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TITLE: "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds:" Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration

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ABSTRACT: In the Spring 2014, I developed a digital storytelling project with my students, titled "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration," comprising thirty-five digital stories on various aspects of Salvadoran transnational migration flows and community formations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. By invitation, "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds" was presented live and live streamed from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). This essay tells the story of how the "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds" digital storytelling project captured the images, sounds, voices, and narratives of Salvadoran transnational migration from the 19th century to the present and in the particular context of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, home to close to 240,000 Salvadorans (U.S. Census 2010). I discuss the making of "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds" as well the use of digital storytelling as a media tool to make visible transnational migration flows and community formations of Salvadorans in the United States. Of particular interest is capturing the stories of Salvadoran transnationality through the art of digital storytelling.

KEYWORDS: Salvadorans, Washington, D.C., Transmigration, Transnationalism, Digital Storytelling

RESUMEN: En la primavera de 2014, diseñé con mis estudiantes el proyecto de historias digitales denominado "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Historias digitales de la migración transnacional salvadoreña" en el área metropolitana de Washington, D.C. El proyecto consiste de treinta y cinco historias digitales sobre varios aspectos diferentes de la migración transnacional y la formación de una comunidad salvadoreña transnacional. Ese mismo semestre fuimos invitados a presentar "Entre mundos/Between Worlds" en vivo y por live stream en el Museo Nacional del Indio Americano de la Institución Smithsonian (NMAI). Este ensayo cuenta la historia de cómo "Entre Mundo/Between Worlds" captó las imágenes, los sonidos, las voces y las narrativas de la migración transnacional salvadoreña desde el siglo diecinueve hasta el presente y en el contexto particular del área metropolitana de Washington, D.C., en el cual residen casi 240,000 salvadoreños (U.S. Census 2010). Aquí explico la elaboración de "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds" así como el uso de historias digitales para hacer visible los flujos y las formaciones comunitarias transnacionales de los salvadoreños en los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica. Nos interesa particularmente explorar la representación del transnacionalismo salvadoreño por medio de la práctica de las historias digitales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: salvadoreños, Washington, D.C., transmigración, transnacionalismo, historias digitales

BIOGRAPHY: Ana Patricia Rodríguez is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the U.S. Latina/o Studies Program at the University of Maryland, College Park, where she teaches classes on Latin American, Central American, and U.S. Latina/o literatures and cultures. Her research interests include Central American and Latina/o cultural production, transnational cultural studies, diaspora studies, and post/war/trauma studies. She has published widely on the cultural production of Latinas/os in the United States and Central Americans in the isthmus and the wider Central American diaspora. She is the author of *Dividing the Isthmus: Central American Transnational Histories, Literatures, and Cultures* (University of Texas Press, 2009) and co-editor (with Linda J. Craft and Astvaldur Astvaldsson) of *De la hamaca al trono y al más allá: Lecturas críticas de la obra de Manlio Argueta* (San Salvador: Universidad Tecnológica, 2013).

“Entre Mundos/Between Worlds:” Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration

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In 2011, Salvadorans became the third-largest Latino demographic group in the United States, after Mexicans and Puerto Ricans (Brown and Patten 2013). Although they began to arrive in the United States in the 19th Century and have since settled throughout the country, they remain a largely underrepresented population nationally and in many locales. Arturo Arias has suggested that, given Central Americans’ long history of violence, trauma, and forced and often undocumented migration, Salvadorans (like other Central Americans) often adopt strategies of invisibility, or passing unperceived (2007), in order to elude immigration and other authorities, making it thus difficult to conduct research on and with them. In an effort to better understand Salvadoran transnational migration flows, particularly in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, where they comprise the largest Latino group (Pumar 2012), I developed a digital storytelling project in 2014, titled “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration.” The project engaged my undergraduate students in the production of digital stories about Salvadorans in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. With the project, I sought to make more visible a community that lives between countries, cultures, and economies and to generate community-based research that could be used to document a group that contributes greatly to the local labor market and economy and remits more than \$4 billion annually to their country, and yet remains

largely in the shadows (Pew Research Center 2013). Our digital storytelling project was a way to make visible a community made invisible in today’s transnational labor market.

