

Activating and Performing Nostalgia at Places of Sorrowful Exile

Lydia Nakashima Degarrod *California College of the Arts*

Abstract

This paper examines the emergence of different forms of nostalgia during the collaborative production of videos about exile among nine Chilean political refugees living in California. It shows that nostalgia, a set of emotions and imaginary activities that yearns for the past, has evolved with time and has different manifestations throughout the different stages of life in exile. It presents the medium of video as an ethnographic tool used in making nostalgia visible through most stages of its creation from the preproduction activities, to the taping, and editing. Five major forms of nostalgia are presented, giving particular importance to the forms of nostalgia that were performed in front of the camera by the exiles.

Keywords

video, exiles, Chile, nostalgia, art-based ethnography.

Lydia Nakashima Degarrod

is both a visual artist and a cultural anthropologist who creates installations that blur the line between ethnography and art. She has received grants from the Fulbright-Hays, California Council for the Humanities, Ministry of Culture of Chile, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She has been a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Virginia, a Senior Fellow at Harvard University, and a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley. She has been an artist in residence at de Young Museum of Art, and the Center for Art and Public Life at California College of the Arts. Her work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibits in art galleries, and art and anthropological museums in the United States and abroad. She teaches in the Critical Studies Program of the California College of the Arts.

“I would see a tree, and it would look exactly like a tree near my house in Chile, or I would go to the Sonoma or the Napa Valley, and suddenly I would smell the very same smell of the countryside of Chile. I would go to the seaside, to the ocean, and the sensations of being in Chile would return, and the nostalgia would be very strong. I felt despair when I realized that I was not in Chile.”

Hector, a Chilean political refugee, described his feelings of nostalgia during his early years of exile during the taping of a video at the marina of a Northern California city dedicated to his exile experience. As a recent refugee in the U.S, Hector would spend much time watching the ocean and dreaming of being in his hometown of Tomé in Chile. Today, as he contemplated the horizon, he lamented that this place no longer brings him the same nostalgia that he felt in the past when he used to visit it to recall Chile and to assuage his longing for the homeland. Instead, now, he feels a layering of nostalgias. One that longs for the Chile of his youth and his old self, as he is flooded with memories of when he was 13 years old and watched the horizon

with dreams of travelling to faraway places. And another is a longing for his young exile self, when being at this marina would fill him with emotions and sensory memories of his idealized youth and homeland.



Hector at the Berkeley Marina

Hector and eight other Chilean exiles participated over 18 months in the creation of the art installation *Geographies of the Imagination* dedicated to the internal images of exile (Degarrod 2016b) which consisted of 9 videos and 23 monoprint banners. During the time that it took to create this installation, the Chilean political refugees were inundated with feelings of nostalgia as they reflected on their lives as exiles and visited the places and recreated the activities that brought memories and sensations of the homeland. This paper is about the forms of nostalgia that were recalled, evoked and experienced by the exiles during the 8 months dedicated to the production of videos.

I show that nostalgia, a set of emotions and imaginary activities that yearns for the past (Davis 1979, Ritivoi 2002, Boym 2001, Sedikides, Wildschut, and Arndt 2008, Wilson 2005), believed to be a constant in the life of exiles (Said 2000), is dynamic (Wilson 2005, Davis 1979). And nostalgia is also a cultural practice. Its meanings, forms and effects vary according to the context (Stewart 1988, Ange and Berliner 2015). The Chilean exiles presented multiple expressions of nostalgia that have evolved through the years, reflecting the different forms of identity, selves, notions of home and belonging that these exiles have acquired as members of diaspora communities after living for almost 4 decades away from the homeland (Hall 1994, Askeland and Sonneland 2011). These expressions of nostalgia became visible during two forms of video-taping: 1) when the exiles performed their feelings in front of the cameras at the places selected by them that used to provide them with solace but also with pain during the early years of exile; and 2) when they re-enacted much loved activities that they used to

engage when living in the homeland. Each form of nostalgia brought different emotions and awareness of self.

In this paper, I present the medium of video as an ethnographic tool used in making nostalgia visible through most stages of its creation. I emphasize the process rather than the final outcome—the edited video itself—as it was in the production of the videos where the exiles expressed their memories and reflections with nostalgia. Video documentary production is not a transparent ethnographic media (van Dienderen 2007, Nichols 1991). Its production involves a series of stages in which the participants, crew, and cameras interact with each other as well as with the environment. I also present my own role as facilitator of the exiles' experiences and performances.

I participated in the creation of the videos in my role as Artist in Residence at the Centre for Art and Public Life at the California College of the Arts (2007-08). In writing of this paper, I am examining the material gathered and the events witnessed from my position as an ethnographer. This includes the transcribed tapes of the raw footage, individual interviews with the participants in the project, and my journal notes made at the time.

The Chilean Exiles

The Chilean exile participants in the art project have lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for, on average, almost 40 years. They arrived at different times from 1973 to 1980, expelled by the government of Augusto Pinochet for their political beliefs and activities¹. The participants' exodus was part of the largest migration out of Chile. An estimated 2% of the population fled the country to escape arrest, or death at the hands of the military regime (Sznajder 2007, Wright and Oñate 2012).

