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## Narrating the Inadmissible: Storytelling and Dialectical Form in *Barefoot Heart* and *Children of the Fields*

IN 2009, I BEGAN TEACHING A COURSE ENTITLED THE Literature and History of Mexican American Farm Workers at UC Berkeley. In the syllabus, I included autobiographies, short stories, novels, and narrative films.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the course was to familiarize students with this important body of literature, but the course also gave me the opportunity to share with them my personal background as a child farm laborer in the San Joaquin Valley of California during the 1960s, and to show the significance of that personal history for the kind of research and teaching I now do at the university. As with any new course, I was immediately confronted with a problem, in this case regarding methods of reading. Specifically, I wanted to understand and be able to explain to students the relation between history and the aesthetic features of the literature. This task, which was both critical and pedagogical, became especially important for reading those literary works in which specific historical events have been omitted or suppressed. Two such works are Elva Treviño Hart's 1999 autobiography *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child* and Robert M. Young's 1973 film documentary *Children of the Fields*. In this essay, I shall suggest that to read these and other similar works properly, we need to pay close attention to the dialectical relation between social context and literary form, taking into account not only what the storytellers in these works say, but the manner in which they say it—and the ways in which history exerts its influence even when neglected.

But first, to establish the critical parameters of my argument, I shall

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consider a work of farm labor history. In the introduction to her 1996 landmark study, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal*, Devra Weber lays the philosophical foundation for the kind of labor history that she finds most useful and critically pertinent. To make her case, she revisits an old debate among philosophers of history on the relation between “structure” and “agency,” pointing out that historians have long argued over “how much relative weight should be assigned to external constraints (structure) and how much to individual motivation (agency), and what the relation is between these factors” (4). Drawing on the relevancy of this scholarly conundrum to guide her study of farm labor, she raises the following provocative question: “To what degree were workers shaped by the economic, social, and political conditions they labored and lived within, and [by contrast] to what degree were they able, within this system, to shape their own lives?” (4) Stated differently, are workers the products or makers of history? Weber stands opposed to historiographies in which farmworkers are “viewed as objects, not subjects, of history” (3) because these kinds of works inevitably result in depicting agricultural laborers as passive, voiceless, faceless, powerless victims that, at most, deserve our sympathy and sorrow but not our critical inquiry into the ways that they have simultaneously contributed to and contested the building of an American capitalist empire in the twentieth century. Even historians who are sympathetic to farmworkers, Weber argues, sometimes make the mistake of constructing a picture of them as “historical non-entities, helpless victims of a rapacious system” (48). She explains that most labor historians “have largely ignored the creative ways agricultural workers dealt with the conditions they faced and how they formed” (3) extended family ties and communal networks as the basis for political organization during the labor strife of the Great Depression. Implicitly, Mexican American farmworkers have effectively relied on the organizational and unifying tendencies of their extended familial networks in organizing countless work actions, stoppages, strikes, and unionizing efforts in the eight decades since the Great Cotton Strike of 1933.<sup>2</sup>

Weber does not ignore the impact of economic and political structures on the lives of farmworkers. Her argument is that even within the rigid limitations imposed by political and economic structures, farmworkers (indeed, all workers) are capable of attaining some level of success in changing their living conditions. To explain her position she

recalls the famous passage by Karl Marx from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: “Men [and women] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past” (227n8).<sup>3</sup> The idea that workers can make their own history but only under conditions that they do not control is a conceptual conundrum—a socioeconomic enigma that requires us to think dialectically rather than in static binaries, and demands that we grasp both sides of a contradiction simultaneously so as to break free from the one-dimensional and reified forms of thought pervasive in modern capitalist society. Thus, with Marx’s dialectical conception of history as a starting point, Weber narrates the story of Mexican American farmworkers who made history by organizing for better working conditions in California during the 1930s despite the overwhelming political and economic power of the cotton industry and the state that they were up against. Her goal in reconstructing this story is to establish that farmworkers have been *both* the products and makers of history.

Weber makes a compelling case for the study of farmworker history, and I want to suggest that a similar case can be made for the study of farmworker *literature*. If indeed a parallel can be drawn between history and literature in this regard, then we might ask: Does Chicano/a farmworker literature live up to the expectations that Weber advocates for farm labor history? Does it represent farmworkers as both the makers and products of their social conditions? Does it expose the link between the proletarianization of Mexican American farmworkers and the building of a state-supported U.S. agricultural empire in the twentieth century? Or does it depict farmworkers as helpless victims of inescapable oppression and suffering and thus as mere products of political and economic structures?

When I started working on this project, I assumed, somewhat naively, that farmworker literature unquestionably represents workers as subjects of history. I quickly discovered, however, that my naive assumption could be easily contested, depending on how one reads the literature. Read at face value, most literary works about Mexican farmworkers seem not to uphold the standard that Weber calls for in works of history. On the surface, the general tendency of Chicano/a farmworker literature is to depict personal suffering rather than to critique social structures—and to represent individual forms of resistance rather than

collective organized action. Raymond Barrio's *The Plum Plum Pickers* might be an exception to this tendency, but what that novel assumes in political transparency it gives up in aesthetic quality. Notwithstanding works such as *The Plum Plum Pickers*, a general discrepancy exists between works of history, Weber's included, that narrate the many instances of militant collective class struggle in the fields since the early decades of the twentieth century, and works of literature that depict mainly the individual struggles of farmworkers to overcome poverty and personal hardships.<sup>4</sup> This characterization of the literature might even hold true for Tomás Rivera's . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*, which has been analyzed as representing an emergent proletarian consciousness (Saldívar 74–89), an analysis with which I agree, even though the novel's unnamed protagonist does little more action-wise than to curse both God and the devil in a desperate fit of anger over his family's never-ending conditions of suffering.

Not satisfied with accepting the idea that farmworker literature might be guilty of perpetuating a view of workers as mere objects rather than subjects of history, I began to explore methods of reading (ideology critique being one of them) that dig beneath the surface content of literary writing. The point I want to emphasize—an issue not only relevant for the study of farmworker literature, but for literary criticism generally—is that we stand to learn as much (if not more) from what a text does not say—from its silences and obfuscations, or from its manner of expression—as from what it states overtly on the narrative's surface. In fact, what a text represses is oftentimes far more interesting than what it reveals explicitly, because the latent is almost always more telling, ironically, than the manifest.