In this essay, I examine the making of “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration,” for which students in an upper division Spanish (L2) class at the University of Maryland, College Park, produced thirty-five digital stories. Linked by storylines, themes, and tropes of transnationalism, the digital narratives sought to “capture” the stories of Salvadoran transnational migration flows in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. For the project, students conducted research on selected topics, wrote bilingual scripts, drafted storyboards, recorded, translated, and captioned voiceovers, synchronized assets (images and sounds), and produced videos using the cloud-based application, *WeVideo*. They also used online collaborative writing tools such as Google Drive and *Etherpad* to co-write and edit scripts in Spanish and English. As the instructor, I guided the production of the digital stories, monitored the collection of assets to ensure the use of Creative Commons (royalty-free) materials, edited and commented on texts, and designed and implemented grading rubrics to assess the digital storytelling from process to product. Peer and self-evaluations were used to assess the outcomes of collaborative learning in this digital storytelling project (Barkley, Howell Major, and Cross 2014). Here, I discuss not only the content

and themes of the student digital stories but also the use of digital storytelling in community-engaged learning for the production of site-based research on transnational migration. Because Salvadoran migration has been largely invisible due to the undocumented status of many immigrants (Arias 2007), this project sought to focalize this migration and to bring to the fore images of their transnational lives and practices in our region.

Salvadoran Transnational Migration in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area

While Salvadorans comprise the third largest Latino population in the United States, they are the largest immigrant group in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, which consists of the District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland, and parts of West Virginia (Singer 2001). The U.S. Census (2010) conservatively estimates that there are approximately 240,000 Salvadorans in the D.C. metropolitan area without counting the large number of undocumented immigrants. Historically, since at least the 1960s, Central Americans particularly from El Salvador have been immigrating to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, attracted by gainful employment in the construction, service, hospitality, and childcare sectors and supported by thriving formal and informal social networks, including service providers, agencies, churches, hometown associations, family, and friends (Menjívar 2000). A growing body of research in sociology, anthropology, communications, migration studies, and cultural studies has already examined the phenomenon of transnational migration of Salvadorans to the United States and elsewhere. To date, these studies have focused on the transnational migration and settlement patterns of Salvadorans to key sites such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York (Zilberg 2011; Córdova 2005; Baker-Cristales 2004; Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001; Menjívar 2000; Winschun 1999; Mahler

1995a, 1995b) and even Calgary, Canada (Lara Martínez 1994).

In recent years, scholars have begun to focus on the migration of Salvadorans to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Among them, Terry Repak (1995) has examined the migration of Central Americans to the region after World War II. Repak calls attention to a Central American/Salvadoran female-headed “pioneer” generation that arrived in the D.C. area in the early 1960s to work as domestic workers in the households of the diplomatic corps, a signature feature of migration to Washington, D.C. Drawing upon Repak’s work, David Pedersen (2013) has studied Salvadoran migration from the eastern part of El Salvador to the region. In “*Mandar a Traer: Antropología, migraciones y transnacionalismo. Salvadoreños en Washington*” (2005) and *Proceso migratorio de una mujer salvadoreña: El viaje de María Reyes a Washington* (2006), the Spanish anthropologist Raúl Sánchez-Molina tells the story of a great number of Salvadoran migrants who came to the area in the 1980s, as a consequence of their country’s civil war. In particular, his ethnography of María Reyes follows his subject from El Salvador, through Mexico, to the working class suburb of Langley Park, Maryland, which contains the largest concentration per square mile of Salvadorans in the United States.

