.

The National Association of Chicano and Chicana Studies (NACCS) has been in existence for more than forty years, holding conferences annually in the United States and in México. However, Chicano Studies remains a field largely unrecognized by universities throughout the United States, as is evident by the cutting of the few ethnic studies programs. Unlike other scholarly associations whose members clearly participate solely out of professional interest, membership, which includes many students, is largely comprised of Chicanas and Chicanos. In these gatherings, participants are engaged as much in the polemic of self-identification as an intellectual dialogue on the discipline.

By entering academia, one may argue, women can participate in social change. This has been the philosophy of the scholars and students who participate in MALCS (Mujeres Activas

en Letras y Cambio Social), an organization founded in 1981 in northern California dedicated to Latinas in academia.⁴ Its annual summer meeting serves to further educate and connect people in academia in need of affirmation and scholarly exchange. MALCS has grown from a mostly nationalist Chicana constituency based in California to a feminist membership, which holds its annual institute throughout the United States. Its willingness to allow for self-evaluation (an inherent quality of Xicanisma) has helped it to endure and expand.

The politics of inclusion/exclusion enter in goals and aims of an organization that expands from a special interests group to one that includes greater diversity. This may be considered an example as to why the momentum of the seventies Chicano/Latino movement has waned, in my opinion, permanently. Traditional Hispano/Latino/Chicano communities, unchanged for generations in the past changed in unalterable ways in the last decades. In addition to gentrification of rural communities and urban barrios there has been ongoing relocation and movement of subsequent generations. Racial, ethnic, and religious intermarriages have also changed demographics. There are innumerable nuances regarding the personal identities of scholars of Latino and Latina Studies.

By the time a Xicanista earns her doctorate, she is well versed in Western philosophy and letters, having succeeded in a rigorous program under mostly white tutelage in an androcentric context. She may be jaded by the competition as well as by the experience of being courted for being Chicana, and then often “dropped” for being Chicana by administrators and faculty. She may be accepted for her ethnicity but rejected for her gender, or accepted for her gender and ethnicity but rejected if she is lesbian or any of a combination of these parts of the whole that she is but which at no time have ever all been fully accepted by society.

Any ambitious Chicana who joins the institution and is in a position in which she may determine the acceptance of another Chicana knows full well that she too, may end up applying a divisive strategy her own. It comes with the territory. And while this new territory is conquered, the territory of indigenista philosophy (which does not see the world in hierarchical terms of power) once compromised, is forsaken. Nevertheless, after so much effort, the potential rewards of the career are tempting. Indeed, by then she is convinced that she has not only earned the glory but must have it. To get it she must play by the university’s rules, even if she has convinced herself that she will beat it at its own game. In other words, the new PhD has become what the white woman scholar was permitted to be decades ago.⁵ She is assertive in meetings, classroom, and in her writing. She usually minds dress codes, carries herself well in social functions, attends conferences, and presents papers. The newest member permitted in the world of higher education may also bring with her invaluable new research heretofore not considered. Scholars in the whole *mélange* of disciplines supported by present academia invest years of work and financing into projects that ultimately make or amputate their careers. Sometimes such studies serve to change policy. Sometimes they persuade people in power to do something. But in day-to-day terms the motivation for this kind of work may be career based. I am certain that many a woman has asked herself about the probable ineffectiveness of her “feminism” within hierarchical academia.

In order to be a viable alternative to stratified society, Xicanisma cannot be elitist. It is not a woman-identified ideology mirroring patriarchy, a grab for material power when white

people or men are not looking. It is not free from the consequences of its actions.

It's an arduous climb to be sure. Most of the schools we attend in heavily Mexican populated areas from preschool to college are vastly deficient in supplies and staff. Curriculum that is relevant to our reality by teachers who are also from our communities still is largely absent in the educational system throughout the United States at all levels, in both public and private institutions. And if there are not enough qualified educators to fill the occasional slots allotted for a person of color it is because the educational process is often hostile to his or her needs. There remain three principal demands that student activists have been placing on their institutions since the late 1960s: recruitment and retention of Latina and Latino students, more U.S. Latina and Latino faculty (in many cases there are none to begin with), and Chicano/Latino Studies or one required course in non-Western cultures. In 1993, more than forty years after the establishment of a Chicano Studies Department at Berkeley, most universities and colleges throughout the United States fail to recognize Ethnic Studies as a legitimate curriculum.