To be clear, I am not arguing that farmworker literature has value only in what it does not disclose. Nor am I saying that it would be incorrect to read farmworker narratives in terms of their immediacy—which is how most people tend to read literature. Rather, what might be most fascinating about this literature generally, and what might be most at stake in the questions I am posing and attempting to answer here, is the significance produced from the interplay between the two very different, albeit opposing, narrative strategies that it employs—that which is revealed and that which is repressed, the said and the not-said, or the apparent and the essential. I would even suggest that the main conflict in farmworker narratives will be found in the formal relation between

these two strategies, and from this perspective we can characterize these narratives as having a dialectical form.

To explain what I mean by dialectical form, I draw on an essay by Franco Moretti entitled "Dialectic of Fear." Moretti's interest lies in the Gothic, but his main point, I would argue, is relevant for most literature. Specifically, he writes about Frankenstein and Dracula, which represent, in his view, the emergence of a monstrous, blood-sucking, dehumanizing industrial capitalism in early nineteenth-century Europe. He argues that Gothic fiction embodies class fears about displacement in a rapidly changing social order—or fears about the racial or sexual other—but that these fears are repressed in the literature only to resurface in symbolic form. The return of the repressed, as he calls it, materializes as the symbolization of silence caused by ideologies that have their origins in political, economic, sexual, psychic, or religious contradictions. Moretti writes:

The repressed returns, then, but disguised as a monster. . . . The literary formalization, the rhetorical figure, therefore has a double function: it *expresses* the unconscious content and at the same time *hides* it. Literature always contains *both* these functions. Taking away one or the other would mean eliminating either the problem of the unconscious (by asserting that everything in literature is transparent and manifest) or the problem of literary communication (by asserting that literature serves *only* to hide certain contents). (103)

By employing two opposing narrative strategies within a single conflicted form, Gothic novels—and to varying degrees, all literary works—partake in efforts of both revelation (realism or history) and repression (fantasy or the unconscious). The relation between these two aspects of the literary text is not one of complete separation, but interpenetration; each aspect mutually implicates the other. The silence on history cannot be separated entirely from the history itself. As Pierre Bourdieu states, in a different context, "The 'unconscious' is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second nature of habitus" (*Outline* 78–79). Bourdieu defines "habitus" as "embodied history, internalized [in the consciousness and practices of individuals]

as a second nature and so forgotten as history" (*Logic* 56).<sup>5</sup> Failing to recognize this internal conflict in a literary work—the objective necessity of forgetting history constantly contending with “embodied history” and the need to comprehend it—reifies the text by making it appear one-sided rather than dialectically structured and multilayered. By contrast, analyzing the various levels of signification in the text can help us to understand the interconnectedness of personal experience and social relations, psychic realities and economic systems, or subjective agency and structural causality. This, Moretti writes, “is the literature of dialectical relations, in which the opposites, instead of separating and entering into conflict, exist in function of one another, reinforce one another” (108). Moreover, this dialectical tendency in farmworker narratives symbolically reproduces the persistence of social contradictions in the lives of characters and in the realities of the social groups they represent. In the farmworker narratives discussed here, there are no monsters or vampires as in the Gothic to symbolize a return of the repressed.<sup>6</sup> But there is nonetheless a “double function” that simultaneously expresses and hides the specific histories that constitute Mexican American farmworkers as social subjects. This double function takes the form of a dialectical exchange between the story and the act of storytelling itself—and it is the latter particularly which embodies the socially critical content of a repressed history that has resurfaced in the intersubjective engagement between storyteller, narrator, and audience.

#### STORYTELLING AS CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE

For the most part, Chicana/o farmworker narratives express a hunger for knowledge and the belief that education can lead the children of farmworkers out of the fields, but they are often critical of the educational system as well. No doubt, the children of farmworkers, like all children, should be encouraged to pursue an education. Yet, even though greater numbers of children from farmworker families may now be earning college degrees than in the past, the general working and living conditions of farmworkers have not improved significantly since the founding of the United Farm Workers Union in 1962.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the political and economic structures associated with global agribusiness that historically have kept farmworkers in conditions of poverty and superexploitation remain in place today. Chicana/o farmworker narratives represent the severe effects of this history in terms of the

social and economic conditions under which farmworkers live, but they do not necessarily address the causes of the conditions. Instead they reflect critically on the contradictions of both farm work and schooling through the act of storytelling, and they do this in such a way that potentially can lead storytellers and audiences alike to a higher level of critical social consciousness.

Storytelling has become an important methodological indicator for scholarly research in disciplines such as Critical Race Theory (CRT). Stories and counterstories of individuals from minority or subaltern groups are considered valid and valuable primary sources for CRT in analyzing the social causes of racism, as well as its social effects and legal implications. Drawing on research techniques that have long been employed in various social science disciplines and in legal studies, CRT scholars have demonstrated the ways in which storytelling can potentially lead to a higher level of critical social consciousness for both the researcher and the subjects of the research. Richard Delgado, for example, makes use of stories and counterstories in what he calls “the struggle for racial reform” (2415) to disclose truths about race and racism that are not often revealed in canonical or hegemonic literary works, because of the ideological standpoints of their authors. As he explains:

Ideology . . . makes current social arrangements seem fair and natural. Those in power sleep well at night—their conduct does not seem to them like oppression. The cure is storytelling [and] counterstorytelling. . . . Stories build consensus, a common culture of shared understandings, and deeper, more vital ethics. Counterstories . . . can open new windows into reality, showing us that there are possibilities for life other than the ones we live. (2414)

For Delgado, counterstories told by working-class and minority storytellers challenge the dominant discourses of power while providing an alternative interpretation of personal and group experiences, events, ideas, cultural practices, social relations, and history itself. Counterstories establish a sense of community, deconstruct traditional belief systems, conceptualize solutions to real existing social problems, and provide an epistemological space from within which readers or listeners can formulate social critiques and take politically informed positions if they are willing to do so. Another CRT scholar, Dalia Rodríguez, draws



on the work of Delgado, Paulo Freire, and others to argue that for “people of color,” whose stories are often untold, “the assertion of our subjectivity as creators and interpreters of texts is a political act” (494). Even if the stories themselves are not particularly revelatory as critiques of political or economic structures, the act of revisionist storytelling challenges the normative explanations of the social inequalities produced by those structures. The most critical aspect of a counterstory might not lie in the narration of personal experience by an individual storyteller, but in the broad social history that provides the context for that personal story and the impetus for the act of storytelling itself. For the interdisciplinary cohort of CRT scholars who merge narrative criticism and social theory—or literary close reading and legal-structural analysis—stories told from the perspective of previously silenced working-class writers, or women and men of color, provide an alternative view of social contradictions, and they offer a perspective that is just as valid, in their view, as those found in the canonical scholarship on race, gender and class.

