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Autoethnography and Organization Research

Reflections from Fieldwork in Palestine

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ISBN 978-3-030-05098-6 ISBN 978-3-030-05099-3 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018962903

This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

I must begin by acknowledging the people with whom I interacted in the West Bank. This book is the direct outcome of their willingness to share their insights and experiences with me. Since my first research excursion in Palestine, I developed much affinity with the people there; this affinity has only multiplied in the years that have followed. I can only hope that this book will offer a modest contribution to the Palestinian cause.

Although I earned my Ph.D. from York University's Schulich School of Business in 2012, I must acknowledge the members of my dissertation committee who provided encouragement and enthusiasm for my dissertation research upon which much of this book is based. I thank the chair of my dissertation committee, Ellen Auster, as well as my dissertation committee members, Marcia Annisette, Russell Belk, and Albert Mills. These scholars never fail to inspire me with their political conviction and intellectual aptitude. Not surprisingly, even years after completing my doctorate, I continue to turn to these scholars for advice, support, and collaboration. I hope that they are pleased both with this book and how my career is unfolding.

My life has been greatly enriched by the opportunities to engage with doctoral students, particularly those at UNSW Australia Business School and Tecnologico de Monterrey's EGADE Business School. I am especially grateful to the doctoral students whom I have had the privilege to advise. Indeed, each of these students has demonstrated—overtly

or otherwise—how their research is informed by their subjectivities and experiences. So, while they may not have methodologically framed their own research using autoethnography, the spirit of autoethnography is palpable in the fabric of their work.

The two rounds of fieldwork that I conducted in Palestine were enabled by the generous financial and research support awarded to me by several organizations. Specifically, a doctoral fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and multiple awards from York University supported my first round of fieldwork in the region in the late 2000s. A Special Research Grant from UNSW Australia Business School supported my second round of fieldwork in 2013. I also thank the generous research support from my Canada Research Chair that afforded me with the unencumbered time necessary to prepare and complete this book.

I also thank the staff at Palgrave Macmillan for being supportive of this book. Marcus Ballenger, the commissioning editor, expressed enthusiasm for this project from our initial communication and, Jacqueline Young, kept me on task with gentle reminders about deadlines.

Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude to my parents, Rajesh and Chandra Prasad; none of this would have been imaginable without you.

Victoria, BC, Canada Ajnesh Prasad
October 2018

Contents

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Autoethnography

Abstract The aim of this chapter is threefold. First, I describe the intellectual origins of autoethnography. Second, I define autoethnography as a method for social inquiry. Third, I describe the layout of this book. This chapter is intended to foreground the subsequent chapters, which draw on my fieldwork in Palestine to offer glimpses into how I have leveraged autoethnography in my own work, as both a method and a form of writing.

Keywords Autoethnography · Reflexivity · Research ethics · Research method · Self

The Intellectual Origins of Autoethnography

As a form of social inquiry, autoethnography emerged some forty years ago. Although it is usually traced to Hayano's (1979) article,[1] autoethnography acquired much of its intellectual legitimacy during the linguistic turn of the late 1980s. Indeed, the intellectual legitimacy afforded to autoethnography was largely the outcome of the critical theories that took shape during this period. Perhaps most importantly, the discourses that emerged from postmodernism—and the philosophically

[1] Carolyn Ellis (2004) notes that while David Hayano is often credited with coining the term in 1979, autoethnography was used years earlier by anthropologist Karl Heider.

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3_1

related traditions within the 'critical' paradigm—came to question the taken-for-granted ontological and epistemological assumptions upon which social science research had, up until that point, been predicated. Concomitantly, by questioning such assumptions, these discourses offered a substantive challenge to the hegemony of positivism in social science research.

The linguistic turn established new space from which to not only imagine the possibilities of doing research, but to have that research validated on philosophical grounds. Critical scholars in this new space contested the very criteria that were used to measure the quality and the legitimacy of knowledge production. At the most fundamental level, it prompted a revisiting of the Cartesian-based assertion that the researcher ought to be ontologically divorced from that which is being researched. This assertion, of course, presupposes a couple of things. First, it assumes that reality is fixed and exists independent of subjects. Second, it assumes that the *nature* of that reality can be ascertained through detached and dispassionate empirical investigation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Autoethnography is wholly disloyal to these ontological assumptions insofar as rather than negating the role of the self, it locates the self as *being* central to informing and making sense of all social phenomena.

It merits note that locating the self in social inquiry did not commence with autoethnography. The self was imbricated in broader engagements with reflexivity that preceded the establishment of autoethnography. Indeed, the self has been the cornerstone of methods in the social sciences, including, especially, among those approaches that were inspired by symbolic interaction theory. Reflexivity underscores the need to acknowledge the intersubjective dynamic between the subject and others within the culture in which the subject is located. George Herbert Mead explicated this point:

> It is by means of reflexivness—the turning back of the experience of the individual upon himself—that the whole social process is thus brought into the experiences of the individuals involved in it; it is by such means, which enable the individual to take the attitude of the other toward himself, that the individuals is consciously to adjust himself to that process, and to modify the resultant of that process in any given social act in terms of his adjustment to it. Reflexiveness then, is the essential condition, within the social process, for the development of mind. (as cited in Salzman, 2002, p. 805)

Put more simply, reflexivity provides an intersubjective conceptualization of how social relating is constituted. Within this purview, there is no provision by which to render tenable any claim that reality can exist autonomous of the self. When applied to social inquiry, reflexivity repudiates the suggestion that the self can (or should) be written out of the research creation process. As such, rather than pretending that the self is not involved in empirical execution, reflexivity calls for the investigator to acknowledge the role of the self at each stage—from the conception of the idea to the final written product.[2]

The importance of accounting for reflexivity has been captured by numerous social theorists. For example, both Foucault (1980) and Gramsci (1971) have shown how hegemonic cultural discourses that are represented as being *natural* are, actually, socially constructed and intended to support particular ideological projects. As they elucidate, these ideological projects are often detrimental to disenfranchised constituents in society. Moving from the abstract to the empirical, Latour (1987) has demonstrated how *scientific fact* is entirely a social fabrication. He showed that even when the scientific fact comes from the most controlled and sterile of environments—i.e., the laboratory—it is, still, the product of myriad social interactions. According to him, authors utilize rhetoric to erase, by not acknowledging, the social interactions that were involved in the construction of scientific fact. The most disturbing implication engendered by this erasure is that *scientific facts* become culturally inscribed—however erroneously—with a veneer of *objectivity*, making it seem as though they are apolitical and unproblematic.

The significance of considering reflexivity by being cognizant of the role of the self in social inquiry is especially conspicuous in the works of feminist writers. Indeed, feminist thinkers have long argued against appeals to a priori bases of knowledge by illuminating how, on the contrary, knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988); that it is circumscribed by social experience. Helene Cixous (1976) went so far as to develop the concept of *écriture feminine* ('feminine writing') to call for writing that explicitly comes from the body (I further discuss *écriture feminine* in Chapter 4). Heeding this call, feminist scholars have offered much evidence to substantiate the claim that the corporeal self is pivotal to

[2] More generally, scholars have invoked reflexivity to call upon researchers to be explicit about the ontological and the epistemological assumptions of their arguments as well as the methodological choices that they make (Fournier & Grey, 2000).

understanding how subjects construct, experience, and explain social reality (e.g., Fotaki, Metcalfe, & Harding, 2014; Phillips, Pullen, & Rhodes, 2014; Pullen, 2006; Ulus, 2015). In an effort to animate this position, Paulina Segarra and I have elsewhere used the illustrative example of Hannah Arendt's theory of the *banality of evil* to demonstrate how theorizing is the outcome of, and cannot be separated from, corporeal experiences (Segarra & Prasad, in press). Ultimately, feminists have captured the primacy of the self—of the embodied self, to be more precise—in identifying the epistemological parameters of knowledge and knowledge production.

Defining Autoethnography

Put simply, autoethnography turns the analytical gaze upon the self in seeking to understand the nexus between the personal and the culture in which the personal is situated (Ellis, 2004). Rather than making any sort of de-contextualized, grand statements about culture, autoethnography illuminates how the personal is informed by culture, and vice versa. Maintaining the primacy of the self, autoethnography is a methodological approach that posits personal experiences as the source of the empirical data from which to conceptualize social phenomena. The etymology of the term alludes to its meaning. Namely, autoethnography endeavors to "systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethnos)" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 273). As a method, autoethnography shares many ontological and epistemological affinities—and is sometimes conflated—with self-narratives, reflexive ethnography, and ethnographic autobiography (Collinson & Hockey, 2005).

While autoethnography has grown in methodological currency in the last few years, its legitimacy as a path to social inquiry is routinely questioned. Critics of autoethnography have viewed the method as lacking rigor (Le Roux, 2017) and being too artful (Ellis et al., 2011), and have accused those who adopt it of engaging in self-indulgence and intellectual masturbation (Collinson & Hockey, 2005). Holt (2003) has distilled many of the criticisms of autoethnography in describing the response he received from reviewers when attempting to publish a journal article using the method. As he found, foregrounding the criticisms of the reviewers was the underlying suspicion about the legitimacy of autoethnography as a method for doing research by which to make

sense of the social world. Holt's reviewers were essentially "[debating] whether autoethnography was research" (Tolich, 2010, p. 1606; also see Freshwater, Cahill, Walsh, & Muncey, 2010). This suggests that critics of autoethnography often make tacit recourse to conventional standards for measuring research quality, which include questions of scientific reliability and validity (Le Roux, 2017). As autoethnography tends not meet these conventional standards, it is hastily cast as being unscientific and, thus, not meriting serious consideration.

Notwithstanding the extant critiques about the legitimacy of the method or the practical quandaries that may arise in its execution, autoethnography has been lauded for its ethical intent. Lapadat (2017) has summated the ethical intent realized in the operation of autoethnography versus more traditional forms of ethnography. Among its other ethical achievements, include:

i. Presenting data that directly represent the subject's voice (rather than having the subject's voice mediated/interpreted through the researcher), and;
ii. Redresses the asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and the subjects of the research (a point that I discuss in further detail in Chapter 2).

Involving both memory work and story-making work (Bochner, 2016), autoethnography places the "story of [the researcher's] life within a story of the social context in which it occurs" (Reed-Danahay, as cited in Humphreys, 2005, p. 841).

Chapter Overview

In the remaining pages, here, I provide an overview of each of the chapters that follow. These chapters capture the utility of autoethnography in the field of organization studies.

Chapter 2 situates the nexus between reflexivity and fieldwork through autoethnographic analysis. Specifically, drawing on psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought, this chapter utilizes introspective data from field research conducted in the occupied Palestinian territories to explore how Qalandiya—a neo-colonial militarized border crossing between Jerusalem, Israel and the West Bank's twin cities of Ramallah and al-Bireh—came to significantly alter the researcher's conceptions

of self and Other. Drawing on first-hand experiences at Qalandiya—reconstructed through monologue style voice recordings, emails with colleagues, telephone conversations, personal diary entries, and memory—this chapter illuminates the discursive impact the field has upon the researcher's self. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the ontological, the epistemological, and the ethical implications of pursuing research at neo-colonial sites in organization studies.

Chapter 3 documents a problematic ethnographic encounter that I experienced while conducting fieldwork in the neo-colonized space of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through autoethnography and reflexivity, I describe how the encounter begins to illuminate the surfacing of prejudices that were originally enacted by oppressive neo-colonial structures but which I had come to discursively accept against the communities and the peoples that were to become the subjects of my ethnographic study. As I explain, these prejudices are sourced to the perception of the denigrated embodiment of the Other—in this case, the Palestinian masculine subject. Finally, in this chapter, I consider how I originally understood these latent prejudices and how I ultimately came to negate them through a prudent engagement with, and deconstruction of, a reified socio-political discourse that ideologically endeavors to maintain the subjugation of a disenfranchised and unrecognized nation.

Extending the works of scholars who have elucidated writing as the quintessential site for social transformation, the aim of Chapter 4 is to locate the myriad possibilities for actualizing Donna Haraway's concept of cyborg writing in the field of organization studies by adopting autoethnographic-inflected approaches to research. I contend that cyborg writing functions as a discursive mechanism by which to disrupt Enlightenment ideals of Cartesian duality, objectivity and rationality. These ideals inform the very structure of masculine privilege that emerges from having a society that is organized along androcentric values. Situating the scholarship of Jo Brewis, a contemporary scholar in the field, I illuminate how cyborg writing can be practiced effectively through autoethnography, whereby greater richness is imparted into conceptualizations of, and theorizing on, organizational and management phenomena. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the implications of cyborg writing, and with the identification of two trajectories that scholars can pursue in future studies. Progress along these two paths will move toward actualizing the feminist project for gender egalitarianism.

Chapter 5 concludes the book by applying reflexivity to my experiences in teaching a doctoral seminar on qualitative research methods. This chapter considers how autoethnography might be pedagogically approached. It underscores the need for professors to situate themselves in positions of vulnerability by offering autoethnographic evidence of their own lived and research experiences. This vulnerability allows students to both appreciate the dynamics and the benefits of autoethnography as a qualitative research method and to move toward transforming the classroom into a more open pedagogical space.

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CHAPTER 2

Autoethnography at Qalandiya

Abstract This chapter situates the nexus between reflexivity and fieldwork through autoethnographic analysis. Specifically, drawing on psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought, this chapter utilizes introspective data from field research conducted in the occupied Palestinian territories to explore how Qalandiya—a neo-colonial militarized border crossing between Jerusalem, Israel and the West Bank's twin cities of Ramallah and al-Bireh—came to significantly alter the researcher's conceptions of self and Other. Drawing on first-hand experiences at Qalandiya—reconstructed through monologue style voice recordings, emails with colleagues, telephone conversations, personal diary entries, and memory—this chapter illuminates the discursive impact the field has upon the researcher's self. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the ontological, the epistemological, and the ethical implications of pursuing research at neo-colonial sites in organization studies.

Keywords Autoethnography · Border crossing · Fieldwork · Home · Neo-colonialism · Other · Qalandiya · Palestine · Reflexivity · Refugee

This chapter was originally published as: Prasad, A. (2014). You can't go home again: And other psychoanalytic lessons from crossing a neo-colonial border. *Human Relations, 67*(2), 233–257.

A. Prasad, *Autoethnography and Organization Research*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3_2

Introduction

Along the graffiti covered concrete wall that separates Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank rests Qalandiya—an ominous looking border crossing contrived of copious amounts of gray cement, restrictive metal bars, and layers of barbed wire. The structure, which is heavily militarized by regiments of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), maintains a one-way—almost—impervious border between the West Bank twin cities of Ramallah and al-Bireh and the holy land of Jerusalem. Having recently moved to Jerusalem to conduct field research on the dynamics of organizational sociology in the region, I crossed Qalandiya on a regular basis.[1] Initially, I was impressed, though also somewhat bewildered, by Qalandiya's architectural prowess. Indeed, growing up along the 49th parallel, I was certainly not new to border crossings; however, the borders that I traversed between Canada and the United States did not, in any way, resemble the intimidating structure that is Qalandiya. While Qalandiya was merely a geopolitical boundary that I was compelled to cross to access various sites for my research, and it certainly was neither within the explicit nor the intended purview of my project, it did ultimately emerge to represent the crux of my experience in the field. Indeed, in the end, Qalandiya would subvert my psychological normality and it would come to redefine my sense of self and Other.

I was befuddled by how and why Qalandiya—a border crossing that I was not implicated in through ethnic affiliation (I am not Jewish, Muslim, or Christian) and to which I have little physical or political connection (except for my days in the field)—would levy such profound psychological repercussions on me. Crossing Qalandiya, far from being a ritualistic-like practice that one might expect would develop when engaging in an activity of daily redundancy, became increasingly problematic. I would find crossing the multiple stages of the cold security

[1] The research project in question was for my dissertation, which explored how entrepreneurs engage in strategizing in the context of extreme institutional voids (see Alvi, Prasad, & Segarra, in press; Khoury & Prasad, 2016). The scope of the research project is not directly relevant to this chapter; as such, I will not be discussing it in any additional detail. It is important to note, however, that given that the project required me to examine a geographical region that is marked by extreme institutional voids, I ultimately selected Palestine/Israel as my site for empirical study. A chapter of this scope could not have come to fruition without situating my self, as the researcher, within the social context of this site.

apparatus that constitutes the Qalandiya checkpoint to be emotionally draining, and it would also compel me to engage in a transformative meaning-making process. Indeed, prior to commencing my fieldwork, I had never experienced the feelings, emotions, and thoughts that were initiated within me since I arrived in the region. Upon critical introspection, prompted by detailed communications with colleagues, I would come to realize that Qalandiya was redefining who was I was—informing both the ontologies that I was constituted by and the ideologies for which I stood. Qalandiya quite apparently demanded comprehension and initiated the need for resolution of issues in the most latent interstices of my psyche. These issues are things that I would struggle with—and would ultimately address with varying degrees of success—once I returned from the field.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, I use psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought to explore how occupying and studying a neo-colonial space like Qalandiya came to substantively alter my ideas of self and Other. In so doing, this chapter adds to the ethnographic-based literature in the field on the mutually informing dynamic between the research and the researched (Devereux, 1967). Second, in extending this discussion further, I draw on reflexivity to consider the ontological, the epistemological, and the methodological implications of conducting research at neo-colonial sites.

This chapter draws upon psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought in an effort to ascertain insights into the meaning of Qalandiya. Each of these theories is replete with nuances and they each provide rich and diverse conceptual resources from which to critique wide-ranging social phenomena. As such, I will not be able to do adequate justice to either theory within the spatial limitations of this chapter. My far more humble objective here is to use particular strands of psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought in an effort to explore questions pertaining to reflexivity at neo-colonial sites.

At the most basic level, "[p]sychoanalytic theory helps understand people's reactions to politics and power by shedding light on typical patterns of unconscious thoughts and feelings about aggression" (Baum, 1993, pp. 35–36). Others have advanced this definition by underscoring that this theory is insightful in examining "human actions particularly in situations of distress" (Fotaki, 2006, p. 1717) and assists in confronting "those truths about ourselves that we do not want to know" (Schwartz, 1989, p. 320). Vidaillet (2007, p. 1696) has further asserted

that psychoanalysis is particularly useful in "[examining] the role of the Other and of the social structures in the construction of the subject." Working from this synthesized understanding, this chapter invokes psychoanalytic theory as a conceptual perspective from which to understand the discursive representations marked metaphorically by Qalandiya and, more specifically, to reveal the intersubjective relationship between the researcher and the researcher. This point provides analytical veracity to Kenny's (2009) recent observation that attributes the currency of psychoanalytic thought within the discipline to its ability to address organizational practices that are not otherwise captured within the limited scope of the dominant theories in the field (Rauf, Prasad, & Ahmed, in press).