Numbers in primary and secondary education fields are not more encouraging and may indicate why we don't find them in high education. Among the 3.5 million teachers we have in the country at present, less than a quarter of a million are Hispanic. There are 10 million Latino and Latina students.⁶ The Latino and Latina high school graduation rate went up in 2010 to 70 percent, although the dropout rate was still double compared to others.⁷ Bilingual education, put forth as part of the Latino movement's agenda, now is associated with immigration. It isn't only under fire by opponents of immigration, but in recent decades immigrant groups have joined the opposition in the belief that their children should adapt to the new country's language and ways. Again, the differences between U.S. and foreign-born Latinos and Latinas make it extremely difficult for Latinos to unify. The opposition to immigrants and the attempt on the part of educators to bring culturally relevant material to their classrooms was exemplified in the notorious case of Tucson's dismantling of the Mexican American Studies program at the public high schools between 2011 and 2013 when a federal judge finally ordered an end to this program. The schools had demonstrated how their students did better in a program that was culturally relevant while the superintendents, citing a law they designed and passed, accused the program of inciting resentment against the United States.

BASIC ELEMENTS FOR A RESURRECTION

When we die, it is not that we die, for still we live, we are resurrected. We still live, we awaken. Do you likewise.

—AZTEC MOURNING PRAYER, as quoted in Bernardino de Sahagún,
General History of the Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex

In Mesoamerica, before the Spanish Conquest people throughout the Americas relied largely

on *maíz* as their food staple. This gave rise to a myth of how the first kernel came to be given to the people. There are variations of this myth. With the Conquest, the Catholic Church condemned the peoples' stories and beliefs, and in popular culture they were eventually altered or forgotten. Early socioreligious indigena thought became diluted with Catholic and European indoctrination. For example, in Chinantla (northeast of the state of Oaxaca), some Chinantec stories now suggest that the far-off land from which *maíz* came might be Europe, others say that Christ brought *maíz*.⁸ Just as indigenas were systematically disconnected in many ways from their own ancestors, most mestizos and mestizas have no way of knowing which indigena group they descend from in México. Such is the result of the annihilation of a people's history if not the people themselves.

Therefore, as Xicanistas (no longer just *obreras culturales pero guerrilleras culturales*) we must simultaneously be archaeologists and visionaries of our culture. We may contribute a collective vision toward the development of an alternative social system. Our Mesoamerican indigenous ancestors developed advanced societies that rivaled that of the Greeks. Our legacy has mostly been vanquished and is widely kept out of the educational curriculum but we can seek it out. From our indigenous background, we can draw examples to understand the endless possibilities and the connections of all things in the realm we perceive as the "universe." Our Spanish heritage and its ongoing dynamic in our lives not only connects us with the Eurocentric ideology of dominant society of all of the Americas, but as mestizas it serves to grant a sophisticated and complex perception of dominant society.

The bilingualism (indeed in some cases, multilingualism) that many, although not all, of us have practiced since early speech is not only a powerful communication tool, it allows for the diverse dimensions that each language brings. We have been stigmatized for not speaking English correctly and not knowing proper Spanish; but language is more than a fixed set of verbal standards, it is a way of seeing the world. By having these two languages as part of our daily dynamic, we have a unique comprehension of society. The supposed stigma may be converted into an asset. As the poet Francisco X. Alarcón has written in one of his poems, "A beso is not a kiss." Words reflect conceptions of reality and do not simply translate literally.

Our forced labor under exploitative and even fatal conditions endured for hundreds of years proves us to be physically, emotionally, and psychically able to withstand any challenge to our survival. To survive in a society that considers us dispensable utilities and yet, to care for and lovingly raise generation after generation, expect and even demand love in our lives, work under sometimes arduous conditions and yet find it within ourselves to appreciate flower and song, despite endless degradation to put on our red lipstick and walk down the street with our heads high like Queen Nefertiti, in my estimation, makes us quite formidable, thriving thick-stemmed and aromatic as a calla lily. In the frank words of the Chicana-Apache religious studies scholar, Inez Talamantez, in conversation with me, "We are a god-damn walking miracle." We do not simply survive—that would imply that we were no more than drones. We live lives full of meaning. Now that we know that we can endure any circumstances and that daily we prove that we must be reckoned with by dominant culture, we must have faith in our vision. Our social conditioning prompts us to proceed through life "on faith" in a hierarchy.