Similarly, scholars, writers, and activists have recognized the critical edge of storytelling by engaging with the politico-aesthetic form referred to as *testimonio*. John Beverley, whose work is often cited on this topic, characterizes the genre of *testimonio* as an eyewitness account of history unfolding, as in various kinds of social movements and political struggles, differing from traditional autobiographies and memoirs, which tend to focus on the formation of individuals. Beverley writes, “*testimonio* represents an affirmation of the individual subject, even of individual growth and transformation, but in connection with a group or class situation marked by marginalization, oppression, and struggle” (41). But what if the connection between the person bearing witness and the group or class is not articulated explicitly? What if the narrative does not link individual experience with actual social movements or political struggles? Can we still call the story a *testimonio*? Some autobiographical works by or about farmworkers—including *Barefoot Heart*, but also, for example, Rose Castillo Guilbault’s *Farmworker’s Daughter: Growing up Mexican in America* and Frances Esquibel Tywoniak’s *Migrant Daughter: Coming of Age as a Mexican American Woman*—do not explicitly link representations of personal experience with specific historical events and struggles that were taking place during the periods in question. Nor do they describe the effects of those

events on the social groups or classes to which they belong. But history nevertheless always exerts its presence in those personal narratives as subtext or informing context, or as a kind of political unconscious, even when the links between personal experience and antiracist class struggles are not stated explicitly. María Eugenia Cotera articulates this point in a study of three early twentieth-century U.S. women of color writers, stating that storytelling

has the potential to transform embodied experience into critical knowledge. This critical knowledge moves beyond a merely corrective (and presumably transparent) account of history—what one might term a counterhistory—because, at its best, storytelling disrupts the reductive logic that stands at the heart of all narrative claims to “truth.” (141)

From this perspective, *Barefoot Heart*, *Farmworker’s Daughter*, and *Migrant Daughter* can indeed be considered testimonios insofar as these works “disrupt the logic” of truth claims about farmworker history in canonical literary and scholarly works.

In *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*, a pathbreaking collection of *papelitos guardados*, or “small, closely guarded papers,” the Latina Feminist Group expands on Beverley’s definition through a series of descriptors that define *testimonios* as follows: “life stories” that are told and reflected upon (11); narratives that are “personal and private” and thus painful to share, but also “profoundly political” (13); expository writings that simultaneously reflect “oppositions of systemic violence and nurturance, injustice and empowerment,” or social critique and cultural celebration (14); a method for theorizing the correlation between individual experience and “global legacies of resistance to colonialism, imperialism, racism, anti-Semitism, religious fundamentalism, sexism, and heterosexism” (19); and confessions that “speak not for the experiences of the individual but for the experience of a community” (20). Most provocatively, the Latina Feminist Group conveys its understanding of testimonio in the very title of its anthology: *Telling to Live*. In one sense, then, the sharing of testimonio is a matter of life or death—it is a conscious choice to live by telling one’s story. The alternative is to succumb to a prolonged, morbid process of existential decay.

Taking into account these various definitions of storytelling and their usefulness for developing a critical awareness of social issues, we can think of storytelling in Chicana/o farmworker narratives as performing a pedagogical function similar to the kind of education that Freire calls “the practice of freedom” (*Education* 149). Freire describes two kinds of education: the “banking” system of education, in which teachers perform a mechanistic function of merely “depositing” information statically into the reified, noncritical minds of students (*Pedagogy* 57–74);<sup>8</sup> and “education as the practice of freedom”—or synonymously, “education for critical consciousness”—a process in which students become involved in a dialogical relationship with teachers and other students to become critically conscious of the social world in a way that enables them, collectively, to transform the social structures of power and class rule. For Freire, an education for critical consciousness humanizes learners by involving them in the decoding of a dehumanizing capitalist logic. Critical consciousness “is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; [and] by the testing of one’s findings” in social practice (*Education* 18). For the purpose of this essay, Freire’s pedagogy not only serves as a form of social critique, but suggests a method for the interpretation of literature as well.<sup>9</sup> From a Freirian perspective, Chicana/o farmworker narratives nurture a critical outlook of the social world in that they represent the real effects of history as the dialectical counterpart to the structural causes of long-standing class struggles between farmworkers and agribusiness. To analyze further the manner in which storytelling can potentially divulge the socially critical content of Chicana/o farmworker narratives, I shall now focus on two textual examples of critical storytelling: Elva Treviño Hart’s *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child* and Robert M. Young’s film documentary *Children of the Fields*.

*BAREFOOT HEART: ‘IF I DIDN’T WRITE, I WOULD DIE INSIDE . . .’*

Treviño Hart describes her childhood growing up in a Mexican American migrant farmworker family. She was born in Pearsall, Texas, in 1950, the youngest of six children. From 1953 to 1959, her entire family traveled seasonally to Minnesota and Wisconsin to work in the sugar beet fields and to harvest vegetables. At one point, the family lived in a shack that had once been used to house a farmer’s pigs. Elva

vividly describes the backbreaking labor, poverty, hunger, shame, and feelings of abandonment that she and her family experienced during those years.<sup>10</sup> She also illustrates the family's perseverance in struggling to overcome the hardships of class exploitation and racism, stating, for example, that in Pearsall even the cemeteries were segregated: "No gringo in Pearsall would allow his body to rot for eternity among the Mexicans" (174).

When I first read Treviño Hart's narrative, I was deeply moved, partly because I can relate to the experience of working in the fields as a child during the same period even though my experience was in California, not Texas. *Barefoot Heart* appealed to me because its descriptions of a migrant farmworker's life ring true. The narrative, written in a lighthearted style, humorous at times, is told mainly from the perspective of an adult looking back analytically, sometimes emotionally, at a lonely, troubled childhood. It also conveys in the very texture of the language a sense of imminent danger, pervasive sadness, and intense pain, along with a profound desire to be loved. It is the kind of language one often finds in narratives of childhood sexual abuse and the stories of trauma survivors.