From a different angle, cultural anthropologist and folklorist Olivia Cadaval (1998) explores how Salvadorans fleeing the violence of the civil war struggled for representation in the nation’s capital and used public space and functions like the Latino festival to protest U.S. intervention in El Salvador and to put on display Salvadoran foodways (food culture), music, and other cultural practices in a city that as a whole overlooked their presence. In an early study of race relations in D.C., Jennings and Lusane (1994) further note the tensions between the longstanding African American communities and Salvadoran newcomers, in what Modan (2007) calls the “turf wars” in certain neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. In various studies, Orozco (2004) more generally examines

the sustained impact through the years of remittances in El Salvador and the nostalgic industries that Salvadorans have built through their consumption away from their country (2015). Finally, Rodríguez (2009) analyzes the literary and cultural production of the Salvadoran diaspora in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, while Benítez (2011, 2010, 2006) explores what he calls the “transdigital divides” produced by migration and diaspora. Building upon this body of scholarship, I sought to train my students as critical observers, researchers, and documentarians of Salvadoran transnationality in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. My objective was not only for my students to study the processes of Salvadoran transnationalism and transmigration, or rather the travel back-and-forth between El Salvador and Washington, D.C. area, but also to become producers of knowledge in their own right. The idea was to produce visual materials (digital stories) on Salvadoran transnational flows of people, goods, and cultural materials, which, in turn, could be of use to educators and others, both in and outside of El Salvador. Moreover, I was interested in exploring the question of how digital storytelling could be used to bridge the geographical and more figurative divides and distances between transnational communities.

The Practice of Digital Storytelling

In the “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” project, I wanted, thus, to “capture” images, sounds, ideas, and narratives of Salvadoran transnational migration between the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and El Salvador through electronic media. As an interdisciplinary literature professor and cultural studies practitioner specializing in U.S. Latina/o and Central American literatures and cultures and as a scholar who values the work of the humanities, for this project I was

not necessarily interested in using digital storytelling or “participatory visual and digital methods” (Gubrium and Harper 2013) as ethnographic methodologies. Rather, I was interested in working with my students to produce original visual stories about different aspects of Salvadoran transnationality with an eye out for metaphors, images, representations, and other narrative practices. Digital storytelling seemed like an ideal practice and tool for this endeavor.

As we know, in the last few decades, digital storytelling has become an innovative tool for producing personal and collective narratives in multimedia formats and platforms with a great number of innovative practitioners (Lambert 2013; Guajardo et al. 2013; Frazel 2010; Kidd 2009; Matthews-DeNatale 2008). The Internet is populated with blogs, Google sites, wiki-spaces, virtual museums, YouTube videos, and other sites showcasing the digital stories of people, communities, and issues. Exemplary digital storytelling sites on the Web include the *StoryCenter* (formerly *Center for Digital Storytelling*), *Immigrant Archive Project*, Robin Bernard’s website *The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling* (University of Houston), and *Digital Storytelling: Multimedia Archive* (University of Georgetown). Abundant online resources also exist, which provide ideas, guidelines, and examples for the production and assessment of digital storytelling projects at various educational levels and for different contexts and audiences. (See Richard Byrne’s Blog “*Free Technology for Teachers*,” *Digital Storytelling*, *EDUCAUSE-Digital Story Telling*, *Microsoft.com*, *Higher Education Resources*, *NancyRubin Blog*, and *National Writing Project*, among others).

None of these digital storytelling projects, however, combines a transnational perspective and methodology to produce stories with community partners across national territories, languages, ages, and educational levels, which is what I envisioned doing with “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds.” My

intention was to create digital stories about the Salvadoran transnational migration and community building as well as a depository and archive for storing these stories and making them accessible. In the long run, with this project, I hoped to contribute to what Joe Lambert, founder of the StoryCenter, calls the “digital storytelling movement” (2013). In the context of the dispersed Salvadoran diaspora, I hoped that digital storytelling could further serve as a resource for producing visual narratives and linking communities and individuals divided by borders, multiple countries, and migration status. Following the aforementioned models of digital storytelling, in “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds,” I sought to develop a virtual space for the collecting, representing, digitizing, and archiving of stories of Salvadoran transnational migration for public access. In order to develop this transnational project and space, I first familiarized myself with the literature and practice of digital storytelling and participated in a number of hands-on workshops at the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California, a leader and innovator in this burgeoning field. I also developed a course focusing on transnationalism and digital storytelling in order to put that scholarship into practice with my students.