Their status as exiles, lasting anywhere from 10 to 17 years, officially ended with the end of the dictatorship in 1989 when their restriction to enter Chile was lifted. All of them, however, chose to remain in the United States where they have maintained their identity as exiles in spite of having the freedom to return to Chile. This chosen identity reflects both the alienation from their homeland suffered when the refugees faced the changes that they and the country experienced during the years abroad, and the lack of recognition of their exile by the post-dictatorship governments.

The exiles' contemporary experiences differ from their earlier days in several ways. Exile is felt and experienced internally as opposed to the public form that they displayed during their early years in exile when they engaged in different forms of public demonstrations aimed at making their exile visible as a way of defeating the intended purpose of banishment (Eastmond 1997). "Life in exile became public," writes Eastmond, as the condition of exile touched every part of the political refugee's social life (Eastmond 1997: 12). They were determined not to allow exile to break apart their families, take away their health, or take their social values. They identified with their country but not with the regime. They organized around political anti-dictatorship activities and participated in activities of cultural groups to maintain those values that they viewed as being in danger of disintegration.

These activities waned with the return to democracy in Chile and as many of the exiles returned to the homeland. Those who remained in California concentrated on rebuilding their lives in the host country and making up for the lost time by obtaining an education, learning English, and seeking permanent employment and building their careers. Nowadays the exiles

sporadically participate in events mostly organized by the La Peña Cultural Centre about cultural and political issues associated not only with Chile but with many countries in the world.

They have become immigrants who have not broken their ties to the homeland supporting the notion held by social scientists that migration does not lead to a sharp and definitive break with the homeland, and that migration does not necessarily lead to complete assimilation (Brubaker 2005). They are part of the Chilean diaspora (Wright and Oñate 2012, Brubaker 2005, Bolzman 1994, Ramirez 2014), and as such they revealed hybrid or multiple identities that are always in a state of change through transformation and difference (Hall 1990) and diasporic consciousness, a collective memory of another place and time that plays a role in shaping their identities (Askeland and Sonneland 2011, Appadurai and Breckenridge 1989).

The Chilean participants were recruited for the project at La Peña Cultural Centre, a known hub for Chilean exiles in the Bay Area of San Francisco. Since its creation in 1975, this cultural organization has been supporting and promoting international social justice through the arts.

The exiles expressed a desire to participate in the project for personal and political reasons. Many felt that this project could be a venue for recalling repressed memories about their exile so they could share them with their children. One exile explained her decision to repress her memories in this manner: "As soon as I took the decision to remain in California, I made the resolution of freeing myself from the past and all the painful memories. I felt that they were dragging me down and stopping me from building a new life and raising my children, but now I have reached the point in my life that I want to tell my grown-up children about my early life." They also viewed their participation as a political gesture, as a way of breaking the silence maintained by the post-dictatorship governments, which has kept silent about the abuses committed by the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship as they hoped for a way to ensure a successful transition to democracy (Rebolledo and Acuña 2000/2001). Exile was one of the topics that the government wished to erase from the Chilean collective memory (Askeland and Sonneland 2011).

Methodology

The creation of the nine videos of this project aimed at being collaborative (Haw 2011) both as an art creation as well as a form of research (Lassiter 2005). It developed organically and involved both the exiles and I using our different skills at different times but united with a common goal. Throughout the process of creating the videos, I maintained a fluid and collaborative approach which was not designed to follow specific theoretical or methodological issues, but rather was aimed at producing videos that were in accordance with the wishes and concerns of the people who were the subjects.

The exiles were involved in the creation of the videos from the inception to the final editing. The idea of making the videos came from the participants themselves who individually manifested an interest in being videotaped during the initial interviews of the project. A few of them had misunderstood the project and had concluded on their own either that the installation would have videos in addition to the monoprint banners, or it would be solely based on videos. Others during the context of audiotaping their memories of their journey of migration for the creation of the monoprint banners, expressed a desire to have

their stories shown in video format at the installation. Noticing their interest, I changed the installation to include videotapes of their memories of exile.

The exiles' request to be videotaped is also part of a worldwide trend in which survivors of social suffering use the medium of video for the transmission of testimony. Since the latter part of the twentieth-century, survivors of violence and catastrophic events have increasingly narrated their stories in audio-visual media, making contemporary times "the era of the witness (Sarkar and Walker 2010: 1)" Audio-visual testimonies tend to be regarded as real, direct, and transparent, in part because, like documentary films, they participate in what Bill Nichols calls "the discourses of sobriety" (Nichols 1991: 4).

The inclusion of nostalgia as a topic in the videos became evident during the making of the monoprint banners in the first stage of the creation of the installation. During the 10 months that it took to make 23 monoprint banners based on the Chilean participants' memories of exile, the political refugees revealed their hybrid forms of identity (Hall 1990, Degarrod 2016b) through their expression and reflections on their evolving identities, the homeland and their places of belonging. Nostalgia was frequently discussed when the refugees engaged in these reflections.