The way that I cast psychoanalytic theory in this chapter is consistent with the description of "socio-psychoanalysis" forwarded by Arnaud (2007). Socio-psychoanalysis effectively integrates traditional psychoanalysis with various strands of critical sociological thought. As Arnaud notes, in extending the works of Gerard Mendel, this approach maintains the inquisitive value of psychoanalysis, as the paradigm is conventionally understood, yet without positing it strictly within the domain of psycho-familial dynamics. Instead, it broadens the parameters of the theory so as to provide the conceptual tools necessary to critique contemporary social relations. In sum, this approach coalesces nicely with the contents and the scope of this chapter, as it transports psychoanalysis from being a theory of psychological development and family relations to a theory that is versed in investigating the self in juxtaposition with cultural (meta) narratives.

Psychoanalytic thought is complemented here with postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory "is a broad rubric for examining a range of social, cultural, political, ethical, and philosophical questions that recognize the salience of the colonial experience and its persisting aftermath" (Jack, Westwood, Srinivas, & Sardar, 2011, p. 277). Anushuman Prasad (2003, p. 5) elaborates on this definition by asserting that, "[it] represents an attempt to investigate the complex and deeply fraught dynamics of modern Western colonialism and anticolonial resistance, and the ongoing significance of the colonial encounter for people's lives both in the West and in the non-West." As Prasad (2003, 2012b) elucidates, while the "colonial encounter" is at the crux of postcolonial criticism, the theory also examines contemporary systems of governance that are predicated on the logic of the colonial mentality. Namely, under the label of "neo-colonialism," postcolonial theory critically appraises how

control, exploitation, and patterns of domination and submission are operationalized through various institutional and discursive trajectories that are marked by remnants of the colonial experience.

While postcolonial thought has offered myriad astute criticisms on different aspects of (neo-)colonial systems, including political economy and culture, my focus in this chapter is on how this theoretical perspective understands the psychology of colonialism. In his watershed text, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (1983), Ashis Nandy rightly observed that the "crudity and inanity of colonialism are principally expressed in the sphere of psychology" (p. 2). The insidiousness—or, to put more aptly perhaps, the perversion—with which the colonization of psychology occurs ensures that the colonial logic remains intact even after the colonial masters vacate the geographical boundaries of the colony. Given the salient and the discursive nature of the colonial psyche, Nandy (1983, p. 3) concludes that it is the "ultimate violence which colonialism does to its victims."[2]

Integrating psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought, in the ways that I have defined each above, allows for a deep engagement with how the self is implicated in neo-colonial spaces, such as the border crossing Qalandiya. Indeed, psychoanalytic theory offers detailed accounting of the socio-psychological and the socio-cultural development of the self within society, while postcolonial theory specifically addresses the psychology of the colonized subject (and that of the colonizer). By conjoining the two theoretical perspectives, I am in an optimal position to leverage the respective strengths of each.

Qalandiya serves as an important site for critical analysis for at least two reasons. First, with the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Qalandiya functions as the quintessential structure that maintains and reifies neo-colonial borders. Second, and somewhat paradoxically, border crossings are liminal sites—a prime example of an "interstructural situation" (Turner, 1987, p. 4)—that are marked ontologically by their lack of definitive place. They are neither wholly here nor wholly there. As postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha (1994) notes, they are a discursive space situated at the crux of multiple cultural and geographical convergences. Citing Bhabha, Frenkel (2008, p. 928) explains that the liminal

[2]It ought to be underscored that, for Nandy, both the colonized and the colonizer are victims of the imperialist project. The process of dehumanizing the colonized subject is perhaps the most insidious of the outcomes that is cast upon the colonizer.

site is a form of the "third space" par excellence; it is a site at which the nexus between "the colo nizer and the colonized is to be found" (Prasad, 2013). As Frenkel (2008, p. 928) elaborates: "Within this metaphoric space we construct our identities in relation to these varied and often contradictory systems of meanings." Thus, individuals traversing a liminal site—such as the border crossing Qalandiya—must recognize and negotiate between different, and often competing, social logics. Working from this assessment, Qalandiya is an ideal site to explore meaning-making processes and to ascertain a contextual understanding of the self.

This chapter (as well as Chapter 3) emanates from ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted in Palestine/Israel in the former part of 2009. Using reflexivity to (re)present the experiences that I had—some of which I continue to hold—and the meaning-making processes that I engaged with while located within the temporal and spatial context of the field, I draw upon a plethora of sources that I gathered while conducting fieldwork. Beyond my own memories, these sources include the introspective entries I made in my journal, the monologues I recited into my voice recorder, and the emails I exchanged and conversations I shared with friends and colleagues while I was in the field. Taken collectively, these sources recount the implications that Qalandiya had on my self, and therein provide the empirical grounding for this chapter.

The remainder of this chapter unfolds in three substantive sections. First, I provide some pertinent situating details about myself. Following the critical tradition to social inquiry (e.g., Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), this discussion is intended to not only situate my self as a researcher within the wider research context, but it is essential to explaining my experiences in crossing Qalandiya. Second, I engage in autoethnographic analysis to narrate my experiences in crossing Qalandiya. Applying psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought to these experiences, I describe how Qalandiya incited consideration of, and subsequently became embedded in, an intricate psycho-social dynamic that affixed me to that context, even when I had physically left the field. It came to reify for me, in the most acute of ways, Thomas Wolfe's (1940) literary adage, *You Can't Go Home Again*. Third, I explain how the experiences that I acquired in crossing Qalandiya potentially offer organizational scholars with valuable insights into the importance of reflexivity when researching neo-colonial sites. That is, I elucidate how critical reflexivity can inform ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions that qualitative researchers routinely encounter when pursuing empirical fieldwork.

As I argue, these questions become even more salient when the field is defined by its colonial legacy.

Contextualizing the Self

Given the scope and the content of this chapter, it is integral to provide some contextual knowledge about who I am and where I come from. Exposing such details should, at least partly, come to explain my experiences in crossing Qalandiya.

Of Indian descent, I moved to Canada in 1987 from Fiji as a refugee. The meaning of "refugee," and who qualifies under such a label, has been much debated in international law, humanitarian, and academic discourses. Negating the nuances in this debate, the Geneva Convention (1951) created a definition more than six decades ago, which remains, arguably, the most widely adopted meaning of the concept and which I will use for the present discussion:

> A refugee is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (Amnesty International, 2011)

I was three when my family and I made the move to Canada and filed a refugee claim. Certainly at that age, I did not make logical sense of what it meant to constitute a refugee. I simply understood it as a dramatic move between nations with very different cultures.

As time went on, my family's legal status underwent changes. After five years of first arriving in Canada, we were, following a period of some uncertainty, awarded landed immigrant status. About a decade later, shortly after I had commenced my undergraduate studies, we took the oath to Canada and became citizens. It was during this time that I began to raise ontological questions of who was I. Indeed, prior to becoming a citizen, I had done research to see whether I would qualify as a dual citizen: a Canadian citizen through naturalization and a Fijian citizen through birth. While Canada permits dual citizenship status, Fiji explicitly prohibits it. As I came to learn, once I assumed citizenship of a foreign country (in this case, Canada), I would, by default, relinquish Fijian citizenship. And, so I became Canadian—only Canadian.

As many immigrants, and particularly those who are racialized minorities in a White-settler nation, can attest, citizenship does not necessarily qualify—that is to say, psychologically afford—the individual a substantive sense of "home." This issue becomes amplified for a young immigrant who desperately seeks external acceptance through assimilation into the dominant culture, yet repeatedly encounters familial pressures to maintain some essentialized set of expectations from the "home" country. The social logics between the two communities often clash significantly. To some degree, this was my situation. As I grew up, I often felt that I was compelled to negotiate between cultural pressures that were posited within the competing realms of the public and the private. Consequently, I never fully felt that I belonged within either community—I was somewhere in an ambivalent third space, as Bhabha (1994) so eloquently describes it.

At some point after acquiring citizenship, I came across Jacques Derrida's (2000) work on *hospitality*, which captured much of the issues that were fermenting within my self. Derrida contends that categorical hospitality is, ultimately, an impossibility. As he writes:

> [H]e who receives, who is master in his house, in his household, in his state, in his nation, in his city, in his town, who remains master in his house—who defines the conditions of hospitality or welcome; where consequently there can be no conditional welcome, no unconditional passage through the door. (Derrida, 2000, p. 4)

Derrida's observation made sense—at the deepest level, it resonated with me. I came to Canada and, in doing so, I had tacitly accepted the conditions of Canada's hospitality; namely, the social, the cultural, and the political values and institutions that define the country. But this is not the full extent of the implications of his claim. Derrida's words made me further realize two unfortunate and mutually constitutive realities. First, it reminds me that by moving to Canada, I unwittingly became a displaced person. Indeed, presumably, I would not have left Fiji, and I certainly would not have become a refugee, unless the circumstances were so dire that it became a necessity. But in that necessary move, of course, I became displaced. Second, and perhaps reflective of my racialized status within a predominately White country, I am reminded that I will never be the "master" of this new "home." The title of "master," along with the authority to make the "conditions of hospitality," continues to be

reserved for those who originally allowed, and received, me to into *their* home. Thus, working from Derrida's notion of hospitality, I conclude that, to the degree that I do not become the "master" of my "home" (the second point), I will continue to have some psychological affixation with being a displaced person (the first point).

When I entered the field, I did not imagine that these issues—which, as I indicated earlier, I had intentionally sought to avoid by going to a location with which I had no direct connection—would impact my research. However, I found that the self became imbricated within the context to such a degree that I was redefining my own identity and ideologies and actively engaging in an "Othering" encounter (a theme that I further explore in Chapter 3). These experiences were particularly conspicuous in the process of crossing Qalandiya.

Crossing Qalandiya

Before proceeding, it is imperative that I briefly situate Qalandiya within the broader historical and political conditions of the region. In 1948, around the same time that the decolonization movement was gaining purchase in Africa, Asia, and other regions of the developing world, "the new state of Israel burst the boundaries that had been assigned to it by a divided United Nations General Assembly and swept 750,000 Palestinians from their towns and villages" (Gregory, 2004, p. 602). As Gregory (2004, p. 601) notes, since this period, there has been a campaign to engage methodically in "[t]he dispossession of the Palestinian people by the predatory expansions of Israeli colonialism." This is achieved through, for example, the systematic destruction of Palestinian homes, a proliferation of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and the strategic deployment of cultural and military violence (Palestine Monitor, 2009; Said, 2000). An increasing number of commentators have likened the Israeli state's treatment of Palestine to the European colonial project. As Cohen vividly captures: "The whole desolate West Bank scene is punctuated with garrison-like settlement hilltops. If you're looking for a primer on colonialism, this is not a bad place to start" (as cited in Zureik, 2011, p. 3). In another provocative account, Ahmad (2002) concludes that, "[i]n seeking to … force as many Palestinians as possible to leave [the] Palestinian territory, Israel is trying to consolidate a racist settler-colonial state modeled on the classical colonialisms of the 19th century."

I decided that my first substantive excursion into the field would take place in the Palestine/Israel region. I was well aware of the challenges that I would encounter in such an environment. Indeed, I had little familiarity with the cultural and the institutional nuances of the geographical context and I could not even be considered a novice of either of the local languages (i.e., I do not speak Arabic or Hebrew). Compounding these liabilities, while I knew the philosophy underpinnings of ethnographic research, I had not, until that point, actually practiced it. I entered the field lost.

In the initial stages of my visit, I grew increasingly anxious and frustrated that my project had not taken off as quickly as I would have liked. Upon speaking with a colleague, who is a more seasoned ethnographic researcher, her simple but astute advice was to "trust the process"—a point I noted cursorily in my field journal. When the project did eventually get off the ground, and when I explained to the same colleague, over several phone conversations, the physical process of crossing Qalandiya, she encouraged me to devote it special attention, as it might ultimately serve as an important site for both introspection and for the overall research project. Heeding her advice, from then on, I began to reflect critically on my experiences within Qalandiya.

Contextualizing Qalandiya

To animate the context that is the focus of this chapter, the transportation logistics of crossing Qalandiya merits some discussion. I lived in the German Colony, a very comfortable and affluent section of Jerusalem that appeared to consist mainly of dual passport holders who spoke perfect English. Across the street from my apartment, at the famous intersection between Emek Refaim and Rachel Emainu, is the Egged bus stop which takes me to the northern part of the city. I would get off and cross a highway just before reaching Mount Scopus and transfer onto an Arab-operated bus, which would then take me to downtown Ramallah. The trip would require the bus to cross Qalandiya, which was done with relative ease except for on one occasion, when the bus was stopped prior to reaching the border and three armed Israeli security officials had everyone disembark the bus while they checked credentials pertaining to our identities. The process concluded without incident and, about 20 minutes later, we were allowed to re-board and proceed to our destination.

While going into the West Bank was fairly simple, returning to Jerusalem was a convoluted process with which, as a Canadian, I was wholly unfamiliar. I would board the bus in Ramallah and travel south. Upon reaching Qalandiya, everyone on the bus is required to de-board with their belongings—the driver will go through the vehicle checkpoint and wait for the passengers on the other side, while people go through the human checkpoint in which they must be individually cleared before proceeding into Israel.[3]

The human checkpoint consisted of a metal maze. As alluded to at the introduction of this chapter, Qalandiya is an impressive, though depressing, structure—all at the same time, it appears impervious, perilous, and uncertain. It is a place where violence, or at least the threat of violence, is ubiquitous at every stage and to which virtually nobody can be ignorant. In one of my journal entries, I described an incident that captures this sense of violence: "Four soliders with guns drawn approach the wall [between the Qalandiya crossing and the Qalandiya refugee camp] … their guns are actually raised at me as our paths diagonally cross." I recall this event distinctly. While the soldiers were briskly walking towards the refugee camp and not, in any way, targeting me, this incident made me acutely aware of the violence palpable within Qalandiya.

While we waited to be screened at Qalandiya, the Israeli officials would often bark orders in Arabic through the microphone. Even if they were simply asking us to move from one line to another, the tone of their voice was one that paralleled impatient owners admonishing their new dog for making a mess than conveying simple commands. As the overhead light would turn green, we would be allowed to pass through the circular metal gates in groups of three to five at a time. After a few times at Qalandiya, I came to expect a light push from behind the moment the light flashed green—a physical sign used by those in line to encourage individuals ahead of them to pass through the gates before the light turned red and the gate was again locked. When I finally arrived in the clearance zone, I would place all of my belongings on plastic containers and push them onto the sliding platform so that they could be screened—much akin to what one might do when passing through

[3]I was so amazed by the border crossing that, in one of my initial encounters with it, I tried to document Qalandiya pictorially with my digital camera. Before I could capture a single shot, an assertive voice on the loudspeaker declared that no pictures are to be taken and I must put my camera away immediately.

security at any given airport. I would then walk over to a booth to be questioned and screened by Israeli security officials who were comfortably seated behind bulletproof glass and wearing their green military apparel.

As the vast majority of individuals who crossed Qalandiya were Palestinian Muslims, I had ample opportunity to observe and juxtapose their experience in passing through security with that of my own. Palestinians living within the Israeli state are required, especially when traveling to and from the West Bank, to maintain their identity cards that prove their residence in Israel. There were multiple occasions on which the individuals in front of me at the clearance zone would be scolded or would otherwise have their screening (purposely) delayed for one reason or another. In contrast, with my foreign credentials pressed confidently against the glass, I was rarely delayed by security, although I did receive my fair share of unwelcoming looks from the officials. What further added the proverbial salt to the open wound is who serves as security officials at Qalandiya and, thereby, who decides on who and when individuals can pass through the final gates. Security at the human checkpoint consists mainly of young women and men who appeared to be satisfying their conscription duties—indeed, most looked to be in their late teens and early twenties. Given the asymmetrical treatment I experienced versus that of the Palestinians with whom I stood alongside, I commented to my colleagues in one email: "I never realized the value of the Canadian passport until I arrived here."

On one evening, when the lines at Qalandiya were especially long, I was standing at the first phase of the security apparatus. On occasions when the flow of foot traffic is heavy, IDF officials will engage electronic locks at different parts of Qalandiya to prevent too many people from crowding the screening area. The first phase of Qalandiya I found to be the most restrictive. I had to enter a narrow lane that measures no more than a few feet in width, and is made up of metal bars on both sides, as well as thick metal wires covering the top. This structure is likely comparable to what one might find in a maximum security prison than at a civilian border crossing. At the end of the structure is a revolving door, also contrived of metal bars, and overhead it, two lights: one red and one green. An illuminated red light indicates that the door is locked, while an illuminated green light indicates that is safe for one to proceed. The oppressive and constrictive nature of Qalandiya was most salient when I stood inside this structure and the light was red; with people closely in

front of and behind me and with bars on each side and on top, I could not escape the reality that my freedom of movement was almost totally compromised.

On this evening, with the red light brightly on, there was an older woman standing behind me holding bags of grocery. We exchanged smiles and pleasantries and introduced ourselves. Our conversation, perhaps given where we were standing, logically turned to border crossings. She relayed her experiences with crossing Qalandiya, and I told her about crossing the border between British Columbia (Canada) and Washington (United States). Our conversation was interrupted by the light momentarily turning green, at which time people pushed those in front of them to pass through the revolving door faster before the green light turned dark and we were locked in once more. Once red again, greater emotion entered her voice, and poignantly, she hit her hand hard against the metal bars and said, "look, this is my country and they treat us like animals." The bars rattled as she made her analogy and I was at a complete loss for words. With no response from me, the conversation turned quiet and awkward; for the remainder of the time, I looked up straight ahead, hoping for the light to illuminate green.

On another day, when my interviews in the West Bank extended into the late evening, I elected to take a taxi to Qalandiya. I got into the passenger seat and the driver, in his heavy Arabic accent, offered me some olives that he was eating from a small silver bowl on the dashboard. As he drove, he inquired about what I was doing there—my foreignness, much to my surprise, always seemed apparent to others. I gave him the well-rehearsed 15-second elevator synopsis of my project, worrying that I might bore him with the details and I would end up having to walk to Qalandiya. To my surprise, he appeared to be most interested in my research and asked probing questions. During our conversation, he told me about his life, which I suppose he inferred had some connection to my project. In 1980, his land, which his family owned for generations, was confiscated by Israel. Upon that land, settler homes were developed. In retaliation, he destroyed a home belonging to a settler family that was situated on what used to be his family's estate. Consequently, Israeli officials arrested and imprisoned him for 12 years, and he told me that while in custody, he experienced several forms of torture.

