Betrayal in the Research Encounter

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Abstract

The ethnographic method draws on empathy, connection, and concern and appears to provide greater respect for and power to one's research subjects. However, feminist ethnographers have grappled with concern for "whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation" (Stacey 1988, 22). In this paper, I look at these feelings of exploitation and their possible connection to betrayal in the research process. Through a series of nested questions, I argue that betrayal can be a powerful analytical lens for feminist ethnographic analysis. I demonstrate this potential through three specific areas of exploration: representation, solidarity, and privilege. By speaking to epistemological concerns I have in my own ethnographic project, I contribute a written artifact from the research process that represents a researcher's internal decision-making and thinking. I hold that increased publication and sharing of such intermediary artifacts will reveal the fictions of objective research and demonstrate the personal, internal processes that are behind the construction of all research projects.

Keywords: betrayal, risks, epistemology, reflexivity, feminist ethnography, research

Introduction

Feminist anthropologists have long grappled with the duality of holding feminist principles while conducting and writing an ethnography. As Marilyn Strathern points out, "Much of the awkwardness in the relationship between feminism and anthropology lies rather in the structure of their epistemological styles. It renders their relationship a hybrid" (1988, 37). Lila Abu-Lughod unpacks Strathern's point, stating that feminist anthropologists are "caught in a tension created by the two different ways feminists and anthropologists are supposed to relate to their subjects" (1990, 16). The discipline of anthropology was founded on a self-other dichotomy with knowledge production based on establishing difference (Trouillot 1991). However, feminist scholars rejected such a separation between subject and object, and knower and known (Haraway 1988; Strathern 1991). Instead, most feminist scholars, as Judith Stacey articulates, advocate for an "integrative, trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge which grounds theory contextually in the concrete realm of women's everyday lives" (1988, 21).

We see feminist ethnographers struggling to rework expectations of scientific objectivity embedded in conventional ethnographic method while seeking out a different genre "characterized by authenticity, reciprocity, and inter-subjectivity between the researcher and her 'subjects'" (Stacey 1988, 22). Is this possible or is it but a pipe dream? While acknowledging that the ethnographic method draws on the human resources of empathy, connection, and concern and also appears to provide greater respect for and power to one's research subjects, Stacey questions "whether the appearance of greater respect for and equality with research subjects in the ethnographic approach masks a deeper, more dangerous form of exploitation" (1988, 22). While I optimistically seek a more egalitarian knowledge production process, I also realistically join Stacey in wondering whether in fact "conflicts of interest and emotion between

the ethnographer as authentic, related person (i.e. participant), and as exploiting researcher (i.e. observer) are also an inescapable feature of ethnographic method" (1988, 23).

In this paper, I build off this question of betrayal implicated within the research process. I start with a brief description of my envisioned project and review of betrayal and other analytical interventions offered by feminist ethnographers. I then outline possible risks that I anticipate in conducting my project, using an analytical lens of betrayal offered by Stacey (1988) and Visweswaran (1994). Through a series of nested questions, I argue that betrayal can be a powerful analytical lens for feminist ethnographic analysis. I demonstrate this potential through three specific areas of exploration: representation, solidarity, and privilege.

By speaking to the epistemological concerns I have with my own ethnographic project, I hope to contribute to feminist ethnography an example of a written artifact that captures reflexivity in the research process and foregrounds a researcher's internal decision-making and thinking. Increased publication and sharing of intermediary artifacts such as this will reveal the fictions of objective research and demonstrate the personal, internal processes that are behind the envisioning of all research projects.

Proposed Project Topic

I begin with a brief overview of the proposed topic I wish to undertake as my PhD dissertation project in order to provide a starting ground upon which both the reader and I can thereafter think through the various dilemmas I may experience both "in the field" and "at home."

"In the Field": Hyper-Representation of Kibera Residents in Development

We have long known that all forms of research including ethnographic research can affect the communities of study. What happens when a community has been the object of so many research studies that the experience of being researched becomes part of everyday life? I plan to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Nairobi, Kenya to address the following research questions: How does intensive research of a population change their perception of self and consequently their social and economic behaviors? In what contexts does a community come to be seen and see itself as "over-researched"? How is the research encounter structured by inequality and what are the consequences?