It became clear then for all the participants that the videos should include a section on nostalgia. Nine videos were created over a period of 8 months, each lasting six to seven minutes, and featuring one refugee narrating the circumstances of her or his exile from Chile to the United States, memories of their homeland, nostalgia, and reflections on identity and places of belonging. The final edited videos used clips of the exiles at their homes and at places in the Bay Area where they often experience nostalgia, clips of the places in Chile they recalled, and photos they owned. The videos were shown along the monoprint banners in the installation *Geographies of the Imagination* (California College of the Arts, 2008, and California State University at Chico, 2013).



Installation *Geographies of the Imagination*, California College of the Arts, 2008.

As the visual artist in this interdisciplinary project, my roles shifted through the creation of the installation. During the creation of the monoprint banners, I was an active creator of images (Degarrod 2013, 2016b) whereas in the production of videos I became a facilitator and organizer of events engaged in pre-production activities such as coordinating the work of the 2 camera persons, consulting with the exiles about places to film and later scouting for places, and consulting about the questions and topics that they wanted to address during the shooting. During the editing, I collected material from the exiles to be used as b-film and showed and discussed the editing with both the exiles and the main editor.

As an ethnographer, I was engaged in a performative ethnography (Fabian 1990) in which I was not just the ethnographer who asked questions, but was both the catalyst and the provider and producer of events. The information used in this writing, in the form of written observations, audio and video recordings of interactions with the exiles, was collected as I participated in this activities (Degarrod 2013).

As a catalyst and producer of events, I participated directly and indirectly in the activation of nostalgia among the exiles. Over a period of 18 months I engaged in and encouraged conversations with the exiles about their pasts, and co-created artworks based on their experiences which contributed to create a generalized nostalgic mood among the exiles as well as in myself (Degarrod 2013). During this time, the exiles recalled memories of their different experiences of nostalgia which later they performed in front of the cameras. I participated in the videotaping of the exiles at places and activities known among them to produce nostalgic feelings believing to some extent that their exposure to the places as well as their performances would reproduce their nostalgias. My knowledge was informed by ideas from *cinema vérité* (Rouch and Feld 2093) and collaborative artmaking (Degarrod 2016a, Irving 2011).

My communication and rapport with the participants of this project was facilitated by our shared commonalities. I too was born and raised in Chile, and I have lived most of my life in the United States. We also shared similar political views and live relatively close to one another. However, I am not an exile.

Our conversations were conducted in Spanish. Using the shared knowledge of cultural customs, political views, and language helped us to develop a comfortable easiness in our relationships. In a short period of time, I was invited to meals and parties at their houses which have continued 8 years after I originally met them.

Nostalgia and Exile

Nostalgia, a state that characterizes the condition of exile (Said 2000), is generally defined by social scientists and psychologists as an emotion that yearns for the past (Davis 1979, Ritivoi 2002, Boym 2001, Sedikides et al. 2008, Wilson 2005). The term nostalgia, introduced in 1863 by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer, unites two Greek words: *nostos* meaning "return home," and *algia* meaning "longing." Hofer viewed nostalgia as a disease, a disorder of the imagination that affected individuals who were homesick for their homeland. The experience of nostalgia is no longer seen as a pathology. It is however viewed as a complex state that involves a large number of cognitions, imagination and emotions, and which creates ambiguity and contradiction in the individual (Wilson 2005). Nostalgia combines several cognitive and affective uses, as the individual is engaged in both an active imaginative state in

which she selects and reconstructs the past, while at the same time experiencing longing for it. Yearning for a past that no longer exist creates for the individual contradictory feelings and ambiguity.

Anthropologists in general have shown little interest in studying nostalgia. While the topic itself has been scantily studied, anthropologists themselves have been affected by what David Berlin labels as an exo-nostalgia, a disciplinary nostalgia which expresses a longing for vanishing societies (Berliner 2015).

There has been a recent interest in nostalgia in the last decade fuelled in part by developments in the studies on memory and affect. However, there is a lack of in-depth ethnographic based studies of nostalgia. An exception is the recently published edited volume *Anthropology and Nostalgia* by Oliva Angé and David Berliner, that examines nostalgic feelings, discourses and practices in different locations in the world (Ange and Berliner 2015).

Nostalgia has been experienced differently by the Chilean exiles. It has changed dramatically from the most intense longing experienced during their early years as exile to a variety of forms of nostalgia that produce among the refugees different emotions and senses of selves. The exiles have changed after living away from the homeland for almost four decades. They have acquired emotional attachments towards the host country, and their feelings for the homeland shift from their idealized memories of their youth to the sense of alienation they feel at times for the country that changed radically from the times of their youth and to resentment for the country's lack of acknowledgement about the suffering they endured as exiles. These different feelings toward the homeland and their sense of belonging are reflected in their different expressions of nostalgia.

Fred Davis (Davis 1979) has identified three sequential forms of nostalgia that are experienced by sojourners. The first one, simple nostalgia, corresponds to their early days away from the homeland and is described as a subjective state in which the individual strongly believes that everything in the homeland was better than now. It is followed by a reflexive nostalgia, occurring upon the return to the homeland and sees a different place from what was remembered and questions the veracity of their early beliefs about the homeland. In a third form, interpretive nostalgia, the individual seeks to objectify his feelings. The Chilean exiles identified a similar sequential order of these 3 forms of nostalgia corresponding to the events that marked their lives as exiles. They also expressed two other forms of nostalgia which they experienced when they were videotaped at places that served as substitutes for the homeland, and when performing activities associated with Chile.