When we arrived at the destination, he parked the car at the entrance of Qalandiya and continued, though this time he told me about his brother. One evening, in the dark of night, his brother was arrested and

accused by Israeli soldiers of trespassing on settler land. Instead of taking him into custody, they opted to play a "game" with him. One of them took out three pieces of paper and on one of them wrote, "break both legs," on another, "break both arms," and on the final one, "break both ribs" (which he described to me as his chest area). They then had his brother choose one of the pieces of paper. When he chose the paper that read "break both arms," the soldiers proceeded to do just that. Horrified by the details of his story, as I sat in the cab in front of Qalandiya, where the car's lights seemed only to illuminate the darkness of the structure, I could not help but be overwhelmed by its authority—with the taxi driver's story well in mind, the power that Qalandiya symbolized was most conspicuous when I walked through its entrance that evening.

After we passed through screening at Qalandiya, we would re-board the bus, where the driver would be waiting in the dusty parking lot that was located just adjacent of the screening area. It was once we were finally seated and on our way back into Jerusalem that I would make conversation with those who were sitting close by. On some days, these conversations would materialize into nothing more than innocuous conversation—we would merely share our reasons for being in the West Bank on that particular day. On other occasions, however, the discussion would take a far more intense trajectory. Indeed, often, the conversation would focus on Qalandiya itself, and the screening procedures that we had all just been subjected to and which were fresh in our minds.

On one particular journey, I spoke with two Palestinian men who, because they work in the West Bank but live within the geopolitical boundaries that constitute Israel, make daily trips between Ramallah and Jerusalem. They recalled some of their experiences in crossing Qalandiya to me. One of them told me that, "sometimes they [the guards] make us wait up to 20 minutes at the galley where you show the guards your ID [that proves you are a resident of Israel]." When I asked what the guards did for so long while they held up their ID cards against the glass for inspection, they told me that they would ignore them and talk among themselves. Perhaps nothing else so poignantly expressed the power imbalance in this context than having one's existence, which is already in a disenfranchised position, completely ignored by the whims of those who occupy roles of authority (Prasad, 2009). This sort of treatment at Qalandiya, which Palestinians routinely encountered, seemed to be most aptly captured by a woman who worked as a journalist covering the West Bank region for a major international news agency. Speaking with her

on one of my rides into Jerusalem, she articulated her disgust with the soldiers at the border who, she believed, viewed Palestinian crossers as nothing short of being "inferior and animals>" One evening, I inquired with someone I was having a conversation with about the ultimate consequence for crossing Qalandiya on a semi-regular basis. His response was short, sad, and ever so penetrating: "psychological stress."

At around the same time, I began to experience various forms of "psychological stress" myself. In addition to the stress associated with physically crossing Qalandiya, I started to struggle with an enormous amount of guilt emanating from being in the field. Indeed, crossing Qalandiya, on each occasion, vividly illuminated the privileged social position that I occupied versus the precarious social realities of my informants.[4] Traveling from Ramallah to Qalandiya, and from there to Jerusalem, I left my informants behind—under the same precarious conditions in which I had met them—and I went to the (relative) physical safety of my apartment in the German Colony. This guilt was fomented by the recognition of the unequal relationship that I shared with those whom I encountered in the field. In an email to a colleague who is a veteran ethnographer, I described my feelings:

> Everyone here was been so decent/kind/hospitable—after I get through some of my interviews/conversations where people have completely opened up to me about some intimate details about their lives, I feel that I am a voyeur (or perhaps, an exploiter) of their lived realities. I cannot help but notice the asymmetrical relationship between us—I am getting something very real from understanding their misery-filled stories (dissertation, papers, job, etc.), yet I am not really providing them with something in return. I definitely feel that I am exploiting their experiences. I wouldn't necessarily feel this way if the Palestinians weren't such wonderful people—I have never been in a new "culture" where I felt so accepted and welcomed. I really cannot say enough about the people of the West

[4] Prior to commencing my fieldwork, I had read Daphne Patai's (1987) article on the ethical implications of using personal narratives in academic scholarship. While I appreciated and understood, at least at the conceptual level, the ethical considerations for pursuing empirical research that draws on personal stories, and while I had developed my own position on the matter—that is, I strongly believed, prior to moving to Palestine/Israel, that scholars' principal responsibility is that they do not inflict undue harm onto their research participants—it was not until I arrived in the field that I began to struggle with ethical questions pertaining to the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

> Bank. I am also realizing the fact that after I am done with the ethnography I get to leave, while the vast majority of them cannot.

Perhaps as a symptom of my own inexperience with ethnographic fieldwork, I could not absolve myself of this guilt. I took some solace, however, in the response that I received from my colleague:

> This is a very common ethnographic experience. What I have come to appreciate over the years is that a large part of what we give back is simply listening to what people have to say with a sincere interest. This is surprisingly rare in today's world and it is not unheard of to have people thank you after an interview. Even when the subject is painful, to know that someone is intently listening to what they have to say and cares is something that is appreciated. Anticipating your departure, it is indeed often a difficult thing to do. But what you have to say as a result of your research can make a difference. It may not change the world or bring peace, but we change often the world one person at a time…I don't know if this helps, but this is a very normal feeling. I'd be disappointed and surprised if you didn't have these feelings.

Taking this comment seriously, thereinafter I became even more cognizant of conscientiously "listening" to the stories my informants shared with me. This conscientious listening perhaps allowed for their stories to have a deeper impact on me from that point forward.

Bringing the Field Home

The psychological manifestation of Qalandiya was not relinquished by simply leaving the field. Shortly upon returning home, a friend and I visited the theatres to watch the movie, *New York* (Kahn, 2009). Set in New York City following the al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon, the film portrays the government-sponsored persecution of Muslims in the United States in the aftermath of 9/11. The central plot of *New York* revolves around Omar (Neil Mukesh), a Muslim male in his late-twenties, who is coerced by members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation into infiltrating a suspected terrorist cell believed to be operated by Omar's college friend Samir (John Abraham). The film included vivid images of Muslim men being humiliated and tortured, much akin to Abu Ghraib, while in the custody of the American state; many of whom were detained without being criminally charged

and without access to legal counsel. For example, one scene showed Samir locked in a small cell with incessant glaring lights and ear-splitting noise to induce sleep deprivation, while another showed him naked and locked in a cramped cage for an extended period of time. Over the course of his detainment, the audience observes the transposition and the systematic degeneration of Samir's psychological stability. Upon his initial imprisonment, he defiantly and loudly proclaims his innocence and demands access to his constitutionally enshrined rights as an American. This defiance subsequently turns into docile pleas for mercy. Without any alternative, and with both his body and his mind being subjected to unremitting abuse, Samir's final mode of resistance is complete passivity and silence.[5]

The film illuminates how, without due cause, an individual was imprisoned, bereft of all of his civil liberties, and had his many appeals for compassion fall on deaf ears. As I sat uncomfortably in the theatre seat, the memories of Qalandiya played back like a slideshow in my mind. I found myself in Samir's predicament—deprived of the most basic human freedoms and lacking agencies of resistance. Anxious and uncertain, minutes later, I am in the restroom staring back at myself in the mirror, emotionally exhausted, and silently pondering what's wrong with me. Later that evening, upon returning home, I sat on my patio staring aimlessly at the black sky as the horrific images of being Samir continued to play on.

Several months later, I had the opportunity to attend a small interdisciplinary conference in Germany. Following the formal events of the conference, the attendees were invited to tour the Stasi prison in Berlin. As my colleagues and I traveled by train, and then by bus, to the eastern part of the city, where chic boutiques and lavish restaurants of western Berlin were replaced by dated infrastructure, it felt as if the iron curtain, far from being an artifact of a time past, still maintained geopolitical and cultural salience. As we walked the block towards the Stasi prison, the architectural environment poignantly evoked remnants of Soviet repression. In what is perhaps testimony of the bloc's innovativeness in

[5] Interestingly, upon his release from custody, Samir appears to internalize the terrorism he experienced in detainment and he projects it externally onto symbols of authority. For instance, in one scene following his release, Samir walks with his girlfriend in the park and he crosses paths with two police officers. Upon seeing the officers, Samir appears visibly anxious and traumatized and stops in his tracks until his girlfriend takes his hand in hers and provides him with the emotional strength necessary to continue.

structural design, the Stasi prison could not be observed by outsiders, even those living in close proximity. The Stasi was concealed from eyeshot by large buildings of state bureaucracy.

Upon entering the prison gates, we were greeted by our informative tour guide. He took us through the various structures that constituted the Stasi and provided disturbing details as to how it operated within the historical context of the Cold War. The Stasi prison was utilized by East Germany following the Second World War to detain, coerce, and torture citizens who were suspected of committing treason and engaging in other anti-State activities. As our guide walked us through the damp halls of the prison, with the most rudimentary looking cells on either side, he described the methods by which prison officials would torture inmates. He described one such scenario. Pointing to a water tap protruding out from one of the cell walls, he said that prisoners would be shackled in such a way that they would be rendered completely immobile and the back of their heads would be exposed right below the tap and then the guard would turn the tap on slightly to let water drip onto a particular spot on the head. As he explained, after extended periods of time, every drop of water would start to feel like a sledgehammer to the skull.

Once more, this event brought me back to my days at Qalandiya. The parallels between the two structures were easily discernible. They were both meant to be intimidating and cold and to preemptively thwart subversive behaviors. Once inside the Stasi, I could not help but recall being inside the constrictive areas of Qalandiya, where movement is governed ever so stringently.

These two incidents serve to illustrate how I brought the field home with me. Indeed, events such as these psychologically abridged the geographical distance between me and Qalandiya. So, while I may have moved thousands of miles away from the precarious border crossing, Qalandiya was continually evoked by the manifestation of a plethora of disturbing images—such as the scenes from the movie (where Samir's experiences of torture became analogous to the experiences of torture of the taxi driver's brother) or the visit to the prison (where the architectural similarities of the Stasi and Qalandiya could not be avoided). I was, at some psychological level, engaging in the process of symbolization, wherein the border crossing and what I was seeing in the present became confounded. As Hall (1958, p. 259) explains, in his analysis of Freud, "symbols are disguises for referents." In my mind, Qalandiya came to

discursively symbolize oppression, and this link became so entrenched that I began to associate it with oppression in other settings.

Symbolically affixing Qalandiya with oppression is perhaps a symptom of my own history as a refugee, a colonized subject, and a racialized minority living in a predominantly White country. Indeed, Palestinians with whom I crossed the border were collectively a displaced group—living in Israel on what was historically, before the great "nakba" as they call it, Palestinian land. Thus, Qalandiya was, for them, a constant and symbolic reminder of their displacement status. For me, this, coupled with the fact that the Qalandiya refugee camp was immediately adjacent to the border crossing—on the West Bank side—resulted in the unmistakable realization that Qalandiya only served to reify a set of power relations that negated the citizenship status of Palestinians. As someone who lived through the experience of being a refugee as a result of European colonialism, Qalandiya came to symbolically engender the pain and sadness that is the corollary of being displaced. In this way, while I would not technically classify Qalandiya as an archetype of the collective unconscious, as Jung (1969) articulates, it did nevertheless emerge as a symbol to which individuals embodying experiences with displacement could ascribe a shared meaning. The fact that I came to impart such pejorative connotations onto Qalandiya, akin to how the Palestinian individuals that I spoke with at the border crossing did, is testimony of the shared meaning that had developed. As time went on, and in light of the association that I drew between Qalandiya and my own history, it became apparent that I will never fully relinquish the troubling experiences that I had in the field, and specifically at the border crossing. I was changed.

A psychoanalytic understanding of the self offers one explanation for not being able to leave Qalandiya. Taking a stance in psychoanalytic theory, Nancy Harding (2008, p. 45) identifies the disposition of the self:

> The self…is a continuously moving experience, a psychic texture formed over many years by countless experiences that contribute to a store of mental contests, some of which cannot be put into words and may not even be easily accessible by the conscious mind. These mental contents comprise introjected objects and can include people, pieces of music, items in writing, experiences, and so on.

From this definition, not only had Qalandiya become part of the innumerable experiences that constituted who I was, but discursively it

became inextricable with my refugee past. Perhaps this experience is testimony to Nandy's (1983, p. 71) claim, which he develops through a reading of Freud, that "what we choose to forget has a tendency to come back to haunt us in 'history.'" Psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan (2004) elaborates on this occurrence. Using the case of refugees, he explains that when one has not resolved their loss through mourning—for the refugee this would, of course, be the loss of their previous home—they will engage in perennial mourning by linking objects to that loss. As Volkan (2004, 82) writes: "Some people are involved in psychological processes that lead them to postpone contemplation of their normal mourning process or prevent them from evolving melancholia." Using what he calls "linking objects," it brings the individual back to, and compels them to recognize and mourn for, their hitherto unresolved loss. Qalandiya achieved precisely this when it became a symbolic linking object to my early history as a displaced person.

While qualitative researchers, and especially ethnographers, may be all too familiar with the predicament of bringing the field home, it ought to be underscored that this phenomenon likely becomes aggrandized when the site is explicitly precarious and representing systems of neo-colonialism. The researchers' foreignness with such a neo-colonial site compels them to engage in a discursive meaning-making process, whereby new ontological definitions are constructed. As such, my experiences in crossing Qalandiya, in the end, and as the following section will further illuminate, came to inform my sense of self, Other, and organizing. These experiences also precluded the possibility of assuming my old self once I left the field.

Reflexive Considerations for Fieldwork

Writing this chapter has been a cathartic exercise. Engagement with this project has provided some explication of the maze of entangled feelings that Qalandiya has engendered within my self since I had entered the field. Many ethnographic researchers, especially those who conduct fieldwork in environments that are marked by significant socio-political instability, will sympathize with the type of psychological conundrum that I described above (see Devereux, 1967).

Given its profound ability to deconstruct the traditional boundaries between the "researcher and the researched" (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003, p. 423), Qalandiya offers many intriguing insights to the field of

organization studies, and the social sciences more broadly. Taking its analytical departure from the feminist proverb *the personal is the political*, the aim of this section is to apply reflexivity to Qalandiya in an effort to extrapolate those considerations that organization scholars should account for when researching neo-colonial sites. Indeed, because reflexivity renders defunct the artificial parameters that separate bifurcated assumptions of "self" and "society" or "self" and "organization" (Carr & Zanetti, 1999), it presents a useful trajectory to consider what researchers in the field may learn from my experiences.[6] Within organization studies, the question of reflexivity has been the subject of many recent debates concerning its ontological, epistemological, and methodological value (e.g., Brewis & Wray-Bliss, 2008; Hardy, Phillips, & Clegg, 2001; Hatch, 1996).[7] As such, in this section, I will discuss how Qalandiya informed each substantively.

Ontological and Epistemological Shifts

The selection of geographical region in which to pursue my project was purposeful. My criteria for selection were motivated by two points:

[6]Critical researchers in the field have made great strides in integrating psychoanalytic thought and reflexivity into organizational analyses; however, the analytical link between the two has been largely overlooked. While some scholars might claim that reflexivity is embedded ontologically within psychoanalysis, therein requiring no further explication, a lucid appraisal of the relationship between the two ideas is potentially very beneficial for organization researchers.

[7]It ought to be noted that discussions concerning reflexivity have often included the influential works of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), which I purposely do not engage with in this essay. Loïc Wacquant explains: "Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity, which may be cursorily defined as the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an integral component of society, differs from others [definition of reflexivity] in three crucial ways. First, its primary target is not the individual analyst but the *social and intellectual unconscious* embedded in analytic tools and operations; second, it must be a *collective enterprise* rather than the burden of the lone academic; and, third, it seeks not to assault but to *buttress the epistemological security of sociology*." Hence, for Bourdieu, reflexivity is part of a broader project that "aims at increasing the scope and solidity of social scientific knowledge" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 36–37, emphasis in original). While this definition is useful in offering holistic accounts of reflexivity, which Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) and others provide, for this chapter, I purposefully limit my consideration of reflexivity to understanding the dialectical relationship between the researcher and the researched.

(i) I wanted a location that could be considered a "precarious context"—this was necessary to capture the scope of my research interests; and (ii) I wanted a context to which I had little a priori ontological affinity. Palestine/Israel satisfied both of these considerations. On the former point, given the socio-political conditions of the environment of Palestine/Israel, I would be hard pressed to find a more precarious location. On the latter point, and as I already indicated, I am not of a religion, ethnicity, or cultural background that is dominant in the region. While heavily influenced by social constructionist and critical understandings of social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 2002; Morgan & Smircich, 1980), I certainly do not subscribe to any notion of objectivity; nonetheless, I did want at least to try to lessen the emotional baggage that may be involved in my first excursion into the field.[8]

While I understood, at least at the abstract level, my aim in choosing the context, soon after I commenced the project, I found myself struggling to maintain even the slightest veneer of impartiality. In an email to another colleague, I described my sentiments:

> [S]eeing people's lived realities on the ground can be very disheartening. I stayed at a couple of West Bank villages this past weekend where grounds are covered with used Israeli artillery (tear gas canisters, rifle shells). Practically every house has their windows shot out. Four people have been killed by the Israeli military in one of the cities in the last several months. Agricultural land has been seized to render entire communities destitute. It's really quite sad. Yet the people here are some of the most resilient that I have ever met. They go on living…I am doing my best not to take sides or to assume an advocacy position…but it is increasingly becoming more difficult.

[8]While I reject the notion of objectivity, I was partly inspired by Deepa Mehta's movie *Earth* (1998) in selecting Israel/Palestine as the site for my research project. *Earth* uses the perspective of a Parsi child to examine the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent into the Hindu-dominated India and the Muslim-dominated Pakistan (Ansari, 1999). A Parsi perspective is especially interesting, as this group '[has] a unique position in Indian history for being neutral, not taking sides in religious and political struggles' (Ansari, 1999). Through the lens of someone who is Parsi, the contradictions, the dilemmas, and the politics of the partition become especially lucid. I was hoping to achieve a similar outcome by conducting my research in Israel/Palestine, instead of a location to which I had strong ties.

My colleague responded with some very powerful words:

> [O]nce you begin to understand social phenomena in terms of hegemony, domination, exploitation, power etc., then you have NO CHOICE but to take sides as such understandings impose on you a commitment to progressive change. You do not have the luxury of making the (false) claim of objectivity, non-partisanship etc. as is the case of, say, a rational choice scholar for whom concepts such as these just do not exist in a social science based on the mathematical modeling of human behavior…so let your self feel the pain, anger, and dissatisfaction and let that passion drive your research. Remember authenticity is key. How can you be authentic if you impose on yourself the constraints of a distant, non-partisan stance in a situation that is so conflict ridden and which to you is such a betrayal of humanity.

She concluded by asking me rhetorically, "what would such objectivity look like in Holocaust research?" Her words were profound, penetrating, and completely changed how I understood my experiences at Qalandiya thereinafter.