Despite the narrative's emotive appeal, I was also, admittedly, troubled at first by Treviño Hart's silence on the significant historical events of the period represented in her stories. Readers could get the impression from her autobiography that there were no efforts at all among farmworkers to organize against racism and class exploitation during that time. Granted, it was not Treviño Hart's purpose to write that history, but literature nevertheless is often held accountable for the things it says or does not say despite authorial intention. Even if we accept that the author may have been too young during the 1950s to remember the politics of those times, she wrote the book in retrospect during the mid-1990s and thus could have done the research to contextualize her experience. She was also certainly old enough to be exposed to the political climate in Texas and the United States generally as she got older and transitioned into high school and college. By the early 1960s, Mexican Americans were active in the Viva Kennedy clubs and the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) throughout Texas. La Raza Unida Party had already begun to organize in Crystal City and San Antonio—fifty-seven and sixty-two miles from Pearsall, respectively. By the late 1960s, the party had taken control of most political offices

in this region of South Texas—a hotbed of radical Chicano nationalism and militancy during the years Treviño Hart was in high school—and Chicanas/os had joined the ranks of the Antiwar Movement en masse, culminating in the Chicano Moratorium demonstrations throughout the Southwest during the late sixties and early seventies.<sup>11</sup> More problematical, *Barefoot Heart* makes no mention of the United Farm Workers union—nor of the 1965 Delano Grape Strike and its corresponding Boycott—which lasted more than half a decade, captured the imagination of the entire country, and popularized the plight of farmworkers throughout the world. Considering that Treviño Hart grew up in a farmworker family, it is hard to imagine how she could not have been affected by this movement, whether she agreed with the politics of the UFW or not. And yet none of this history enters her autobiography directly; there are only occasional vague allusions to it.

I bring up *Barefoot Heart*'s silence on history, not to pass negative judgment on it, but because Treviño Hart's autobiography exemplifies a perspective that we find in most literary works about Mexican American farmworkers. It perceives the effects or symptoms of history through the thoughts and actions of narrators or characters, but without representing that history itself. Despite its silence on actual historical events, *Barefoot Heart* nevertheless conveys a truth about history, not simply in the memories and opinions of the narrator but also in what Bourdieu refers to as "embodied history"—which might be described, using a different kind of critical language, as the political unconscious of the text. In this case, we might need to read the story in the way that a psychoanalyst would listen to both the revelations and omissions of a patient to approximate the source of her/his internal conflict.

One source of "embodied history" in *Barefoot Heart* stems from the narrative's ideological fascination with the theme of education. For example, in an effort to prevent his children from becoming adult migrant laborers, Elva's father, whom she calls Apá, passionately sets a goal for all of his children to graduate from high school—a goal that, with the help of the children themselves, he miraculously achieves. To ensure that this happens, he refuses to pull his children out of school before the end of the school year to take them on the migrant circuit, as other migrant families do, because a family in which every child "graduated from high school was a rarity on the Mexican side of Pearsall" (33). Despite his commendable endeavors, Apá problematically subscribes to

the ideological belief that a liberal education is the pathway to the American dream, and that anyone can attain this dream and thus escape social strife and economic hardships by working hard. On one level, this ideology implies that the solution to poverty lies primarily with individual achievement rather than through systemic change, but, at another level, it reflects the desperate realization by Elva and her siblings that they need to get out of the fields by any means necessary. Elva's sister, Delmira, expresses her understanding of the problem as follows: "I will *not* follow in my mother's footsteps. I swear that I will *not* marry a man who has dirt under his fingernails, and who drags me from field to field. No, señor, not me! I will get *out* of here, one way or another" (45). In *Barefoot Heart*, the most practical way for Elva and her siblings to "get *out*" of the fields is by getting a formal education.

To some extent, Elva buys into her father's belief system during her formative years, evidenced by the fact that she excels academically in elementary and high school. But her understanding of the need for an education is much more complex and socially critical than that of Apá. She realizes that the odds are stacked against her because of racism, gender discrimination, and class bias. "The drop-out rate on our side of the tracks was high," she states, observing that "working seemed easier than competing academically, past the language barrier and the discrimination" (151). Nevertheless, she becomes an overachiever academically, especially in math, which appeals to her more than history and English because it conceptualizes the universe in terms of logical associations and thus structures her world with a "sense of order" (179) in the otherwise chaotic life of a Mexican American migrant farmworker. But math also becomes a source of political resistance for her—a ground upon which to build a social consciousness and establish more than a modicum of leverage for individual advancement. "The truth was that what I loved was not so much the geometry," she admits, adding, "What I loved was clearly being the best—not in anyone's opinion, but in fact. I had finally found a place where I could not only be equal to the gringos, but clearly better" (180). And when Apá dishearteningly calls her "muchacha inútil" (182), Elva takes an antipatriarchal stance and becomes firmly committed to graduate from high school, attend college, and thus demonstrate to her father and the world that she is not a "useless girl": "Now I decided everything I did would be aimed at that goal" (184). Eventually, she earns a bachelor's degree in

theoretical mathematics and a master's degree in computer science and engineering from Stanford University. She also works as a sales executive at IBM, earning a lucrative salary for twenty years after graduating from college.

But with one contradiction solved, another takes its place. Elva finds out that a formal education liberates her from the backbreaking oppression of farm labor and elevates her into a world of corporate success, but it also alienates her from family, community, and history. Being successful in school comes with a price, even if that success, as in Elva's case, takes the form of political opposition to racism, sexism, and class bias. Elva describes the costly consequences of her accomplishments in terms of alienation, solitude, and deep feelings of cultural betrayal, which are conveyed most clearly in the epigraph at the start of chapter 15.

*Mestizo educado, diablo colorado.*

An educated mestizo is a red devil.