In the following section, I present the three sequential forms of nostalgia during the exiles' first decade as exiles as they were described by five of the exiles: Hector, Fernando, Eliana, Jaime and Rosita. These recollections emerged first during conversations about the experience of exile while the exiles were involved in the creation of monoprints for the installation. These recollections about nostalgia continued during the pre-production activities during which the exiles and I discussed the locations of places in the Bay Area to film their memories.

First Form of Nostalgia

The first form of nostalgia described by all of the exiles was an intense and painful feeling that was ever present during their first years in California as they waited for their return to Chile. In separate studies Davis (1979) and Wilson (2005), find that this form of nostalgia appears more often when individuals are undergoing situations of transition, conditions that characterized much of the Chilean exile experience. During this time, they yearned for continuity with their old selves, the selves they were before exile. Smells, landscapes, sounds, familiar tastes, and a myriad of expected and unexpected things had the power to trigger memories among exiles of life in the homeland. During those moments of nostalgia, they were transported to the past, to a time that in comparison to their current situation was so much better (Davis 1979). At these times, the past became idealized and desired.

The similarity of the geography and weather of the San Francisco Bay Area to Chile was a double-edged sword for the exiles. This familiarity of landscape, which influenced many of the exiles to choose California as their destination of exile, created among them both joy and suffering. It made them momentarily forget their current place of residence, confusing the host country with the homeland. At these moments, many imagined they were in Chile, and they relived past pleasurable experiences, and longed to be there. Small things that differed from the homeland—car alarms, the sounds of different birds, different smells, people speaking in English—all brought them back to their current place and their lives as exiles. The juxtapositions created by their memories of happier selves in the homeland to their present situation as exiles living in a foreign place brought keen awareness of their discontinuity of self. The exiles went from experiencing recognition and familiarity, which gave them a sense of comfort, to being quickly reminded of what they didn't want to recall, that is, their expulsion from their homes and their estrangement from the homeland. For those who wanted to forget their situation, it was painful.

During this period, many exiles used their imaginations to create fantasies that would take them back to the homeland and ameliorate their nostalgia. Hector said, "I used to dream that I was in Chile. I used to feel horribly sad when I would see an airplane pass by. I would imagine that I was on the plane returning to Chile." Fernando would dream that he was returning home and being received with honours in Chile. In his imagination Fernando reversed his relationship with the homeland: instead of being expelled from the country he was welcomed back and received as a hero who had saved the country from the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

Reflexive or Counter-nostalgia

A second form of nostalgia was identified by the exiles occurring during their first return home after almost two decades of living in the United States which had profound consequences upon the exiles' sense of place, identity, and belonging. During the time that they had been away, Chile had undergone severe social, political, and economic changes. Seeing these changes after so many years of idealizing the past and the country created what Rebolledo calls counter-nostalgia, a vision that contrasted radically from what they remembered and dreamt (Rebolledo 2006: 173) and what Fred Davis calls reflexive nostalgia. This confrontation of the imagined and the actual served to cement the decision for all of them to remain in the US.

Hector was sixteen years old when he was sent to prison. He felt the loss of time the

deepest when he saw his family again after fifteen years. Here, Hector describes how the years in prison and in exile created a gulf between him and his family, and how this experience influenced Hector's decision to remain in the United States:

"I realized that I was different from my family. When I left, my sister was eight or nine years old, when I returned she was an adult and had a child... When I returned, I encountered brothers I didn't know. We had to get to know each other, but we never understood each other. I believe there was much love between us, but there was no connection. We didn't have common histories. Sometimes I was envious of my brothers' friends because there were histories between them, more than what I had with them. We had a barbeque and they started telling stories about going to the beach or the countryside, and I was there listening to them realizing that I didn't share that world with them, that I didn't see my brother grow up, that I lost seeing them growing from childhood to youth. And that they didn't see me growing up either. That there is a gap, a separation created by lost time. When I was exiled, they continued with their lives."

Interpretative and Restorative Nostalgia: Creating a Home Away from Home

These forms of nostalgia emerged when the refugees had made the decision to remain in the host country for varied reasons. For some, it was the disillusion of visiting Chile and not being able to recognize the homeland of their memories, and or that they have children who have been raised in the United States, or for others, have started school or new careers. It was a form of interpretative nostalgia in which they sought to reflect and understand the role and function of these feelings in their lives. For the majority of the exiles, however, this period of their lives was characterized by what Svetlana Boym calls restorative nostalgia, which focuses on nostos or home and aims to recreate the lost home(Boym 2001). During this time, they put effort into recreating the homeland in the host country. It was a strategy of survival fuelled in part by restorative nostalgia, as a way of restoring and recalling what has been left behind, and to affirm their Chilean identity.