Taking the words to heart, at some point in standing in the lines at Qalandiya, I no longer felt like the foreign researcher in a new culture—I had acquired a temporal sense of being part of a collective, an oppressed class going through the monotony of invasive security screenings. Although I fully recognized that my Canadian passport, my apartment in the German Colony, and the fact that I was not an Arab in a location where being Arab habitually entails marginalization afforded me a certain degree of privilege in relation to Palestinians, I did nevertheless come to appreciate, what Clifford Geertz (1991 [1972]) eloquently described in his classic anthropology paper, the process of becoming an "insider." While Geertz's acceptance into the Balinese community that he was studying involved running from police, alongside fellow spectators, during a raid at a local cockfighting event, my induction was far less theatrical but still equally salient. As my days in the field progressed, I became increasingly at ease with striking up random conversations—often using "*marhaba*," a common Arabic greeting—to initiate discussions with those standing in front of, behind, or alongside me. I began to view these individuals, whom I did not know, in a substantive way as friends—or, if I could be so dramatic, as comrades. Given that I was being subjected to the same screening measures as the locals—though,

admittedly, in holding a foreign passport my stress was mitigated—I believe that this helped me become accepted as one of them.[9]

This acceptance as an insider afforded me several liberties. Most notably, by being accepted into the community, many individuals would openly discuss with me any topic that was broached. They would divulge to me their experiences, emotions, and perspectives on the most ideologically fraught subjects, and often without any reservations. But as any experienced ethnographer can relate, conducting fieldwork is endemically an intersubjective act (Prus, 1996). Namely, I became equally inflected by my experiences at Qalandiya and elsewhere in the field. As described in the previous section, I began to assume the conditions under which my informants at Qalandiya, and in the West Bank more broadly, lived. In phone conversations with one colleague, I underscored to her how I was undergoing a steadfast "loss of normality" and how I had developed anxiety and fear that this would become a permanent disposition.

It was also around this time that there was a shift in my use of first-person pronouns. The individuals with whom I stood alongside I came to refer to with the collective *we*. Indeed, *we* were there, together, sharing an experience at the border crossing known as Qalandiya. I was a member of an animate community; and, especially given that I was away from home, I enjoyed having this sense of belonging. It made the daily crossings of Qalandiya a more tolerable exercise. What I had not realized during my time in the field was that I was concurrently and unwittingly engaged in the practice of Othering.

The concept of the Other has become a mainstay in social and critical theory, and has been defined and applied in myriad ways.[10] For the

[9]In this experience, I may have been exhibiting counter-transference, as described by Georges Devereux (1967). Devereux transported the idea of counter-transference from the clinical setting to describe how social science researchers can be profoundly affected by their experience in the data collection process. Given the intimacy with which researchers engage with fieldwork, this has particular relevance for ethnographic research.

[10]Taking a postcolonial interpretation, which is perhaps the most relevant here, the Other is a denigrated socio-political category that is intrinsic to the Orientalist discourse (Said, 1979). Orientalism informs the ideological bifurcation of Western and non-Western cultures and "[invites] the West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other" (Said, 1979, p. 48; for an excellent overview on Orientalism and its application in organization studies, see Frenkel & Shenhav, 2006). Said's (1979) text is replete with examples of Orientalism and Othering in modern

purposes of this chapter, I delineate the Other to be the essentialist and antithetical source by which my own identity is constituted (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008; Hall, 1996; Harding, 2008). Working from this meaning, my own sense of community and solidarity with those with whom I stood in line at Qalandiya was reified through an essentialist construction of the border guards—as perhaps a representation of the state of Israel more broadly—as the Other. The detached harshness of the guards' behavior and the intimidating prowess of the structure intricately combined so as to render Qalandiya an ideal site for the Othering phenomenon to manifest with my self. In sum, not only had I come to assume the subjugation of many of my informants, as indicated above, but I had also come to accept—without being fully cognizant of it—their Othering as my own. In this Othering process, and especially given the context, I reconstructed my own identity discursively; a process through which I strengthened my affiliation with the disenfranchised community and reified my alienation with those in authority (Hall, 1996). This outcome is perhaps the corollary of my own history. Indeed, being someone who is a colonized subject and a displaced refugee increased my sensitivity and sympathy with a group that was enduring the same predicament.

An intervention from Nandy's (1983) postcolonial theorizing, once again, provides some explication for what occurred. In his incisive discussion of the British colonial legacy in India, Nandy argues that for the psychology of colonialism to function effectively, the perverse logic of essentialism underlying the imperialist project must be maintained. As he writes:

> India is not non-West; it is India…the ordinary Indian has no reason to see himself as a counterplayer or an antithesis of the Western man. The imposed burden to be perfectly non-Western only constricts his, the everyday Indian's cultural self…The new responsibility forces him to stress only those parts of his culture which are recessive in the West and to underplay

history. One example, which is interesting contextually for this chapter, is Rabinowitz's (2002) critical appraisal of early Israeli anthropology. In it, Rabinowitz (2002, p. 320) concludes that first-generation Israeli anthropologists' "implicit adherence to certain segments of Zionism ideology and rationalization…prevented them from using their empathy and first hand acquaintance with Palestinians, their insight into the hardships of Palestinian daily life and their comprehension of the stress associated with being Palestinian inside Israel to produce a meaningful critique of Israeli sociology." This case suggests how affixation with a particular ideology can engender Orientalism and can reify the Othering phenomenon.

> both those which his culture shares with the West and those which remain undefined by the West. The pressure to be the obverse of the West distorts the traditional priorities in the Indian's total view of man and universe and destroys his culture's unique *gestalt*. It in fact binds him even more irrevocably to the West. (Nandy, 1983, p. 73, emphasis in original)

Nandy elucidates how European imperialism indoctrinated an essentialist-based system of identity that is predicated on the colonizer and the colonized possessing opposing, but complementary, definitions of their respective cultures. Transporting this rationale to Qalandiya, my essentialist inscribing of the Israeli border guards as the Other, and my affinity with the Palestinians, is perhaps reflective of the colonial logic of essentialism.

My experiences in crossing Qalandiya underscore the ontological immersion of the body into the field. On this point, Goffman accounts for the 'corporeal' implications of conducting field research:

> It's one of getting data, it seems to me, by subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals…so that you are close to them while they are responding to what life does to them. (as cited in Conquergood, 1991, p. 180)

Goffman's observation elucidates the value of engaging reflexivity into ethnographic fieldwork. Indeed, it is through this engagement that I, as an ethnographer, acquired an intimate appreciation of how the field engendered transformative effects on my psyche and on my ontological and epistemological positioning.

These transformative effects led me to consider what organizational researchers might learn from my experiences in conducting fieldwork at this particular neo-colonial site. When we, as scholars, study neo-colonial contexts—which certainly the vast majority of emerging economies are—there is compounded responsibility cast upon us. That is, we must not only identify conclusions to narrowly circumscribed research questions and hypotheses, but we must also sufficiently engage with the colonial legacy so as to understand how contemporary phenomena are, at least partly, constitutive of the remnants of the imperialist project. This may translate into understanding how discourses that emerge from

informants are manifest outcomes of the discursive nature of the psychology of colonialism, as Nandy elucidates, or it may mean revealing how certain structures and forms of organizing function to maintain (neo-) colonial based hierarchical power systems (see Banerjee & Linstead, 2000; Prasad, 2012b).

I have sought to take this responsibility seriously. Witnessing the conditions of the West Bank firsthand, I have made a concerted effort in framing my interpretation of the ongoing occupation in terms of neo-colonialism, hegemony, and oppression, rather than conforming to the dispassionate vernacular that defines much of the field of organization studies. This has meant that I not only unapologetically circulate the stories of the informants, but it further demands that I expose the reprehensible conditions of neo-colonial occupation. I understand that doing so may entail certain consequences to my career; however, I equally recognize that such an act also ensures that I am giving back substantively to those individuals who took the necessary risks to share their stories with me so honestly and openly. Interestingly, at the personal level, this helps me to absolve myself of the "enormous guilt" that I experienced in the field concerning not doing enough to give back to the individuals and the communities from whom I so greatly benefited.

Methodological Insights

Qalandiya also offers important insights for methodology, three of which I will discuss here. First, while ethnographic researchers are implored to include introspection—mainly in the form of detailed reflexive notes—as part of their data collection strategy, often, this evidence is used to complement primary sources of data, such as interviews, field notes, and documents. Qalandiya illuminates how emails, phone conversations, monologue style voice recordings, and journal entries serve an integral function on their own. Such sources of data operate as the foundation from which to engage critically and substantively with reflexivity, particularly once the researcher returns physically from the field. While many critical ethnographic researchers have appreciated the value of such sources of data, these data continue to be largely under-utilized, especially in the field of organization studies. If we are to take seriously Prus' (1996, p. 14) advice, that "[a]ny 'science of human behavior'

should respect both conceptually and methodologically, the intersubjective features of the human condition," researchers—and ethnographers specifically—ought to devote greater attention to these forms of introspective-based data.

Second, extending from Devereux's (1967) psychoanalytic insights, ethnographers in the field should be acutely aware of how counter-transference occurs in the research process and how it informs the researcher's interpretation of the data. When ethnographers become ingrained into the field to such an extent that they come to embody their informants' experiences and ideologies as their own, it poses significant repercussions both on themselves personally and on their research project. To reiterate, this counter-transference is more likely to manifest when there exist "linking objects" that implicate the researcher to the field site (Volkan, 2004). Indeed, as I explain above, my refugee past served a pivotal function in determining how I interpreted my experiences at Qalandiya—a neo-colonial space. At a minimum, being reflexive of how counter-transference enters into a research project allows researchers to produce more conscientious scholarship, as it raises their subjectivity to the level of consciousness.

Finally, while I would encourage organization studies researchers to engage rigorously with reflexivity and, where appropriate, publish their results, an ethical caveat should be underscored. A chapter of this scope is an extremely personal project. As such, there are tangible risks pertaining to exposing oneself too much, which researchers should consider diligently and conscientiously. In her discussion of autoethnography, Medford (2006) illuminates some of these concerns by implementing what she terms "mindful slippage" in such writings. As she notes: "There is slippage between Truth (or our experience of reality) and truthfulness because sometimes it seems appropriate—even necessary—to abbreviate, edit, or otherwise modify our life stories in our writing" (p. 853). Citing Green, Medford underscores that such genres of prose are inherently an "'*outing process*'…You have to decide if you're ready to be outed or to put yourself out in that way…writers [should] consider the potential impact on personal identity and relationships" (p. 859).

Several courageous scholars within the field of organization studies have offered illuminating, and what appears to be unedited, glimpses into their own lives by turning the analytical gaze upon the self (e.g., Ashcraft, 1998; Bradshaw & Newell, 1998; Brewis, 2004, 2005;

Engstrom, 2012).[11] While the work of these scholars is certainly admirable, not all researchers will be willing or able to engage in exposure to the same degree. Extending from Medford's (2006) distinction between Truth and truthfulness, researchers must take the necessary measures to protect themselves when pursuing auto-ethnography. Indeed, akin to a traditional ethnographer's pivotal task of not creating undue harm onto their informants as a result of their research participation, similar precautions should apply when the research subject is the researcher. This would mean utilizing "mindful slippage" (Medford, 2006, p. 853), in a manner that protects the researcher from psychological harm whilst still affording integrity to the ethnography.

To achieve this, scholars can adopt strategies that suit their idiosyncratic needs. Crossing Qalandiya was an extremely powerful experience, which had profound effects on my psyche. Sharing intricate details regarding an experience of such magnitude necessarily renders one's self vulnerable, and thus requires a great deal of trust. I did share many of my feelings with a senior colleague whom I trusted unequivocally. This exercise was beneficial inasmuch as it allowed me, a novice ethnographer, to locate my experiences within the broader research process. However, without having trust entrenched between me and the potential reader, in writing this chapter I chose not to share everything. For deeply personal reasons, I elected not to share the exact or exhaustive scope of the experiences that I encountered in the field. In the process of developing this chapter, I came to the conclusion that if certain experiences expose dimensions of the researcher's private life to the public, which s/he does not desire, then it is wholly ethical to exclude such discussions from academic writing—it is legitimate to leave things out. While remaining consistent with this principle, for the purposes of the present chapter, I have used reflexive-based data to construct an introspective story that: (i) has veracity and contributes to various discourses within organizations studies; (ii) respects my own self-imposed boundaries and limitations; and (iii) honors my informants and the field site.

[11] Interestingly, in each of these examples, the scholars appear to be writing within the broad discourse of feminist theory. As such, gender is central across these narrative discussions. There is surprisingly very little work adopting such genres of writing outside of feminist scholarship. I extend this discussion in Chapter 4.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has used introspective data and has drawn on psychoanalytic and postcolonial thought to critically analyze my experiences at Qalandiya, a neo-colonial border crossing. In doing so, it has illuminated the discursive and mutually constitutive relationship between me as a researcher and what I researched. Through this engagement, it has shown how my experiences in crossing Qalandiya were informed by my own personal history and how these experiences culminated in my redefinition of self and Other.

As organizational researchers, we are habitually preoccupied with developing, refining, and advancing knowledge on various social phenomena (Prasad, 2012a). In so doing, we often negate, or otherwise wholly erase, the impact that the field has upon us, and vice versa. Explicitly linking these dynamics with my own history as a colonized and displaced subject, this chapter demonstrates the utility of reflexivity in examining how the field affects us intersubjectively, especially at neo-colonial sites. At the very least, it allows for us to learn things about ourselves that we lacked awareness of and, quite possibly, it shows how our experiences in conducting the research inform our ultimate findings.

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CHAPTER 3

Autoethnography in an Ethnographic Encounter

Abstract This chapter documents a problematic ethnographic encounter that I experienced while conducting fieldwork in the neo-colonized space of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through autoethnography and reflexivity, I describe how the encounter begins to illuminate the surfacing of prejudices that were originally enacted by oppressive neo-colonial structures, but which I had come to discursively accept against the communities and the peoples that were to become the subjects of my ethnographic study. As I explain, these prejudices are sourced to the perception of the denigrated embodiment of the Other—in this case, the Palestinian masculine subject. Finally, in this chapter, I consider how I originally understood these latent prejudices and how I ultimately came to negate them through a prudent engagement with, and deconstruction of, a reified socio-political discourse that ideologically endeavors to maintain the subjugation of a disenfranchised and unrecognized nation.

Keywords Autoethnography · Fieldwork · Neo-colonization · Other · Palestine

This chapter was originally published as: Prasad, A. (2014). Corporeal ethics in an ethnographic encounter: A tale of embodiment from the Occupied Palestinian Territories. *Scandinavian Journal of Management, 30*(4), 525–531.

A. Prasad, *Autoethnography and Organization Research*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3_3

An Ethnographic Encounter

Having finished the last bite of coleslaw that remained on the aluminum plate, I take a sip of water and proceed to the front counter to pay the thirteen shekels for lunch. The two pieces of fried chicken and the thick potato wedges, which had accompanied the dollop of coleslaw was probably the most filling, but least healthy, meal that I had since I had arrived into the Middle East.

With the transaction completed, I pull out my fieldwork journal from my book bag and ask the aging restaurant owner for the directions to the office of my upcoming appointment. In heavy Arabic, the owner calls out, quickly prompting an olive skinned teenager wiping down a table nearby. The young man reads the directions scribbled on the pad and, in broken English, advises me that I would need a taxi to get to my intended destination. He accompanies me outside onto the bustling, cracked sidewalk of al-Manara. He hails a taxi, which stops in the middle of the street, halting the congested afternoon traffic behind it. He leads me swiftly toward the vehicle. While speaking in Arabic to the driver, the young man opens the backdoor of the cab ushering me in. Closing the door behind me, he informs me through the open window that he has given the details to the driver who, while not being able to speak any English, will take me to the area at which I have my appointment.

In just a few minutes into the ride, the restless and lively activity of Ramallah's city center has been replaced by the silence of a relatively desolate area, sparsely consisting of a few residential homes and a small gated apartment complex. Few cars pass on the road and no human presence can otherwise be detected. Sitting in the backseat in awkward silence, I wonder where the driver had brought me—whether or not he received the correct directions from the olive skinned young man at the restaurant. Communication barriers prevent me from making this inquiry. Just as I am about to really become concerned, he points to the sign of a small hotel. From the directions of my would-be informant, I knew that the sign indicated that I am in the right vicinity. I still had time, so I pay the fare and step out of the taxi.

I slip the buds of my iPod into my ears, and begin to walk along the uneven road with a copious amount of loose gravel scattered over it. The clouds have turned gray and dreary and there is a complementary chill in

the air, not unlike the typical autumn day that I had become accustomed to growing up in Vancouver. Scanning the area, I look for any sign of an office—there is none.

Having walked for what seemed to be about ten minutes, I can hear, through the music emitting into my ears, a car behind me. Without a clearly designated sidewalk, I had been walking along the road so I turn my head to ensure that the car has enough space to pass me safely. The car is moving at an uncomfortably slow pace. There are no homes or buildings immediately around me, so it certainly is not the case that the occupants of the car would be slowing down because they had arrived at their intended destination. The only thing that is there is me, alone and in a foreign and precarious land.

I put my hand into my jacket pocket and clandestinely turn off my iPod, though leaving the buds in my ears. I want to remain alert but, at the same time, I am desperately trying not to display any sign of alarm. With Rob Thomas no longer singing to me about his middle of the night conversation with his lover, I can hear the friction from the tires against the gravel getting louder…and louder. My mind is racing. *Why had I made the stupid decision to come into the West Bank? I was well aware of the highly publicized kidnappings that occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Hell, there was a large banner adorning a balcony of my German Colony apartment complex in Jerusalem depicting Gilad Shalit, an Israeli Jew who had been kidnapped years ago. Even the information that I received from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where I was a Visiting Research Fellow, had ominously warned me not enter the West Bank as my safety could not be guaranteed.* And now, there I am, with a car slowly approaching me.

Precisely what I am dreading would happen, happened. With its engine still running, the car stops just adjacent to me. *I was fucked.* I stop in my tracks and pull out the buds from my ears. In the car, there are four Arab men, each of whom appears to be in his 20s. "What are you doing here?" inquires the man sitting shotgun, his face a cold glare. I answer his question honestly. He asks me a couple more questions in the same vein, before saying that they are going to kidnap me. A thousand thoughts cross my mind. *Should I run? Would they accept money in return for not harming me? Why did I even decide to conduct a multi-sited ethnography, and in this region of all places? I was a doctoral student in*

a business school now for crying out loud. I could be sitting in the comfort of my office in Toronto using archival data to run regressions rather than being on this isolated West Bank road having this very disconcerting experience.

