

8-2009

“Cosecha Voices”: Toward A Transcultural Pedagogy

Silvia Patricia Solis
University of Texas-Pan American

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Solis, Silvia Patricia, "“Cosecha Voices”: Toward A Transcultural Pedagogy" (2009). *Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA*. 1017.
https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/leg_etd/1017

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations - UTB/UTPA by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

COSECHA VOICES:

TOWARD A TRANSCULTURAL PEDAGOGY

A Thesis

by

SILVIA PATRICIA SOLIS

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

August 2009

Concentration: Anthropology

Copyright 2009 Silvia Patricia Solis
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Solis, Silvia Patricia., *Cosecha Voices: Toward a Transcultural Pedagogy*. Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS), August, 2009. 66 pp., references.

In the fall of 2007, I began filming a course called *Cosecha Voices*, which centered on the migratory, farmworking experiences of South Texas students attending the University of Texas – Pan American. This thesis therefore, stems from my two-year collaborative experience with the *Cosecha Voices* project. I propose *Cosecha Voices* opened up an academic space for critical pedagogy and transculturation to intersect, creating a *transcultural pedagogy*. *Transcultural pedagogy* as praxis, centers on students' lived experiences, engaging educators and students in a transculturation of intersecting theories intertwined in oral performances, film ethnography, and *testimonios* as pedagogical practices and epistemologies. This process allows for personal and social change by empowering the students to document their own migratory, farmworking histories as *testimonios*. As part of this framework, I transform the *testimonio* to an empowering/creative/research tool to interpret the research findings and analysis to illustrate the transculturation in the development of this research.

DEDICATION

Madre... sin ti no existo, no hay mundo, no hay fuente de vida

Abuelo, que estas en los cielos.....

Abuela, que vibras en mi..... mi comienzo

Lule, por todas enseñanzas

Angelica, por tu alegría, espíritu, y hacerme sentir amada

Para mis primos, lejos y cerca, ustedes son los artistas de sus mundos

Jay... Mi Che, no word could ever encapsulate what this morena feels walking, agarrados de la mano, through yet another life with you. Gracias, for finding me again.

Crisis

After a crisis, *no importa el tamaño,*

Usually when silence sets in, you begin to feel the wound – the tear

lo descosido that disrupted the skin of our comfort.

A crisis shakes our fundamentals, *lo descosido* – the pain engraved on your skin leaving behind its tattoo, changes your world view. I have been *descosida* since the day I was born. I am that thread in the skin of a world that I have chosen to disrupt.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without la cruzada del Puente de Progreso. I thank Stephanie Alvarez and Tato 'Jesus' Laviera for their creation.

Rosalva Resendiz, mi comadre, thank you for your wisdom, spiritual and intellectual. You made this arduous task, a vision of resistance and hope.

Margaret Graham, thank you for your patience and confidence through this process.

Teresa Garcia, thank you for becoming a friend through this process. You experienced my writing/my voice wholeheartedly. I will be forever grateful. Thank you for giving me space in the writing center, for a wonderful staff who supported and encouraged me throughout.

Edna Ochoa, for teaching me a new way of seeing the body and for telling me to grab the bull by the ovaries!

The Anthropology Faculty and College Dean for their support and encouragement these past two years and for all of those who indirectly influenced the growth of this research.

To all of the *Cosecha Voices* students, Gracias. For becoming family, for encouraging my personal goals through yours, and for showing the world that a voice should never be silenced.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Conception of Cosecha Voices.....	2
The Birth.....	4
Language.....	5
Explorative themes for the writing workshops.....	6
The Visual.....	6
Tato ‘Jesus’ Laviera: <i>Every word is a universe</i>	7
The becoming of a collaborative community.....	9

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY.....	11
Research Design.....	13
<i>Participant Observation</i>	14
Visual Methods: ethnographic film and photography.....	16
Critical Race Theory Storytelling and Cultural Intuition.....	18
Concerns and Challenges.....	19
CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS.....	21
Critical Pedagogy.....	21
Paulo Freire and <i>Conscientização</i>	24
Dialogue.....	26
Love.....	27
<i>Borderlands</i> and Gloria Anzaldúa.....	29
Body.....	31
<i>Transculturation</i>	33

CHAPTER IV: PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN <i>COSECHA VOICES</i>	36
Oral Performances.....	36
Visual Methods.....	40
<i>Testimonios</i>	42
CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS/FINDINGS.....	45
Despojo as a Quest in the Crevice.....	47
<i>Coraje, Celebracion, and Voice</i>	50
Ways of Knowing.....	51
Education in the Crevice.....	51
<i>Cosecha Voices: Education, Family and Orgullo</i>	52
Education.....	54
Familia.....	57
Orgullo.....	59
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION.....	62
NOTES.....	64
REFERENCES.....	67

APPENDIX.....72

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....79

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2007, Edna Ochoa, Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Texas-Pan American, invited me to participate in a course called *Cosecha Voices*. The course was created through the efforts of Stephanie Alvarez, Ph.D. and Nuyorican poet Jesús ‘Tato’ Laviera¹ to document the experience of South Texas² students from migrant farmworking³ families through what they named, emancipating pedagogy. The invitation came about after my proclaimed interest in film ethnography; along with the challenges the educators of this course had in finding someone to document the semester’s course. At 2:30 p.m. on Friday of that week, with a borrowed camera still plugged into the wall to prevent it from turning off, I found myself filming a group of undergraduate and graduate students, and four educators in the first *Cosecha Voices* writing workshop.

This thesis therefore, stems from a two-year collaborative experience with the *Cosecha Voices* project. I propose *Cosecha Voices* opened up an academic space for critical pedagogy and transculturation to intersect, creating a transcultural pedagogy⁴. Transcultural pedagogy is a praxis⁵, centered on students’ lived experiences, engages the educators and students in a transculturation of intersecting theories intertwined in oral

performances, film ethnography, and *testimonios*⁶ as pedagogical practices and epistemologies. This process allows for personal and social change by empowering the students to document their own migratory, farmworking histories as *testimonios*. As part of this framework, I transform the *testimonio* to an empowering/creative/research tool to interpret the research findings and analysis. The *testimonio* blended together with those of the students', written in 2007, illustrate the transculturation in the development of this research.

Conception of *Cosecha Voices*

Cosecha Voices was conceived in the spring of 2007 when Tato Laviera traveled to South Texas as a guest poet for the Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA)⁷. After the reading, José Luis Martínez, Director of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)⁸ (July 2006-December 2007), invited Laviera to Progreso, Tamaulipas. During this trip, José Luis shared with Laviera his migrant/student experience. Laviera recalls this moment, "...we were crossing the bridge to Progreso, the first time I ever touched Mexico in my whole life... you (José Luis Martínez) tell me your story of how you planted your hand on the root of the earth, and then ...you had your pencil in the left of your hand. That to me was a tremendous, tremendous image..." (*Mi Vida, Mi Voz: Una Cosecha de Voces*, 2009). The image recreated for Laviera, of one hand on the earth and the other hand holding a pencil, signifies to José Luis family, work, struggle, success, and "the power of education, the knowledge and what you can do with that knowledge..." (*Mi Vida, Mi Voz: Una Cosecha de Voces*, 2009). José Luis Martínez explains further (Rothenberg, 2000), "Once you're a migrant, you're a migrant for the rest of your life, whether or not you travel from place to place, working the fields.

Even when I have a degree, I'll still be a migrant, on the inside anyway" (276). José Luis worked with his family as a migrant from the age of seven until the day before he attended college at the University of Michigan. José Luis' commitment to his family is one of the main reasons he pursued higher education and has continued to contribute to the migrant community through his profession. His migrant experience, in dialogue with Laviera, inspired the creation of *Cosecha Voices*.

From this image, Tato Laviera conjured up the idea for a course that would engage the migrant students in ways that would enable them to document their own personal history, and it was named *Cosecha Voices*. Laviera explains (email to author, May 22, 2009),

"Cosecha is the center of the mano a obra of the migrant worker. It is the action that gives credibility, for it is the migrant worker who is at the root of the American farming system. Thus, the voices of *Cosecha Voices* are the voices of "los de abajo," that from deep under they acclaim and exclaim the credibility of their hard work so that the experience can be applied to the English class, to the social studies class, to the cultural studies class, and to the language class as *serious contemporary thought and thinking* [emphasis mine]."

José Luis' image and what it became for Laviera is in fact represented throughout the development and implementation of the course. Tato Laviera places the experience that comes from la cosecha in the center of the migrant's body (mano) and its production (obra); transforming the image of the hand into the empowered students and the obra into the students' *testimonios*, making this particular cosecha their voice. The voices of "los de abajo" emerge and are documented through their oral performances, an ethnographic

documentary and the *testimonios*, creating spaces for them to become *serious contemporary thought and thinking*. To implement this praxis, Laviera together with Stephanie Alvarez, created an emancipating and transformative curriculum enabling the historically-silenced voices of the migrant, farmworker to enter the classroom and then the public sphere.

The Birth

In two months, Stephanie Alvarez and Tato Laviera had a curriculum, a proposal, a course on the books and a vision statement. The former CAMP Director immediately saw the importance of the course and assisted by funding five of the seven workshops offered by Laviera and by assisting in student recruitment. In fact, with the financial support of CAMP, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, and Humanities Texas, the course was piloted in the fall of 2007 as an advanced Spanish composition course, a requirement in the Spanish BA program. Twenty-two students registered for the course the first semester with Edna Ochoa and Tato Laviera as the instructors on record. The students and the educators met on Fridays for two and a half hours. The schedule consisted of one initial oral history workshop by Sonia Hernández Ph.D. from the Department of History; bi-weekly preparatory sessions conducted by Edna Ochoa; and the bi-weekly writing workshops conducted by Tato Laviera and coordinated by Stephanie Alvarez. In addition to helping the students with Spanish grammar lessons, the preparatory sessions introduced the students to literature and documentaries related to the lives and history of migrant farmworkers. Ochoa also incorporated theatrical practices to help the students with their oral performances and improvisations. These sessions prepared the students for the writing workshops

conducted by Laviera the following week. In the writing workshops, Laviera instructed the students on how to take their experiences and acquired knowledge and capture those in an original piece, the *testimonio*.

Language

Language played a fundamental role within the course. Although ascribed under Spanish composition, the educators gave importance to the hybridity of languages that emerged through the different pedagogical practices. The take-home assignments were written in Spanish and submitted to Edna Ochoa and Tato Laviera. All the activity generated in the writing workshops was given linguistic freedom. The educators of *Cosecha Voices* learned, through different challenges, the need to balance the importance of linguistic freedom. Spanish language and its complexities is a cultural and political tool in the Chicana/o community and linguistic freedom for the students is an integral part of voicing their personal experiences. Henry Giroux states, “Language in all its complexities becomes central not only in the production of meaning and social identities but also as a constitutive condition for human agency. For it is in language that human beings are inscribed and give form to those modes of address that constitute their sense of the political, ethical, economic, and social” (Giroux, 2005: 11). It is language that weaves together meaning and identity, essential in the exchange, understanding, and questioning of knowledge between educators and students. The title of the course, *Cosecha Voices*, exemplifies those “modes of address” constituted by the educators from their knowledge of the migrant, farmworker struggle and a woven identity of the students with their language and their own migrant, farmworking histories.

Explorative themes for the writing workshops

To add structure, but not to sacrifice the fluidity of voice, the students were assigned two themes in each writing workshop [see appendix A] The themes portrayed either a day or a seasonal experience at the farm. The students began exploring the different themes through questions posed by Tato Laviera. The students answered the questions in writing in a given amount of time [due to the time constraint], followed by an oral reading and sharing of the individual experiences. The themes were generated by the educators' knowledge of migratory, farmworking histories and were essential in creating dialogue with the students. It is important to note that the themes were also expandable according to the dialogue being presented by the students.