(Mexican dicho from the colonial days.) (173)

This proverb has a troubling history with racist, sexist, and colonial connotations. According to Nieves Rodríguez Valle, the proverb originates in Mexico during the colonial period and reflects the antagonism that *indios* felt toward mestizos, whom they considered the bastard offspring of European men and Indian women.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, *indios* felt that mestizos, along with their Indian mothers who were often violently forced into relationships with European men, were the embodiment of indigenous collusion with European colonizers and thus traitors to their race.<sup>13</sup> For Treviño Hart, the proverb alludes not to colonial interracial tensions per se but to the internal ideological conflicts experienced by the academically successful Mexican American female student who becomes alienated from both community and family and thus feels remorse and a sense of betrayal for colluding with an alien culture and worldview. The proverb nevertheless implies a link between its colonial legacy and Elva's situation, and this link reverberates in her deep feelings of loneliness and cultural betrayal. As Elva admits, "I admired people who could stay connected to the family and the local support systems. They never had to feel alone. I had to sever all ties and try my own wings—alone" (207).

At first glance, *Barefoot Heart* seems to posit Elva's successful educa-

tion as the solution to farm labor. But despite her impressive academic record, she suffers an emotional collapse at the height of her career. It is not until she revisits her childhood and reconstructs the story of her experience as a migrant that she is able to achieve some level of healing and critical consciousness about what that experience had meant for her and others like herself. She writes, "I had cut an emotional artery; I was bleeding profusely and I didn't know how to turn it off. . . . My intellect and the strong critic in my head wanted to censor everything. . . . I let myself write the unspeakable, the unwriteable, the inadmissible. . . . Then I knew. If I didn't write, I would die inside while my body was still alive" (235–36). As if adhering to the practice and wisdom of the Latina Feminist Group, *Barefoot Heart* emphasizes the felt need of the former migrant farmworker child, now an adult, to avoid a social death by narrating the "inadmissible," by "telling to live," which is to say, by writing a narrative that bears witness to experience, documents that experience, and then shares it with others through the act of storytelling. In the process, the former farmworker child develops a critical knowledge that stands opposed to the rigid emptiness associated with a strict "banking" type of education in pursuit of social accommodation. *Barefoot Heart* emphasizes the importance of storytelling, not only as a literary genre or a type of communication that serves to inform readers about the hardships of a migrant farmworker's life—even though it fulfills that function well—but also as a *dialectical moment* in the process of transforming the experience of a race-gender-class subject into a critical consciousness of the social world, a necessary step in overcoming and abolishing the structures of sexism, racism, and class power that perpetuate the disenfranchisement of such subjects.

Moreover, Elva's exposure to the critical edge and healing power of storytelling does not begin during adulthood, but during childhood. She first becomes fascinated with storytelling at six while living with her family at a migrant camp in Minnesota. Marielena, a teenage migrant worker, comes to live at the camp and begins telling stories to the migrant children in the evenings, and Elva is immediately smitten with an inexplicable love for Marielena and a desire for it to be reciprocated, even though she feels undeserving. When Marielena touches the girl on the head, it reminds Elva of the way her mother would touch her, but only in those "rarest and closest loving moments" (95). With Marielena, however, the touching and affection is different because it is



associated with the appeal and wonder of storytelling and the opening up of whole new worlds to Elva's young mind and heart: "I felt as if the sun had just been turned on—for me. The love overwhelmed me. . . . What was she that she could affect me this way?" (95) Despite the love she feels for Marielena, Elva is nevertheless totally consumed by an "overwhelming feeling of not deserving this much love" (95).

Elva is a needy child, not only because she needs to be touched emotionally and physically—"No one in my experience had ever kissed me," (96) she confesses—but also because she lacks intellectual and spiritual fulfillment, which is what the storyteller offers her and what she feels she does not deserve. The ideology of dominance that naturalizes the nonintellectual status of farmworkers, especially female farmworkers, has already left its mark on Elva's self-image by the age of six. By contrast, the images, concepts, and values represented in Marielena's stories explode the limits of Elva's intellect: "We rode an undulating magic carpet through the stars with the wind caressing our faces and our hair blowing behind us. . . . Her supply of stories seemed unlimited. . . . [She] awoke my imagination. . . . I experienced my heart and soul being transported to the other side of the world while my small body remained at the migrant camp" (96). Elva, however, does not become fully aware of the storyteller's effect on her internal formation until many years later, after suffering her existential crisis and deciding to write about her childhood as a migrant:

Now I'm the storyteller. [Marielena's] stories were grand, magnificent ones that expanded us so much that we hurt inside with a sweet, wild pain. Mine are little girl stories, but I feel the same sweet, wild pain as I write them. I have no choice now but to write them. . . . Now I'm bathed in [the storyteller's] tenderness and this allows me to feel the pain as I write the migrant stories—safely. So that experiencing my family's migrant days again as I write them doesn't destroy me. I am safe and deeply loved. (97)

It is the memory of the storyteller that enables Elva to reconnect with those early migrant years. Marielena serves as the mediation of Elva's past and present, and thus helps to integrate the child and the adult. Elva thus associates storytelling with affection, safety, and the broaden-

ing of the imagination; storytelling enables the expansion of a liberating intellectual horizon, and it facilitates the healing of injuries suffered from the loveless, reified existence of exploited labor. Elva must write and be a storyteller to heal these injuries.

Considering this reading, we can now address the question of history as it pertains to *Barefoot Heart*. Even though the autobiography remains silent on key historical events in the 1950s and '60s, Treviño Hart's narrative of personal experience stems from and implicitly criticizes the very history that it omits. *Barefoot Heart* is a narrative about abuse—physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, economic, and political. It has to do with child labor as a form of child abuse and the superexploitation of migrant labor as a form of social class abuse. It describes the effects of class power: the intentional manufacturing of poverty, the destabilizing of communities, the formation of a culture of inferiority, and the creation of second-class citizenry. In a telling scene, Elva's father disciplines his six-year-old daughter, Delmira (Elva's sister), for playing with her belly button. He fears she will corrupt her mind by becoming intimate with her body. So he ties her hands behind her back with a rope for several days to train her how to keep her hands away from her stomach (66–67). Clearly, this is a form of child abuse and gender oppression, even if that was not the father's intention. The father, nonetheless, is a figure of patriarchal authority within his family, much in the same way that the state has served as a repressive apparatus against farmworkers historically—disciplining them, instilling fear, and then training them to be subservient.