I am frozen, staring back at them, wondering what to do next. "I know that you're Canadian and we're going to kidnap you for ransom," the same man says. *What? How did he know my nationality? Being of Indian decent, it is not often when traveling overseas that someone assumes that I am Canadian*. Suddenly, a mischievous smile crosses the same man's face, and he extends his hand through the passenger side window, introducing himself by name. I recognize the name…the same name I had scheduled an interview with that day. Indeed, the man sitting in the passenger seat is my informant. He tells me that his office is just up the road and asks me to get into the car as that is where they are headed.

Toward Psychologically Reconciling Latent Prejudices

This problematic encounter, particularly in terms of how I interpreted and felt during the situation, can be read in multiple ways. The anxiety that I experienced might be reflective of my naiveté as an ethnographic researcher. Indeed, while I read many classic and contemporary texts by astute anthropologists that have effectively utilized ethnographic methods, this was my first attempt at actually doing fieldwork. A second explanation might attribute my reaction to the fact that because I was in a new geographical context, which had its own idiosyncratic set of cultural and institutional norms to which I was unfamiliar, I was rendered more sensitive to perceived threats—threats that were manifest of my own paranoia more than anything else. Yet, a third account might suggest that this encounter represents the surfacing of my own latent prejudices against an 'unknown' group. Or, perhaps these three 'realities' converged at a discursive liminal site—at which conceptions of self and Other are articulated and negotiated—to create the proverbial 'perfect storm' (on the idea of liminality, see Bhabha, 1994; Frenkel, 2008; Turner, 1987).

Ultimately, the question remained for me to psychologically resolve: How could I so imprudently accept, as my own, the stereotyping which effectively constructs the Palestinian man as terrorist, and which is foundational to a reified ideological discourse that legitimizes and justifies

the permanent displacement of the politically disenfranchised Palestinian nation? This is an especially disturbing question for someone who has always prided himself on being particularly conscientious and sympathetic to the disempowered state of others. To briefly explicate this point: Although I elected to pursue a doctorate in a business school, I earned previous degrees in the traditional social sciences. Through this training, I became reasonably well-versed in critical and social theory, including anti-racist thought; I had also taken undergraduate- and graduate-level courses specifically devoted to ethnic and race relations, colonialism, and citizenship. In addition to my academic background, I grew up as a racialized minority in a White-settler country. As such, I had experiential—situated and lived—knowledge of the myriad forms of discrimination and subjugation that is all too often engendered by embodying a social reality of the racialized Other (see Visweswaran, 2012). Yet, in that encounter, on that desolate road, I had enacted a gaze of the Other that was informed by neo-imperialist power structures that endeavors to demonize the constituents of an entire (unrecognized) nation en masse.

It is useful, even if only at some cathartic level, to 'make sense' of what occurred in that ethnographic encounter (Weick, 1995). Sensemaking is a process that "involves the ongoing retrospective development of plausible images that rationalize what people are doing" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). Extending this idea, Helms Mills, Thurlow, and Mills (2010) have propagated the notion of "critical sensemaking." Critical sensemaking contends that "the analysis of sensemaking needs to be explored through, and in relationship to, the contextual factors of structure and discourse in which individual sensemaking occurs" (p. 190). Achieving critical sensemaking would require me to account for what are arguably the two most conspicuous elements that constitute the structure and the discourse of the geopolitical context in which the ethnographic encounter unfolded: violence and surveillance.

From the very moment that I commenced my trip to Israel, the sense (and the threat) of violence and surveillance became conflated and ubiquitous. My first realization of this social reality actually came 2500 kilometers away in Poland, where I transited planes on my way to Ben Gurion International. Having arrived slightly late at the Warsaw Chopin Airport from a red-eye flight from Canada, I headed immediately to board my El Al operated flight to Tel Aviv. The other passengers were already at the gate by the time that I finally arrived. Shortly before boarding began,

my name was called and I was asked to see the agents at the gate. This is certainly not an abnormal practice at airports that I had previously frequented; in the past, I have had my name called by desk agents to confirm my passport details, to change seats, to issue a new ticket, or for any number of other innocuous reasons. This experience, however, would turn out quite different.

I was met at the gate by an attractive woman with cropped blond hair, who I would guess was in her mid-30s. She escorted me to a barren space in the airport and began to ask me questions about my purposes of going into Israel. I had my formal documents from Hebrew University ready to substantiate my reasons for my visit to the country. Her questions quickly went from being generic and mundane to invasive and unnerving. She asked me myriad questions, many of them that seemed rather repetitive, about where I was from—by that, she meant, where I was *really* from—and what sorts of groups I had affiliation. She also asked me about my research, my family, and my personal history. About 15 minutes into our conversation, when she saw that I was becoming unsettled, she said, "I hope that I'm smiling enough to reassure you that this is just part of the routine."

After she exhausted her questions, she rushed me to baggage claim to retrieve my bags and, then, led me to a room, where she left me in the care of two men, who appeared to be security officials of the airport, but perhaps, more likely, El Al—I never did figure out who exactly they represented. They made me open each of my bags and went through my things diligently. As they did, they asked me to remove my sweater, baseball cap, and shoes, and they told me to sit and wait for them until they finish. I was certain that I was in for the rubber glove treatment. Once they finished with my belongings, they returned to me and demanded answers to another series of invasive questions, including on multiple occasions the peculiar question of what was my father's name. The same questions that I might have been affronted by if asked by an official in Canada, I found myself quickly becoming acclimated to answering. It was clear from follow-up questions that each answer that I provided was viewed with palpable suspicion. In the end, after a couple of unanticipated inquisitions, I was permitted to board my flight, though without my belongings except for my necessities (wallet and passport) and one extra pair of clothing. I was told that all my other belongings would arrive on a different flight and was assured that they would be delivered directly to my apartment within 48 hours.

My second realization of this social reality occurred later that same day. Once I arrived into Tel Aviv, I cleared customs and boarded a shuttle bus to Jerusalem—my new temporary home. I asked the driver to drop me off at the main intersection of the German Colony neighborhood, where Rachel Emainu meets Emek Refaim. It was already dark by the time that I stepped out of the shuttle bus, holding only a black duffle bag with one pair of clothes in it. The neighborhood was animated with couples and families shuffling in and out of little restaurants and shops that lined Emek Refaim, well-dressed people strolling along the streets on their evening walks, and colorful lights from street lamps and local storefronts that juxtaposed beautifully against the darkness of the night. I knew that my new unit was located close to the main street, however because the signs were largely in Hebrew, I did not know precisely where was my apartment complex. I saw a couple walking by and stopped them to ask them for directions. The man responded assertively, asking me why I was looking for that location. I told him that it was my new apartment. He asked me, "Where I was from," to which I told him, "Canada." He asked to see my passport, which I pulled out of the side of my duffle bag and showed him. He took it from me, scanned it quickly, and returned it. Convinced that I was who I said I was, he pointed me to the direction of my new apartment, and advised me that it is probably not the best idea for me to be walking around with a duffle bag such as I was.

These two events foreshadowed my ultimate realization that the discourse of violence and surveillance is normalized in the events of daily life in and around Jerusalem, and more broadly Israel (for an extensive discussion of this idea, refer to the chapters in Ochs, 2011; Zureik, Lyon, & Abu-Laban, 2011b; for a discussion of similar patterns of daily experience in the West Bank, see Kelly, 2008; Long, 2006). From the mandatory security checks of personal belongings—and, in some cases, of persons themselves—at the university, at restaurants, and at governmental buildings, to similar ad hoc checks on buses, to observing men who while adorning the kippah had guns tucked into the back of their trousers, there was the uninterrupted message articulated that threat was omnipresent and that the only path by which to control it was through violence and surveillance. On this point, Elia Zureik (2011, p. 10) asserts, when speaking of the situation in Palestine/Israel, that everyday surveillance, and by extension, violence "[constitutes] subjectivities at the level of desire, fear, security, trust, and risk – all of which ultimately

impact upon human dignity and individual autonomy." Working from Zureik's reasoning, systems of surveillance and violence enacted by Israel, either discursively or literally, violate the fundamental rights of Palestinians (see Kearns, 2013).

The question posited at the crux of the discourse concerning violence and surveillance is: what precisely embodies the threat? The threat in this geopolitical context—much akin to the threat that governed colonizer/colonized socio-legal and socio-sexual relations under imperialism—is the body; that is, in this case specifically, the ontology of the racialized man (Spivak, 1988; Stoler, 1997). Julie Peteet (1994) insightfully explains how Palestinian bodies, and particularly Palestinian male bodies, are central to the Zionist project (also see Leshem, 2013). As she writes:

> The daily inscription of power on the unwilling bodies of Palestinians, almost a routine occurrence, is an attempt to embed power in them as a means of fashioning a domesticated subject whose terrorized silence would confirm the mythical Zionist landscape of an empty Palestine. Through bodily violence, the occupier desires not just to fashion a laborer but equally to assure a quiescent population, one sufficiently terrorized so as not to engage in acts of rebellion. (Peteet, 1994, p. 33)

Through her incisive analysis that accounts for discursive notions of phenomenology, Peteet argues that the violence that the male Palestinian body experiences under occupation subversively functions as a form of social agency—that is, as a rite of passage into manhood (for consideration of the question of masculinity for Palestinians living within the state boundaries of Israel, see Sa'ar & Yahia-Younis, 2008). While affording much credence to Peteet's conclusions, it is equally crucial to remember that the demonized body of the Palestinian male—although largely voiceless or subaltern (Spivak, 1988)—signifies him as a terrorist. Such a corporeal signification is strategically deployed to defend, rhetorically and militarily, the continuing occupation and the discourses of violence and surveillance that foreground them.

There are a plethora of sources by which the discourse of violence and surveillance, as necessary tools to protect the Israeli community from the Palestinian terrorist, becomes enacted and institutionalized into social action. Sandra Berkowitz (1997) offers one explanation through a thought-provoking analysis that effectively links institutionalized social actions based on this discourse with the Holocaust ideology

(see also Finkelstein, 2000). She argues that this nexus is constituted in two ways. First, the "Holocaust ideology serves to maintain power relations, not by keeping Jews in a power down position, but by continuing to validate the need to have power" (p. 6). She concludes that, "by precluding self-reflection and recognition that there are instances when the community may have, and indeed, may abuse power" (p. 6). In this way, the Holocaust ideology insulates itself from criticism and reflexivity of those individuals who accept it. Second, Berkowitz asserts that the "Holocaust ideology can be called the 'Demonization of Palestinians'. If the Palestinians take on evil characteristics, then people are less likely to sympathize with or accept their position" (p. 7). In sum, this ideology serves as one element by which the discourse is reified through institutionalization, and it further transcends to the level of social action (on this process, see Phillips, Lawrence, & Hardy, 2004).

The institutionalization of discourse enjoys the discursive authority to render social realities highly susceptible to ideological manipulation and cultural negation. An intervention from one of Gayatri Spivak's illuminating remarks might elucidate the phenomenon. Spivak (2004, p. 524) observes that colonialism was predicated on a system of education that is "interested in the seemingly permanent operation of an altered normality." In an analogous process, the institutionalization of discourses of violence and surveillance is intended to construct an altered normality. The essence of this circuitous logic is the construction of the culturally inscribed Palestinian male body as terrorist, which in effect validates the need to maintain a complex architecture of surveillance and violence so as to govern that very body—this is emblematic of the spirit of what Eyal Weizman refers to as the "architecture of occupation" (cf. Zureik, Lyon, & Abu-Laban, 2011a, p. xviii). Through critical sensemaking, I brought to the level of consciousness my latent acceptance of prejudices that were engendered by a set of ethnocentric discourses. Indeed, I came to understand how ideological discourses become compounded and why, because of this, I tacitly accepted, on that particular day, the Othering of *others* as my own, along with the paranoia that sustains it.

Moving Past, Moving On

At the crux of this ethnographic encounter is the question of embodiment. The work of Thomas Csordas (1990) is particularly relevant, here, given his analytical focus on the nexus between embodiment and

fieldwork. Situated in the discipline of anthropology, Csordas integrates Maurice Merleau-Ponty's idea of the preobjective and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus to develop a paradigm of embodiment, which as he notes, can be leveraged to approach the study culture and the self. Pivotal to this paradigm is the "methodological postulate that the body is not an *object* to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the *subject* of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture" (p. 5, emphasis in original). In this way, akin to other theories of embodiment constructed through various branches of social thought (e.g., Butler, 1997), Csordas' paradigm of embodiment effectively deconstructs the Cartesian bifurcation between the body and the mind and between the subject and the object. Applying this paradigm to fieldwork, he finds that, "embodied selves inhabit a behavioral environment much broader than any single event…that embodiment need not be restricted to a microanalytic application, but as Merleau-Ponty hoped, can be foundational for analyses of culture and history" (p. 39). This logic, which posits embodiment as central to the fieldwork process, offers further insight into what occurred. Indeed, I had perceived an essentialized embodiment of the ideologically constructed Other. This was particularly conspicuous in the West Bank because of the very static maintenance of politicized space through the conditions of the ongoing occupation (Jeffrey, McFarlane, & Vasudevan, 2012).

While Csordas presents a functional paradigm for understanding embodiment as it pertains to the phenomenological process of doing fieldwork, an intervention from Pullen and Rhodes (2014) addresses the often-neglected question of ethics within this paradigm. Drawing on Rosalyn Diprose's text, *Corporeal Generosity* (2002), Pullen and Rhodes extend the concept of corporeal ethics to the field of organization studies. For them, following Diprose, "corporeal ethics arises by encountering and responding to the 'other.'" As such, there is a discursive negation of the self in this framework. Indeed, "[e]thical primacy is given to the concrete and embodied other in self-other relations as opposed to obscuring particular individual relationships through generalizations and the organization of people into comparable categories." Such an appreciation of ethics—one that refutes metaphysical duality by having its ontology specifically cast on the corporeal—serves an important political purpose; as Pullen and Rhodes note, it functions as a site of resistance against the systems of domination that defines contemporary organizations and forms of organizing. If I had engaged sufficiently

with corporeal ethics, I would have been far more cognizant of what was happening in my ethnographic encounter in situ. That is, I would have prioritized the interests of the Other—and, correspondingly, resisted the ideological discourses that relegated this Other—rather than affording primacy to the self.

Nevertheless, I should note that even without a thorough understanding of corporeal ethics during the time of my fieldwork, I did ultimately relinquish any latent prejudices that I held toward the Palestinian community rather quickly. The experience that I described above occurred on the first day that I had intentionally gone into the West Bank. In the end, the Palestinians that I met throughout the territory were some of the most kind, most hospitable, most patient, and most noble people that I have ever had the privilege of meeting. Several of these qualities were exemplified in an incident that I had in Nablus, a city that I visited to conduct an interview.

Disorientated by a troubling interrogation that I had encountered at a rural Israeli checkpoint on my way out of the city—in which my declaration of being a foreign researcher, and not Arab, was received by an IDF soldier with unabated suspicion—I had neglectfully left my wallet in the taxi. Later that evening, before I even realized that I had lost it, I received a call from the business owner that I had interviewed earlier in Nablus. He informed me that the taxi driver contacted him to tell him that he found my wallet in his cab. The informant also told me that the taxi driver had delivered my wallet to him and, as he would be in Ramallah for a meeting the following day, he can return my wallet to me then. We made arrangements to meet in al-Manara.

As promised, my informant was standing at the main intersection of the city center at five in the evening, just as the sun was setting. With a warm smile, he reached into his blazer and pulled out my wallet and handed it to me. I quickly opened it and saw that my credit cards, IDs, health insurance card, and driver's license were all there in good order. The approximately 300 shekels that I had were also untouched.

Grateful that I had the most important things returned to me, I pulled out all the money that I had in the wallet and I told my informant to give it to the taxi driver. My informant hesitated and said he will only do that if the taxi driver is willing to accept it, and with that he pulled out his mobile phone and placed a call. Functioning as an interpreter, he spoke in Arabic with the driver and in English with me. I briefly expressed to the driver why I wanted to give him the money—as

a small reward for his honorable action that spared me so many headaches. What the driver said, through my informant, was profound. He told me that the money that I owed him—for the taxi ride the previous day—I had already paid him and that he is neither entitled to any other money in my wallet nor does he want it. He said this even though, for him, I would guess that 300 shekels would likely amount to several weeks' worth of hard work. Before ending the call, he advised me to be more careful for the remainder of my trip. I was absolutely humbled by the integrity and the wisdom found in the words of that Palestinian taxi driver.

There were many incidents, such as this one, where the most beautiful qualities of the Palestinian people and culture were on display and available for appreciation. Although I was not of the same ethnic or religious background, the Palestinians treated me with warmth and as one of their own—and my affinity for them, indeed my identification with them, grew as a result. But for a junior researcher, the lesson on latent prejudices and (the lack of) corporeal ethics that I learned on that cool day in Ramallah is invaluable as I engage with ethnographic methods with unfamiliar communities in the future. Indeed, this lesson will keep me conscientious of the intended anti-imperialist political project of my ethnographic scholarship (Hart, 2006; Muhr & Salem, 2013).

Epilogue

I originally prepared this chapter about four years after I had returned from the field. While I continued to retain vivid memories of my time in the West Bank—thanks, in part, to my field journal notes—as one of commentator noted, I have run the risk of romanticizing my experiences. That is, I might be reducing complex experiences to a type of essentialized nostalgia. On this point, astute postcolonial thinkers have cautioned scholars not to engage in a form of historiography that will produce an overly simplified and, ultimately, an inaccurate vision of the precolonial past (see Bhabha, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 1997; for Foucault's related observation, see his discussion on genealogy: Foucault, 1980; Prasad, 2009). This comment was offered just a couple of weeks before I was scheduled to return to the West Bank for a second round of fieldwork (in 2013). Needless to say, as I went back into the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the comment compelled me to be ever so cognizant of my interactions with the subjects of my research. Indeed, I had to ask myself:

Had I come to romanticize my perception of Palestinians upon my return from the field in 2009?