Residents in Kibera, one of Africa's largest informal settlements located in the heart of Kenya's capital city, appear to increasingly be an "over-researched" population, demonstrating survey fatigue, falsified responses, and even feelings of exploitation—cognitive and otherwise (Sukarieh and Tannock 2012). Meanwhile, Kenya itself has emerged as the poster child for Information Communication Technology in Development (ICTD), an often-cited success story of mobile phones for poverty alleviation. This dualism between narratives of Africa's rising success and hopeless poverty sets the stage for contestation amongst a wide range of social actors who construct and re-frame their notions of self and their daily lives in terms that align to these different notions of "Africa." This hyper-representation of particular communities in the development discourse is not unique to Kibera. Another notable example of extensive research influencing the sociality of a community is the Harvard Chiapas Project (Greenhouse 1969; Kemper and Royce 2002), where Harvard University set up its own "perfect anthropological laboratory" by sending its students and faculty to live and study Native Americans continuously for over 20 years. Insights from my work will also be relevant for other global development sites where significant levels of research work are ongoing.

These development and poverty narratives are built up by research work conducted by thousands of local and international students and research professionals. These researchers are often conducting their work as part of a graduation requirement for a degree program, for a publication towards tenure, or for a commissioned study by international development or private sectors. Researchers who choose the informal settlement of Kibera as their field site are often also driven by a motivation to "do good" and "help" those who live in such abject poverty.

I am interested in turning the gaze on ICTD research that promotes and perpetuates narratives of technology and development "success" and "failure." In particular, I am keen to explore the intended and unintended consequences of such research and study the connections between researchers and their selected research sites and objects of study. Amongst the estimated 170,000 - 2 million population of Kibera, certain communities have been more heavily researched than others. Through the use of participant observation and interviews, I plan to look at these variations, moving between Kibera residents with a range of experience as research subjects, and the ICTD researchers who study them.[1]

"At Home": Research Design and Knowledge Extraction

As part of understanding the production of knowledge in and about Kibera, I anticipate another key component for my research will be the study of ICTD researchers "at home." In order to track the conceptualization of research site, subjects, and the development of theoretical frameworks and tools, I plan to select two U.S. institutions that have a significant research

[1] I plan to conduct participant observation in at least two communities within Kibera, one that has been the frequent site of research, and one where little to no research work has been done. I will also frequent other sites where ICTD researchers "hang out" such as coffee shops and co-working spaces. I will observe other researchers' focus group discussions, informal interviews, and public presentations of their research. I will meet informally with researchers and their research participants outside the structured research interactions to explore how research is spoken of and impacts daily life. I plan to conduct formal interviews with ICTD researchers (local and international), and Kibera residents with varied levels of experience participating in research studies. My interviews will be structured around understanding the experience of research for the different actors and its consequences, both positive and negative.

investment in Kibera.[2] Through participant observations and interviews, I plan to explore the various factors that shape researcher imagination of a place and community. I am also interested in tracking the research narratives constructed about connections to field sites over time and space. In selecting a "home" site outside of the typical "field site abroad," I am answering a call by Visweswaran for anthropologists to conduct more "homework" or "anthropology in reverse," which is to "speak from the place one is located to specify our sites of enunciation as home" (1994, 104). In studying the intellectual community within which I locate myself, I hope to produce a more "decolonized" feminist ethnography. I believe doing so will also complicate my own feelings of allegiance and to whom I am "doing justice," highlighting the messiness of identity positions that I will explore in subsequent sections of this paper.

Betrayal as a Lens of Analysis

I have briefly outlined the early formulation of my project to provide a starting point for thinking about epistemological concerns I have with the project. In this section, I discuss issues laid out by scholars within the feminist ethnography literature, which I will return to in the subsequent section to unpack my own project with a feminist lens of betrayal.

Visweswaran (1994) holds that betrayal cannot be decoupled from ethnography. But rather than demonstrating the impossibility of a feminist ethnography, she argues that betrayal can be read as allegory for its practice. She quotes James Clifford who stated that allegory "'draws special attention to the narrative character of cultural representations, to the stories built into the representational process itself.' It generates multiple levels of meanings and further allows us to say that 'this is a story about that'" (1994, 40). In other words, rather than something

[2] I am still in the process of determining the appropriate sites – these may be academic departments, institutional centers, or a variety of sites linked by a shared funder, e.g. USAID.

to be avoided (which it cannot be), betrayal can be used to highlight the fiction of ethnography. Accepting and even emphasizing the betrayal embedded in the practice of ethnography can allow for more explicit revealing of the fictions of representation.