The recreation of home abroad has been used by exiles to combat their feelings of alienation and nostalgia in the host country, and as a mnemonic device to recall what has been lost (Ballinger 2003, Boym 2001, Bahloul 1996). This view and these mechanisms for coping were shared by other Chilean exiles in the United States and Europe (Eastmond 1997).

Recreating the homeland was also for all of the exiles a form of recreating a way of life and an identity. Many brought their close relatives from Chile to share a resemblance of home with them. Jaime, for example, when he realized that he was staying in the United States felt that he needed to be with people who shared his upbringing and brought his closest sister Erika from Chile to live with them, and she has lived with them ever since. Eliana as well brought her parents to live with her. At home, those who had married US citizens maintained Spanish as their main language at home, and their spouses learned the language. They decorated their houses with Chilean objects and followed Chilean traditions and customs. They kept themselves separated from what they viewed as "American society" by socializing only with other Chilean exiles, and with others with whom they shared similar international political views, primarily other Latin Americans. In fact, many of them were surprised when they met me that I have very few Chilean friends as all of their friends were Chileans. At this time, as part of their political identity, they were involved in political activities that denounced

the Pinochet regime, in part to keep alive the fight against the dictatorship, but also to soothe feelings of guilt that many experienced for surviving while many of their comrades hadn't.

Taping Contemporary Forms of Nostalgia

All of the exiles experienced feelings of nostalgia as they were videotaped when they engaged with the places that reminded them of Chile, and when they performed their favourite activities associated with the homeland. These feelings of longing were triggered by their emotional connection with places, the performance of their embodied memories, and the presence of the cameras and crew played a role in the re-activation of these emotions, memories and imaginations.

To film nostalgia, an interior experience, requires methods that provoke the experience itself among the participants of the ethnographic project to be socially shared. In this case, by filming at the places known to trigger these feelings in the past and by following the general aims of *cinema vérité* (Rouch and Feld 2093) which views the camera as creating greater spontaneity, expression and truth. Also the use of collaborative artmaking (Degarrod, 2013, 2016) and collaborative dramatizations at places (Irving 2011) creates platforms for the sharing of interior worlds.

During the taping a testimonial event was created (Sarkar and Walker 2010) in which I was the interlocutor who asked the questions to the exile narrator, who was out of the frame and invisible. The exiles narrated their memories both to the camera and also to me and the crew. They spoke with deliberation and conviction in their voices and gestures and exhibited no hesitation in their narration of the events. In several performances the exiles added elements, such as frames, to their narratives at the beginning or at the end, or included elements in their narration that showed they had specific audiences in mind. Families and close friends made up most of the exiles' intended audiences.

What was striking about most of their performances was their breaking of the "fourth wall," the convention established by documentary filmmakers that treats the crew, the interlocutor, and the cameras as invisible. By breaking the illusion of the fourth wall, they manifested a desire both to control their representations and to include the crew and me in their testimonies, making us witness to their narratives. Furthermore, the presence of the cameras brought to the exiles an awareness of the present. By the very presence of the cameras and crew, each exile had the bittersweet experience of reliving moments of their youth and of being reminded of their aging and the passage of time.

As will be seen with the following examples of Jaime, Fernando, Hector, and Rosita, taping these two forms of nostalgia revealed a different type of self-awareness in the exiles. For instance, during the taping of nostalgia at places that trigger these feelings they expressed a bittersweet dissonance of memories and selves. As they reconstructed happy memories of childhood and their associations with a younger self, they felt an awareness of their current self. Some of them also experienced a layering of nostalgias for younger selves: the young self living in Chile, and an older self of the early of exile. Whereas taping the exiles in activities that produce nostalgia, on the other hand, brought joy and a reaffirmation of the old selves which created a sense of continuity with the past.

Taping Places of Nostalgia

Jaime works as an electrician for the city of Oakland. Several decades ago, while responding to an electrical issue call, he discovered a city baseball yard that gives a 180 degree view of the bay and the hills, a view that recreates places in Chile that he normally misses. This discovery made Jaime very happy because he had found one place that he could visit alone to recreate the homeland. Jaime took the crew and me to the ball yard showing much excitement to show a place that has been his solitary source for recreating the homeland. Jaime, a practical man, was eager to show us the place, which provided him with a condensed geography of beloved places, and said: "I was so excited that in one place I could see and imagine places of Chile. I have been coming here for years! While the crew filmed, he would make eye contact with us and point to the places and the view, providing us with a map of his memories. "There I have memories of Valparaiso," he said pointing at the bay. Pointing at the hills, he said, "The hills over there are similar to the forests near in Valparaiso. The hills of San Mateo are similar to the hills of Santiago. California looks like Chile: same trees, flowers." After the taping was finished, Jaime expressed nostalgia about his childhood. He told me that as he was being filmed he had a bittersweet memory. He recalled an occasion when he went shopping with his mother in an open food market in Santiago. He said, "When I was a child I used to go with my mother every week to shop for food. That is a good memory. I feel happy. I see the red tomatoes in rows, all orderly aligned. I like it. It's beautiful." He also told me that this memory was unusual because his mother was a cold woman who rarely showed any affection towards him. He said: " I usually feel sad when I think of her." He was pensive for a while, and then he said that he wanted to hold on to the happy image of the red tomatoes and ask me to film rows of red tomatoes. I remembered that the day was Sunday, and that there is an open fair Farmers' Market in Montclair, the district where we both live. We went to the market and Jaime directed the crew to stalls of fruits to film.