Following my second excursion into the field, my resounding answer to this question is, negative. Unwaveringly, Palestinians exhibit an incredible amount of positive human attributes including hospitality, generosity, kindness, and understanding. It is a place where people will offer assistance to perfect strangers if they think they need it; such as I was in my most recent trip, when a woman approached me and asked me if I needed anything when she saw me sitting alone on a dusty sidewalk in the small Christian town of Taybeh after finishing an interview. Only after I assured her that my taxi was on its way, did she give me a warm smile and continue on with her day. There appears to be principles of care toward others there, which I have not found in my home country or during my other travels. These attributes could be charged to different sources. Perhaps they are the corollary of living in a neo-colonial state, governed by the dehumanizing structures of apartheid (Abdelnour, 2013), which has made them more conscious of the need to embody qualities that would maintain a strong sense of community and, thereby, could withstand the occupier's fanatical attempts at cultural destruction. Or, perhaps, these qualities are an intrinsic element of the local culture. Regardless of its etiological basis, a very special humanity traverses naturally across the people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which I could not ignore while I was in the field, a humanity that wholly subverts their demonized portrayal by certain governments and popular media.[1]

In closing, I am left with the question: What might scholars in the field of organization studies take away from my idiosyncratic experiences in conducting ethnography in the West Bank? It seems to me that as organization studies scholars, we have largely shied away from assuming positions that are explicitly grounded in advocacy. Research in the field, even in those studies that center on issues of inequality, hegemony, and

[1]As a caveat, I will note that my personal history—as having been a colonized subject and a political refugee and as currently living as a racialized minority living in a White-settler country (see Chapter 2)—likely informed my sympathies and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Indeed, my own history allowed me to have a perspicacious understanding into what it means to be displaced and exiled (Prasad, 2014). While this is not to say that others who do not share my personal background would not be moved by the people of the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the ways that I was, it is to suggest that my sense of viewing the plight and oppression of the local population became even more sensitive as a consequence of my past experiences.

power, are all too often bereft of promoting overt political positions that would advocate for social justice causes (Fotaki & Prasad, 2014). This disposition in the field must be rectified. I want to underscore, here, that I am not merely arguing for greater appreciation for subjectivity in scholarly engagements. Indeed, critical scholars in the field are all too familiar with philosophical critiques of objectivity and positivism and, thus, have an acute understanding of how social reality—and the knowledge that is constructed within it—is the outcome of myriad intersubjective processes (Prasad, 2012). Yet, even while being aware of the ontological and the epistemological underpinnings of subjectivity, it seems that with very few exceptions, even critical researchers have been unwilling to take up advocacy positions in their scholarship, even when the subject of their study desperately calls for it. A level of Cartesian detachment has become tacitly reified into our scholarship (Anteby, 2013). Notwithstanding the field's reluctance to do so, what is needed at this juncture are explicit engagements with the political—we need to speak with and, at times, for those marginalized subjects who lack the social and political agency to represent their voices against the literal and symbolic violence that is routinely cast against them, whether in contexts of apartheid or in other dynamics of subjugation in different types of organizations.

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CHAPTER 4

Autoethnographic Writing

Abstract Extending the works of scholars who have elucidated writing as the quintessential site for social transformation, the aim of this chapter is to locate the myriad possibilities for actualizing Donna Haraway's concept of cyborg writing in the field of organization studies by adopting autoethnographic-inflected approaches to research. I contend that cyborg writing functions as a discursive mechanism by which to disrupt Enlightenment ideals of Cartesian duality, objectivity, and rationality. These ideals inform the very structure of masculine privilege that emerges from having a society that is organized along androcentric values. Situating the scholarship of Jo Brewis, a contemporary scholar in the field, I illuminate how cyborg writing can be practiced effectively through autoethnography, whereby greater richness is imparted into conceptualizations of, and theorizing on, organizational and management phenomena. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of the implications of cyborg writing, and with the identification of two trajectories that scholars can pursue in future studies. Progress along these two paths will move toward actualizing the feminist project for gender egalitarianism.

Keywords Androcentricism · Autoethnography · Brewis · Cyborg writing · Gender · Haraway

This chapter was originally published as: Prasad, A. (2016). Cyborg writing as a political act: Reading Donna Haraway in organization studies. *Gender, Work and Organization, 23*(4), 431–446.

A. Prasad, *Autoethnography and Organization Research*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3_4

Introduction

Feminist scholars in the field of organization studies have long been aware of how mainstream genres and forms of writing—and its corresponding effects of rhetoric and discourse—have been invoked to marginalize the feminine (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004; Bendl, 2008; Calas & Smircich, 1991; Muhr & Rehn, 2015; Phillips, Pullen, & Rhodes, 2014; Runte & Mills, 2006). The intellectual hegemony afforded to such types of writing suggests, perhaps, one reason for women's ongoing relegation in academia (Auster & Prasad, 2016; Fernando & Prasad, in press; Fotaki, 2011; Thomas & Davies, 2002). As Pullen (2006) observes, there is an underlying paradox even in the act of writing academic research through reflexivity, in that such an undertaking requires either the negation of the feminine or the non-strategic invocation of an essentialized category of 'woman' (Prasad, 2012a). Drawing on the works of Julia Kristeva, the late Heather Hopfl (2000) went so far as to argue that a set of androcentric values dictates the constitution of scholarly writing. Indeed, for writing to be considered academic, theoretical, or even legitimate, it must be kept "pure." This question of purity, as Hopfl (2000, p. 103) reminded us, ontologically necessitates the unequivocal rejection of the "Other/Mother/Feminine."

Extending this line of inquiry, the aim of this chapter is twofold. First, I seek to conceptualize how Donna Haraway's articulation of cyborg writing functions as a radical site of infinite possibilities—and, at minimum, as a discursive means by which to disrupt Enlightenment ideals of Cartesian duality, objectivity, and rationality. These ideals achieve multiple objectives. At the broadest level, they inform the very structure of masculine privilege that emerge from having a society that is organized along patriarchal values (Harding, 1986). More specifically, these ideals underlie the androcentric assumptions that constitute mainstream approaches to writing in the discipline of organization studies (Hopfl, 2000). With few exceptions (see Bowring, 2004; Muhr, 2011; Muhr & Rehn, 2015; Prasad, 2016; Prasad, Segarra, & Villanueva, in press), attributions to Haraway's work by organization studies scholars have, to date, been mainly limited to cursory citations that support claims about the fluidity in (gender) identity (e.g., Essers & Benschop, 2009; Gremmen & Benschop, 2009; Styhre & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2008) or to citations that develop arguments related to actor-network theory (e.g., Alcadipani & Hassard, 2010; Durepos, Mills, & Weatherbee,

2012; Durepos, Prasad, & Villanueva, 2016; Fox, 2000; Parker, 1998). Not surprisingly, then, in a recent overview article on feminist theory in the journal *Organization*, Harding, Ford, and Fotaki (2013) observe that researchers in the field have only begun to unearth the potential of Haraway's textually layered ideas; as such, they implore for organization studies scholars to more substantively engage with her oeuvre. A critical appraisal of the corpus of Haraway's rich and nuanced texts reveals a thoughtful discussion regarding the specific role of writing in the project for feminist revolution—a point that has, unfortunately, all too often escaped many of her readers. Indeed, for Haraway, "the masculine hegemonic story of reality can be destabilized by telling a feminist story and this ought to transform cultural thinking about women" (as cited in Knights & Kerfoot, 2004, p. 448).

Second, I endeavor to illuminate, by way of contextualized examples, the manifestation of cyborg writing in organization studies. With this aim, I show how Jo Brewis, a contemporary scholar in the field, has beautifully captured the spirit of cyborg writing; although, admittedly, she does not explicitly frame her work through a theoretical lens informed by Haraway. Through her provocative and situated analyses, I argue that Brewis' scholarship reflects Haraway's cyborg writing *par excellence*. At the very least, by invoking corporeality to violate the structures of unitary knowledge, Brewis' contextualized narratives proffer alternative perspectives to how various facets of social reality might be theorized and understood. By implication, in undertaking a form and content of "writing that inscribes femininity" (Cixous, 1976, p. 878), and which ushers critique into the "unvoiced assumption of masculinity [in writing] that renders the masculine normal" (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 317), Brewis catalyzes the project for unraveling the phallogocentric nature of Western epistemological systems. Brewis narrates from, and about, her body while adopting a mode of writing that is transgressive to the prevailing institutional arrangements that undeservedly benefit and normalize masculinity. In this way, Brewis' papers can be interpreted as being exemplars of cyborg writing and they contribute to setting the foundation from which other organization studies researchers can actualize its promise.

The remainder of this chapter is presented in three substantive sections. First, I provide a selective overview of Haraway's ideas, focusing particularly on her notions of the cyborg and cyborg writing. Second, I situate two of Brewis' scholarly contributions to elucidate the textual embodiment of cyborg writing. Here, I also discuss how such writing

challenges the epistemological orthodoxy that presently defines much of the scholarship in the field. Finally, in the third section, I discuss the implications of the arguments forwarded, and invoke the question of the political and the Deleuzian concept of the rhizome to offer potential directions for future research.

From Writing the Cyborg to Cyborg Writing

In 1985, Donna Haraway published her essay, 'A manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s,' in the periodical, *Socialist Review* (which was subsequently reproduced in 1997 in *Feminist Social Thought*: *A Reader*). This essay, almost immediately, became a watershed text for feminist theory and for, what was at the time, the inchoate field of feminist science studies. Interweaving ideas that were playful and imaginative with an incisive critique of the totalizing essentialism that was the ironic hallmark of the myriad strands of the second-wave feminist movement (Prasad, 2012a)—encompassing, but not limited to, Marxist, psychoanalytic and radical feminist approaches—Haraway conscientiously articulates the politics of a monstrous creature of the post-gender world: the cyborg.

Before proceeding, a caveat is warranted here. In this single essay, Haraway coherently appraises issues as widely dispersed as the artificial division between subjectivity and technology, the misappropriation of voice-consciousness of the disenfranchised, the strategic use of partial and fragmented identities as the foundation for political action and social change, and the material conditions of work under unabated globalization. Given its textual richness and its conceptual nuances, I will certainly not claim to do justice to the exhaustive ideas found in Haraway's essay within the spatial confines of this chapter. Instead, I will purposefully and pre-emptively circumscribe my analytical gaze to two symbiotic elements of the essay. The first element concerns the idea of the cyborg itself and the second element oscillates on the writing of subversion or, what Haraway calls, *cyborg writing*.

For Haraway, the cyborg is the central character of a myth representing infinite possibilities. A cyborg is, not so simply, "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (Haraway, 1997, p. 502). In other words, it is chimera residing in indeterminate liminality—the corollary of confounded ontological demarcations that rigidly separate human, animal

and machine, and that categorically differentiates the physical and the non-physical constituents of (social and material) life. Haraway further explains that it is the omnipresent and invisible disposition of the cyborg that engenders its revolutionary potential: "They are hard to see politically and materially. They are about consciousness—or its simulation" (p. 506). Underlying the cyborg's political mandate is the aim to fracture ideological dualities that structure society and that apportion undeserved privilege, along with its corresponding weapons of violence and domination, to subjects of certain classes at the detriment of their negated opposites. The most destructive and ubiquitous of the dualities, and the one which subsumes most others, is the *naturalized* bifurcation between culture and nature. It is at the interstice of this duality where the ideology of the cyborg is located. In a cyborg world, so writes Haraway, "[n]ature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other" (p. 504). She elaborates further on this point:

> [M]y cyborg myth subvert[s] myriad organic wholes (e.g., the poem, the primitive culture, the biological organism). In short, the certainty of what counts as nature—as a source of insight and a promise of innocence—is undermined, probably fatally. The transcendent authorization of interpretation is lost, and with it the ontology grounding 'Western' epistemology. (p. 505)

Rather than ritualistically observing codified knowledge systems that rely on Cartesian philosophical declarations, the cyborg, by the very hybrid constitution of its being, disrupts and repudiates them.

The cyborg's agency is not restricted to its ontological constitution alone. Haraway explicates that the cyborg actualizes its political mandate through the act of subversive writing. Indeed, writing serves as the medium for entering chaos into the consecrated and almost impervious logic that maintains the ethos and unity of Western epistemology. As such:

> Writing is pre-eminently the technology of cyborgs…Cyborg politics is the struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication, against the one code that translates all meaning perfectly, the central dogma of phallogocentrism. That is why cyborg politics insist on noise and advocate pollution, rejoicing in the illegitimate fusions of animal and machine. These are the couplings that make Man and Woman

> so problematic, subverting the structure of desire, the force imagined to generate language and gender, and so subverting the structure and modes of reproduction of 'Western' identity, of mirror and eye, slave and master, body and mind. (p. 522)

The hybridity—or, the pollution of the uncontaminated actor—that is the defining characteristic of the cyborg, engenders the denaturalization of taken-for-granted knowledge that affords cultural hegemony to Western epistemology.[1]

Haraway underscores the significance for feminists, in particular, to pursue cyborgian modes of writing. Indeed, the rationalization for women's oppression from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, and beyond, is grounded in philosophical claims that postulated the feminine to be simultaneously complementary to, and negated by, the masculine (Cullen & Gotell, 2002; Hird, 2004; Laqueur, 1990). Through and from cyborg writing, there exists the socio-material possibility for subjects rendered invisible in the crystallization of phallogocentricism—a process that is ultimately enabled by metaphysical duality—to reclaim and rewrite their own narratives. This presents an opportunity for feminists to unravel the content and the singularity of grand narratives—which, at once, normalizes the masculine voice and naturalizes the subjugation of the feminine—through the articulation of a multiplicity of stories (for a discussion of grand narratives in relation to gender, see Fraser & Nicholson, 1997). As Haraway elucidates:

> The tools are often stories, retold stories, versions that reverse and displace the hierarchical dualisms of naturalized identities. In retelling origin stories, cyborg authors subvert the central myths of origin of Western culture. We have all been colonized by those origin myths, with their longing for fulfillment in apocalypse…Feminist cyborg stories have the task of recoding communication and intelligence to subvert command and control. (p. 521)

[1] It is worth noting that the gaze of Haraway's critique on Western epistemology is a reflection of the hegemony that it currently possesses in constituting what qualifies as knowledge (and upon what public policy is made). It does not necessarily suggest that her critique cannot be applied to those non-Western epistemologies that also propagate grand narratives that have been declared to be constructed through disembodied processes. This point underscores the idea that Western epistemology (or the West itself) should not be *ipso facto* read as being antithetical to, or opposite to, non-Western epistemologies. This form of essentializing not only erroneously romanticizes the non-West, but it also further reifies the imagined construction of the other.

In sum, because it does not acquiesce to philosophical claims that (re) produce social injustices—in fact, it seeks to actively transgress from them—cyborg writing functions as a discursive trajectory toward liberation from the grand narratives that inform and legitimize inequality along the fault lines of gender and sex (see Fraser & Nicholson, 1997). In this way, it is, to borrow the words of Sheena Vachhani (2015, p. 149), "a means of representing the unrepresentable as a way of challenging devalued notions of the 'feminine.'"

Haraway extends these ideas in her highly influential article, 'Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective' (1988). In this article, Haraway develops the idea of *feminist objectivity*, which she qualifies as localized expressions of situated knowledges. That is, feminist objectivity, "is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object" (p. 583). From the perspective of "situated and embodied knowledges," Haraway argues "against various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible, knowledge claims. Irresponsible means unable to be called into account" (p. 583). In integrating the ideas found in Haraway's two articles, cyborg writing can be understood as those writings that are epistemologically informed by experience—'situated' and 'embodied'—and which move toward deconstructing the systems by which the Western ethos of metaphysical bifurcation is produced, reproduced and, finally, reified.

While researchers in the field of organization studies have only begun to engage with the corpus of Haraway's ideas, there have been some critically orientated scholars who have adopted—intentionally or otherwise—genres of cyborg writing. I now turn to discuss the selected works of one such researcher in the field whose scholarship exemplifies—or, perhaps more aptly, *embodies*—the spirit of cyborg writing.

Jo Brewis' Scholarship as Cyborg Writing

Haraway's arguments, while being profound, are sometimes considered to be esoteric due to her peculiar style of prose and by the tacit assumption of the reader's familiarity with the nuanced debates that transpired during the second-wave feminist movement—and, especially, during the establishment of standpoint and identity politics of the 1980s. In an effort to contextualize Haraway's theoretical ideas, in this section, I situate two of Jo Brewis' scholarly contributions; such an endeavor seeks to illustrate

the textuality of cyborg writing.[2] Before continuing, however, it is crucial to position, as Brewis rightly does, the meaning of text from a Derridean perspective. That is, according to Derrida, texts are propagated by a plethora of signs "deployed by those who write and taken by those who read"; and, "so, even though [authors] may literally sign a piece of work as their own by putting their name to it, others may 'sign' it differently by reading other inferences into the traces of authorship within…the work" (Brewis, 2005, pp. 493–494). This astute observation is vital insofar as, in the present chapter, I am ascribing certain signs to Brewis' works that she may have never intended. While fully appreciating the point that my application can be construed as erroneous—from the original author's and some readers' perspectives—I equally believe that expanding the 'political' scope of Brewis' texts offers scholars in the field additional insights into what cyborg writing might look like in practice. In the remainder of this section, I provide a brief critical synopsis of two of Brewis' works and, then, I turn to discuss how they are exemplary of cyborg writing.

[2]While I invoke the works of Jo Brewis to illustrate the case of cyborg writing in this article, I could have also used the scholarship of other researchers in the field who could be considered to exemplify the practice of cyborg writing. For instance, in their own ways, Karen Ashcraft and Emma Bell have consistently collapsed the tenuous boundaries between the public and the private, have reflected on their personal experiences to critically analyze systems of hierarchy and privilege, and have questioned taken-for-granted epistemological assumptions that undergird mainstream perspectives (see Ashcraft, 1998; Bell & King, 2010; Bell & Shoaib, 2014; Bell & Sinclair, 2014). My decision to focus on Brewis in the present article is primarily motivated by deeply personal reasons. Although at the time of writing I had neither met nor communicated with her, it was upon reading her very moving account of her experiences as an early career researcher that contributed to catalyzing the eventual completion of my dissertation (see Brewis, 2004). While my dissertation did not share any substantive themes that comprise Brewis' research agenda, in the concluding chapter of my dissertation, I did acknowledge Brewis' essay as a source for personal inspiration. Indeed, while referring to one of my research sites, I wrote: "As Qalandiya appeared to have some discursive connection with my personal self, I elected to employ psychoanalytic theory to understand Qalandiya in terms of how it impacted me and the implications that it holds for the field. It was only after I had drafted this paper that I came across Joanna Brewis' (2004) powerful and forthright chapter on her experiences in the early part of her academic career. Everything I wanted to say about my experiences in the field and those that I had upon my return home are captured so eloquently in the first couple of pages of Brewis' chapter. Indeed, the parallels between her experiences and those that I had are rather uncanny. She so openly articulates all the 'truths' I wanted to say in this paper, but I elected not to" (Prasad, 2012b, p. 165). It was only after I had defended my dissertation that I chose to develop this chapter on Haraway and explicitly focus on a selection of Brewis' works as exemplar of cyborg writing.