The Visual

A film documentary of the course to expose the process and the voices of the students to a wider community was envisioned by Stephanie Alvarez and Tato Laviera. After the first workshop with Laviera, I volunteered to film the writing workshops, with help from my partner, Juan José García. Both of us filmed and photographed the workshops, presentations, and students' celebrations. We are also working on the ethnographic documentary. The video footage and the photography were also used in presentations and middle-school workshops to complement the students' oral performance. For two years now, Tato Laviera has also utilized the video footage of the course as a pedagogical tool. I will discuss this practice further in chapter four.

Tato 'Jesus' Laviera: *Every word is a universe*

At the first workshop, I captured Tato Laviera engage the students in movement, sound and excitement by articulating the following poem out to and with the students in what felt like a mantric idiom:

*Every word is a universe
Every syllable is an expression
Every letter is an endless sound*

Tiramela en español...

*Cada palabra es universo
Cada sílaba es una expresión
Cada letra es un sonido sin fin*

Laviera helped me understand that this poem is more of a *teaching device*. He explained (email to author, May 12, 2009),

“By understanding the word or a word, one understands the basic principle of reading and /or writing. This piece had been written for about ten years and I kept on chiseling until I found the right balance. Word, Syllable, Letter. The word is universe, the syllable can express and the letter can sing.”

Laviera applies the same principle of deconstructing the “word” to place it within a broader literacy context. This guides the students in deconstructing their individual migrant experiences by voicing them, to then reconstruct them within a documented collective experience, hence, a cosecha of voices: voices de la cosecha.

Tato Laviera performed *Every word is a universe* in almost every subsequent workshop and, with each performance, a different interpretation. He also shifted through different pedagogical practices, exciting and challenging the students to meet him half

way on their own merit. A few weeks into the semester, I heard one of the female students singing the poem as she prepared to leave for the day. She was so captivated by the workshop that she pranced out of the classroom still carrying the tune. According to bell hooks (1994), the desire to encourage excitement in the classroom is to transgress, to move beyond traditional pedagogical boundaries, acknowledging that it can only be generated through a collective effort (7-8). Through Laviera's poetic alchemy, Edna Ochoa's theatrical infusion, and Stephanie Alvarez's conductivity of the project, a space was created for the students to freely express their migrant experiences within an institution that traditionally disregards those experiences as academically legitimate. They also ruptured old educational paradigms to transform living subjectivities through praxis. Always working as a group, the students, with the guidance of the educators, extracted memories to conjure up the words to give voice and write about their personal experience *como migrante*, their life as a migrant. The students laughed, cried, or just remained in silence, as they shared and listened to the different migrant experiences they were writing about. They also sang in search of their emblem song, which eventually became *La de la mochila azul* [see appendix B] by Pedro Fernández. These classroom experiences are seldom and random acts practiced within academic institutions in South Texas.

I base this argument on my own experience of being born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, growing up in Brownsville, Texas (the farthest southernmost border town in the region) and attending Brownsville schools throughout the 1980s until I graduated high school in 1994. After a ten-year break, I returned to the University of Texas-Pan American as a full-time student. During all the years of schooling in my own community,

I had never experienced a collaborative curriculum centered on the students' life experiences, let alone the migrant experience. This becomes quite alarming when we consider that approximately 60% of Texas migrant farmworkers reside in Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr counties, with Hidalgo country having the highest concentration of 70% (Richardson, 1999). In fact, Texas has the second highest population of migrant farmworkers, with California being the highest (NCFH 2009), yet the migrant experience remains invisible within our South Texas schools. Stephanie Alvarez asked students in several of the *Cosecha Voices* writing workshops if they had ever been asked to write about and share their migrant experience at school, and the answer has been consistently no, demonstrating how South Texas academic institutions continue to marginalize the Chicana/o's global and local history⁹, culture, politics and identity. Within this context, *Cosecha Voices* becomes a critical departure for its vision and approach in de-marginalizing, validating, and legitimizing the students and their families' contribution to society by engaging them in a transformative process that documents their experience.

The becoming of a collaborative project

Since its inception as a course in 2007, *Cosecha Voices* has evolved into nearly a two-year, collaborative project among educators and students. After the end of the 2007 semester, *Cosecha Voices* became a student organization. It was formed to create awareness of migrant farmworkers and their conditions, to create opportunities for civil leadership for students, and to have a forum for students to voice, promote, and discuss issues concerning the migrant community at large [see appendix c] They have presented their original work at numerous local and national conferences and participated in middle

school writing workshops directed by Tato Laviera and coordinated by Stephanie Alvarez. They have also fundraised in order to present at various national conferences, universities and venues. In the spring of 2009, a new cohort of students enrolled in the course. They were encouraged to form part of the *Cosecha Voices* student organization.

In participatory projects/research, the methods used between the researcher and the coordinators inevitably collide in the research process. In chapter two, I will discuss the methods I used, and those I collided with, in the development of this research. Chapter three discusses the theoretical frameworks that emerged from my participation, observations, and research. Chapter four describes oral performances, visual methods and *testimonios* as pedagogical practices and epistemologies used by the educators of *Cosecha Voices*. In chapter five, I employ the *testimonio* as an empowering/creative/research tool to interpret the research findings and analysis.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

To better understand the methods underlying this study, it is important to discuss the concerns and objectives forming *Cosecha Voices*. This will allow for a better understanding of how the methods stem from my collaboration with the group as co-filmmaker and a graduate student. I will then outline the methods used to formulate the development of this research. The vision of a course, film documentary and a project is the conception of two educators who are concerned with the social, cultural, political, and material conditions that shape the educational experiences and choices (Bernal, 1998:558) of Chicana/o students from migrant, farmworking families. Tato Laviera, Stephanie Alvarez, Jose Luis Martinez, and later Edna Ochoa and the students, each integrated a different wealth of knowledge to *el desarrollo* (nurturing and strengthening) of the *voice*, as concept and practice. Alvarez and Laviera's objective for *Cosecha Voices* is to "educate the voice" of the students "to become a writing tool." Antonia Darder (1998) indicates that people of color in the United States exist in a "hybridized state," meaning that "their histories of forced interaction with the dominant culture have required consistent forms of adaptional behaviors which have, in many instances, eroded, restructured, and reconstructed the language system, cultural beliefs, and social traditions

of these groups” (130). In this respect, the voices - in every form of expression - of historically marginalized and oppressed cultures become contested spaces “from which to struggle against relations of domination” (131). Thereby, in *Cosecha Voices*, the voice of students from migrant, farmworking families become their “established sense of place” (131), a meta-context from which they can struggle, negotiate and celebrate their historicity and bring change to their lives.

Integrated in the objective to guide the students into becoming “a writing tool” was to document the knowledge the students produced from their migrant, farmworking experiences. The educators used oral performances, film footage, and in particular, *testimonios*, as pedagogical practices and epistemologies to facilitate the documentation of the students’ knowledge so it could become *serious contemporary thought and thinking*. Allowing their voices/lives to be part of academic conversation, the *testimonios*, in particular, are the crucial means through which the students can inscribe “into history those lived realities that would otherwise succumb to the alchemy of erasure” (Latina Feminist Group, 2001: 2). Therefore, the process the students go through to reposition their voices and to produce knowledge become inseparable within the *testimonio*. Within this context, the *testimonio* represents the students’ agency for personal and social change by legitimizing their own lived experiences and by exercising their subjectivity.

My collaboration with *Cosecha Voices* has then been situated as a contradiction between insider and outsider (Guajardo and Guajardo, 2008), such that in research, as “a social practice...has to follow certain rules or conventions in order to be officially recognized as legitimate” (De Genova, 2005:20) making the epistemological methods [beyond the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy] problematic because they have

historically been used to “objectify, exploit, and dominate people of color” (Bernal, 1998:558). As Nicholas De Genova (2005) explains, “The active and fundamentally open-ended engagement of living people with their social circumstances and their efforts to transform their own history, therefore, get reduced to the delimited object of study of an institutionally credentialed researcher who fashions him- or herself as intrinsically outside of their meaningful concerns and struggles” (De Genova, 2005:22). Employing a traditional research paradigm (which has historically subjugated migrant, farmworking communities within research) would only regress the students’ subjectivities to the objects of the study.

Research Design

Drawing from Christine Eber’s (1995) reflexive ethnographic approach, I used methods that would allow me to establish a dialogue with the educators and the students, and for it to be illustrated in the research. This approach led me to design my research with an ethnographic/qualitative/critical race counterstorytelling paradigm. It also incorporates Dolores Delgado Bernal’s (1998) concept of *cultural intuition* to interpret the students’ *testimonios*. This paradigm will lay the foundation for the students’ multiple subjectivities to be forged with the multiple subjectivities I brought from the collaborative/participatory process, particularly in the interpretation of the students’ *testimonios*. The methods that I use interweave visual and written analysis. The collection of data draws from the triangulation of the qualitative methods, the students’ *testimonios*, and from my own personal experience. It is important to note that when collaborating with a group/community that uses diverse pedagogical strategies, it is only natural that any research on its behalf produces the same means.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was the primary method throughout my collaboration with *Cosecha Voices*. According to Bernard (2006), participant observation is an epistemological approach that comprises the use of many methods at once to collect data (3). It involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you have seen and heard, put it into perspective, and then write about it (344). This process allowed me to deepen my experience with *Cosecha Voices*.

My participation as co-filmmaker, graduate student, and later as a research assistant, allowed me to participate and observe the students and educators from different perspectives. As co-filmmaker, I observed the relationship between the educators and the students in the classroom through the writing workshop and in the preparatory sessions. I also observed them in a public sphere such as the presentations, university venues, conference trips and *Cosecha Voices* gatherings. I was in the first year of my graduate program in Interdisciplinary Studies with a focus in Anthropology when I began participating with *Cosecha Voices*. I was able to interact with the students, as a student. They shared appreciation, frustrations, excitement and more personal stories about their families and their educational aspirations. I participated as they fundraised through food and ticket sales. I also observed their interaction with each other as they began developing friendships and strengthening existing ones. I was also invited to attend several family events with the students. I volunteered with *Cosecha Voices* from August of 2007 through December of 2008; thereafter, I was hired as a research assistant in the Department of Modern Language and Literatures to assist with *Cosecha Voices*. This

position allowed me build rapport with the educators at different levels, and I observed the educators individually and as a group. I assisted with the writing of the constitution for the *Cosecha Voices* student organization. I attended all of their meetings. I assisted the students with fundraising by helping them purchase food, prepare, sell, and count the money. With Stephanie's guidance, I prepared a grant application for Humanities Texas. I met with four *Cosecha Voices* students from the 2007 cohort to go over their testimonios and help with any editing. I captured and then burned footage from the 2007 course to have two of Stephanie's student assistants transcribe them. This was a difficult task because of compatibility issues and capturing/editing involved in the process. I also assisted with Tato Laviera's transportation and twice photographed another course he was teaching at the University of Texas Pan American.

In the participating process, I conducted three focus groups and conducted in-depth, unstructured interviews after IRB approval. The first focus group was on-campus and shortly after the 2007 course, and Stephanie Alvarez coordinated it. Four students showed up and it was filmed. I asked open-ended questions to help them reflect on their experience. The second focus group was in Alvarez's home. I filmed the gathering and the focus group that included the students, Stephanie Alvarez, Tato Laviera and José Luis Martínez. This focus group was more informal. The third focus group was in Puerto Rico with the educators. We met at a Starbucks and had a reflection of *Cosecha Voices* up to that point. This was instrumental in understanding the educators' perspectives of the development of *Cosecha Voices*.

Visual methods: ethnographic film and photography

The collaborative/participatory methods and a production of the ethnographic documentary are what Sarah Pink (2007) defines as *applied visual anthropology* which is projects that engage in three areas of visual anthropology practice in and out of academic spaces: the analysis of visual aspects of culture; the use of visual methodologies; and the production of visual representations (13). It involves more than just making ethnographic films or photography: it involves collaboration and analysis. She continues by explaining that *visual interventions* used within applied visual anthropology are like *social interventions*, “usually takes the form of a problem-solving practice that involves collaborating with research participants and aims to bring about some form of change” (11-12). In respect to *Cosecha Voices*, the problem-solving practice is through a transcultural pedagogy that empowers the students to document their voices in a form of a *testimonio* to denounce the injustices in their lives and also announce their celebrated voices. Filming the process in the classroom can help counter any oppressive representations of migrant farmworkers and will compliment any future curricula packaged by the educators of *Cosecha Voices* for training purposes. As the co-filmmaker, photographer, and researcher, the visual methodology must also move toward a decolonizing representation. Although the ethnographic documentary is still in process, the students have been part of the viewings and have provided critique of its development.