A Course in Salvadoran Transmigration and Transnationalism

In spring 2014, I launched the research-based digital storytelling undergraduate course *Spanish 408i Latino/a Transmigration and Transnationalism (El Salvador)*, fulfilling the general education requirement for Scholarship in Practice, a new general education requirement at my institution. The class focused on the history, practices, and literature of transnationalism (Jay 2010; Khagram and Levitt 2008; Vertovec 2009; Lionnet and Shih

2005; Hitchcock 2003), particularly Salvadoran transnational migration. In particular, the class paid close attention to how Salvadoran transnational migrants build and maintain material, symbolic, and affective ties with their homelands and how some Salvadoran transmigrants (with documented status) travel back-and-forth between sending and receiving sites in El Salvador and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, respectively. The class format consisted of lecture, discussions, group work, short essays and reflections, presentations, workshops, activities, public presentation of collaborative projects, examinations, and an abbreviated community-engaged service-learning requirement. Readings drew from history, anthropology, politics, immigration, communications, culture, art, and literature, among other fields. Students not only read scholarly research on transnational migration but also material from newspapers, first-hand accounts, and other critical and ethnographic works, among them *Proceso migratorio de una mujer salvadoreña: El viaje de María Reyes a Washington* (Sánchez-Molina 2006), a key text for the class.

For their digital storytelling projects, students developed individual and collaborative digital stories representing aspects of Salvadoran transmigration and transnationalism in the region. For this purpose, the technology support unit for my department subscribed to the cloud-based system *WeVideo* and assisted me in training my students in the use of the technology. Training included instruction on filming on Samsung pocket cams and mobile phones, audio recording of voiceovers on the sound recording software *Audacity*, and compiling, uploading, and editing assets to *WeVideo* to produce the final products. Sessions in class were also dedicated to best practices in selecting and using Creative Commons (royalty-free) materials from sites such as Jamendo, Audio Jungle, and SoundBible. Each student in the class was required to produce an individual digital story (video) as part of her/his training and

to collaborate in a group to produce a longer digital story on a more complex issue in Salvadoran transnational migration.

In order to expose students to transnationalism at different levels, from the lives of immigrants in the region to the intricacies of government policy, I arranged for students to assist me in the planning and hosting of a public forum at our university, featuring the Ambassador of El Salvador. During the course of the semester, I also arranged for them to meet with Salvadoran writers whose work they were reading and to participate in a Skype conference with a specialist on Salvadoran migration at the Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA) in San Salvador. Thus, my students were able to participate in the same transnational networks of politics, culture, and media that connect the Salvador migrant populations with El Salvador (Benítez 2011, 2010). During the semester, my students were also required to fulfill an abbreviated service-learning (SL) project through which they each visited a local high school and gave presentations in the Spanish for Native Speakers (heritage language) classes, per previous arrangement with teachers of the Spanish department at the high school. My students also assisted in coordinating the daylong visit of two hundred high school students from the aforementioned classes to our campus. My college students were responsible for planning, organizing, and leading activities with the high school students, from which my students learned first-hand about the lives and migrations of their younger counterparts, many of who were recently arrived child migrants from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. The event ended with a performance of scenes from "PLACAS: The World's Most Dangerous Tattoo" by Ricardo Salinas of the Chicano theater troupe Culture Clash who agreed to perform at my institution in the context of the program.