Text 1—Brewis (2004)

In 2004, Brewis published her chapter, 'Refusing to be "me,"' in the book, *Identity Politics at Work*: *Resisting Gender*, *Gendering Resistance*. The chapter endeavors to make sense of a set of experiences that Brewis had shortly after the commencement of a new appointment during the early part of her academic career. She describes how the myriad pressures associated with her professional career at that stage in her life—which included moving to a new city to work at a new institution, developing new courses, and finishing a book—ultimately culminated in her being diagnosed with "nervous debility," or what she refers to as "chronic reactive anxiety and depression" (p. 24). Through a moving first-person approach, she describes the disposition of her "being" during this period of her life:

> Not wanting to let self or others down has…characterized my working life, which has been one of long hours, rigidly-adhered-to deadlines, allowing students to take up chunks of my time, anally retentive preparation for conferences, teaching, publications, job interviews and my Ph.D. viva and finding it difficult to say no to additional responsibilities…The more that I was told I appeared self-assured and good at what I did, the harder I worked to conceal my assumed inadequacies. Being 'human' in this respect, for me at least, involved working to stave off 'failure' in the way I look after my body, in my relationship with others and in my career. My deep-seated fear of being 'found out' is also linked to insecurity about my environment, and a desire to control it wherever possible. I failed to buy two properties while living in Portsmouth, dreaded opening official letters, checked things over and over, maintained superstitions religiously: the belief that disaster is just around the corner has always characterized my thinking patterns. I also felt guilty taking time off. Only when I was too tired to sit at a keyboard any more, when the house was tidy, the washing up was done and all necessary calls made could I switch off. (Brewis, 2004, p. 31)

Brewis reflexively notes that, "[this episode] represents a violence that [she] inflicted on [her]self as a result of [her] self-image and the ways in which [she] performed it on a daily basis" (p. 24).

By interweaving narration and critical analysis, Brewis attempts to make sense of the experiences that she describes as well as the changes that she subsequently made using Foucault's notion of techniques of the self. Drawing on this concept, she explains that, "for Foucault it

is *not* the case that being in one way is somehow superior to being in another." Rather, for Foucault, "we need to be alert to the different ways in which we could be and to begin to make conscious choices about how we relate to ourselves" (p. 25, emphasis in original). Interestingly, this Foucauldian claim indicates the multiplicity of being—the possibilities of making and re-making ourselves. That is, although essentialist logic attempts to establish static ontological parameters onto our being—so as to be able to know the coherent self and, equally, to know the coherent self of others—who we are, our very identity, is always subject to flux, change and fragmentation by the discursive effects of time and space (Harding, 2008; Prasad, 2012a). In the end, Brewis explains that she has engaged in a difficult identity-transforming project through which she has consciously sought to redress the techniques of the self that have governed her being and that have caused her such high levels of anxiety, self-regulation and paranoia.

Text 2—Brewis (2005)

A year later, in 2005, Brewis published her article, 'Signing my life away? Researching sex and organization', in the journal, *Organization*. As much of her scholarship had, to date, been devoted to the study of sex and sexuality (Brewis & Linstead, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c), she describes the signs of authorship that has been ascribed to her by some fellow members of the academy. As she states: "I have become aware that some of my academic colleagues believe I am involved in the various practices which my work interrogates and/or that my co-authors are also my intimates" (Brewis, 2005, p. 494). For Brewis, given the content of her research, her public and private lives had become intertwined to such an extent that she— her "self"—has become defined by a set of gendered and sexualized markers. Citing Coffey, she elucidates that: "[A]s an academic, I am therefore a 'visible' as well as a 'writing' and 'speaking' body—my authorship is marked by both gender and sexuality" (p. 498). As a woman academic, she is well cognizant of what such connotations have translated into:

> The [biographizing] inference appears to be that I am, consciously or unconsciously, trading on my sexuality in order to get on. If I have achieved any measure of academic success, then, the interpretation which suggests I am engaged in [sexual] relationships with my collaborators

> perhaps serves to discount the merits of this success. Maybe it confirms that women can only progress in organizations if they ally themselves with men, as well as mitigating against any 'threat' that my participation in the public space of the academy—my publications, my presentations, my attendance at conferences—may pose. (Brewis, 2005, p. 499)

This suggests a negation, or outright denigration, of her work—and of the effort involved in producing such work—due to certain connotations associated with the topics that her research covers and the individuals with whom she collaborates. Brewis (2005, p. 505) spells out the ensuing implications of this outcome:

> The construction of knowledge gathering as necessarily scientific and objective (and its opposite as unscientific, subjective and therefore flawed) is, I would contend, still at large—even amongst my own academic community, a group of organization studies researchers who share a commitment to interpretive forms of investigation. Constructing someone as the kind of author who has intimate contact with their collaborators (or respondents) may therefore also construct their work as less valuable.

All too poignantly, I concur with Brewis in her contention that even among members of the critical community—those of who regularly declare their penchant for interpretivist approaches to research—there still exists habitual recourse to some desultory form of objectivity that might function to validate empirically grounded conclusions (see Baxter & Chua, 2008).

In this article, Brewis further considers the role that her personal history has had on her decision to pursue a research agenda on sex and sexuality. She asserts that the dynamics of her upbringing—"being raised as a Catholic, with all the complexities growing up in this religion implies for its female faithful" (p. 503)—is a source of her ongoing research interests; however, she observes that in the process of investigating such interests, there has been a conflation of her personal and her public selves. The latter point is vividly achieved, as Brewis elaborates, through rumors that circulated within certain segments of the academy that sexualized her relationship with her collaborators. Such rumors functioned as a "subtle critique of bias, implying that the author in question is not to be trusted because they are insufficiently detached from the topic they are examining" (p. 505). Taking these points collectively, Brewis illuminates the need to account for biography in the process of knowledge

production, although, somewhat ironically, it has been Brewis' very willingness to delve into her biography, which has effectively conflated the public and the private realms of her life and which has called the legitimacy of her research—and, to some degree, her self too!—into question.

Performing Cyborg Writing

Integrating the ideas of Haraway and Irigaray, Margaret Toye (2012) considers the political and the ethical dimensions of cyborg writing. Toye's point of analytical departure is Irigaray's notion of *écriture féminine*, which translates to "feminine writing" or, to expand its definitional scope, "writing the body." Undergirding the idea of *écriture féminine* is the claim that, "[w]riting philosophy … [is] truly embodied practice, where the writing is inextricable from the bodies that produce the thought" (p. 190; see also Toye, 2010). In this way, *écriture féminine* shares both philosophical and political affinity with Helene Cixous's (1976, p. 875) advice in her watershed essay, 'The laugh of the Medusa':

> I shall speak about women's writing: about *what it will do*. Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies—for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement. (emphasis in original)

Indeed, what Cixous is calling for—much like Haraway—is writing that embodies women's distinct narratives; that is, for women to "write her self."

In considering its political and ethical aspects, Toye explains that, "cyborg writing is tied to particular gendered and raced bodies and practices of writing" (p. 191). Hence, cyborg writing is a form of socio-cultural agency proffered to those individuals who have been oppressed, marginalized, denigrated, negated, or who have otherwise had their subjectivity rendered invisible in the hegemonic writing that, by its very essence, privileges certain corporeal classes (on this point, see Spivak, 1988). Toye asserts that cyborgian modes of writing are an integral part of the emancipation project in that they allow these individuals to reclaim writing as a tool for personal and collective liberation—therein, postulating a claim wholly antithetical to Audre Lorde's (1984) now famous feminist adage, "the master's tools will never

dismantle the master's house." Toye concludes that there exists salient potential for Haraway's cyborg, as embodied through the practice of writing (and, by extension, reading), to be recast "in a new 'body' or context, that of 'poethics'" (p. 191); and, in doing so, "[t]he lived lives of people in their particular embodied locations also becomes 'cyborg writing'" (p. 192).

Returning to Haraway's (1988) article, 'Situated knowledges,' in which she outlines her concept of feminist objectivity as knowledge constructed through localized lived realities, we again see the concept's affinity with cyborg writing. Indeed, cyborg writing commences from the epistemological foundation of feminist objectivity; at the same time that feminist objectivity rebukes extreme interpretations of cultural relativism that can be manipulated to sustain and perpetuate the disenfranchisement of Others by shielding problematic ideologies from critique, it resists in affording any credence to universality or to totalizing knowledge systems such as through the reified articulation of cultural metanarratives (Prasad, Segarra, & Villanueva, in press). Cyborg writing, as grounded in and read through feminist objectivity, is *écriture féminine* in action, wherein there emerges the subversion of Cartesian ethics to such a radical degree that there subsequently exists not even the remnants of the (artificial) distinction between knowledge and the knowledge creator (Toye, 2012).

Haraway (1997) traces the genealogy of the cyborg to the sociopolitical conditions of the late twentieth century. She explicates this point by averring that the cyborg "is the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism, not to mention state socialism." Importantly, she notes, "illegitimate offspring are exceedingly unfaithful to their origins." In an analogous way, Brewis explains how her own origins and experiences inform the knowledge that she produces. This is particularly apparent in her article 'Signing my life away.' Pondering the reasons why she has pursued research on sex and organizations, Brewis writes:

> Perhaps it is due to being raised as a Catholic, with all the complexities that growing up in this religion implies for its female faithful…Perhaps it is because I spent my first eighteen years in a village where teenage girls were by and large classified as either 'frigid' or 'loose', and had to negotiate their way through the resultant sexual minefield. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that I have been a serial monogamist, producing a concomitant desire to explore other people's sexual experiences, whether they were similar to or different from my own. (Brewis, 2005, p. 503)

One reading of this statement affords credence to Haraway's description of the cyborg's genealogy. Indeed, while Brewis grew up in a country that was foundational—at least in the post-Enlightenment era—for the propagation of arguments that crystallized metaphysical duality, and thus discreetly separated experience from knowledge (Shilling, 1993), she negotiated her way through dichotomized social and sexual categories. While she became "a serial monogamist," thus conforming to the dominant sexual mores of society, she may concurrently be using her research agenda as a voyeuristic mechanism by which to explore and expose the alternative sexualities of others. Such exposure potentially challenges the prevailing socio-sexual constitution and, in doing so, positions Brewis as the illegitimate offspring that is *unfaithful to her origins*.

We ascertain additional insights when scrutinizing the structure of Brewis' approach to writing. While narrative approaches are increasingly acquiring purchase among organization studies scholars (e.g., Hatch, 1996; Prasad & Qureshi, 2017; Rhodes & Brown, 2005a, 2005b), in empirical articles that undertake narrative analysis, there continues to be a neat separation—often marked by the division of a paper's sections—between descriptions of experience and scholarly analysis. This indicates an implicit recourse, even in narrative studies, to the idea that knowledge construction occurs at a transcendental level beyond experience. In each of the works described above, Brewis does not yield to any such convention that compartmentalizes narration and analysis. Instead, the hallmark of her writing is defined by a certain dialecticism wherein experience and critical examination ubiquitously inform one another. Indeed, in her writing, there is no tangible distinction between her situated 'being' and her theorizing. In this way, Brewis embodies the substance of praxis as so eloquently elucidated by bell hooks (1994, p. 61): "When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to the processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice."

Politicizing Writing

I recently had a manuscript accepted for publication in a special issue of a well-ranked (non-critical) business journal. Months after the manuscript was given unconditional acceptance by the guest editors, I received an e-mail from the editor-in-chief of the journal advising me that additional revisions were necessary before the article could appear in print.

The editor had enclosed a copy of the manuscript with track changes of his editorial comments embedded within it. I was somewhat alarmed by the comments noted on the title page of the manuscript. In bolded capital letters, the editor wrote: "**TOO MUCH SENTENCE TRASH APPEARS IN THIS PAPER**." Moreover, I was further instructed to: "**IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF 100 SENTENCES IN [THE] PAPER. THE REVISIONS THAT DO APPEAR (DONE BY ME [THE EDITOR]) GIVE SOME IDEA OF THE WORK NECESSARY TO BE DONE**." As I looked through the comments, the source of the editor's frustration became unequivocally clear: the first-person approach adopted in the manuscript. I ultimately acquiesced to the editor's demand to change the voice of the manuscript from first person to third person, and the manuscript was subsequently published (Prasad & Holzinger, 2013).

This experience served as a sad reminder that among certain members of the academy, there continues to exist the tacit belief that knowledge construction is a detached process; namely, that knowledge itself is ontologically divorced from its creator. Indeed, it reinforces the very Cartesian truths that propagated beliefs about the bifurcation between epistemology and materiality (for a related argument made through a reading of Luce Irigaray, see Fotaki, Metcalfe, & Harding, 2014). The separation of these two ideas was foundational in maintaining boundaries regarding those who can legitimately create knowledge and those who cannot—certain sexed and raced bodies were declared to be bound to the material conditions of the social world and, therefore, exempt from occupying the role of knowledge producer (or even reasoned thinker) (Shilling, 1993). While the boundaries were established with fever in the post-Enlightenment era, as Hopfl (2000) argues, they continue to marginalize historically disenfranchised groups such as women (Cixous, 1976; Fotaki, 2013).

Writing is an important form of political action (Cixous, 1976). Grey and Sinclair (2006) ask scholars to *write differently* to capture writing's aesthetic, moral and political potential. They, and others in the field, have observed that for this potential to be channeled into social change, scholars must write with clarity and for accessibility (Tourish, 2015). Extending the line of thought on the possibilities of writing, Haraway (1997) goes so far as to describe writing as a necessary tool for cyborgs. Namely, writing serves as agency, whereby the political claims of the cyborg are embodied and articulated. To illuminate this point, I have

critically assessed a selection of Jo Brewis' (2004, 2005) writings. The genre adopted in, and the content of, Brewis' scholarship captures the spirit of cyborg writing by transgressing from the normative constitution of epistemology, which Haraway (1988) elsewhere asserts as engendering undeserved privilege to (androcentric) Western knowledge systems.

To conclude this discussion, I will identify two interrelated possibilities that scholars, especially those whose works have been inflected by various strands of critical thought, might consider adopting in their own future work. Here, I will also briefly reflect on how I have engaged with each of these possibilities using my doctoral research project on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict as an example. Admittedly, my engagements have been met with varying degrees of success (and failure).

The first consideration pivots on the question of the political itself. Writing should, for it to qualify as a tool of the cyborg, be offered as an overtly political act. From this purview, writing would be intended to dismantle the many social, political, and economic injustices that currently prevail in society (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Prasad, 2018). This declaration is not intended to translate into mere recourse to a subjective position, for critical organization studies scholars are all too familiar with critiques of objectivity. Rather, I point to the urgent need to drape writing in an explicitly political stance (Li & Prasad, 2018)—one that seeks, as Haraway imagined, deconstruction and revolution. Brewis realizes this objective by using her writing to embody the classic second-wave feminist adage, *the personal is the political*. Through her writing, she diligently collapses the fallacious ideal of the body/mind split—among other metaphysical assertions—and locates knowledge construction as a process that falls within the jurisdictional terrain of human experience. In the same spirit, scholars should aim to politicize their writing in a manner that is overt, instead of passive. Researchers habitually assume that the political element of their scholarship (if they even have one) will be discerned by its readers, and so they do not explicate the social transformation that their writing is demanding. Progressive and critical scholars of the academy must release themselves from this proclivity by imbuing their work with unapologetic claims of the change that they endeavor to create in the world. Actualizing such a project will be cyborg writing in action.

My dissertation fieldwork was an experience replete with instances of violence, discrimination, and resilience. I witnessed, first-hand, the inhumanity that I had only previously read about and appreciated through

vicarious imagination. In Chapter 2, I critically appraised these issues using the backdrop of my fraught experiences in crossing Qalandiya, a border that separates Ramallah from Jerusalem. My experiences in the field, complemented by reflexive conversations with senior colleagues, compelled me to politicize my research and writing—to not sanitize what I encountered in the process of producing scholarship. In Chapter 2, I not only elucidate how my own history as a refugee and as a visible minority in a White-settler country informed how I interpreted my fieldwork encounters, but I also consider how I went about resolving the guilt that I felt as a result of the inherently asymmetrical relationship between my informants and me. Indeed, I wrote:

> Witnessing the conditions of the West Bank firsthand, I have made a concerted effort in framing my interpretation of the ongoing occupation in terms of neo-colonialism, hegemony, and oppression, rather than conforming to the dispassionate vernacular that defines much of the field of organization studies. This has meant that I not only unapologetically circulate the stories of the informants, but it further demands that I expose the reprehensible conditions of neo-colonial occupation. I understand that doing so may entail certain consequences to my career; however, I equally recognize that such an act also ensures that I am giving back substantively to those individuals who took the necessary risks to share their stories with me so honestly and openly. Interestingly, at the personal level, this helps me to absolve myself of the 'enormous guilt' that I experienced in the field concerning not doing enough to give back to the individuals and the communities from whom I so greatly benefited.

Intertwining the personal with the political not only placated, for me, the now perennial 'relevance' question in business schools (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005), but it provided one important avenue by which to ensure that my research is charged with social and political mandates.

The second consideration is related to the first. Critical researchers are well aware of the implications that emerged from the institutional pressures to pursue scholarship within positivist and functionalist paradigms (Prasad, Segarra, & Villanueva, in press). Indeed, they have long noted how these pressures have defined the scope of what types of research are valued and, by extension, worth publishing (e.g., Prasad, 2013, 2015a; Tourish, 2011; Willmott, 2011). The negative implications on scholarship do not cease here, however. Paradigmatic pressures have equally dictated how researchers should present their writing and ideas; and,

certainly, even critical members of the academy have not escaped these scholarly demands (Phillips et al., 2014). If writing is indeed a political act, as Haraway contends and as Brewis expresses, then *how* we write matters. But the question remains, then: What might such forms of writing look like? Scholars might take some suggestion from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) seminal text, *A Thousand Plateaus*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and specifically their idea of the rhizome. A rhizome, for them, is grounded in the "[p]rinciples of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be…A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles" (p. 7). Deleuze and Guattari achieve the ideological aims of the rhizome by not conforming their text to any *logical* chronology; there is neither a defined beginning nor a defined end, but only myriad ideas that can be linked through critical consideration of different entities that come to collectively define social reality and experience. By not yielding to the orthodox subscription of what qualifies as scholarly writing, Deleuze and Guattari set out on a (politically driven) project to subvert the constitution of how epistemological claims are presented—and this very act, I argue, renders anxiety and chaos in the hegemonic epistemological structures themselves, which have been founded and maintained on a set of problematic androcentric values. In a similar way, organization researchers should be aware of not only what they write but how they write it. They should consciously strive to write in ways of discursive practice; so as to position writing as a mechanism to unravel the structured systems of oppression and privilege, which function collectively to maintain the inertia of problematic status quos. Invoking the rhizome as a metaphor offers a useful starting point for pursuing cyborg writing.