The 1950s were a decade of intense political repression for Mexican American farmworkers, not only because of mass deportation campaigns such as Operation Wetback in 1954, but because of racism, anti-immigrant hysteria, fanatical anticommunism, and attacks against labor unions and political activists generally. In his foundational scholarship on farm labor organizing, agribusiness, and immigration law, Ernesto Galarza analyzes the politics of the 1950s with regard to Mexican migrant farmworkers in the Southwest (*Farm Workers, Spiders*). During that time, like today, Mexicans became scapegoats for depressed economic conditions. Attacks on migrants were fueled by McCarthyism and a fear of radical insurgency, despite the fact that U.S. agribusiness needed to recruit Mexican immigrants as a source of cheap labor.

Galarza explains, for example, that one of the primary effects of the Bracero program (1942–64) was that it lowered wages in agriculture for all farmworkers, not only for contracted laborers. Unable to earn a living wage in Texas, U.S.-born Mexicans and legal residents, such as Treviño Hart's family, were forced to leave the state in search of work. They migrated north to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, or west to Utah, California, Oregon and Washington. Galarza also argues that the Bracero program served multiple aims: it provided a steady source of cheap labor for agribusiness, undermined farmworker unionization efforts, lowered wages in agriculture and thus increased profits for agribusiness, drove legal residents and citizens (including whites and blacks) out of the agricultural labor pool, and tailored a proletarianized agricultural workforce comprised mainly of undocumented Mexican immigrants—a workforce that continues to be in place today (Galarza, *Farm Workers* 2–17, 204–76). The Bracero program, like most immigration laws, served to impose strict disciplinary measures on farmworkers. It was a deliberate effort to give agribusiness the upper hand in the class struggle against Mexican American farmworkers, and to make workers believe that their lives were entirely determined by forces beyond their control. From a sharper political perspective, Gilbert G. González refers to braceros as “indentured” workers and describes Mexican labor migration to the United States generally as “colonized labor” (*Guest Workers* 85–112). Nevertheless, as Weber and other historians have shown, farmworkers have fought back repeatedly and against large odds (even during the 1950s) to resist the effects of structural determination,<sup>14</sup> and, as Treviño Hart illustrates in *Barefoot Heart*, farmworkers and their families have displayed the symptoms of that history in every aspect of their public and private lives—a history that, paradoxically, has also enabled enormous potential for the kinds of subjects they can become.

#### THE STORYTELLER AS TEACHER AND CHILD LABORER

To draw on a second example of a narrative in which the conflict between personal experience and history is played out in its representation of education and storytelling, I shall refer to three scenes from a film entitled *Children of the Fields*. Robert M. Young, the filmmaker, has made more than thirty films since 1969. Notably, in 1977 he wrote and directed *Alambrista*, a feature film that follows an undocumented Mexi-

can farmworker as he enters the United States to work in the fields, and in 1982 he cowrote and directed *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, a full-length dramatization of Américo Paredes's 1958 monograph *With His Pistol in His Hand*. Young's *Children of the Fields* is a low-budget, twenty-six-minute documentary about the Galindos, a Mexican American farmworker family of two parents and five children. The Galindos are forced to leave their home in Arizona because they cannot earn enough money to support themselves by picking onions. So they migrate to Stockton, California, with no predetermined place of residence and with very little money, and Young tags along with his camera for six weeks. All of the family members work, from the youngest to the oldest. Young shot the film himself entirely with a handheld camera, mostly at eye level. In making the film, he wanted to have his camera play the role of a nonintrusive storyteller: there is no voice-over or narrator in the film and no music in the background. Young's intention was to have the inquisitive eye of the camera *show* rather than *tell*—a form of stark realism. He wanted to allow viewers to peek into the lives of the Galindos as they follow the crops from Arizona to California. Thus the film offers no overt commentary on the actions of the Galindos; it passes no explicit judgment on their situation; and it provides no contextual background to explain the history of events leading up to the Galindos' dire situation. In this sense, the film's silent, nonintrusive camera functions in a manner similar to *Barefoot Heart's* narrator, who remains silent on actual historical events.

Despite the camera's apparent nonintrusiveness, the film nevertheless offers a point of view even if only in the filmmaker's decisions concerning which details to focus on, when to zoom and pan, the camera's particular angle shots, the cutting effects, and so forth. Young is not only a filmmaker; he is also a storyteller. Thus he is conscious of the effects of the decisions he makes about how to use his camera, and these decisions give the film its critical storytelling edge. The three scenes that I shall discuss focus mainly on the second-oldest of the four daughters, Nena, who is about ten. "Scene 1" serves as an introduction to the family and shows them working in the onion fields. The other two scenes depict examples of schooling, learning, storytelling, and critical consciousness.

As is obvious from its title, the film emphasizes child labor. When the title of the film first appears on the screen, the children are already

at work even though the sun has not yet come up. The children's bodies appear as silhouettes against a tenebrous sky. Their faces are not yet visible in the predawn day, and their shapes are dark and anonymous—symbolically representative of the obscure, hidden reality of all farmworker children. In scene 1, as daybreak begins to spread over the onion fields, child labor appears as quietly and natural as the sunrise, while the train whistle in the background serves as a reminder of the nearly unstoppable forward march of modern industrial progress, unhindered by the sickening sight of children working in the fields. The scene is no aberration; this is no exception to the normalcy of the migrant farmworker family. José Martínez, a first-year university student in 1998, offers a keen perspective on the meaning of childhood for migrant farmworker children. Looking back at his own childhood as a migrant, Martínez acknowledges that he began working in the fields when he was in the second grade. As he explains, "Farmworker children often work alongside their parents, both because many families rely on their children's earnings and because child care is expensive. . . . Farmworker children typically grow up with the idea that working is an essential part of childhood" (Rothenberg 276). In scene 1, the Galindo children do not complain; they do not ask if they can go and play. They apply themselves methodically and dutifully to the dull, laborious task of picking onions, cleaning them, and packing them, as if their lives had been predestined to perform this kind of labor at such an early age.