With this community-engaged, service-learning project, particularly the daylong campus event, I sought to produce a contact experience for both my college students and

the high school students through campus tours, games, presentations, and storytelling exercises in which my college students worked with the high school students to produce a picture book with images and captions based on personal migration stories. The high school students produced three to four page storybooks with drawings that told stories of their migration from homelands, reunification with parents and relatives, and difficulties of living in between, just like my students and I had read in the critical literature. Through this high school-college student encounter, I hoped students would connect and put a human face to the structural processes of migration, despite the cultural, linguistic, class, ethnic/racial, and town/gown barriers that make community-engaged learning difficult for some. Indeed, Barbara Jacoby, renowned scholar of service-learning practices and my mentor at the University of Maryland, defines

service-learning as a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes. (1-2)

In this context, I sought to make transnational migration experiences and processes "real" for my students and to create situations in which they could engage with the younger students in their high school and on our campus in an effort to break the borders that often exist between the community and the university. At the end of the semester, I asked my students to write letters to the high school students, reflecting critically on their shared encounters and encouraging them to pursue their studies in high school and college.

Up to now, I have discussed conceptual, pedagogical, and service-learning aspects of my class titled "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds." I designed this class with many course goals and one significant outcome in mind. Before the class began, I was invited to present the "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds"

digital story project at a special event at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. The event would take place on May 3, 2014 and would be open to the general public and live streamed and watched via the Internet. To that end, at the onset of the class, I had in mind to train the students to produce the best digital stories they could for public presentation to a worldwide audience on the subject of Salvadoran transnational migration. I was awarded an inaugural Foxworth Creative Enterprise Initiative-Curriculum Development Grant to create a new class that would fulfill the General Education Distributive Studies-Scholarship in Practice (DSSP) requirement for undergraduate students at my institution. I was also awarded the assistance of an Undergraduate Technology Apprentice (UTAP) for the class.

Digital Stories of "Entre Mundos/ Between Worlds"

Now, I would like to turn to the digital stories themselves, which include individual and group productions. Based on particular topics covered in class, and particular interests, each student was responsible for producing an individual digital story of two to three minutes. These stories focused on a wide array of topics on Salvadoran transnational migration, including: (1) personal narratives of family, home, and community; (2) immigration process and movement; (3) immigrant service providers and organizations; (4) immigrant social spaces such as restaurants, supermarkets, indoor soccer fields, and neighborhoods; (5) local transportation, businesses, and communication networks; (6) nostalgic foods such as pupusas, cheese, and other products; (7) remittances; (8) violence and security; (9) citizenship and belonging in the United States; (10) gender and motherhood.

All the stories used original and/or Creative Commons assets to represent the local

context of Salvadoran transnational migration and were recorded and/or captioned bilingually in Spanish and English. Each of the projects required multiple drafts, editing, and consulting with me face-to-face or electronically to arrive at the final narrative captured in digital form. Perhaps one of the most compelling individual digital stories was titled "The Life Line/El celular," representing a student's daily trajectory upon leaving her dorm on campus. The student describes her daily encounter in her dorm's stairwell with one of the Salvadoran housekeepers, who every day at a certain time takes her break on the stairs and calls her daughter in El Salvador using her cell phone. The student reflects poignantly and critically on the material, symbolic, and affective ties mediated by the cell phone as the housekeeper makes her daily phone call to her daughter. In another exemplary digital story, "The Salvadoran 7-11/El 7-11 salvadoreño," a student shows the impact of the Salvadoran demographic in Northern Virginia as pupusas, sweet bread, and other Salvadoran products became staple sale items. In "The Traveling Cheese/El queso viajero," another student recalls how her family eagerly awaits the return of her grandparents from El Salvador and the cheese they bring home, symbolizing for the student and her family the nostalgia for their homeland. Finally, in "The Hummingbird: Peace and Violence/El colibrí: La paz y la violencia," a student ponders the systemic and gendered violence of the civil war, which has pushed a family friend into exile in the United States. These are only a few examples of the critical digital stories produced by each of my students in "Entre Mundos/Between Worlds."