Jaime at the park

Fernando selected Robert Sibley Park, a regional park in the Oakland hills, a place he has been visiting since he arrived to California, as a place that brings him memories of his childhood. Fernando grew up in the desert, an area geographically different from where he lives now in Northern California. During his early years as an exile, finding a place that would resemble his childhood home in Antofagasta, near the Atacama Desert, a desert known for its aridity, was difficult. The landscape of the park is dry with no vegetation, primarily dunes with lava-bearing rock formations that resemble the desert.

It was a warm summer day when the crew and I met Fernando at the entrance of the park, and we went to one of the volcanic areas that he had chosen to be filmed. We did two types of taping; the first was to be used as b-film and included shots of Fernando walking on the park; the second was of Fernando talking directly to the camera while he answered questions about the place and his memories.

During the filming of the b-film shots, Fernando expressed self-consciousness about his looks and age. He walked down a hill as we followed him. He stopped where there was some brush on the hill, and turned around. He walked by a formation created by a series of concentric circles. A crew member asked him to look up while she was shooting him from below. He pointed at his chin and made the gesture of wiping his sweat. He looked at me and said, "I look so old!" Later, without realizing he was being filmed, Fernando, looking pensive, leaned down and grabbed a chunk of dirt and broke it down with his hands. He played with the rocks.

We moved to an area where we would be protected from the wind and continued taping. I asked him why he liked visiting this place. He said, "I like to come to this place because it reminds me of where I used to play with my brother at the quarries. We pretended we were miners. I grew up in a place like this, Antofagasta at the outskirts of the Atacama Desert. He gazed at his surroundings and smiled. He looked at me and said, "I remember my brother, playing with him. Happy moments. I grew up near the train station... When I am in a place like this I want to play. I feel playful. I recall happy times. I feel happy when I am here because it's warm. There are rocks too, and the colors. It's like being in a known place, familiar, comfortable."



Fernando at Robert Sibley Park

During the taping, Fernando experienced both nostalgia for his childhood and self-consciousness about his looks and his having aged. I was surprised about the latter, since in previous tapings conducted at La Peña Cultural Centre, he hadn't expressed self-consciousness. I suspected it was the contrast of his feelings of nostalgia, which had transported him temporarily to his childhood and to a younger self, and the presence of the cameras that reminded him of his looks and age. The image of his childhood and the projected image of his present and his adult self-created a dissonant moment.

Layering of Nostalgias

Hector chose the Berkeley Marina to be taped because it is the place where he visited often as a young exile when he wanted to recall the homeland. As we waited for the crew, he explained that when he made the decision to remain in the United States, he gradually stopped visiting this place and that his feelings of nostalgia for Chile decreased with time. He recalled that when he was thirteen or fourteen years old, he would sit by the seaside in his hometown of Tome and dream of faraway places. He watched the horizon and imagined himself travelling and exploring the world. "I would watch the horizon because I never had the chance to travel. I would sit there and dream of going around the world exploring." He explains to me that growing up in Tome, a small fishing town, he only had access to radio and magazines for entertainment. Television didn't arrive until he was an adolescent. He talks about the pleasure he had reading comic books as a teen. "I loved my magazines. I had them bound with hard covers," his hands moving as if touching them, his eyes closed for a moment. He expressed the anticipation he had each week, waiting for the magazine to be released, running to the local paper kiosk to buy it, and the delight he had with the magazine finally in his hands, his hands moved as if he is lifting each of the pages as his eyes closed for a moment.

The crew arrived, and we began shooting. As the crew films shots of the bay, Hector walks toward the crew and gives them technical advice. After a while, he sat by the edge of the bay, seemingly in a reflective mood. When the taping was finished, he told me that being by the shore had brought back childhood memories as well as memories of his days as a young exile. He recalled occasions when he used to go with his grandmother to dig for Manila clams. He said wistfully, "I saw her and also a boat, but I didn't get on the boat." He also tells me that he felt nostalgic for his younger self. He manifested surprise for his nostalgic feelings for his early years as an exile because he thought that being in this place, he would just have memories and feelings for his past in Chile.

Taping Productive Nostalgia

For most of the exiles, nostalgia was best experienced when engaged with activities associated with the homeland. This form of nostalgia is what is referred as productive nostalgia, one which implies embodiment and enactment in practice (Blunt 2003) "I felt like my old self," said Eliana, when recalling a party she had attended the night before. "We ate and afterwards we danced until late in the evening. That is something we do in Chile. Here, people at parties just sit, drink and talk—in Chile we dance! I felt different. I felt like I was in Chile again, dancing and laughing. I was myself again! I felt that I had recognized another self in me."

Eliana doesn't have a special place to recall the homeland today. She explained that during her early years of exile, she did, but now with the passing of time, it is activities that she once loved doing in Chile that have the power to transport her back to her youth and make her nostalgic. And most importantly, they have the ability to restore her old self.