Christianity teaches that a hierarchy exists beyond death. We now must base our faith on the fact that the meaning of life is not organically dependent on a higher order. We are made of the

same molecular structures that comprise all life forms on this planet and all that makes up this planet is interdependent for survival.

Let us allow for the speculation that a matriarchy existed for much longer than our currently dominant patriarchy. Let us also consider that the hypothetical matriarchy was equally sophisticated as anything that has been known since recorded history; and let us remember that archaeological findings show that fertility-based cultures did initiate the understanding of the arts and sciences that we work with now. Consider, for example, that as recently as the eleventh century AD, there appears to be extensive evidence pointing to traces of a matriarchal society in the mysterious Toltec Empire. “In former times women had held the supreme power, as at Tula, for example, and it even appears that a woman, Ilancueitl, was at the origin of the royal power in México.”⁹ Further investigation in this area might lead us to speculate that the very source from which the Aztecs claimed their magnificent accomplishments was if not matriarchal, then matrilineal.

Perhaps matriarchy was not a primitive way of life that through linear time had to be replaced by imperialist patriarchy as is suggested by the prevalence of literature that dismisses it. History is always told by the victors. There may well have been an ongoing conscious decision to not pursue the route toward human exploitation because matriarchal aims were quite different: the rejuvenation and regeneration of earth’s life sources. Matriarchy was not like patriarchy—run by women, women in control, women subjugating men, exploiting men, clubbing men on the head and dragging them by the hair back to the cave. It was also not, I am convinced by the preponderance of archaeological proof,¹⁰ some long-term period of fruit and berry gathering preceding early agriculture. At some point it was undoubtedly that, but we might consider that there is much more that we do not know or do not want to accept about that vast expanse of human life called prehistory, because we have for too long been seeing humanity through the eyes of patriarchy. In our case, as women of Mexican descent, the severity of the Conquest destroyed much of our more recent history.

Indigenous people, among the most significant “endangered species” throughout the planet, have belief systems that (like the Christian Bible) foretell the end of the world, such as the prophecies of the Mexíca, Hopi, and the people known as Aborigines in Australia who refer to their history as “Dream Time.” While the concept of the world may have been restricted to mean each people’s particular way and land, the final end (because mythologies usually discuss several ends of the world and beginnings) is usually “related to the willful destruction of nature, the disturbance of cosmic balance, the declining respect for nature, and a deterioration of humankind’s proper relationship with it.”¹¹ The ultimate objective for us all now is not a question of man versus woman, nor people of color versus whites, nor rich against poor. Today it is a question of a unified global consciousness for the sake of salvaging what we have left of our Earth’s resources, rejuvenating and regenerating them, and taking care of its residents.

As heiresses of Christianity, we have been alienated from our intuitions and dreams, from bonds with other women, our same-sex lovers, and our umbilical tie to the Mother-Bond Principle by over four thousand years of spiritual oppression (as well as five hundred years of relentless racism). We have all come to suffer the fate of “the Massacre of the Dreamers”

whenever we have dared to utter the prediction of the inevitable fall of the Omnipotent God in the Sky. Macuilxochitzin (Tula poet), doña María Bartola Ixhuetzcatocatzin (Ixtapalapa, first chronicler of the Conquest), Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (New Spain), Rosario Castellanos (México), Veintimilla de Galindo (Ecuador), Federico García Lorca (España), Gabriela Mistral (Chile), Alfonsina Storni (Argentina), Julia de Burgos (Puerto Rico), to recall only a sandlike sprinkling of poets, ached with primordial dream prophecies for a world much different than the one they were forced to live in and who were killed for desiring so desperately.