The *pièce de résistance*, however, was the corpus of eight collaborative group digital stories, each five to eight minutes in length, produced for the public presentation at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian on May 3, 2014. In order to allot time for the completion of these group digital stories, by mid-semester students were divided into groups according to research interests. Each student was asked to identify her/his skill

set and was assigned accordingly a specific role in her/his team. Roles included project manager/director, script writer/editor/translator, videographer/photographer, and video producer, among others. As stated in the course syllabus, the original requirements of the collaborative group digital story were as follows:

Students will be organized into groups of 3-4 people. The group will produce one (1) collaborative digital story on any aspect of Salvadoran transmigration and/or transnationalism in the local area. In this instance, the goal is to tell the story of a flow of transmigration or transnationalism in the local area. For example, a group may elect to tell the story of the circulation of remittances starting with a visit to a local remittance service center such as RIA, Bancomercio, Gigante, etc.; the role of cell phone calling and phone cards in the transnational community; the activism of a local immigrant organization; the adaptations of Salvadoran cuisine for the “nostalgic market;” the labor of transmigrants in the Student Union or outside; the affective connections maintained by Salvadoran families through family visits, calls, memories; the experiences of our transmigrant partners at NWHs; etc. The group will write a 350-400 word narrative script that will serve as script and voiceover. The group digital story should be 5-8 mins. Student will use *WeVideo* application to capture sound, music, and voiceover to digitize the story.

In essence, studnets were asked to focalize and make visible the Salvadoran community in our local area, whereby becoming producers of knowledge about immigrants who are highly underrepresented in the United States, although they comprise the third largest Latino population. Since their production, the digital stories have contributed to a growing archive on the Salvadoran experience in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

In the end, the collaborative group digital stories covered a range of topics on Salvadoran migration history, neighborhoods, remittance-sending practices and institutions, hometown associations, education, and racial identity. The titles and descriptions of the digital stories are as follows and can be viewed at hyperlinks and at my Vimeo site.

(1) *Digital Stories of Transnationalism and Transmigration: El Salvador to D.C. (Historias digitales del transnacionalismo y de la trans migración de El Salvador a D.C., a behind-the-scenes student-produced documentary on the making of “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds: Digital Stories of Salvadoran Transnational Migration.”*

(2) *Vignettes of Salvadoran Transmigration (Viñetas de la trans migración salvadoreña)*, an overview of Salvadoran migration to the United States from the 19th century to the present through fictionalized vignettes.

(3) *In Search of Security: Salvadoran Immigration and Its Transnational Routes (En búsqueda de seguridad: La inmigración salvadoreña y sus rutas transnacionales)*, an exposé of the migratory routes taken by Salvadoran transmigrants as they travel to the United States by train, plane, and foot.

(4) *The Salvador Flavor of Mount Pleasant (El sabor salvadoreño de la Mount Pleasant)*, a virtual tour of Mount Pleasant, the historic epicenter of Salvadoran migration in the Washington, D.C. metro area, and its ever-changing character as it undergoes gentrification.

(5) *The Kings of Remittances: Salvadorans in the Washington, D.C. Area (Los reyes de las remesas: Salvadoreños en el área de Washington, D.C.)*, a close-up look at remittances, the transnational economic pillar of Salvadoran communities in the United States and El Salvador.

(6) *Transnational Foundations: Destination El Salvador (Fundaciones transnacionales: Destino El Salvador)*,


a reflection on how Salvadoran immigrants maintain ties with their hometowns, particularly Santa Teresa and Mogotillo.

(7) *Empty Desk: The Process of Registering International Students* (*Pupitre vacío: El proceso de matricular estudiantes internacionales*), a fictional account that exposes the difficulties of enrolling newly-arrived immigrant students in Prince Georges' County Public School System (PGCPS), Maryland.

