CHAPTER SIX

EXPANDING THE VIEW: THE CHALLENGES OF A FEMINIST THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE OF FILIPINO WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION TO THE THEOLOGY OF STRUGGLE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Beginning to think in a different way requires us to take different positions on the subject of knowing: to open up spaces for new ways of thinking and to consider our own thinking in terms of how our goals affect our perceptions.

—Ivone Gebara—1

INTRODUCTION

Every theological expression does not arise nor exist in isolation. It has a context of its own that is heavily dictated by the present; it arises from an-other context that forms part (but not entirely) of its past; and its future partly depends upon the critical, constructive, and creative weaving of these two. As a contextual theology on Filipino women FToS2 is obviously dialogical first with the contextual theology in the Philippines. Among the various contemporary theological efforts in the Philippines3

2 For purposes of brevity, and taking cue from the abbreviated reference to the Theology of Struggle in the Philippines as “ToS”, “FToS” will be used throughout this part of the research to refer to “feminist theology of struggle of Filipino women domestic workers in the context of migration.”
3 Daniel Franklin Pilario, C.M., “The Craft of Contextual Theology: Towards a Methodological Conversation in the Philippine Context,” Chakana Vol.1, No. 1 (2003): 20–1, 38–40 citing Catalino Arevalo, S.J. “Filipino Theology” in Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives, ed., K. Mueller (New York: Orbis, 1997): 161–7 speaks of three trajectories in the Filipino theological landscape. These include, first, mainstream theology, which uses the discourse of the magisterium as its main base for reflection; second, culture theology, which consists in correlating key Filipino terms and their cluster concepts with the Christian message; and third, liberationist theology known and called as Theology of Struggle which, Arevalo says, is comprised of three sub-groups. These consist of, first, the Filipino theologian members of the EATWOT
the Theology of Struggle or ToS stands out as the best possible partner for dialogue.4

Just as Williams herself engaged Black liberation theology in dialogue with womanist theology to see where the womanist material “fits” and where Black liberation theology can expand for womanist theology to “fit,” this chapter will undertake a similar endeavor. It will engage ToS in a dialogue with FToS to see where the FToS material fits and ascertain how ToS might go forward. Three areas will be the

---
4 See Antonio B. Lambino et al., *Towards “Doing Theology” in the Philippine Context* (Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1982), 20–2 for a concise presentation of the development of ToS in the Philippines. For sources this research relies heavily on the first of the three sub-groups of liberationist theologians identified above, i.e. EATWOT and CNL group, primarily because their group is the one that has gained a wide international hearing and has greater and sustained publications from the time ToS emerged in the late 1960s. The more recent publications include that of Eleazar Fernandez, “Theology of Struggle,” in *Dictionary of Third World Theologies*, 201–2 and Mary John Mananzan, “Globalization and the Perennial Question of Justice,” *In God’s Image* Vol. 21, No. 2 (June 2002): 22–7. This dearth in publications does not necessarily mean that there have been a change in context but, rather, due to a number of practical limitations. Daniel Franklin Pilario, C.M., “The Craft of Contextual Theology,” *Doing Theology (In a Situation) of Struggle*, 38 says it is because many reflections do not get a hearing as they exist only in mimeographed forms. In *Doing Theology (In a Situation) of Struggle*, 38 reckons the option to start with concrete socio-historical reality; the use of the tools for social analysis (particularly Marxism); commitment to concrete action towards social transformation; and the view that it is the grassroots poor who are the “real theologians” unite these groups.

---