An oral disclosure of the visual methods was given to the students by the educators allowing them to reconsider their participation in the course. Every other week or as needed, I checked out a digital video camera and a microphone from the

Department of Communication film studio and with DV tapes purchased by both myself and *Cosecha Voices*, my partner and I filmed the writing workshops, both 2007 and 2009. I would walk into the classroom, prepare my equipment, and start filming immediately to capture as much of the interaction before and after the workshops. The classroom was large enough for me to walk around with the camera. I filmed the different activities of the class: writing, performing, and the dialogue among the students and educators. I also filmed specific exercises Tato Laviera wanted captured, mainly performances. We logged the DV tapes by date and a short description of the class. After the course was over, my partner and I purchased two external hard drives to back up the captured footage used for editing and to archive the footage. Different film versions have been used for local and national conferences, presentations, and other events coordinated by Stephanie Alvarez. We have traveled with the group to Puerto Rico, New Jersey, and New York filming their presentations. We filmed three middle school workshops, a focus group with the school district's coordinators/administrators and the *Cosecha Voices* educators, and prepared a short-film on the 2009 middle-school workshop. We filmed university venues that included *Cosecha Voices* and/or Tato Laviera, gatherings among the educators and students, and celebrations.

Photography was another technique I used in the process. When I was not filming, I was documenting through the digital camera. I also created photo-documentaries for events coordinated by Stephanie Alvarez. We also collected, scanned, and archived photos provided by the students of their families, special events in their lives, and working in the fields. The pictures are preserved in an external hard drive and uploaded on to a private online account for accessibility and back up.

The visual methods were sustained throughout the two-year collaboration with *Cosecha Voices*. This type of participation can be challenging for both the researcher and those collaborating with because of all the intersecting complexities involved in interpersonal relationships and group interactions, although it can be very enriching because it integrates one in unexpected ways.

Critical Race Theory Storytelling and Cultural Intuition

Critical race theory counterstorytelling, as defined by Tara J. Yosso, is “a method of recounting the experiences and perspectives of racially and socially marginalized people. Counterstories reflect on the lived experiences of people of color to raise critical consciousness about social and racial injustice” (2006:10). “A theme of ‘naming one’s own reality’ or ‘voice’ is entrenched in the work of critical race theorists”, through the use of “parables, chronicles, stories, counterstories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories” (Ladson-Billings, et al., 1995:56-57). Solórzano explains that critical race theory in education challenges the “dominant discourse on race and racism as they relate to education by examining how educational theory, policy, and practice are used to subordinate certain racial and ethnic groups” (1998:122). I employ critical race theory storytelling within the *testimonio* to bring to life the racially and socially muted and marginalized (Ladson-Billings, et al., 1995:47) experiences of the students and as well as my own. One of the research tools used within critical race counterstorytelling is the autobiography. For this research, I will expand counterstorytelling by using the *testimonio* as the research tool. This embrace is significant due to the historical connotations of the *testimonio* with Latinamerican social movements and the critical race

theory race-based approach to counterstorytelling to challenge dominant social constructions about race and power (Deyhle, et.al.,1998).

Cultural intuition is “a complex process that acknowledges the unique viewpoints that many Chicana/o scholars bring to the research process” (Delgado Bernal, 1998:555), allowing them to have “some freedom to interpret their research findings outside of existing paradigms” (574). Cultural intuition involves one’s personal experience, which includes collective experience and community memory, existing literature, one’s professional experience, and the analytical research process itself (563) to interpret research findings.

Therefore, by using the critical race theory storytelling, with cultural intuition in the *testimonio*, it becomes an empowering/creative/research tool for the interpretation of the research findings and analysis. The *testimonio* will weave the students’ voices, from their *testimonios*, with my own lived experience collaborating with *Cosecha Voices*. I used grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to draw out themes from the student’s *testimonios* from those written in the fall of 2007, the focus groups, and interviews. The themes generated by educators emerged. After another combination, three themes were continuous in each of the *testimonios*: education, familia, and orgullo. I will discuss these themes more in chapter five.

Concerns and Challenges

Challenges were present in the implementation of all the methods and in the collaboration with *Cosecha Voices*. When I began collaborating with *Cosecha Voices*, I had no prior experience with visual methodology or film production. I enrolled in two film courses that same semester (fall 2007), a production course that gave me access to

the equipment, and a directing course, which had no instruction on documentaries/ethnographies or any application incorporated within the curriculum. Therefore, all my learning was done during the filming process. The same can be said about the post-production stage such as the editing. Within this learning curve, I encountered direct frustrations from the educators of *Cosecha Voices* and lack of technical and academic support from university faculty and administrators since I was not in a direct film track. The use of the camera was denied on various occasions, especially when I required two cameras because of the type of shots that were needed. For Puerto Rico, through Stephanie Alvarez's faculty privilege, my partner and I were able to use library camera equipment. To alleviate these setbacks, in 2009, Stephanie Alvarez received the funds necessary for the purchase of editing software, a video camera, and a microphone for the project.

This research must also be critical of *Cosecha Voices*; therefore, it is important to mention that there were differences, friction, and challenges in the ongoing process. First, the project required much attention from multiple directions due to the different objectives of each of the educators. This presented strong methodological concerns and challenges, but also concerns with the students as they often voiced their confusion and frustration about having multiple educators and instruction. I experienced it more in my involvement as a research assistant. The engagements coordinated by the educators did become overwhelming as co-filmmaker, photographer and student. Nonetheless, the experiences with the students surmount any challenge presented and although problematic can allow for multiplicities.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Critical Pedagogy

Pedagogy is different than teaching in that it embodies a different approach to any form of education. Teaching is a process of organizing and integrating predetermined knowledge for the purpose of communicating it to students through an exchange of understanding in prescribed contexts and environments (Mclaren, 2000:185). Teaching does not take into account the “wider context of historical and sociopolitical forces” (185) within the “act of knowing” as pedagogy does. Pedagogy recognizes and accounts for the different politics of reception from the students (185). Critical pedagogy takes it a step further by engaging in a reciprocal exchange between educators and students that reframes, refunctions, and reposes the question of the exchange by unmasking knowledge and power dimensions in relation to a historical and political human existence (185). The *Cosecha Voices* educators implemented critical approaches by engaging in a reciprocal exchange with the students on their migratory and farmworking history and simultaneously transformed traditional relations of power and knowledge among themselves and the students. The emergence of critical pedagogy comes from a long history of “radical social thought and progressive educational movements, which aspired

to link practices of schooling to democratic principles of society and transformative social action in the interest of oppressed communities” (Darder et al., 2003: 2). It is often referred to as “the doing of” critical theory (Kanpol, 1994:27), tying it to the social reconstructionism of John Dewey, the Frankfurt School of critical thought, democratic theory, and most recently, postmodern and *borderlands* perspectives (Shapiro, 1999 and Darder et al., 2003).

It is important to mention that from a sociological perspective, education is framed as the socialization of the young into the societal roles and values believed necessary and desirable for a society’s continued existence (Vandenberg, 1990:3). Through the development of critical pedagogy, with the diverse beliefs, perspectives, and practices from various fields, critiques of schooling in terms of its role in shaping subjectivities for a particular form of social life help change and transform these prescribed conditions (Hernandez, 1997: 10). This process is referred to as *social reproduction*, “the intergenerational reproduction of social class (i.e., working-class students become working-class adults; middle-class students become middle-class adults)”. McLaren states (Darder et al, 2003:77), schools reproduce the structures of social life through the colonization (socialization) of student subjectivities and by establishing social practices characteristic of the wider society”. In the case of farmworkers, educators and educational programs classify school-age children of farmworking families as “migrant students,” defining them based on their parents’ position and occupation in society (Thompson, Jr. 2002:222). It is not enough that farmworking families must meet the unquestionable realities of poverty: substandard housing, exposure to pesticides and/or work-related injuries, inaccessibility to quality healthcare, and labor exploitation.

In addition, their children must also face educational forms of categorizing and the complexity of their effects, which create a marginal trajectory within educational institutions that children/students must learn to navigate through. This becomes highly challenging for both the students and their families, evident in the relatively low number of high school graduates among farmworking families. According to the 2000 Human Right Watch report, *Finger to the Bone*, only fifty-five percent of farmworker youth will graduate from high school (2). Palmira Cepeda tells us how this affected her,

Cuando era pequeña yo migraba a Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, y el ultimo lugar que fuimos fue a O'Donnell, Texas. Todas esas veces que íbamos me daba miedo de los demás alumnos porque me menospreciaban por ser una Mexicana y también por ser migrante (2007).

One important aspect of critical pedagogy is that it should not be confined to schooling or to the classroom, nor should it be reduced to a method. Pedagogical practices can occur in diverse socio-cultural spaces, and they can also determine what forms of life and knowledge will be legitimized (Hernandez, 1997:24). It exposes the ways the existing social and cultural structures perpetuate and reproduce inequalities, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression. Barry Kanpol (1994) states that critical pedagogy, in its most radical form, “seeks to unoppress the oppressed, and unite people in a shared language of critique, struggle and hope to end various forms of human suffering” (27). Critiques of critical pedagogy, including feminist and *Borderlands* perspectives, warn that critical pedagogy should not be about “saving” oppressed communities through perceivably liberal strategies but instead should be about building

collaborative communities to create spaces for emancipatory processes through critical pedagogical practices.

Another emancipating aspect of critical pedagogy is that it does not prescribe to any formulas for universal implementation. According to Henry Giroux, it is the critical theorists and practitioners' objective to empower and transform existing inequalities and injustices that give critical pedagogy unity (Hernandez, 1997). This unity brings together a "heterogeneous" set of philosophical principles that have emerged from a variety of intellectual traditions and influences (Darder et al, 2003). They include cultural politics, political economy, historicity of knowledge, dialectical theory, ideology and critique, hegemony, resistance and counter-hegemony, praxis, dialogue and conscientização or conscientization, as well as critiques from feminist, postmodern, ecological, and *Borderlands* perspectives (2003:17). This is not an all-encompassing list as there are many other contributing principles consolidated within critical pedagogy. Each of these principles has developed the multitude of expressions within critical pedagogy based on the different communities they have emerged from.

Paulo Freire and Conscientização

One of the most influential pedagogical philosophers in the development of critical pedagogical thought and practice has been Brazilian-born Paulo Reglus Neves Freire¹⁰ (Mayo, 2004:1). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is Paulo Freire's most controversial and renowned work. It was first published in Portuguese in 1968. Two years later, after an invitation to teach at Harvard University, *Pedagogy of*

the Oppressed was published in both English and Spanish. Publication in his country of Brazil, however, was not allowed until 1974 because of the subversive pedagogical philosophy behind his work. Even today, most of the educators that take up Freire's work are those working away from mainstream approaches. Regardless, Paulo Freire's work is essential to any scholarship that engages systematically and structurally marginalized, disenfranchised, oppressed communities. Freire's work does come with critiques from a wide range of perspectives. He has been accused of masculine language and patriarchal assumptions, as well as universalism and the homogenizing treatment of the oppressed as a category, and finally for his uncritical erasure of his own relative privilege (De Genova, 2005: 257). Regardless of his detractors, many educators, including feminist educator bell hooks, maintain the value and respect for Freire's insight and contribution.

Among Paulo Freire's many critical philosophical hallmarks are *conscientização*. *Conscientização*, or conscientization, refers to "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire 2001:35). In other words, *conscientization* is the process of developing a critical social consciousness through which students, as empowered subjects, achieve a critical and deepening awareness of the social realities which shape their lives and discover their capacity to transform them (Darder et al 13-14), and it is through the experience of struggling to transform those realities and the experience of the transformation that critical consciousness can fully develop (Allman in Darder et al., 2003:424).