(8) *Trigueña/o: Culture of Three* (*Trigueña/o: Cultura de tres*), an exploration of racial identity in El Salvador and Latin America through a reflection on the word "trigueña/o."

At the public presentation at the Smithsonian NMAI (Figure 1), students not only presented their digital stories but also participated in a Q&A session, capably responding to questions from the audience regarding their work and experience producing the digital stories. In their own right, my students became producers (and not merely consumers) of digital media, knowledge, and public scholarship.

With these digital stories, my students and I sought to understand the workings of transnationalism in the form of "real," material, affective, and symbolic practices and to ponder critical questions of what it means to live between nations, territories, cultures, and languages. We wanted to observe and discuss



ENTRE MUNDOS/BETWEEN WORLDS:
Salvadoran Digital Stories of Transnational Migration
Saturday, May 3, 2014

**3 p.m.-4:30 p.m., Rasmuson Theater
 National Museum of the American Indian
 4th Street & Independence Avenue, S.W.**

Join the Smithsonian Latino Center and the University of Maryland for a student-led program that combines digital media with live performance to share stories from the third-largest Latino community in the United States—Salvadoran Americans. Organized with Professor Ana Patricia Rodríguez, student presentations will bring to life the history and context of Salvadoran migrations since the 19th century into the present. Theater doors will open at 2:30 p.m. First come, first seated. This FREE program will be webcast live!

View it here:
<http://latino.si.edu/newsevents/webcasts.htm>

The nearest Metro station is L'Enfant Plaza (Orange, Blue, Green, and Yellow Lines). For more information call (202) 633-0925 or email woodamanr@si.edu. Image courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Figure 1: Advertisement for the public presentation of the project at the National Museum of the American Indian

local examples of Salvadoran transnational migration.

Ultimately, our mission was to work with community partners to produce original research on Salvadoran transnational migration, particularly in our local area, in other words to counter the invisibility of Salvadorans, which I have previously discussed. The class required additional community-engaged work outside of class and considerable collaboration on the digital storytelling projects. At the end of the semester, students were offered the opportunity to reflect critically not only on the class as a whole but also on the process of collaborative group work and individual contributions. All students signed release forms granting me permission to present on and write about their digital stories and the “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” project.

Conclusion

Following various models of digital storytelling, “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” developed a virtual space for the collecting, representing, digitizing, and archiving of stories of Salvadoran transnational migration. To date, the project “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” has taken different iterations in other classes and has generated almost sixty digital stories on the formation, practices, and processes of the Salvadoran transnational migration, diaspora, and home/land in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, most of which can be viewed at my Vimeo site. The next step for the project is to create a website that will make the digital stories more readily available for viewing by the public and for use by educators as learning tools. It is my hope that, once housed and archived at a website, the digital stories will be available for use by schools, organizations, and other parties interested in transnational migration.

In the future, my plan is to train students in El Salvador and at other institutions

and community venues in the United States in digital storytelling elaboration in order to continue producing and adding additional digital stories to the archive. To the best of my knowledge, no other digital storytelling archive project representing the Salvadoran transnational migration exists to date. In practice, such an archive will serve to bridge what Benítez (2010) calls the “transdigital divide” between Salvadorans in El Salvador and members of the Salvadoran diaspora. In fact, following the presentation at the NMAI, one of the major newspapers of El Salvador published an online article on the students’ digital stories, titled “Entre mundos se ven los salvadoreños inmigrantes en Estados Unidos” (Salvadoran Immigrants See Themselves Between Worlds) (Guevara 2014), thus giving face and voice to our project and connecting us to El Salvador. In the end, the “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” digital story project was a venue for making visible Salvadoran transnational migrations in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan Area. Putting students to work on producing community-engaged scholarship for public access, “Entre Mundos/Between Worlds” crossed many real and virtual borderlines, bringing together different communities divided by migration, national territories, political borders, and citizenship documentation (or lack thereof) across the digital divide.

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