Lichi, who grew up in a small town in the Chilean wine country, expressed similar feelings. Nothing so intensely reminds her of her past as when she participates in an event that closely resembles her life in Chile. She recalled an event when she spent a weekend with a family at the Russian River, north of San Francisco. There, she felt that she had recovered her old self: "One of the choir members invited me to spend the weekend with his parents and brother in the Russian River. They are Jewish. They fed me just like my mother. Being near sweet water, near the river, reminded me of the summers in Chile when we used to go to the countryside, and I would spend two months swimming in the river, walking on dirt, playing, eating, and singing. This family, the parents and the two sons, sing all the time like my family. We gathered around the table to eat, next to the river. It brought me the most beautiful memories of my country, and my town. That is why this particular place in the Russian river feels so close to my heart, because that weekend was so similar to that of being with my family. I remember that the last meal started at 11:30 p.m. The mother kept feeding me, just like my own mom. I couldn't eat anymore. It was warm and emotional. Jewish families remind me of my family. People reunited around food reminds me of my country."

Taping Rosita at Her Garden

Rosita, an instructor of English as a Second Language at a local community college, had chosen her garden as the place where she feels connected with the homeland and with her life before the *coup d'état* in Chile. While we waited for the crew to assemble and test the equipment, Rosita and I talked in her kitchen about her relationship to places in the Bay Area, and the role that her garden plays in her life. She credits the similarity of the landscapes in the San Francisco Bay Area to Chile with duplicating her experience of dichotomy about places and associated feelings. Like Jaime and other exiles, she has created a geography of places in the Bay Area of San Francisco which she associates with places in Chile and with specific memories and emotions. She associates her garden with the countryside and her family, and her happy times as a child. And the cities, particularly San Francisco, with Santiago, about which she has negative connotations. "I avoid San Francisco, because parts of it, particularly the financial district, reminds me of Santiago. For Rosita, many places in the Bay Area have the potential power of triggering good and bad memories of the homeland in her; gardening, on the other hand, connects her deeply with her roots as a farmer, and reinforces this identity. She maintains strong ties with her family and their farm, spending at least five months a year at her parents' home in Chile. Twice a year, during school breaks, Rosita travels to her family home, avoiding Santiago as much as she can, only going there for the flights to and from the United States. Santiago still reminds her of her life working as a domestic maid, the abuse she endured from some of her employers, as well as the fear and terror she experienced during the military regime. When Rosita is at her parents' home, she explains, "I am not a visitor. I work in the fields, I feed the animals, I take care of the house when it's needed. Last winter, I hired people to fix the roof. There is so much to do on a farm!" She laments, "My parents are old so I need to help them."

It was a form of restorative nostalgia that made her create her garden to combat the longing feelings she experienced during her early years in the United States. Rosita works daily in her garden, in which she planted twenty-five different edible plants.

During the taping, Rosita proudly explained what she was doing. She pointed at all the different plants and explained their use. She noted that she didn't have any ornamental plants. Farmers, she said, use every plant: "They are not for decoration. They are life! " She was clearly enjoying the opportunity of showing us her garden and her delight in gardening. She also was happy that we were filming it. She constantly addressed us, the crew, and pointed at the birds that were drinking water from the different containers that she had placed in the garden. Rosita moved continuously in her garden talking and pulling weeds and examining the plants. Rosita faced the cameras and said, "We don't have space for trees (referring to her garden), but in my small garden, I have brought wildlife to this place. I have butterflies and hummingbirds. I have plants to attract butterflies and birds. We have several types of plants to eat here: tomatoes, cilantro, beans, basil, peaches, and lemons. I have mint too. I have a bit of the farm here, the greenery. I can see the birds. It's wildlife."

I asked her, "Does it take you back to your farm in Chile?" Rosita responded, "Working here, digging my hands in the dirt. It reminds me of working in the farm first thing in the morning, taking out roots that you didn't want there. It reminds me of my life there, it gives me much peace that I need. I help friends who have their own gardens. I have three gardens to keep up. I need to have gardens with vegetables, I need to have some of the country life here, not just plants for decoration. Rosita looks directly to the camera, her face shining with pride, she says with great emphasis: That's me!" She also communicated that when she is gardening, she becomes her old self, the self before all the events that radically changed her life. Through the act of gardening, touching the soil, digging with her hands, pulling weeds, watering the plants, she becomes connected to her old self.

Last Words

I have provided examples that show that nostalgia--as it emerged in the shared responses to memories, places and activities-- is a dynamic expression of emotions, imaginations, and memories, that evolves with time and responds to different historical and personal situations. Each of the different forms of nostalgia expressed by the exiles revealed different expressions of selves and emotions showing the complexities created by the experience of rupture from the homeland, and the many years living in the host country. Nostalgia doesn't always involve the yearning for the youth in the homeland, but for some it also includes a longing for their younger selves as exiles in the host country. It also shows that the experience of re-creating activities that are associated with the homeland transports them to the past without creating the dissonance between the old and new selves, but, rather, they restore their selves. This form of nostalgia fulfils one of its functions which is to facilitate the continuity of identity (Wilson 2005, Davis 1979) by not creating dissonance with former selves as did most of the other forms of nostalgia evoked by the exiles.