Paula Allman explains Freire's *conscientizaçao* as "A deepened consciousness of their situation leads [people] to apprehend that situation as an historical reality susceptible of transformation. Resignation gives way to a drive for transformation and inquiry, over which [people] feel themselves in control" (422).

Dialogue

Conscientizaçao embodies, among other tenets, dialogue and love.

Dialogue, Freire states, "is the encounter between men [people] mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (2001:88). Dialogue, within critical pedagogy, speaks of an emancipatory educational process which is committed to the empowering of students, done through an exchange between educator and student that involves transformation, love, humility and faith to challenge hegemonic discourse, thereby, illuminating the right and freedom of students to become subjects of their world by naming the world (Darder et al., 2003:15). Critical to Friere's concept of naming the world is the basic understanding of the *word*. This concept is also critical for Tato Laviera; it is through the understanding of the word or deconstruction of the word that makes this dialogical process transformative. Tato Laviera applied a dialogical praxis in his writing workshops for *Cosecha Voices*. By engaging the students, through poetics, that "every word is a universe," he began creating a dialogical process with the students so that their voice could emerge. In this process, incorporating a pedagogy of the body, he began to deconstruct the framework of "words" for deeper meanings. As each student spoke about their migrant, farmworking experiences, Laviera would intervene with a repetition of a particular word the student spoke, breaking down

its syllables to manipulate its meaning and reference. These interventions would help the students understand that the knowledge within each word, with its historical, political, cultural, and economical complexities, is perceivable. Reciprocal to this, Laviera would gain a deeper understanding of the students' embodied knowledge, helping him generate the themes for each writing workshop, continuing the dialogical process.

Love

Freire believes that the naming of the world, a transformative act, is not possible if it is not infused with love (2001:89). "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people" (Freire, 2001:89). This concept sets Freire apart from many leftist educators and philosophers and joins him in spirit with Ernesto Che Guevara, who spoke unabashed about the power of love as a revolutionary impetus (McLaren, 2000:171). Freire did not speak of love in terms of romance or religious formation. Instead, he spoke of a revolutionary love or "armed love," ready to fight to "denounce and to announce" or in Tato Laviera's words, "acclaim and exclaim" (Darder et al, 2003: 567); a love that embodies struggle and is pointed in the direction of commitment and fidelity to a global project of emancipation (McLaren, 1999: 54); and a love anchored in narratives of transgression and dissent to become the foundation of hope and the oxygen of revolutions (54).

Love is a challenging act to synthesize within an academic context when it is, for the most part, ousted from our public educational vernacular, constituting actions not associated with education. Freire's revolutionary love within

pedagogy and its commitment to liberation are what I believe can help question the absence of love within education. For *Cosecha Voices*, the love that Freire speaks of was evident as it dissolved the traditional boundaries that exist between the “public” (school) and the “private” (home and community) (Valenzuela, 1999, 11) and among educators and students. Stephanie Alvarez and Tato Laviera constructed *Cosecha Voices* with a passion to empower and to humanize the voices of students from migrant, farmworking families by bridging together community and academics. The students, although required by the grading system enforced in the curriculum, reciprocated with excitement by opening up and sharing their migrant, farmworking experiences in the classroom. Seldom were the writing workshops and oral performances without cathartic moments that did not come with tears, from both the students and the educators. Most captivating was when they read their *testimonios* to their families demonstrating the love of children for their hard working parents. Amanda Turrubiarres speaks of the significance of her family,

Quisiera regresarles [a mis padres] por todos los sacrificios que han hecho por mi con tal de seguir adelante, por el apoyo que me han dado y me siguen dando, y por muchas cosas mas. Mis padres forman una parte muy indispensable dentro de mi vida. Realmente, mis padres me han inspirado a seguir adelante con mis estudios, para asi ya no tener que estar trajando como migrante bajo el sol todo el dia (2007).

The reciprocal dialogue and love that emerged within *Cosecha Voices* has led the students through their own *conscientização*, the building of their own social critical consciousness. The group of students that formed after the course and founded the organization has remained close to the educators and to each other. The students also admit that these relationships deepened due to the involvement with *Cosecha Voices*. Freire states that the effort toward *conscientização* is not the end itself (2004:66), but continual when joined with a transformative praxis (hooks,1994:47).

Borderlands and Gloria Anzaldúa

The pedagogical strategies implemented by Tato Laviera, Stephanie Alvarez, and Edna Ochoa for *Cosecha Voices* were also highly influenced by their knowledge and engagement with *borderlands* discourse and theoretical formation. C. Alejandra Elenes states that *borderlands* is a “discourse of people who live between different worlds” – geographic and symbolic- that speaks “against dualism, oversimplification, and essentialism” and it is “a discourse, a language, that explains the social conditions of subjects with hybrid identities” (Darder et al, 2003: 191). The *borderlands* in this thesis refers to both the deepened experience of living between multiple subjectivities and the “symbolic barriers that divide communities along race, class, gender, and sexual orientation lines, academic disciplines, and organization structures” (215). It is also the geo-political U.S. – Mexico border region of South Texas. It is, to a great degree, the centrality of the U.S-Mexico border within its geographic and symbolic meanings that makes *borderlands* scholarship distinguishable.

Borderlands as a theoretical perspective emerged from the efforts and struggles of the Chicana/o movement, which worked towards increasing the bodies of Chicanas/os in higher education, as well to establish academic spaces to study systematically the experience and contributions of Chicana/os to society (In Darder 194). According to C. Alejandra Elenes (2003), the *borderlands* educational scholarship borrows from Chicana/o studies, women's studies, and cultural studies to help provide a broader understanding of educational practices impacting the Chicana/o community (215). *Borderlands* theory allows for theorists and practitioners to look at all the different elements that are part of both formal and informal educational settings (215). *Borderlands* resembles critical pedagogy in many aspects, except that *borderlands* interjects Chicana/o identity politics and difference within critical pedagogy. "The ultimate goal of borderland scholarship is to transform practices that reproduce racist, sexist, and homophobic forms of oppression to egalitarian ones" (216). Therefore, *borderlands* theory and practice provide subjects with the ability to transgress "dualistic modes of inquiry" (216) by transforming the historical effects of colonization.

Borderlands has been largely informed by Chicana Feminist thought. One of the most influential *borderlands* theorists, Gloria Anzaldúa¹¹ in her work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza/La Frontera* asks of the new mestiza to understand the circumstances of our hombres and "demand" from them, "the admissions/acknowledgement/disclosure/testimony that they wounds us, violate us, are afraid of us and of our power" and "We say to them: We will develop equal power with you and those who have shamed us" (106). This point is

important to make because there was male participation within *Cosecha Voices* by both students and educators, and “equal” transformation was developed as they all listened to each other’s experiences and understood each other’s struggles. In the two-year collaboration, it was Gloria Anzaldúa’s work, her life and spirit that were often invoked in the ongoing dialogue among the educators, the students and the community forming around the work being done for *Cosecha Voices*. It was Anzaldúa’s work, along with his personal experience in South Texas, which inspired *La Media*, a monologue Tato Laviera began writing shortly after *Cosecha Voices* was first piloted. Once completed, Edna Ochoa gave two outstanding performances at the University of Texas – Pan American and then at the Nuyorican Poets Café in New York.

Body

The students’ bodies are central to all the critical theoretical perspectives used to approach *Cosecha Voices*. I draw from Sherry B. Shapiro’s work *Pedagogy and the Politics of the Body: a Critical Praxis* to formulate how the body is engaged within oral performances, film, and *testimonios* in *Cosecha Voices*. Shapiro poses the body as “the interface of the individual and society; as the ‘terrain of flesh’ where ideological structures are inscribed; as the material base that holds knowledge; and as that which can ‘tell the stories’ of the ‘lives we live’” (1999:82). The body is what takes in the lived experiences and constructs the being and its identity. This critical approach is particularly transformative for students who have migrated and physically labored with their farmworking families as children. If they are not in the field working alongside their families,

they are nonetheless physically and emotionally taking care of their younger siblings or other children. Diana Luna explains through her testimonio,

Yo personalmente no trabaje en la cosecha. Yo cuidaba a dos niños por \$80 dólares a la semana y con eso ayudaba a mi madre a pagar la renta, que era un cobro mucho mas alto de lo que yo ganaba (2007).

Additionally, they witness the physical toll taken on the bodies of their own parents and siblings every day. Maria Elena Sanchez also speaks of this in her testimonio,

Mi padres trabajaban en la labor levantando todo clase de vegetal que los dueños plantaba. A cuasa de tanto trabajo mi madre y padre tienen sus coyunturas muy afectadas. Mi padre se dislocó dos discos y mi madre tuvo que ser operada de sus vérices por la mala circulación (2007).

From a young age, the bodies of farmworking children become sites for labor socialization and labor exploitation. Children from farmworking families start working a full day's work (ten-twelve hour days) as early as the age of seven or sometimes earlier.

Farmworking can be considered a form of "all-body" labor that has no reflection or connection (Shapiro, 1999:81) other than to survive. According to McLaren, the bodies of people who have been historically and economically oppressed, "are the primary means by which capitalism does its job," producing a body in "the image of capital;" nevertheless, Shapiro believes, "through the

creation of a critical vernacular and praxis of liberation [the body] can be reappropriated” (Shapiro, 1999: xiii); a vernacular and praxis can decolonize and engage the body in telling/voicing its own story of oppression. *Cosecha Voices* acknowledges the body as the holder of knowledge, thus to re-appropriate the bodies of the students, oral performances, the film and the *testimonios* are ways through which the educators and the students engaged, to not only document the process, but also create a broader project of liberation or emancipation. The students decolonize the body by experiencing the learning process, within an academic space, through the entire body. For the student with migrant, farmworking experience, reclaiming the body as a source of liberation and empowerment becomes of particular importance since it has been a source of power for capital.

Transculturation

Transculturation is a conceptual framework constructed by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969), in his outstanding work, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (2003). Ortiz’s neologism, *transculturation*, proposes to change the terminology from the widely used term of *acculturation* to *transculturation*. Ortiz’s explains why *transculturation* provides a broader framework,

I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really

implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a *deculturation*. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called *neoculturation* (2003:102).

Neoculturation, he continues, is the cultural “offspring” or the hybrid, always having “something of both parents but is always different from each of them” (102) and always “in a state of transition” (103).

In Ortiz’s work, *transculturation* is used to critically refute the traditional polarities through which cultural differences and political and social inequalities had systematically been analyzed (Coronil, 2003: xii). The process he describes through *transculturation* apprehends both the violence/dolor, which undeniably occurs and is often erased, in histories affected by colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and globalization, and the creativity which emerges as a constructive aspect for survival (xv). In addition, unlike acculturation, which is a unidirectional acquisition of culture, in *transculturation*, all the cultures converging at once are transformed, creating a *neoculturation*. *Transculturation* is a process that Ortiz did not intend to restrict to Cuba. It is a concept considerably “fundamental and indispensable for an understanding of the history of Cuba, and, for analogous reasons, of that of America in general” (Ortiz:103).

I propose in this research *Cosecha Voices* opens up an academic space for critical pedagogy and transculturation to intersect to create a *transcultural pedagogy*. *Transcultural pedagogy* is a process that involves a hybridity of

intersecting theories intertwined in oral performances, film, and *testimonios* as pedagogies and epistemologies. This process of transculturation emancipates the voices of the students through the production of the *testimonios* bringing about social change. With the students from migrant, farmworking families being the impetus and the thread within this transculturation, the convergence of the educators, with their critical knowledge and their own struggles and the theories and practices, empowered the students to emerge and document their own voices, bringing about social change within an environment that most often marginalizes their situated, embodied histories.