The violent repression of our spirits and sexuality has gone against our molecular connection with the Earth. We continue on this mummified track because the process of alienation and denial that has been violently imposed on humanity has existed for so long; we're numbed into apathy. We have forgotten, but it is not too late to remember. The Hopi people's belief in an apocalypse is not a dogma. They believe that their world will not end if the people return to the Way of the Great Spirit. Many Hopis are also very protective of their prophecies, among other reasons because they believe that the divinations are only relevant to their Way: their lives and culture. For this reason, too, I have attempted to restrict my discussion to mestizas of Mexican descent. Our world, our Way, our communion with our spirit guides, our relationship with society is deeply rooted in our particular reality and history, which has brought us to this social status at present.

Xicanisma, therefore, includes an ongoing awareness of our accountability to ourselves, allies, and to the environment. However, when we have a vision in which brown women refuse to work for a system that renders us ineffective and invisible except to serve it, this appears as a threat to the current world order. Our vision is labeled male bashing, reverse racism, or "limited." If only we were willing to compete—comes the advice or judgment of critics. If only we would quit whining and pull ourselves up by our bootstraps, if only we would all learn to be ambitious (read: think and act like WASP society) and make use of the opportunities that are presumably available to all American citizens—more of us would realize our goals.

When we profess a vision of a world where a woman is not raped somewhere in the United States every three minutes, where one of every three female children do not experience sexual molestation, where the Mexican female is not the lowest paid worker in the United States—we are not hating but trying to change the facts of our conditions.

More facts: Latinas account for 20 percent of reported female AIDS cases in this country.¹² Our elderly are also among the poorest elderly in the country with the fewest support services available to them. While it is true that because of our prevailing extended family structure, our elderly are usually at home with adult children and their families, we must remember that a large percentage of our families are not only among the poorest in the United States, but increasingly headed by women with children. Our vision must call society to accountability for these disproportionate figures.

Every day there is a war going on somewhere in the world and we live in an age (no less than several thousand years old) that accepts this as a fact of life. Our vision as Xicanistas expects peace. Again, our vision is seen as a threat because most people, despite advocating democracy, believe fervently in a socioreligious philosophy based on dualisms that make

society a system of irreconcilable opposites that are inherent in each other (i.e., the notion that we must *fight for peace*). Peace, however, is not the opposite of war, peace is the achievement of balance.

Our vision inherently includes a better quality of life for all. Living in a stratified society it seems inescapable, it even seems natural, that society must operate like a food chain. And there is always justification found for why some people suffer more than others. If we replace the term *Chicana Feminism* with *Xicanisma* or give it any other label, it should not be a term that excuses nationalism as a way of self-identification. Nationalism throughout the history of civilization excludes certain groups that will inevitably feel intimidated and react in like manner. Through territorial invasions, ethnic divisions, racist contempt for others, and ongoing oppression of women, nationalism always finds justification for manipulation for power.

Although *Xicanisma* is a way to understand ourselves in the world, it may also help others who are not of Mexican background or women. It is yielding and based on integration, not dualisms. Men are not our opposites, our opponents, our Other. Many of us are as alienated from our true feminine spirit as men are, while men are just as vulnerable to the phallic mechanism of society. This is an arguable fact.

A *Xicanista*'s education does not automatically exempt her from much of the same intolerance suffered by the community she serves, such as racial profiling; harassment as a female whether on the job, on the street, or at home; and class privilege discrimination. In the mid-1990s a new generation of feminists began to examine the concepts of the Politics of Inclusion/Exclusion. As discussed in the first chapter, these theories, which started in the seventies in France, grappled with an alternative discussion to defining poverty. Programs in developed countries attempting to alleviate economic disparity and other hardships in the long run haven't worked. These theories have since taken various forms in countries such as Ghana, Nepal, and Ecuador. The idea of bringing in excluded groups such as the physically challenged, immigrants, substance abusers, and others to be integrated in a society where acceptance and opportunities for life improvement might occur were met with some disagreement by some feminists of color thinkers. Elizabeth V. Spelman put it this way, "Welcoming someone into one's own home doesn't represent an attempt to undermine privilege, it expresses it."¹³ If we understand one thing about capitalism and the wriggle room free trade zones give socialist and communist society, enterprising power is not easily surrendered.