This form of art based ethnographic research shows the importance of collaboration in following and adapting to the wishes and needs of the participants to create spaces that promote the sharing of interior experiences, in this case nostalgia, while keeping in mind that what we obtain as ethnographers is what the collaborators choose to share, and that our roles

in facilitating these forms of sharing platforms and our roles facilitators of the ethnographic information (Degarrod, 2013).

Finally, the study of expressions of nostalgia brings us to question how much of the experience of nostalgia--one that tends to permeate our ethnographic work by the mere act of making our collaborators and informants recall the past—shape their responses and our understanding of the research?

REFERENCES

- Berliner, David. 2015. "Are Anthropologists Nostalgic?" In *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, edited by Olivia Ange and David Berliner. New York: Berghahn.
- Blunt, Alison. 2003. "Collective memory and productive nostalgia: Anglo-Indian homemaking at McCluskieganj." *Society and Space* 21 (6):717-738.
- Bolzman, Claudio. 1994. "Stages and Modes of Incorporation of Exiles in Switzerland: the Example of Chilean Refugees." *The European Journal of Social Science Research* 7 (4).
- Boym, Svetlana. 2001. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brubaker, R. 2005. "The "diaspora" diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (28):1-19.
- Davis, Fred. 1979. *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: The Free Press.
- Degarrod, Lydia Nakashima. 2013. "Making the Unfamiliar Personal: Arts-based Ethnographies As Public Engaged Ethnographies." *Qualitative Research* 13 (4):402-413.
- Degarrod, Lydia Nakashima. 2016a. "Collaborative Art and the Emergence and Development of Ethnographic Knowledge and Empathy." *Critical Arts: A Journal of North-South Cultural and Media Studies* 30 (3).
- Degarrod, Lydia Nakashima. 2016b. "Exile, The Sorrow of Time and Place." In *Beyond Text? Critical Practices and Sensory Anthropology*, edited by Rupert Cox, Andrew Irving and Christopher Wright, 76-88. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Eastmond, Marita. 1997. *The Dilemmas of Exile*. Goteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.
- Fabian, Johannes. 1990. *Power and Performance: Ethnographic Explorations through Proverbial Wisdom and Theater in Shaba, Zaire*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, edited by Jonathan Rutherford, 222-237. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hall, Stuart. 1994. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Chrisman, 392-401. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Haw, Kaye, and Mark Hadfield. 2011. *Video in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.

Irving, Andrew. 2011. "Strange Distance: Towards an Anthropology of Interior Dialogue." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 25 (1):22-44.

Lassiter, Luke Eric. 2005. *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Nichols, Bill. 1991. *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ramirez, Carolina. 2014. "'It is not how it was': the Chilean diaspora's changing landscape of belonging." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37 (4):668-684.

Rebolledo, Loreto, and Maria Elena Acuña. 2000/2001. "Narrativa del exilio chileno." *Anales, Nueva Epoca* (3-4):3-20.

Ritivoi, Andreea Deciu. 2002. *Yesterday Self: Nostalgia and the Immigrant Identity*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Rouch, Jean, and Steven Feld, eds. 2003. *Cine-Ethnography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Said, Edward. 2000. "Reflections on Exile." In *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, edited by Edward Said. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sarkar, Bhaskar, and Janet Walker, eds. 2010. *Documentary Testimonies: Global Archives of Suffering*. New York: Routledge.

Sedikides, C, T Wildschut, and J Arndt. 2008. "Nostalgia: Past, Present, and Future." *Association for Psychological Science* 17 (304-307).

Stewart, Katherine. 1988. "Nostalgia - A Polemic." *Cultural Anthropology* 3 (3):227-41.

Sznajder, Mario, Luis Roniger. 2007. "Exile Communities and Their Differential Institutional Dynamics: A Comparative Analysis of the Chilean and Uruguayan Political Diasporas." *Revista de Ciencia Política* 27 (1):43-66.

van Dienderen, An. 2007. "Performing Urban Collectivity: Ethnography of the Production Process of a Community-based Film Project in Brussels." In *Visual Interventions: Applied Visual Anthropology*, edited by Sarah Pink. New York: Berghahn Books.

Wilson, J. 2005. *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.

Wright, Thomas C., and Rody Oñate. 2012. "Chilean Political Exile." In *Exile and the Politics of Exclusion in the Americas*, edited by Luis Roniger, James N. Green and Pablo Yankelevitch. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.

¹ The participants of this project who came as paroled refugees to the United States arrived between 1974 and 1979 among a group of 400 exiles and their families. As refugees they didn't benefit from aid from the state since the Refugee Act was passed after the arrival of the Chilean exiles. While the experience of exile impacted the lives of each exile differently and individually, the official status as immigrant to the United States posed stresses that affected those who arrived with a parolee status differently than those who arrived voluntarily and without a permanent visa. For those who arrived as voluntary exiles, their early years were spent in great part trying to make a living and to obtain permanent residence. Those who arrived as parolees, liberated from the penuries of legitimatizing their stay in the country, could devote their time more fully to fighting the Chilean dictatorship.