The transculturation process for the development of *Cosecha Voices* first emerged when José Luis Martínez, and Tato Laviera crossed the U.S. – Mexico border in Progreso, and Martínez recreated his migrant, farmworking history for Laviera. From this *convivio*, *Cosecha Voices* was conceived as a course capable of creating a space where students with migratory, farmworking experiences could be empowered to document their histories. The transculturation continued as the educators, Tato Laviera, Edna Ochoa and Stephanie Alvarez, each brought to *Cosecha Voices* their own critical knowledge and pedagogical practices which blended with the students' knowledge of their lived experiences. This created a transcultural praxis where new forms of knowledge were produced. Furthermore, it is the *testimonios* that represent their emerged voices; transformed bodies; their multiple subjectivities; and that which moves them to create social change within a rigid academic institution and environment.

CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN
COSECHA VOICES

Stephanie Alvarez uses the term, “emancipatory pedagogy” to describe the educational strategies used in *Cosecha Voices*. Alvarez, together with Tato Laviera, constructed the curriculum to in fact incorporate critical pedagogical practices, such as oral performances, visual methods and the *testimonios* to produce an ongoing project of emancipation. This led the students to engage in a transformative and dialogical process with the educators to bring about personal and social change by documenting their own personal migrant, farmworking histories, thus becoming aware of their own historic subjectivity. These practices asked of the students to bring their lives into the classroom and use their individual and collective bodies to voice or emerge those lived experiences pertaining to their migrant, farmworking experience, thereby, illuminating the students through a process of liberating memory and knowledge.

Oral Performances

The *Cosecha Voices* curriculum implemented oral performance in various forms to prepare the students throughout the semester for a public reading/performance of their *testimonios* to their families, friends and university community. Oral performance, in this

context, refers to a pedagogical practice and a form of epistemology that include taking the textual migratory, farmworking experiences of the student and transforming them into oral practice and performance. During the initial part of the course, the student read their experiences out loud and, most often, verbatim. As they developed more confidence and trust, I observed as they detached themselves from the paper and instead, began to speak more openly and freely their particular migrant experiences. These bi-weekly, spoken readings led to improvisations of the different themes Tato Laviera and Stephanie Alvarez incorporated in the curriculum. Finally, they prepared a consolidation of their writing and performance practices, their *testimonios* to publicly read to their families, friends and communities in different events and conferences.

The first public reading, which also counted as the ‘final’ for the course, was coordinated by Stephanie Alvarez and included presentations by each of the educators and the former CAMP Director. Each one of the students read their *testimonios* and together, holding hands, sang their emblem song *La de la mochila azul*. This was a significant performance because it brought together farmworking families and their children, as students, and embraced by their educators. It also created a safe space for the students to voice and validate the struggles they have endured and the contributions they have made with their families to the wider society. For many of the students, this was the first time their families heard them openly speak about how they perceived their migrant experience, though there were several students that could not share their *testimonios* with their families. Palmira Cepeda had been struggling with sharing her *testimonio* with her family since 2007 when she wrote it. She had presented her *testimonio* on at least four occasions to “strangers” in various settings. In a platica we had about her *testimonio*, she

mentioned it would be difficult for her to read to her parents what she wrote for fear of crying. Palmira Cepeda recently sent me and others a text message telling us this, (Text message sent to author, May, 2009), “I read my story to my parents. I was going to cry but I stopped myself... My mom started to cry. They liked it a lot. It was hard but I finally did it. Palmira is twenty-one years old.

The active students, including Palmira, that now form the *Cosecha Voices* student organization have each taken the oral performance of their *testimonio* to Puerto Rico at the CAMP/HEP National Conference; New Jersey for the NACCS National Conference and Rutgers University; several local readings and New York at the *Nuyorican Poets Café*. In each event and conference, the students and the educators traveled and worked as a collective voice. The oral performances of the students’ *testimonios* in the classroom and in public spaces are a vital pedagogical practice within curricula focusing on the Chicana/o migrant, farmworking experience. The oral performance, as a critical pedagogical practice, constitutes a body pedagogy that is vital for the decolonization and transformation of students’ bodies from which their voices emerge from. Furthermore, oral performances as pedagogy among Chicana/os from migrant, farmworking communities have a cultural and historical connection to *El Teatro Campesino* which emerged as a counter hegemonic tool to expose the exploitative living and working conditions of farmworkers in the United States.

El Teatro Campesino emerged in 1965 as a union tool for organizing, fund-raising, and politicizing with and for the farmworkers and the movement’s struggle (Broyles-Gonzalez: 1994: xii). *El Teatro Campesino* was composed of an ensemble of farmworkers who performed improvisational *actos* or skits to express the exploitative

conditions of farmworkers using satirical words and actions (1994: xii). Their trajectory ended around 1980, and today El Teatro Campesino Inc. exists only as a production company (1994: xii). Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez positions *El Teatro Campesino* within a Mexican oral culture or popular performance tradition which refers to “a larger unified field of interlocking cultural practices” (1994:5). It is important to note, however, that *Cosecha Voices* is also directly influenced by Tato Laviera, who is one of the leading voices of the Nuyorican experience and artistic movement. The poets gathered at the *Nuyorican Poets Café* in the Lower East Side of Manhattan – renamed Loisaida by the poets (Acosta:83). The Nuyorican movement also came from the margins to denounce the racism and inequalities of U.S. society, and give a voice to the experiences of Puerto Ricans living in the *barrios* of New York (Acosta-Belén in Rosaldo: 82). Edna Acosta-Belén states that *El Teatro Campesino* and the *Nuyorican Poets Café* are two contemporaries of the civil rights movement period (82).

The oral performance implemented in *Cosecha Voices* can be linked to the Mexican oral culture as ‘interlocking cultural practices’ as elaborated by Broyles (1994) in her work *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. Broyles explains, “oral culture is typically not just spoken words but words defined by their lifeworld context, hence inseparable from that context and from the body and voice that utters them” (1994:5). Therefore, the words performed by the students in the classroom, as practices, and in public, as performances, must not be disembodied or detached from their bodies and voices. It is their spoken lived experiences that they are defining for the world, to name the world. This is significant because the students are also exposing to the world, the struggles and exploitation of migrant, farmworking families and their children.

The students are then empowered to denounce the racism, sexism, and inequalities in their lives, and the educators facilitate this fruition within and outside of a rigid academic institution that structurally perpetuates the silencing of students' voices, particularly the voices of students of color. The silencing and delegitimizing of the students' voices and efforts were made evident when the students were criticized for their name, *Cosecha Voices*, by two white tenured professors, for being 'confusing' for its bilingualism or 'not representative' of the migrant, farmworking struggle. It was also evident when Stephanie Alvarez and the students who form the *Cosecha Voices* organization, after legitimately requesting travel funds for a conference in Puerto Rico from the Office of Dean of Students, had to battle for months after, through emails and through meetings to receive their reimbursement. These actions are defined by Peggy Davis (Solórzano, 1998), as *microaggressions*, "stunning, automatic acts of disregard that stem from unconscious attitudes of white superiority and constitute a verification of black inferiority" (124). Microaggressions can go beyond the black/white dichotomy and actually manifest themselves in "multiple faces, voices and experiences" (Solórzano, 1998:124).

Therefore, their negotiations with the university because of their reimbursements is representative of microaggressions towards students of color, perpetuating the dualistic conditions the students and their families experience with the farm owners, when having to justify their work/existence in order to receive what they rightfully earned.

Visual Methods

Stephanie Alvarez and Tato Laviera integrated several visual methods in the curriculum and in the overall project. First, they envisioned a film documentary of *Cosecha Voices* to expose the process and the voices of the students to a wider

community. According to Alvarez, (personal communication with author, August 2009), “The original idea for filming was that I knew what we were doing was unique and important work... I wanted it documented... I wanted someone in the future to know what we were doing here. Then came the concept of an actual film, then the filming to document in order to create a curriculum, and then the digital stories.”

As mentioned by Alvarez, the documentary will be part of a training curriculum for educators or educational programs interested in implementing the *Cosecha Voices* curriculum. Second, the video footage was also used as a critical pedagogical tool to create dialogue between educators and students. For the midterm, the students were asked to prepare a ninety-second consolidated, written piece of their original work. I filmed the majority of the students reading their written work directly into the camera, with a few seconds of open dialogue about their migrant experience. This process took the entire two and a half hours and even then, several students did not finish. These students provided their own ninety-second video recording the following week.

For the viewing of their midterm, Tato would have me pause the video before each student and would then go around the room asking everyone to critique the performance. This practice engaged the students with their own image on the screen allowing them to reflect on how integrated their bodies, in particular their voices, were in the process of emerging their voice. This practice prepared the students for the final presentation at the end of the course.

Third, the educators also used documentary films to engage the students in dialogue and critical thinking. The films shown were representations of the migrant, farmworking experience and struggle. Finally, in the course taught in 2009, the educators

had the students prepare a short digital-story that complemented their *testimonio*. This process became challenging for the students because of the time constraint and the lack of accessible, technical expertise within the university in assisting the students with filming and editing support. Nonetheless, all the students presented their digital stories and read their *testimonios* in their final presentation.

Visual methods, as pedagogical practices, are similar to reading and writing, Dale Jacobs explains (McBride, 2004:157) “Reading and writing are not simply technical matters of decoding and encoding, then, but are implicated in the ways in which we live our lives. Such is the case not only in reading a novel or writing a letter, but also in watching a film or taking a photograph: all imply various kinds of literacy, various ways of reading the world, all of which are important within the lives of humans beings” Therefore, visual methods, as pedagogical and epistemological practices function in the same way as reading and writing, because they also transform “the ways in which we live our lives” (157).

Testimonios

The students’ *testimonios* are the textual documentation of their migrant, farmworking experience. They came together through all the writing the students did throughout the course based on the explorative themes generated for the curriculum. The *testimonios* were also the final production read to their family and friends at the end of the course, in the conferences and other venues. The *testimonio* has emerged as a counter-hegemonic tool within Latin America. John Beverly has theorized the *testimonio* from a historical and political perspectives, with subjects such as Rigoberta Menchu, Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, and El Sub-comandante Marcos, which form part of leftist movements in

Latin America. Beverly also adds that the *testimonio* has a long history, developing through texts such as the colonial *crónicas* or war diaries of Bolívar or Martí (Beverly, 2004: 31). The *testimonio* was sanctioned as a literary genre by the Casa de las Américas in Cuba which began awarding literary prizes under this category in 1970, as well as with the reception of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965) and Miguel Barnet's *Biografía de un Cimarrón* (1967) (31). The *testimonio* has also impacted sociological and anthropological methodology in that it requires a direct participant engagement, as well as a political one (32). With this historical development, the *testimonio* is still considered a leftist tool, linked to social movements, with the desire for social justice. The Latina Feminist Group (2001) speak of the traditional methodology of the *testimonio* as a "form of expression that comes out of intense repression or struggle, where the person bearing witness tells the story to someone else, who then transcribes, edits, translates, and publishes the text elsewhere" (Latina Feminist Group, 2001:13). The Latina Feminist group has restructured and reclaimed as a process and a product of knowledge that is "inseparable from the collaborative process" (13). For the Latina Feminist Group, "testimonio was critical for breaking down essentialist categories, since it was through telling life stories and reflecting upon them that [they] gained nuanced understandings of differences and connections among [themselves]" (11). The same phenomenon occurred in *Cosecha Voices* through the implementation of the *testimonio* as a means and an end for the course (process and product).

The *testimonio* was embedded in every pedagogical practice as it was being developed throughout the course. The theories brought in by the educators, the oral performances and the visual methods all weave together to form the *testimonio*. They

form part of what I believe to be the transculturation of the students. The transculturation within the *testimonio* empowered and emerged the students' voices *to denounce and to announce* or to *acclaim and exclaim*. According to Chéla Sandoval (1998), oppositional mestizaje, [in this case, transculturation], "occurs when the unexplored *affinities inside of difference* attract, combine, and relate new constituencies into a coalition of resistance" (362). The testimonios represent the bodies of the students in which the *affinities inside of difference*, or the similarities within themselves, the bridging of their identities, have been transformed to build a "coalition of resistance" (362).