In the following section I give another example of the politics of inclusion, which demonstrates the effectiveness of a marginalized group placing itself at the center of a social order. It was formed by a group who were among the most excluded on every level by the government that dominates its ancestral lands. Eighteen years after its declaration, it thrives, has influenced and taught many throughout the world: los Zapatistas of southern México.

Be a Zapatista wherever you are.

—ZAPATISTA CALL

The EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) came to the world's attention when they seized several towns in Chiapas on New Year's Day 1994. The mobilization began in the jungles with the principles of inclusion and dialogue. They broke with Marxist orthodoxy by developing a new discourse and semantics. Significantly, it was the first major moment of global resistance to neoliberalism. Unlike the traditional model of a revolutionary organization where the insurgents' goal was to overthrow the existing government and then to form a new government, the EZLN did not aim to supplant one bureaucracy with another. It believes what is required for effective and long-term change is conscientización, state institutions, material conditions, and civil society. The EZLN, made it clear from the onset that its struggle was for employment, land, shelter, food, health care, education, autonomy, freedom, democracy, justice, and peace.

Despite the camouflage gear, Zapatistas made the point that their cause was peaceful and many were not armed. Some held symbolic wooden rifles. Women and children stood together with men. In this regard, it may be said the EZLN is a social movement. Nevertheless both the Mexican and U.S. governments unsurprisingly consider the EZLN a terrorist organization. EZLN members have been isolated in the mountains and jungles but their movement thrives; their ideas are working for them, and above all, they serve as inspiration to others with their rebellion "without bullets." It is the quintessential example of "words as weapons."¹⁴

A main guideline the world may take from the Zapatistas is the assembly. Some of the Occupy Wall Street movement's participants claimed to have been inspired by the EZLN's assemblies. "What many people of the Occupy movement are trying to do is break the relationship between capital and humanity," said Marlina of the Movimiento por la Justicia en el Barrio (Movement for Justice in the Barrio), a Latino collective that forms part of the Other Campaign in New York City and the Occupy Wall Street movement. The quote concludes, "The Zapatista resistance encourages us to keep up the struggle to build a different world."¹⁵

In the same article, picked up by several other online forum reports on the international seminar "Planet Earth: Anti-Systemic Movements," held in Chiapas in 2012, Mercedes Olivera, an anthropologist, observed that the Zapatista communities had developed outside the mercantilist logic. According to her view, it could become a viable point of departure for

men and women to dare to experience the construction of another civilization based on solidarity not exploitation, to try to recreate the human sense of existence, recover the vital sense of the land and the sustainability of production for consumption, to be able to practice new forms of using and caring for natural resources, and in this way we can change and reorient our strategies toward building a new paradigm of development and attempt a civilizing process based on life and not on destruction, like the Zapatistas do in their autonomy.¹⁶

The Mexican poet turned popular activist and leader of the Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity, Javier Sicilia Álvarez, also attended the seminar. In an interview about the Zapatistas he said, "By revealing the negation of the indigenous world . . . [they] also revealed

the dysfunction of the State and the neoliberal system.” We may also view this discussion in terms of a family unit. The indigenous Zapatistas, while concentrating on the rights to thrive on their long-appropriated ancestral lands speak to the human family. They represent a role model for thriving as a community interdependently and thereby speak directly to the frustrated arguments feminists of color around the world make against the concept of the politics of inclusion.

Many of the points discussed in this book are exemplified by the Zapatista struggle. Simply put, the answer to the “Inclusion Question” is not to be included in a society based on the principles of hierarchy and privilege, whether individually earned, inherited, or stolen. Values assigned to the concept of social inclusion similar to the Zapatista *modus operandi* is that everyone is ready, can learn, needs support, and can contribute. “We are not dreaming of a world where everyone is like us—difference is our most renewable resource.”¹⁷ For the Xicanista that would mean to take the long road toward *conscientización*, which would embody the spiritual and material concerns of her chosen community.

The goal of socialist ideologies was liberation of the worker. For the feminist socialist, it was liberation of woman within postindustrial society. However, the ultimate liberation is that of enlightenment. Through conscious decisions guided by being informed about the intricate clockwork of industrial destruction of lives and natural resources, each of us is not only being responsible to others, but we are being accountable to ourselves. An Iroquois proverb offers wise advice as a guiding light: *In every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.*