Scene 2 shifts from the work place to the home. Nena is playing school with her two younger sisters on the front porch, but she acts as if this is no game. She takes her role as teacher seriously. What interests me in this scene is the conflicted, overlapping layers of teaching and learning taking place. The unspoken subtext of the scene is the long history of poor academic achievement by Mexican American farmworker children in public schools. Nena is a natural teacher, confident and determined to teach her siblings to write properly. But as much as we might admire her skills as a teacher, we would be guilty of naive romanticism not to notice that the values represented in her actions are ideologically compromised. On the one hand, her role as teacher serves as a hopeful alternative to a farmworker way of life. The future of her sisters could depend on how well she is able to teach them, a huge responsibility for a ten-year-old. As a result of teaching her sisters to

write, she is also teaching herself to teach—to become a teacher. At first glance, there is little not to admire about Nena in this scene. Education stands as the key to escaping the drudgery of farm labor and the poverty that comes along with it. On the other hand, Nena appears to have acquired her teaching skills (at least partly) from public school teachers. She mimics the pedagogical approach of teachers who are stern disciplinarians, those who perhaps have been most influential in her own schooling. But as effective as those teachers might have been in opening Nena's mind to the necessity of an education, they also taught her how to hold up the coercive stick of the state in performing her teacherly duties. Consequently, she warns her sister, JoAnn (about five years old), that she will be fined "ten dollars" for writing in one of the books and damaging school property, and she threatens to hold JoAnn back in the second grade if she does not learn to write her name. Essentially, Nena employs a pedagogical approach in her makeshift classroom that relies on both "education as a practice of freedom" (Freire, *Education* 149) and "education as a banking system" (Freire, *Pedagogy* 57–74). She attempts to change the expected outcome of her life and that of her siblings while also helping to mold her sisters into subjects that will adhere to the discipline of ideological state apparatuses generally, and educational institutions in particular. In looking out for the best interests of her sisters, and in developing her own talents as a teacher, Nena also becomes complicit with the ideological needs of the state, in a complicated, unavoidable way.

My purpose in analyzing this scene is not to criticize Nena for teaching her sisters to become good students. Her learning to teach at such a young age is admirable and courageous. My analysis of this scene is directed rather at the way in which the act of teaching in an educational institution is ideologically contradictory, especially for those who teach younger children, but also for those of us who teach at the university. And this contradictoriness becomes more acute when the need for a traditional education is represented as a solution to social problems faced by members of superexploited groups, such as Mexican American farmworkers.

In scene 3, the family is back at work in the onion fields. Nena is trying to have a conversation with her father, Paul, concerning a story she wrote in school about a dragon, while Paul is keeping an eye on JoAnn, who is clipping onions close by. As in scene 2, there are multi-

ple levels of contradictory teaching and learning taking place here in the midst of a work setting. Now Nena has become the student rather than the teacher. She expresses pride in the story she wrote and confidence in her ability to write because of her teacher's recognition. She seeks further recognition from her father, who has now assumed the role of teacher. His function as teacher, however, is even more complex than Nena's was in scene 2 because, on the one hand, he is basically teaching his children, out of necessity, to be effective in their jobs as exploited laborers. As the camera zooms in on JoAnn, the shot of the young girl clipping onions forms a stark contrast with the scene in which the sisters are playing school. Here JoAnn is learning to work for a wage even before she knows how to write her name. On the other hand, the attention Paul gives to Nena in allowing her to finish her story serves as a reinforcement of an alternative form of knowledge acquisition, one based on affection coupled with the recognition of basic survival needs in a capitalist world. The fact that Paul must negotiate his roles as teacher and parent from within his job as an exploited laborer speaks volumes about the challenges he faces in trying to teach his daughters to be critical thinkers. There is a certain brusque gentleness to the way in which he instructs JoAnn in the art of cutting onions that transcends the rigid limits of his involvement in training his daughters to be good workers.<sup>15</sup>

As in *Barefoot Heart*, the most critical aspect of scene 3 has to do with storytelling. There are multiple levels of storytelling taking place here: the story about the dragon that Nena wrote in school; the story she tells to her father about the recognition she receives from her teacher; and the story being captured and allowed to unfold by the socially conscientious eye of the camera. In this case, it is the act of storytelling, even more than the story itself, that creates the possibility for a critical consciousness of the social world. As Walter Benjamin reminds us in his famed essay "The Storyteller," the story "does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him [or her] again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (91-92). That is, the importance of storytelling does not lie exclusively in its description of events or in the conveyance of the narrator's feelings, but rather in the essential humanity of the storyteller as ingrained in the story itself and informed by the complex web of social relations and history.

Nena's essential humanity is attached to the story she tells—as a student, as a child teacher, and as a child laborer caught up in the immense socio-historical complexities of a state-supported U.S. agricultural empire.

Storytelling as a strategy for critical consciousness in *Children of the Fields* can be compared to a similar function in Helena María Viramontes's *Under the Feet of Jesus*. In this novel, thirteen-year-old Estrella, the protagonist, relentlessly tries to figure out a way to escape the harsh social conditions that she and her migrant farmworker family experience. Estrella and her family are welcome during harvest time, but they are not allowed to stay once the picking is done. They are needed for their labor, but they can never become permanent. They exist constantly on the edge of catastrophe and with the same level of desperation experienced by the narrator and his family in Tomás Rivera's short story "The Salamanders" (159–61). The desire for a traditional education as a way out of this predicament is represented by Estrella's sweetheart, Alejo, and his dream to become a geologist. It is a dream that will never be realized, because he has been poisoned by exposure to pesticides, and by the end of the novel he lies on his deathbed. Narratives such as *Barefoot Heart*, *Children of the Fields*, and *Under the Feet of Jesus*—whether autobiographies, fiction, or films—operate as cognitive maps that represent not history as such, but the interconnectedness of individual experiences that are symptoms of that history. In this case, our work as critics is to begin with those symptoms and trace backward to understand the significance of the structures and underlying causes that produced them in the first place.

#### CODA: THE WAY OUT

In my course on Mexican American farmworker literature, the study of history has been inescapable. Briefly, a rapidly expanding U.S. agricultural industry hungry for cheap labor actively lured hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to the United States to work on farms during the first half of the twentieth century. Workers of other nationalities were also recruited, but Mexicans made up the largest percentage of the workforce by far. This workforce—comprised of legal, illegal and contracted workers—was central to the building of a transnational, capitalist-agricultural empire fully supported politically and economically by various industries, such as banking, energy, transportation, textile, and commerce, not to mention extensive backing from the state and news