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS/FINDINGS

In this chapter, I transform the *testimonio* to an empowering/creative/research tool to blend together the *Cosecha Voices* students' *testimonios*, written in 2007, with my lived experiences as a collaborator. By interpreting the research findings through a *testimonio* as a method/process/product, this *testimonio*, thus becomes what the Latina Feminist Group (2001) speak of as a "more organic way of collecting and generating knowledge" and a process that feels "more comfortable" because it is "the familiar story telling" that harkens "back to our mothers' and other relatives' kitchens" (12). The *testimonio*, in this respect, becomes a place of *desarrollo*, always transgressing through nurturing and strengthening. It is a place where one becomes subject/agent of one's own representations. The *testimonio* also questions my place and works toward resolving my relative privilege or "authorial relation" (Allatson, 2002:14) in the textual/cultural production of the *Cosecha Voices* students. Therefore, *al dar testimonio* to the *Cosecha Voices* experience helps to deepen the understandings of a transcultural pedagogy in the writing of our own histories/*testimonios*. It is manifested in the transformative process of extracting and re-creating embodied knowledge that comes from our unique ways of knowing and the intersecting systems of power in our quotidian

lives. It empowers us to name our own world, tell our own stories, and document our own histories. In *This Bridge Called My Back* (2002), Chrystos speaks of a *theory in the flesh*, which means one,

Where 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. Here, we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience:

We are the colored in a white feminist movement.

We are the feminist in a white feminist movement.

We are often the lesbians among the straight.

We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words (Chrystos, 2002:21).

The students' *testimonios*, including my own, come from the flesh. They become part of the *politic born out of necessity*, transforming into our own voices. A contested space from which we can struggle, negotiate and celebrate our historicity and bring change to our lives. The voice, through the *testimonio*, is no longer dis/embodying enabling the de/construction and re/construction of our identities and subjectivities through our own words. The *testimonio* that follows is a transculturation of the students' *testimonios* and my lived experiences. They are blending/fusing together through dialogue, forging subjectivities and agency to build a "coalition of resistance" (Sandoval, 1998:362). This process illustrates the transcultural pedagogy involved in the two-year development of this participatory research with *Cosecha Voices*.

Despojo as a Quest in the Crevice of Education

In the fall of 2007, Edna Ochoa, Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at the University of Texas-Pan American, invited me to participate in a course called Cosecha Voices. The course was created through the efforts of Stephanie Alvarez, Ph.D. and Nuyorican poet Jesús 'Tato' Laviera to document the experience of South Texas students from migrant farmworking families through an emancipating pedagogy. The invitation came about after my proclaimed interest in film ethnography; along with the challenges the educators of this course had in finding someone to document the semester's course. At 2:30 p.m. on Friday of that week, with a borrowed camera still plugged into the wall to prevent it from turning off, I found myself filming a group of undergraduate and graduate students, and four educators in the first Cosecha Voices writing workshop.

This is the first paragraph to my master's thesis. After I graduated with a B.A in Anthropology, I went straight into the master's program in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in Anthropology. This is where a particular quest began in my life. Although I should reiterate that I am a living quest, I wanted this one to immerse me into academic space to experience the crevices. The introduction to my thesis is how a crevice found me. This thesis is the process and product of that particular immersion and what I learned through the process.

From the first workshop in 2007, to the writing of this *testimonio*, I became interested in the pedagogy transforming both the educators and the students, including those involved indirectly in that formation, which included me. It was captivating because it centers on lived experiences; it uses an array of practices informed through

theory and hopes for transformation. It is a pedagogy that can move through any public and private sphere and takes many forms. Its fruition can only be determined through dialogue and action transformed. I call it *transcultural pedagogy*.

Now, in technical terms, this thesis theorizes (formulates a theory) about a way of teaching (pedagogy) that centers on the students' life experiences. The educators utilized the *testimonio* (original piece) as a process and a product (the means and the end) to ignite change in the learning process of students from migrant, farmworking families. The educators named the course *Cosecha Voices* referring to the voices from la cosecha, las voces del campo, de la labor, and everything the term cosecha represents within the lives of farmworkers. It also refers to a challenging pedagogy, a transcultural pedagogy that involves a transculturation of intersecting theories intertwined in oral performance, film ethnography, and *testimonios* to create a space that allows for students and educators to become both learners and teachers. Because of the exchange of knowledge (dialogue) that empowers them to document their own migratory, farmworking histories, it ruptures an old paradigm that requires students to confine into obscurity their own knowledge, so authoritative figures can *deposit* (Freire, 2001) knowledge only they deem important. The now, almost two-year process after the creation of *Cosecha Voices*, has formed a project of educators, students that collaborate towards a collective goal, to raise consciousness about the lives of migrant, farmworking students and their families.

The counterstory I am now telling and form part of is a *testimonio*. *Testimonio* translates to “testimony” or “the act of testifying or bearing witness in a legal or religious sense” (Beverly, 2004:32). Although in Spanish, the term has deeper connotations and uses, because of its multiple antecedents, in particular, the historical roots in Latin

American social movements. More recently, Latinas/Chicanas/Feministas have restructured and reclaimed the *testimonio* as “a tool for Latinas to theorize oppression, resistance, and subjectivity” (Latina Feminist Group, 2001:19), thus, making the *testimonio* an empowering/creative/research tool used within the Chicana/o community.

I use *testimonio* because I am personally connected to and familiar with the *testimonio*. *Dar testimonio* has been part of my cultural and social upbringing and adult life. I have experienced *testimonios* in church convivios, political protest and rallies, and in my spirituality. It helps bridge the personal in my life with the academic in my life, as it did for the *Cosecha Voices* students. Moreover, in the research process, I learned and understood the contradiction for me, and for the *Cosecha Voices* students, to create an analysis departed/disembodied from my own knowledge. Therefore, the *testimonio*, as a method/process, and what it represents provide me with a plethora of possibilities to explore and express my ways of knowing entwined with those of the students, embedded in their *testimonios*. It also expresses the “complexities of our communities as a whole” (Latina Feminist Group, 2001:21). This *testimonio* speaks of the engagement I had with the students’ *testimonios* and of the similarities we bridge to build ‘coalitions of resistance’. This process of engaging with what Rosalva Resendiz (comadre, y committee member) calls the *spirit* of the theory, in this case, transcultural pedagogy, amplified the understanding of who I am, what I represent in relation to others and how this liberates my embodied knowledge from the confinements of obscurity. First, I will define concepts from my lived experiences and my ways of knowing.

Coraje, Celebración and Voice

Coraje is a trait, a trait I began engaging with from the moment I was conceived and felt my mother's body. It is a trait that mi familia showed me to never sacrifice. It brings pride, rancor, and power down to their knees. *Coraje* is my embodied knowledge and embraces enseñanzas, amor, fortaleza, sabiduría, fe, y ganas. It is the inheritance of my ancestas y ancestros, mis abuelas y abuelos, mis tías y tío, y mi madre. *Coraje* is loyal, seeks justice, harmonia y paz in my life, and it is an expression that can not be oppressed.

Celebración es vida. *Celebrar* is the creativity in our everyday lives with convivios, pláticas over the kitchen table, cleaning the house with the music a todo lo que da, el canto de mis abuelos con la guitarra and besar al santo after counting the money from a good venta at the pulga. It is the celebration of life in rituals such as bautizos, posadas, quiceañeras, graduaciones, bodas, y velorios. *Celebración* is about forming families, friends and communities because it embraces what mi tía Angelica theorized as logros, alegría y esperanza.

Voice es la facultad that guides me through this process called vida/life. It is thought, spoken, felt and ignited. It requires coraje to emerge it, and it demands celebration when present. Voice can stand as one and can also be a collective that can tear down walls and move mountains. Voice is what refuses to be held captive in the confinements of obscurity.

Ways of knowing

My way of knowing is through the body. I am a healer, a curandera, a chamana, and yes even an hechizera. I refute, and yet negotiate/navigate through, colonizing structures. I learn through el despojo de mi carne/my flesh: I live a rebirth. I transform my flesh, mi facultad, and mi camino in every despojo. Soy la comadrona. To be clear, I am not speaking of symbolisms or metaphors: I am a woman of color, a beautiful brown to be precise, and I heal. Through this flesh, I name the world. I use *coraje*, *celebración*, and *voice* as, forms of expressions vividos that often converge in my quotidian life. This includes the quest within the crevice of my academic education.

Education in the crevice

Siento coraje because I have also confined my own knowledge in obscurity for believing that it is not legitimate because an “institutionally credentialed researcher” (De Genova, 2005:22) did not collect and analyze my life. I celebrate with some cafecito as I understand why. Voice guided me through the process of discovery in this crevice. I learned of a new language that holds power and has used it against my flesh. I learned of new concepts that created a matrix of oppression. I learned new metaphysics that showed me another form of despojo, called transculturation. I made certain *coraje*, *celebración* and *voice* converged in the formation of this thesis. Son mis santos in these crevices, Son mis amuletos para el camino. Son el Rosario en mi mano, going through each misterio. From this camino, I made the decision to write about *Cosecha Voices* because it was through this experience that the sacred and the academic converged and amplified. I describe this converging and amplifying in dialogue with the students’ words. The words

they used to construct their testimonios. From these words, three concepts emerged in their writing and their experiences.

Cosecha Voices: Education, Familia, and Orgullo

Llegando al lugar, el paraíso no fue como nosotros esperábamos, bueno de los paisajes no me quejo porque al ver los campos hermosos y al oler el aire fresco de los campos todo el tiempo es bello. Pero trabajar el campo es otra cosa. Todos piensan que vivir en los Estados Unidos es color de rosa, y que el dinero se gana fácil. Pero trabajar en la parcela, pisando verduras o frutas no es una hermosura, es una verdadera friega que quisieras no volver (Irasema, 2007).

Irasema's *testimonio* speaks of the complexities within the experiences of the students. In this pedacito de carne/cut from the flesh, you get a sense of the contradictions and resolutions of having to labor hard over a beautiful field, a paradise up to that point. Then having to do this to be able to survive in the United States, where a distorted illusion/imagery exists, and is manipulated by, those in power to make us believe there is free land where money is bountiful. In class, Irasema could barely speak a few words without pausing to hold back her tears, and when she spoke, it was liberating to watch. She found the bravery to read it to her family and to read it once again in Puerto Rico.

I began the *Cosecha Voices* conversation with Irasema because as I read it, I recalled many of the students, including myself, expressing the same friega with our education. Her words made me connect to the struggles and challenges Chicana/o students have to endure throughout their education by trying to

balance schoolwork and familial responsibilities which often include labor as contribution. In both cohorts, 2007 and 2009, several of the students still perform local farmwork throughout the year and also migrate during the summers to be able to pay for school. In my research, I found scholarship from Chicanas that spoke of these struggles and how the educational system, through institutionalized racism, force out people of color from higher education. Tara J. Yosso demonstrates through the Chicana/o educational pipeline that out of 100 elementary school students, only seven graduate with a B.A degree, two graduate with a professional or graduate degree and less than one will graduate with a doctoral degree (2006:3). Given that farmworkers have a greater percentage of k-12 drop-out rates, the number of doctoral graduates for this particular community would be even fewer. Within *Cosecha Voices*, out of the 21 students that participated in the 2007 cohort, three students have already graduated with their bachelor's degree, and one is in her first year of a master's program.

The students' *testimonios* are incredible at demonstrating the complexities they grapple with on a quotidian basis that help them challenge and resist abandoning their educational goals. To understand those complexities that help them in their educational pursuits, como una leida de cartas, I layed out all the *testimonios* in front of me and as I read them found myself reflecting back to their individual experiences within *Cosecha Voices*, and how each of the *testimonios* came about as a lived experience and what they must have endured in the process. This is where my dialogue is grounded, in the endurance, that which gives us agency to battle and survive. Through the methods, I saw the

exploratory themes generated by the educators emerge from the text. I was there, I was the witness to the truths. After several more *leidas* and more coding, three concepts spoke to me because they were continuous within each of the *testimonios*, within the words, within the voices: education, familia and orgullo. These concepts also emerged in the footage of the course, in the improvisations, the focus groups and reflections in the writing workshops and in the interviews with the students.