It was, in part, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome imagery that motivated me to write a paper that used stream of consciousness techniques to develop my ideas. In Chapter 3, I describe a problematic experience that I had while conducting fieldwork in the West Bank. I purposefully employed stream of consciousness, which was lightly peppered with theoretical insights, so as to not conform to the traditional and the acceptable ways of presenting an academic article (at least in business schools fields). There was a purposeful interplay between, on the one hand, what I was doing, feeling and seeing and, on the other, some consideration of the extant literature and theories. My aim was

to absolve myself, as the author, of the oppressive conventions that dictate how academic writing must be presented. It was to illuminate the idea that consideration of theory can never be divorced from corporeal experience—regardless of what Descartes may have asserted. It was in fusing experience with theory so inextricably that any understanding of the latter is impossible without accounting for the former that became one of the tacit claims of the chapter. In terms of content, it focused on another idea central to Deleuze and Guattari's work, though still related to the metaphor of the rhizome—*becoming*. Indeed, this chapter attributed the development—or, the *becoming*—of my political affinities with Palestinians, a systematically oppressed group in the region, as a corollary of some of the ethnographic experiences that I encountered while I was in the field.[3]

What I have sought to achieve in my dissertation-based chapters, though without necessarily being deliberate about it, is an attempt to dislocate the hegemonic discourse that has been ideologically constructed to qualify the conflict between Palestine and Israel—a discourse that systematically fails to recognize the voice and the humanity of subjects from the former geopolitical region. This discourse has effectively demonized Palestinians, and has all too often engendered consequences against those who question the prevailing institutional arrangement that allows for the continual undermining of the Palestinian cause. Though they occupy positions that are perceived as being relatively secure, academics are certainly not immune from the repercussions that are the corollary of provocatively adopting a stance that grounds the subjugated and disenfranchised nature of Palestinian lived realities into ongoing debates. The cases of tenure denial of Norman Finkelstein at DePaul University (Prasad, 2015b) and the more recent revocation of tenured appointment of Steven Salaita at the University of Illinois at

[3]Given that this chapter relies on Haraway's work for its theoretical framing, it is worth noting that in her more recent book, *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway moves beyond Deleuze's idea of "becoming" by developing the notion of "becoming-with." Specifically, she addresses the question, "How is 'becoming-with' a practice of becoming worldly" (p. 3). Reflecting on her text, she notes elsewhere, "[t]he task of WSM [When Species Meet] is 'becoming with' rather than "becoming", at every interleaved scale of time and space, in material-semiotic places (here, not there; there, not here; this, not everything; attachment sites, not case studies for the general; oxymorons, not examples), all the way down, without end but also without ever starting from scratch and never alone" (Haraway, 2010, p. 28).

Urbana-Champaign (Flaherty, 2014) are poignant illustrations of this fact.[4] However, it is perhaps the problematic establishment and influence of the Orwellian website Campus Watch (http://www.campus-watch.org/)—which, among other things, "monitor[s] Middle Eastern studies faculty in departments across the US for signs of anti-American and anti-Israel bias" (Roy, 2004, p. 24)—that has served to censor pro-Palestinian representation in the academy and, therein, maintain the hegemony of a unitary narrative in conceptualizing the conflict. Such censorship has in effect—and as Haraway might have predicted—achieved a level of silencing; it has circumscribed the debate on the Palestinian question in academia and public policy alike. Indeed, as Salaita's case much too sadly demonstrates, censorship on this subject has come to delineate the parameters of academic freedom by defining what can be said, who can say it, and how it can be said. Transgression from these parameters often carries detrimental risk to one's career and social standing.

In a very modest way, in my own work, I have sought to destabilize this hegemonic discourse by inserting reflexive and situated accounts from the field, which are—especially when taken

Repudiating the anthropocentricism that undergirds the Deleuzian concept of "becoming," Haraway uses "becoming-with" to stress how the symbiotic relations between multiple and varied figures—and certainly not all of the figures in Haraway's logic are human—co-produce understanding of, and put at stake, the material-semiotic world.

[4]Norman Finkelstein, an outspoken critic of certain Israeli foreign and domestic policies that contravene international law and engender the mistreatment of Palestinians, was denied tenure at DePaul University in 2007. Even with an outstanding research and teaching record, and even after being recommended for tenure by the relevant department and faculty-level committees, Finkelstein ultimately had his tenure application rejected. It has been well documented that the denial of Finkelstein's bid for tenure was an outcome of the (academic) backlash generated by his political stance on Israel (for details on the case, see Prasad, 2015b). Along a similar ideological current, in 2014, Steven Salaita had his offer of tenured appointment in the American Indian Studies program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign rescinded by its vice president and chancellor Phyllis Wise, just days before his employment at the university was expected to commence. The reason for the abrogation of Salaita's contract has been attributed to the comments posted by him during the preceding summer months on his personal Twitter account concerning the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza. These comments included the remark: "At this point, if Netanyahu appeared on TV with a necklace made from the teeth of Palestinian children, would anybody be surprised?" (Flaherty, 2014).

collectively—subversive to the dominant pro-Israeli position. Analogous to Brewis, and through a reading of Haraway, this work problematizes the prevalent narrative on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict by contributing another voice to understanding a complex phenomenon; it, therein, illuminates the politics of resistance and of cyborg writing. On the latter idea, it does so by: (i) supplanting the universal with the particular, the singular with the multiple, and (ii) interrupting the dichotomized logic of othering by repudiating the demonized portrayal of the Palestinian body politic.

As a final note, and as the experience that I described at the outset of this section suggests, experimenting with writing is not an endeavor that will be without its obstacles—especially if publication in well-ranked (and, all too often, positivist) journals is the ultimate intent. Indeed, as recent history has already demonstrated, experimenting with writing or paradigms initiates anxiety among even the most accomplished academics in the field, and attempts to silence such experimentation is often the outcome (Donaldson, 2003; Mintzberg, 1991). Editors, associate editors, editorial board members, and reviewers serve as gatekeepers of what is to be published and, as importantly, what must be kept out. It is not without merit to state that journals from certain geographical areas are more restrictive than others (Prasad, 2015b). Not all too surprisingly, then, the articles described above appeared in *Human Relations* and *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, respectively (Prasad, 2014a, b)—two European journals known for having editorial teams with rigorous but progressive members. More recently, however, I had a co-authored paper accepted for publication using my dissertation data in the American journal, *Business and Society* (Khoury & Prasad, 2016). While this journal did not allow for the level of reflexivity that appeared in my earlier works, my co-author and I did locate spaces in which to call the ongoing illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine for what it is. Calling it by its name—a brutal neo-colonial occupation—retains the politics of the article, while still furnishing us with the latitude to engage with some of the mainstream organizational discourses occurring in the field. It is worth noting that it was in engaging with such discourses that opened the possibility for the article to appear in a mainstream journal. I am using this anecdote as a somewhat crude way of underscoring the idea that there are discursive spaces of opportunity—even in American scholarly outlets—from which to pursue meaningful and politically activist

research that relays narratives of the marginalized and, thereby, extends the project of cyborg writing.

Concluding Remarks

Critical scholars in the field of organization studies have long observed how writing can serve as an important site for social transformation (Li & Prasad, 2018; Phillips et al., 2014; Rhodes & Brown, 2005a, 2005b; Segarra & Prasad, 2018; Segarra & Prasad, in press). By allowing for the emergence of a multiplicity of voices—some of which would ostensibly challenge the hegemony of the status quo—cyborg writing provides one important avenue by which to realize this laudable objective. Indeed, cyborg writing transforms the singular into the multiple and, thereby, inserts uncertainty into any notion of universality that seeks to privilege the narratives of certain subjects while relegating the narratives of others. Conscientious efforts to engage with cyborg writing hold the potential to redefine what constitutes legitimate and worthy scholarship in the field.

It further merits note that much akin to feminine writing (Pullen & Rhodes, 2015), cyborg writing is not a monolithic enterprise—it is composed of, and can thus be represented by, diverse forms of prose and genres. Somewhat analogous to Cixous' (1976, p. 876) declaration against a universal (and phallogocentric) classification of womanhood and the possibilities that emerge from heterogeneous positioning—"[w]omen's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible"—so, too, is cyborg writing constituted by innumerable possibilities. As it is primarily concerned with dismissing the grand narratives that have historically structured much of society in favor of a multiplicity of particularities, of situated knowledges, cyborg writing proves to possess the malleable attributes necessary to dislocate the cultural sources of phallogocentricism. Likewise, it is the tool of the cyborg that can be adaptable to the idiosyncratic voice(s) of its author. Indeed, so long as its author is aware of its underlying motive—to subvert and to cause chaos to the unitary nature of Western epistemology or, to put it another way, "to [challenge] the masculine orthodoxy by confusing it" (Phillips et al., 2014, p. 313)—cyborg writing can be expressed and *embodied* through myriad trajectories. As Haraway declares, cyborg writing is, all at the same time, playful, imaginative, and metaphorical. Its possibilities and its promises in the discipline of organization studies and beyond are indeed limitless.

I will offer a forewarning to conclude this chapter. Given the current state of the field, and with the exception of certain progressive circles of the academy, undertakings of cyborg writing will continue to be met with resistance, negation, and even condemnation. Critics will continue to baulk at its legitimacy as a scholarly pursuit. Its 'science' will remain under pressure. Accusations of engaging in intellectual masturbation over research that has 'relevance' will prevail. On this issue, we might draw some inspiration by returning, once again, to Brewis. Brewis' response to what she encountered from certain constituents in the field when she wrote, with her male colleagues, about sex and sexuality is both subversive and powerful. Rather than being silent about the circulating rumors in the field—and, thereby, giving the rumors any sort of credibility—Brewis utilized the mode of cyborgian writing to unapologetically confront them. In writing from and about her body, as Cixous advised, she discursively afforded credence to her self by reclaiming her identity, and the merits of her research. She turned the shame that was once cast on her with the intent to ascertain her silence—or, at a minimum, to govern her voice—onto the very people that invoked gossip to call into question her credibility as a scholar. Taken from this example, operationalizing cyborg writing thoroughly and repetitively will pose substantive challenges, and may even come to destabilize, the consecrated myths that Haraway decried some 30 years ago.

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CHAPTER 5

Teaching Autoethnography Through Vulnerability

Abstract This chapter concludes the book by applying reflexivity to my experiences in teaching a doctoral seminar on qualitative research methods. This chapter considers how autoethnography might be pedagogically approached. It underscores the need for professors to situate themselves in positions of vulnerability by offering autoethnographic evidence of their own lived and research experiences. This vulnerability allows students to both appreciate the dynamics and the benefits of autoethnography as a qualitative research method and to move toward transforming the classroom into a more open pedagogical space.

Keywords Autoethnography · Qualitative research · Pedagogy · Teaching · Vulnerability

In 2010, I assumed my first full-time academic appointment as a lecturer (equivalent to the North American title of assistant professor) at UNSW Business School (Australian Graduate School of Business) in Sydney. As part of my teaching responsibilities, I was assigned to co-teach a doctoral seminar on qualitative research methods.[1] I was excited as well as a little

[1]While for the purposes of this chapter I am referring to this course as a doctoral seminar, it should be clarified that, due to the nature of the Australian postgraduate system, this course included select other research students, including MPhil and Honors candidates. Regardless of their degree programs, each of these students was required to pursue some

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3_5

uneasy about my teaching role in the doctoral program; not least because I had committed the cardinal graduate student sin by assuming the appointment as an ABD (it would not be for another two full years after I commenced my position at UNSW Business School that I would finally defend my PhD dissertation). What only seemed to add to my apprehension was the fact that the course catered to research students from across the various disciplines of the business school. As such, in addition to students in management (my home discipline), I was charged with the task of teaching students from accounting, information systems, marketing and, occasionally, economics and finance.

It had only been a year earlier that I was conducting fieldwork in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, using ethnographic methods to collect data for my dissertation. My days in the field marked, what would collectively become, the most traumatizing experience that I encountered in my life thus far—replete with instances of racism, cultural negation, and literal and symbolic violence (see Chapters 2 and 3). Shortly after I returned from the Middle East, I was notified that I was awarded a funded Graduate Research Fellowship by Yale University. The opportunity to live in New Haven for a year—and without any teaching or research assistantship obligations—would have, ordinarily, provided me with sufficient time and space to write my dissertation. In the end, however, I did very little writing for my dissertation—or successfully undertake any other substantive academic work for that matter—during the fellowship period. Reflecting on that stage of my life now (almost a decade later), I can reasonably conclude that I was paralyzed by the things that I had encountered in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. I had become consumed by sentiments of guilt, anxiety, anger, and regret (Prasad, 2014a, 2014b).

What ultimately aided me in overcoming my intellectual stagnation was serious engagement with autoethnography. Autoethnography allowed me to make sense of what I had encountered in the field, and to resolve the "trauma"—psychanalytically speaking—that I carried with

form of original research by writing either a thesis or dissertation. In most departments within the business school, this was a compulsory course for research students. It also merits note that I once I vacated my post at UNSW Business School and I assumed a position at Tecnologico de Monterrey's EGADE Business School in Mexico, I continue to offer qualitative methods at the doctoral level, though with the move I am solely responsible for the delivery of the course.

me even after I had returned "home" (see Chapter 2). I would eventually pursue research informed by the tenets of autoethnography with much enthusiasm, not only to understand my specific experiences with the fieldwork that I had undertaken for my dissertation (Prasad, 2014a, 2014b), but also the doctoral student experience more broadly (Prasad, 2013, 2015a).

Given how well autoethnography had come to serve me both personally and professionally, one of my agendas for the qualitative research methods course was to convey to students its utility. This would be facilitated by the fact that I was responsible for delivering the particular seminar devoted to autoethnography. While I certainly did not expect every student in the class to incorporate this methodological approach, I did want to expose them to autoethnography and to make it an available resource for them in the data collection process, and where necessary, as an approach to self-understanding. Nonetheless, the question remained: How do I go about achieving this objective? This is particularly cumbersome in the context of the business school, where positivist science toward research—and instrumentality toward career development—prevails with little objection or resistance (Prasad, 2015b).

What became quickly apparent was that the teaching of autoethnography could not be approached in the same manner that I taught other methods. When I taught topics such as critical discourse analysis or storytelling, there was little need, if any, for me to situate myself, as researcher or as teacher, into the pedagogical process. I could reasonably limit the scope of the seminar to a (relatively detached) discussion of the theory of the method and to its benefits as a qualitative approach; and, therein, not engage in any form of "situated" analyses wherein my personal self was implicated. Irrespective of my own interpretivist predilections, when it came to teaching most methods, a level of Cartesian duality could be maintained in terms of how I went about teaching the students in the course.

The nature and the purview of autoethnography demanded that I take an alternative approach. Indeed, at the empirical crux of autoethnography is the willingness for the gaze to be turned upon the self in an effort to conceptualize the intersubjective nexus between subject and society. As Dutta (2015, p. 161) observes: "An autoethnographic sensibility entails the recognition that we craft our scholarship in distinctive and personally meaningful ways…Autoethnography is a genre of writing that connects the personal to the social, cultural, and political." For this

reason, autoethnographic insights hold the potential to "enrich the story, ethnography or case study and enhance the reflexivity of the methodology" (Humphreys, 2005, p. 853). Parallel to its practice, the self cannot be negated when teaching autoethnography. As such, what I sought to do in the classroom, and the underlying message that this chapter seeks to convey, is to, essentially, collapse the boundaries between the theory and the practice of autoethnography during the teaching process. That is to say, to incorporate autoethnographic reflections—much of which is based on my own research—as a path by which to exalt its merits as a qualitative methodological approach.

It became clear that I needed to situate myself into the seminar on autoethnography. As has already been noted by scholars in the field of organization studies and elsewhere, autoethnography habitually renders the subject of study—that is, the author of the narrative—in a state of vulnerability (Brewis, 2005; Medford, 2006). Indeed, autoethnography requires authors to disclose (sometimes) intimate details about themselves. I took this point seriously. I shared some very personal reflections and excerpts of my personal writings from while I was in the West Bank, which revealed my psychological angst in the fieldwork process—some of which would eventually be published (Prasad, 2014a, 2014b).

As importantly, and so as to relate better to the students, I revealed some of my most difficult experiences in the PhD program. This included not only discussions on the institutional pressures cast on doctoral students to pursue a dissertation within a certain assemblage of paradigmatic boundaries, methodological approaches, and research parameters (Prasad, 2015a), but also the sense of failure that routinely manifests among members of this group. To convey this point, I revealed how I nearly did not complete my PhD as a consequent of the toxic dynamics that had emerged between my supervisor and I; and I eventually only did complete because of the decision to switch to another supervisor with whom I was more ideologically aligned. Completing the program in six years, when I originally anticipated to complete it in four years, resulted in perceiving myself as someone who was not competent enough to belong in academia (Prasad, 2016).

Although as a professor leading the seminar I was in a position of power relative to the students, in sharing such details, it effectively dismantled hierarchies by positioning me in a state of vulnerability. It was

this vulnerability that, I believe, established trust between the doctoral students and me. Namely, in my willingness to assume a condition of vulnerability through autoethnographic reflections, my students appeared to be equally more willing to share their own—sometimes, very personal—narratives. It created an incredible classroom dynamic, wherein the self (mine and theirs) could be interrogated, understood, and even nurtured in the context of scientific research. A new compassion seemed to come to fruition, which allowed us to relate to one another not only as individuals invested in the same profession, but also as members of a community genuinely interested in one another's care. It allowed for discourses to emerge that would have otherwise been subjugated by conventional power relations between professor and student and by the assumption that good pedagogy pivots on the exercise of objectivity and by the static separation between the body and the mind.

To animate this point, let me offer one example of how students in the class opened up. As this class mainly consisted of first-year doctoral students, most did not yet have experience with conducting empirical research, and certainly not with firsthand data collection. They did, however, upon hearing my own experiences, begin to express the difficulties they have encountered in navigating the early part of the PhD program. This included managing relationships with their supervisors and peers, office politics, and the constant pressures to publish in 'top-tier' journals. The most conspicuous sentiment that emerged, in one form or another, was the idea of being an imposter—that they did not belong in the doctoral program because they were simply not smart enough (Coller, 2016). I attribute, at least partly, the willingness for students in the class to share feelings such as this due to my own willingness to be open with them about some of my germane experiences as a doctoral student. In so doing, of course, it discursively extolled the merits of autoethnography as a qualitative method. Likewise, because I published scholarship that was grounded in ethnographic reflections, it illuminated the method's potential in research.

In sum, and at least based on my own experiences, vulnerability performs in a very powerful function when teaching with and about autoethnography. It is, indeed, this vulnerability that has engendered some of the most fulfilling teaching moments that I have had in the early stages of my academic career.

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A. Prasad, *Autoethnography and Organization Research*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-05099-3