media (G. González, *Guest Workers* 85–175). Mexican farmworkers, however, are generally not credited for their part in the building of this empire; nor have they prospered equitably from its economic and political gains. On the contrary, they were excluded, for example, from the provisions of the 1935 Wagner Act, also known as the National Labor Relations Act, a law that was part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal (Weber 162–79; Daniel 167–57) and that gave U.S. industrial workers the right to form unions and bargain collectively with their employers. To this day, no federal law protects the rights of farmworkers to organize unions. Consequently, laws such as those prohibiting children from working in the fields—or those requiring growers to provide shade, ample rest periods, restrooms, and clean drinking water—are oftentimes simply ignored by agribusiness and the state alike. In a recent study of immigrant farmworkers as “modern American slave labor,” John Bowe writes that “in the United States . . . modern slavery involves the coercion of recent or trafficked immigrants. . . . The children of such slaves are seldom themselves enslaved. But, of course, none of this makes it any less troubling” (xviii). Consequently, and tragically, migrant and immigrant farmworkers and their children, historically, have been systematically forced to straddle a space between the actual material demands of the agricultural labor market, on the one hand, and the ideological frame of social and cultural nonacceptance, on the other: they are essential for their labor but disposable because of their ethnicity and social class status, physically visible but not socially recognized, needed but not wanted. This history often informs the unwritten political content of Chicano/a farmworker literature.

Late in Tomás Rivera's classic migrant farmworker novel . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*, several anonymous characters take turns declaring how they would complete the phrase “When we arrive . . .” The characters are in the back of a truck, returning to Texas after a long haul to Wisconsin on the migrant labor circuit. They are commenting on what they plan to do once they arrive back home with their meager earnings (115–18). Rhetorically, however, the scene poses the symbolic question: When will Mexican American migrant farmworkers finally enjoy the full benefits of American citizenship? Some critics have responded to Rivera's rhetorical question claiming that we have indeed arrived, pointing to former migrant farmworkers who are now professionals in politics, education, and business. I would suggest, however, that Mexi-

can American farmworkers, for the most part, continue to inhabit that contradictory space of inclusion and exclusion, where they are constantly made to feel needed but not wanted, and where—like Elva, Nena, Estrella, and their families—they are still in the process of narrating the inadmissible story that they themselves must write and tell, to show them the way out.

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#### NOTES

1. Literary works in the course have included M. González, “The River Bottom Ranch”; Martínez, “The Baseball Glove”; Moraga, *Watsonville: Some Place Not Here* (play); Rivera, *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* and *The Harvest*; Ruiz, *The Big Bear*; Soto, *Jesse*; Treviño Hart, *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Girl*; and Viramontes, *Under the Feet of Jesus*. Films have included Young, *Alambrista* and *Children of the Fields*; Pérez, *And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him*; Friendly, *Harvest of Shame*; and the UFW, *Fighting for Our Lives*.

2. I use the term “Mexican American” in this essay in reference to both Mexicans born in the United States (or Chicanos/as) and Mexican nationals, documented and undocumented, residing in the United States. I focus on Mexican American farmworkers because since the 1930s they have constituted the largest percentage of the U.S. agricultural workforce by far, especially in the Southwest. But I acknowledge that workers of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as Latinos of other nationalities, have also worked in the fields in significant numbers.

3. See also Marx 595.

4. For a partial list of excellent works on Mexican American farm labor history, see Bardacke, *Trampling out the Vintage*; Daniel, *Bitter Harvest*; Galarza, *Spiders in the House*, and *Farm Workers and Agri-business in California*; Gilbert G. González, *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing*, and *Guest Workers or Colonized Labor?*; Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*; Jenkins, *The Politics of Insurgency*; Majka and Majka, *Farm Workers, Agribusiness, and the State*; McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields*; Pawel, *The Union of Their Dreams*; Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*; Shaw, *Beyond the Fields*; and Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold*.

5. Habitus, for Bourdieu, refers to the dialectical relation between the totality of history and the immediacy of subjective activity; it “is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present” (*Logic* 56).

6. There is, however, a haunting presence in Viramontes’s *Under the Feet of Jesus*, as represented most dramatically by the spectral figure of the “harelip boy.” From this perspective, Viramontes’s novel can be read as containing elements of a female, racial Gothic tradition.

7. The National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) was founded in 1962 by Cesar Chavez. In 1965, the NFWA merged with the mostly Filipino Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC) to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). In 1972, the UFWOC joined the AFL-CIO and became the United Farm Workers Union (UFW).

8. Freire, ironically but intentionally, uses the terms “banking” and “depositing” in describing the kind of education he opposes, fully aware of their economic or capitalistic connotations. Some Marxist scholars, however, have been critical of Freire’s “objective idealism.” See, for example, Gibson.

9. For an in-depth interpretation of the usefulness of Freire’s critical pedagogy and Marxist humanism for literary criticism, see Maese-Cohen (27–32). Maese-Cohen argues that Freire’s concept of *conscientização* and his “humanizing, positive view of liberatory language and dialogue provide a method for reading the decolonial literary imagination” (30).

10. For clarity, I shall use the name “Treviño Hart” when referring to the author and “Elva” when referring to the literary narrator of the autobiography.

11. For an autobiographical/historical account of La Raza Unida Party in Texas during the 1960s, see Gutiérrez.

12. *Indios* is the Spanish word for Indians, sometimes used in a derogatory manner.

13. Similar proverbs include “Al mestizo, el diablo lo hizo; al indito, el Dios bendito” and “Mestizo educado, indio renegado” (“The devil made the mestizo; God blessed the Indian”; “An educated mestizo is a renegade Indian”).

14. For an interesting discussion of “farmworker agrarianism” as a means to achieve social justice in *Barefoot Heart* and other literary works, see Carlisle.

15. I want to thank JoAnn Galindo Vitiello and her mother, Odilia Herrera Galindo, for allowing me to interview them by telephone on 2 March 2013. In an e-mail message, Galindo Vitiello also wrote, “It is exciting to know that someone has found an interest in our family and the life of a migrant child. Life was tough growing up, and I was often teased by those who lived in our barrio. . . . My father [Paul Galindo] often spoke to us of furthering our education. He did not go to school, but he admired those who had a college education. Often, students from Arizona State University would come to our home to study our family, and my father treated them as if they were royalty” (19 Feb. 2013). The Galindo family continued to work in the fields until 1989. Paul Galindo died of Glioblastoma, a cancerous brain tumor, in 1996. Minerva (Nena) Galindo has worked for the City of Tempe her entire adult life. JoAnn, who was four when *Children of the Fields* was produced in 1973, received a master’s degree in nursing in 2013 (Galindo and Galindo, personal interview).

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