Education

Pero por eso estoy estudiando para seguir adelante y para no volver a la friega (Irasema, 2007).

Quiero ser maestra de primaria y se que lo voy a lograr (Mariana 2007).

Todas esas veces que íbamos me daba miedo de los demas alumnos porque me menos preciaban por ser una Mexicana y tambien por ser migrante (Palmira, 2007).

Statements about the importance of education are in all of the *testimonios* and footage, as well as the challenges of attending different schools throughout the year. They refer to how they felt about leaving school early or returning late, overcoming teacher's low expectations, and the reinforcement from their families to continue school and leave the friega in the field.

Before *Cosecha Voices*, even though I have lived them through my own flesh, I was not keen to the educational decisions, conditions, and challenges confronting the everyday lives of the Chicana/o community, much less the migrant, farmworking community. It became clearer when we filmed the first

focus group with four students: Diana, Roberto, Palmira, and Annabel. This was the first time filming the students outside of the workshop and the first time asking them to reflect on the course and in their experiences. They all expressed the difference *Cosecha Voices* made in their lives because of the opportunity to voice experiences never shared in an academic space and that they did it as group. Diana told us a story that has since lingered in me,

*Before I went to Kansas, because I was migrating, I had this teacher and she was real nice. I was taking college classes and telling me to go to college and stuff, but then she got real mad when she heard that I was migrating. She got real mad, I felt so bad. But then, I mean, I guess she felt that I was wasting my time but I really wasn't wasting my time. I realized that it was very hard and that I had a team with my mom, my little brother, and my grandpa. We are such a small family but we became much closer and I did not see it as bad as she saw it. I do not blame her because, she thought I was quitting school but I wasn't, I am still here. I almost have a minor in Spanish. I took a lot of college classes in college so I was not wasting time (Diana Luna in *Mi Vida, Mi Voz: Una Cosecha de Voces*, 2009)*

Diana is a bright young woman who I have had the privilege to meet and admire. I could not help but feel connected to her experience because of the similarities in mine. Familia is part of who we are as Mexican-Americans. As complex as familia is, it is part of our identity. A single mother just like Diana's raised me,

and we felt like a team with my grandparents, my uncle and my two aunts. The rest of our extended family was in Mexico. Therefore, mi familia's struggle is my own. Their coraje, celebrations, and voice are my own.

Education has been a struggle in my life because I have had to balance a commitment to my education and a commitment to my family and especially to my self. When I decided to take on *Cosecha Voices* as my thesis project, I was working two jobs, surviving a miscarriage and feeling a tear inside of me because my grandfather was battling cancer and was at the end of life. I was also helping *Cosecha Voices* as much as my energy would allow. And just like Diana, I have also received personal attacks from educators who directed their frustrations at me. I learned through new language and concepts that critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and love can give a learner (in any socio-cultural sphere) insights as to why these frustrations directed at students of color manifest themselves. They are called microaggressions and are based on racist conceptions. This new understanding gave me the mechanism to use my coraje to celebrate my voice through this *testimonio*, although I do not allow it to erase the pain felt because I still lost much. My grandfather passed away in May of 2009. It has only been three months, and I have yet to grieve him the way he deserves. But just like Diana, I am still here, with my coraje, pushing through with almost a graduate degree. This leads me into how important familia is within the lives of the students.

Familia

Para mí fue muy doloroso partir de mi destino por que deje a mi abuelita quien yo consideraba mi mama (Maria Elena, 2007).

Asi que mi Madre soltera, decidió convertirse en migrante de agricultura haciendo que sus hijos valoraran los esfuerzos que ella hacía para obtener “felicidad y bienestar” en nuestra familia (Diana, 2007).

Fue una noche de preocupación para mis padres el saber que no tenían el dinero suficiente para pagar los pagos que mes con mes se acumulaban. Esa fue una de las razones por la cual mis padres decidieron migrar hacia el estado de California, también porque mi madre fue criada ahí. Ella ya estaba al tanto de las oportunidades de trabajo. Mis padres juntos empezaron su vida en Texas y juntos empezaron su vida como migrantes (Anna, 2007).

The students describe their familias as a team, working together and protecting each other. Migrating and working the fields brings them closer to each other. Reading the *testimonios*, a nostalgic feeling emerges as they speak of their memories through the trip, or the days off watching TV with their father, or going to the store with their mothers. The writing of their *testimonio* has given them the tools to celebrate their familias. Familia is inseparable from the migrant, farmworking experience. And yet it was difficult

for the students to share what they were doing for the class and to read their *testimonios* to their familias. Annabel tells us how she has handled this with her family.

My parents do know I took a class with Tato. They do not really know how it works because I would take late classes, so I would get home really late so they would be sleeping. But whenever I had time, I would be like, I am taking this class, it's about migrants and this is what we are doing, we are writing a story. Ever since the semester ended, they could not come because they had some stuff to do. But the class ended but the project didn't. So we are always with the three minutes because we are going to present it... I have never read the three minutes to them but they know that they are there and they know that I am always reading it to other people.

(Annabel, personal interview, 2009).

Familia is important to the students, and it is manifested throughout the collaboration. It is difficult to share a story so personal when it speaks of those who gave you flesh. It is difficult to have familia hear their children speak of what they saw how they struggled with their own bodies, hurting their hands, sacrificing their health for the subsistence of the familia. This is why for the educators it was important to coordinate and prepare a public reading of the *testimonios* and invite the students' familias to celebrate. It would be part of that bridging between the academic realm and who we are at home. I also observed how familia is so engrained in the students through the formation of the group. Those students that remain close after the course in 2007 have shared those *celebraciones* and *corajes* with each other as they go through the process, bringing them even closer to each other.

By observing how the students brought their lived experiences into the academic crevice reinforced mi despojo. My miscarriage and my grandfather's end of life drew mi familia and my relationship closer. Para celebrar, my partner and I decided to have a spiritual ceremony to forge our relationship. We wanted a blessing with our families and friends. Growing up as a healer/spiritualist, I have always resisted churches and patriarchy. Therefore, I asked Tato Laviera to commence our blessing. He was accommodating and became part of our sacred blessing. I will always be grateful he shared this moment with us because my grandfather got to witness it before he fell more ill. That was the last trip my grandfather ever made. It was a beautiful way to bridge my academic life with my sacred life.

Orgullo

Lo único que yo puedo decir es gracias a mis padres por la vida que me dieron y el ser migrante me ha enseñado a valorar más mi vida y lo que soy (Annabel, 2007).

Yo siendo un migrante me a ayudado mucho en el estudio también como una bonita experiencia que nunca me olvidare porque yo nunca lo mire como algo malo (Martin, 2007).

Aunque ser migrante fue mucho trabajo y muy agotante, todo valió la pena (Amanda, 2007).

Orgullo throughout the *testimonios* is being proud about who they are and coming to terms with their own understanding of how important their experience as a migrant, farmworker is in their lives. It has made them who they are in the

world. Within the testimonio, and in their lives, they no longer have to silence a fundamental experience. They can now celebrate it and they have. Stephanie Alvarez and Tato Laviera coordinated a trip to New York where they presented in different events. It was the *Nuyorican Poet's Café* that showed them how many barriers they can tear down with their histories, with their own flesh. Roberto's statement voices his spoken resistance,

Back then I did not think [my migratory, farmworking experience] was really important cuz it would get us money to put food on the table, but now that I think of it, if it wasn't for us I would say that maybe America wouldn't have food. Because who would pick their food? Because I see those, uh, I don't want to be racist or nothing, but those white people wouldn't go and pick food in the fields because oh no "we are too good for that, they pay us too little, let the Mexicans do it." But then with immigration, they say "the Mexicans are stealing our jobs." Then they should not be discriminating against us because we are the ones that do the hard work. And now I do believe [my experience] is important because we were helping out, not only ourselves but also other people by picking up the fruits and vegetables for them (Roberto, 2008).

Orgullo is what emerged through their testimonios, through their participation with the project after the course ended, but most importantly through their voices. Orgullo/voice is what emerges from the despojo, from the transculturation. Orgullo/voice is what helps the students from heal the process of bridging their subjectivities. Orgullo/voice is a transculturation of *coraje*,

celebración, education, and familia. Orgullo is Fortaleza, empowerment, amor, valor, fe.... It is paz after you have finished the Rosario.

Orgullo/voice is what my mother always told me “la educación nadie te la quita, lo que aprendes, nadie te lo saca.” Orgullo/voice celebrando con un tequilita after that camino. It is the coraje that gave me strength to continue through this crevice, and it is why mi familia was present in my thesis defense. I wanted them to bare witness to my *testimonio*. I have lived four lives and I am now starting my fifth through this despojo/transculturation.

CONCLUSION

Transculturation, as proposed by Fernando Ortiz, apprehends both the violence/dolor, which undeniably occurs and is often erased, in histories affected by colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and globalization, and the creativity which emerges as a constructive aspect for survival (Coronil, 2003: xv). In addition, unlike acculturation, which is a unidirectional acquisition of culture, in *transculturation*, all the cultures converging at once are transformed, creating a *neoculturation*. *Transculturation* is the manifestation of this process within a given sphere.

I propose in this research that *Cosecha Voices* is this sphere; it opens up an academic space for critical pedagogy and transculturation to intersect creating a *transcultural pedagogy*. *Transcultural pedagogy*, in this context, involved a hybridity of intersecting theories intertwined in oral performances, film, and *testimonios* as pedagogies and epistemologies. This process of transculturation emancipates the voices of the students through the production of the *testimonios* bringing about personal and social change. With the students from migrant,

farmworking families being the impetus and the thread within this *transculturation*, the convergence of the educators, with their critical knowledge and their own struggles, and the theories and practices, empowered the students to emerge and document their own voices, bringing about social change within an environment that most often marginalizes their situated, embodied histories.

In the analysis, I illustrate through *testimonio* a transcultural pedagogy. I elaborate how this thesis theorizes (formulates a theory) about a way of teaching (pedagogy) that centers on the students' life experiences, the way educators utilized the *testimonio* (original piece) as a process and a product (the means and the end) to ignite change in the learning process of students from migrant, farmworking families. On this premise, the educators named the course *Cosecha Voices* referring to the voices from la cosecha, las voces del campo, de la labor, and everything the term cosecha represents within the lives of farmworkers. It also discusses how transcultural pedagogy ruptures an old paradigm that requires students to confine into obscurity their own knowledge, so authoritative figures can *deposit* (Freire, 2001) knowledge only they deem important.

In conclusion, from *Cosecha Voices* emerged the becoming of a transcultural pedagogy. *Cosecha Voices* created an important departure from a traditional way of teaching, and it is important to those participating/collaborating because they have the opportunity to go through a transculturation that emerges the orgullo/resistance that our voices can celebrate. Through a critical stance, *Cosecha Voices* is innovative, in that the educators recognized through the process that they did not "educate" the voice of the students: that is oppressive language. In fact, I believe the educators only facilitated, through a space, the emergence of voices confined previously to obscurity. Through

coraje, celebración, voice and the students' concepts, education, familia and orgullo, within the *testimonios* a transculturation process occurred. No longer can the voices of the students be silenced, marginalized or oppressed and through orgullo, their flesh is transformed.

NOTES

¹ Jesús ‘Tato’ Laviera is a Nuyorican Poet and winner of the American Book Award. He currently resides in New York.

² South Texas is the geographical area south of, or sometimes including San Antonio. The cities I discuss in this research are located in the southernmost Texas counties of Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, and Starr. This region borders with N.E. Mexico and it is considered one of the poorest regions of the United States. This region has historically been referred as the Rio Grande Valley or Magic Valley by Anglos who settled in this area as a way to promote “cheap land” and “cheap labor” (see Guajardo and Guajardo, 2008 and Guerra, 2007). In this research, I use South Texas to refer specifically to this region, unless otherwise notated. Furthermore, I use South Texas as a way to reject and disrupt nomenclature damaging to oppressed communities.

³ In the United States, farmworkers are laborers who cultivate, harvest, and prepare a variety of seasonal crops for market or storage and it is estimated there are between two million and three million farmworkers today (Thompson, Jr., 2002: 3). These numbers are difficult to ascertain due to the way the industry is structured. Farmworkers shift through different categories in any given season: migrants, seasonal farmworkers and guestworkers. Migrant farmworkers are individuals who work in seasonal agricultural, they live in temporary housing and travel more than seventy-five miles to obtain a job;

Seasonal farmworkers are individuals who reside permanently in a single community but whose principal employment is agricultural labor; Guestworkers are part of a U.S program that temporarily allows foreign workers to be brought under an H-2A visa to perform agricultural labor (Thompson, Jr.:2002: 4).

⁴ Critical pedagogy, *transculturation*, and *transcultural pedagogy* are conceptual frameworks that I will discuss further in Chapter three.

⁵ Praxis refers to theory-based action or human activity that emerges from an on-going interaction of reflection, dialogue, and action (Darder, et al. 2009: 13). Reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed (Freire, 2001: 126). It is also considered one of the philosophical principles of critical pedagogy.

⁶ The closest Spanish to English translation of testimonio is testimonial narrative (Beverly, 2004). I discuss this concept further in chapter four.

⁷ FESTIBA is a yearly festival held at the University of Texas Pan American. The goal is to celebrate the Arts and Humanities through various academic and community arenas. (<http://coah.utpa.edu/FESTIBA/index.htm>)

⁸ CAMP is a federally funded migrant educational program assisting student in their first year of college with academic, personal and financial support. www.utpa/camp

⁹ In this thesis, I use Chicana and Chicano when speaking broadly about the Mexican American in the United States and Mexican American when speaking specifically about the students in this study.

¹⁰ In the fall of 2007, a few weeks into the same semester *Cosecha Voices* was being piloted, I traveled to New York for a conference. Tato Laviera resides in New York City, so on my last night before I flew back to South Texas, we met.

We talked about *Cosecha Voices*, the film and his impressions of the students. From all the excitement, Paulo Freire and his work emerged in the conversation. From that point on, Tato Laviera made the connection between Paulo Freire's pedagogical work and *Cosecha Voices*. "You get me" were Laviera's words with contagious enthusiasm. Therefore, when I decided to approach *Cosecha Voices* as my thesis, there was no question that Paulo Freire's theory and practice played a crucial role in the critical pedagogical practices implemented in the curriculum and in Tato Laviera's writing workshops.

¹¹ Just like with Paulo Freire, Gloria Anzaldúa and her vision needed to form part of this thesis because of the engagement the educators had with her work and with *borderlands* in general. Anzaldúa was born and raised in South Texas. She was also a migrant farmworker up until she graduated from the University of Texas – Pan American.

REFERENCES

- Acosta-Belen, Edna.
 2007 *Latina/o Cultural Expressions: A View of US Society Through the Eyes of the Subaltern*. In Juan Flores and Renato Rosaldo, eds. *A Companion to Latina/o Studies*. Pp. 77-89. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria.
 2007 *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Bernal, Dolores.
 1998 Using a Chicana Feminist Epistemology in Education Research. *Harvard Educational Review* 68(4): 555-582.
- Bernard, H. Russell
 2006 *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. New York: Altamira Press.
- Beverly, John.
 2004 *Testimonio: On the Politics of Truth*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Broyles-Gonzalez, Yolanda.
 1994 *El Teatro Campesino: Theater in the Chicano Movement*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Coronil, Fernando
 2003 Introduction. In Fernando Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Pp. ix-lvi. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Chrystos.
 2002 Entering the Lives of Others: Theory of the Flesh. In Cherrie L. Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Pg. 21. Berkley: Third Women Press.

- Darder, Antonia and Rodolfo D. Torres
 1998 The Politics of Biculturalism: Culture and Difference in the Formation of Warriors of Gringostroika and The New Mestizas. In Antonia Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres, eds. *The latino studies reader: Culture, economy and society*. Pp 129 – 199. Malden: Blackwell.
- Darder, Antonia, Marta Baltodano, and Rodolfo D. Torres. Eds.
 2003 *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Donna Deyhle, Sofia Villenas, Kristin Crosland Nebeker and Lawrence Parker.
 1998 Guest Editors' Introduction: Critical race theory and qualitative studies in education. *Qualitative Studies In Education* 11(1): 5-6.
- De Genova, Nicholas
 2005 *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space and "Illegality" in Mexican Chicago*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Eber, Christine.
 1995 *Women & Alcohol in a Highland Maya Town: Water of Hope, Water of Sorrow*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Elenes, C. Alejandra.
 2003 Reclaiming the Borderlands: Chicana/o Identity, Difference, and Critical Pedagogy. In Antonia Darder, Marta P. Baltodano, and Rodolfo D. Torres. eds. *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*. Pp. 191-210. New York: Routledge.
- Elenes, C. Alejandra, Francisca E. Gonzalez, Dolores D. Bernal, Sofia Villenas.
 2001 Introduction: Chicana/Mexicana Feminist Pedagogies: *Consejos, respeto, y educación* in everyday life. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 14(5): 595-602.
- Freire, Paulo.
 2001 *Pedagogy of the Opressed*. New York: Continuum.
 2004 *Pedagogy of Indignation*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.
- Giroux, Henry.
 2005 *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Glaser, Barney and Anselm L. Strauss.
 1967 *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Reserearch*. New York: Aldine De Grruyter

- Guajardo, Miguel A. and Francisco J. Guajardo.
 2004 The Impact of *Brown* on the Brown of South Texas: A Micropolitical Perspective on the Education of Mexican Americans in a South Texas Community. *American Educational Research Journal* 41(3): 201-526.
- Hernández, Adriana.
 1997 *Pedagogy, Democracy, and Feminism: Rethinking the Public Sphere*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- hooks, bell.
 1994 *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- Human Rights Watch.
 2000 *Fingers To The Bone: United States Failure To Protect Child Farmworkers*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- Jacobs, Dale.
 2004 "Where Can I Get a Camera?": Documentary Film, Visual Literacy , and the Teaching of Writing. In Kecia Driver McBride, ed. *Visual Media and the Humanities: A Pedagogy of Representation*. Pp. 155-172. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Kanpol, Barry.
 1994 *Critical Pedagogy: An Introduction*. Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey.
- Kincheloe, Joe L.
 2008 *Critical Pedagogy Primer*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria and William F. Tate IV
 1995 Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education. *Teachers College Record* 97(1): 47-61.
- Latina Feminist Group.
 2001 *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mayo, Peter.
 2004 *Liberating Praxis: Paulo Freire's legacy for radical education and politics*. Connecticut: Praeger.

McLaren, Peter.

2000 *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

1999 A Pedagogy of Possibility: Reflecting upon Paulo Freire's Politics of Education: In Memory of Paulo Freire. *Educational Researcher* 28 (2): 49-56.

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

2009 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Demographics.
<http://www.ncfh.org/docs/fs-Migrant%20Demographics.pdf>,
Accessed June 17, 2009.

Ortiz, Fernando.

2003 *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Pink, Sarah, ed.

2007 *Visual Interventions: Applied Visual Anthropology*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Richardson, Chad.

1999 *Batos, Bolillos, Pochos, and Pelados*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Rothenberg, Daniel.

2000 *With these Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today*. Berkeley: University of California Press

Sandoval, Chela

1998 Mestizaje as method: feminist - of - color challenge the canon. In Carla Trujillo. ed. *Living Chicana Theory*. Pp. 352-370. Berkeley: Third Woman Press.

Shapiro, Sherry B.

1999 *Pedagogy and the Politics of the Body: A Critical Praxis*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.

Solis, Silvia Patricia and Juan Jose Garcia.

2009 *Mi Vida Mi Voz : Una Cosecha De Voces* 47 min. Chamana Films Production.

Solorzano, Daniel G.

- 1998 Critical race theory, race and gender microaggressions, and the experience of Chicana and Chicano scholars. *Qualitative Studies In Education* 11(1):121-136.

Thompson Jr., Charles D. and Melinda F. Wiggins, eds.

- 2002 *The Human Cost of Food: Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Valenzuela, Angela.

- 1999 *Subtractive Schooling: U.S. - Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Vandenberg, Donald.

1990. *Education as a Human Right: A Theory of Curriculum and Pedagogy*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Yosso, Tara J.

- 2006 *Critical Race Counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano Educational Pipeline*. New York: Routledge.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

COSECHA VOICES VISION STATEMENT

The main purpose of *Cosecha Voices* is to expose the humanity of the students in their work at the farm. The migrant experience and the people who inhabit it are at the bottom of the American economic structure. At the same time, migrant existence is at the center of an American political feud. This controversy influences the economic and social competitors for jobs, status, and citizenship. Thus, we want to record these youth. The objective of *Cosecha Voices* is to educate the voice to become a writing tool. We aim to teach the students how to document their voices and how to edit the writing that emerges from their voices. The voice is the first primal and natural tool of expression. We want the students to tape their voices, to transcribe their voices, and then to type out their voices. For in that process writing skills will be developed. The process that moves from taping the voice to transcribing to typing is a concise writing exposition tool. In addition, by taping a section in the website, the students will be editing their writing and selecting what they perceive to be choice oral and written texts.

The seven writing workshops sections have been broken down to portray either a day or a seasonal experience at the farm. They are perceived in the time of the day that each activity occurs. The impetus is to be able to have enough material so that we can edit it into a documentary for the conference in March. So we begin in the following order:

6pm the Night Before:

Migration and the American Land
La Colonia & The Farmhouse

Next Day:

5am – The Harvest
9am – Gathering/Distribution
12pm – The Marketplace/Salary Structure
1pm – Pay Day/ El Correo
3pm – Escuela
5pm – Health & Labor Conditions
6pm – La Lucha

7pm – La Comida
8pm – La Familia
9pm – Games
11pm – Social Life

We wish to receive the typed text from the students so that the two teachers can meet every other week to review the papers for grammar, sentence structure, and thematic content. We also want to get an idea of the particular lifestyles, dramas, and personal views of each student. We also want to begin to pre-edit a format for the documentary.

We expect to receive from the students 42 moments of the *Cosecha Voices*. We expect to listen every other week to one selection from each lesson on the website. We are assigning seven writing lessons. In between the writing workshops the students will be exposed to research, film, poetic texts, Spanish and other resources to enhance the qualitative experience of the course objectives.

In the end, the experiences of *Cosecha Voices* will prove to be an important course to instruct and inspire the newly arrived migrant students to be proud of their family and their achievements to the American national growth.

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

Pedro Fernández - *La De La Mochila Azúl lyrics*

Que te pasa chiquilla(o) que te pasa
me dicen en la escuela y me preguntan en mi casa
y hasta ahora lo supe derepente cuando vi pasar la lista y ella no estuvo presente

Chorus

(El)La de la mochila azul el (la) de ojitos dormilones
me dejo gran inquietud
y bajas calificaciones
ni al recreo quiero salir
no me divierto por nada
no puedo leer ni escribir
me hace falta su mirada

Chorus Ends

Me recuerdo me quedan sus colores
las ojas del cuaderno dice amores de borrones
yo quisiera mirar en su pupitre
porque si ella ya no vuelve mi salon sera muy triste
(Repeat Chorus)

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX B

CONSTITUTION OF COSECHA VOICES

Article I. Name

This Organization's official name is Cosecha Voices.

Article II. Purpose and Goals

Cosecha Voices purpose is to create awareness and appreciation of Farmworkers' working conditions in the Lower Rio Grande and in the United States. To create opportunities for civil leadership for students in an institution of higher education. To allow students a forum to voice, discuss and promote issues that concern the migrant community at large. (i.e. Race, discrimination, poor working conditions, university policies, etc) Provide research assistance to all students to better understand Farmworkers historical realities.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

I am a daughter, a niece, a granddaughter and a lover/partner. But most importantly, I am a morena. This is my first publication. It was challenging in many ways, but completely enriching. The most important part, I have amplified my voice.