The question of betrayal is foregrounded in much of feminist ethnography because of the feminist project's reliance on affective, interpersonal connection to the research subject. Such close relationships, as Stacey (1988) highlighted, are rich grounds for betrayal. Research is based on the trope that there is something yet undiscovered that needs to be revealed. If uncovering a secret is inherent in the act of research, then betrayal too is inherent in the act of research. Stacey writes that fieldwork places the researcher in "situations of inauthenticity, dissimilitude, and potential, perhaps inevitable betrayal, situations that I now believe are inherent in fieldwork method" (1988, 23). Visweswaran mulls over how to confront such betrayal in her own research:

> "The questions were not merely "Why did Janaki betray Lima, and Tangam betray Janaki?" or even "Why was Tangam's help enlisted in confronting Janaki?" for *would anyone have betrayed anyone else had the anthropologist not provided the opportunity?* For a year or longer I was paralyzed by this set of incidents. The horror of my trespass lingered. I did not know how I could, or should, write about it. Indeed, I thought more that I could not, and should not." [1994, 47, emphasis added]

Here, Visweswaran touches on a point that I am interested in dissecting further. What opportunities for betrayal does the anthropologist open up by configuring the research experience in a particular way? Stacey suggests that the inequality and potential treacherousness of the relationship between researcher and research subject seems inescapable because "fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships, a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer than the researched to leave" (1988, 23). Visweswaran complicates this relationship, finding that the issue extends beyond the researcher's own agency and culpability. Rather, she holds that the issue has to do with the very organization of knowledge and structure of inquiry. Visweswaran, through her own experience in the field, realized that

while she had indeed witnessed one betrayal and staged another, she was not the main actor in the drama of everyday life, but a secondary character. The drama existed before her arrival, and would continue after her departure.

Note the importance of travel, location, arrival and departure to the field site and to one's "home." Stacey asserts that the researcher is "freer to leave" and Visweswaran believes that once she departs, she is no longer part of the daily drama of her research interlocutors. But I argue that today, due to increased uptake of networked technologies and the Internet of Things, we are rapidly moving into an era of 24/7 research, with big data constantly being collected as we peruse the Web or swipe a public transportation card. We are increasingly "living in research" in a world where the fieldworker never leaves. For example, I continue to be in touch with my research interlocutors through Facebook and we continue to track each other electronically. Does this increase the stakes for betrayal? There is much less space to hide on either side. With research now an ongoing part of the everyday experience, this radically shifts our thinking about ethnography, culture, research, and ethics. My proposed study looks at a Kenyan moment where research being part of our everyday life is coming into being. Thus, the feminist ethnographic notions of "home" and "field" are of special importance for my project.

Key for my research is acknowledging that "a feminist way of knowing sees the process of positioning itself as an epistemological act" (Visweswaran 1994, 48). By looking at "situational knowledges," that is, knowledges produced both in and for a specific context, acts of "betrayal can also be read as a series of moments of self-staging and fashioning (Visweswaran 1994, 49). Thus rather than focusing on obtaining the "truth," the moment of betrayal offers a chance to better understand why one is positioning oneself in a particular way. It is not the potential lie but rather the self-staging itself should be of keen interest an epistemological act.

The feminist epistemological framework put forth by Visweswaran and supplemented by Stacey provides a means of triangulating the "truth" between ICTD researchers, their research subjects, and myself. In the subsequent section, I use this notion of betrayal to look at possible risks that I anticipate encountering in my project.

Possible Risks

Harrison (1991) suggests that for meaningful dialogue to take place across boundaries of culture, nationality, race, class and gender, the authority structure of professional anthropology must be dealt with and changed to include more "studying up" (Nader 1972), sharing pre-publication text, or writing texts that "give voice" to the researched (England 1994). Indigenous researchers from "native" populations being studied have also developed guidelines for research, which they deem more culturally appropriate and less symbolically violent (Smith 1999). But could the ultimate solution simply be discontinuing study of "over-researched communities" (Sukarieh and Tannock 2012)? What would be lost and gained by such a move?

Another way of looking at this question of "over-research" could be in terms of betrayal. If, as established in the previous section, betrayal is inherent in the research process, then with every research project, another act of betrayal occurs. Might there be a threshold level of betrayal which, once crossed, could have more wide-seated effects? What might be the unanticipated impact of such regular occurrences of betrayal? Returning to Visweswaran's earlier question is key: "would anyone have betrayed anyone else had the anthropologist not provided the opportunity?" (1994, 47). If the answer is no, then the practice of research begins to look like a more highly volatile set-up where risk of betrayal is higher than it was under previous circumstances. If the answer is yes, then the research practice becomes less suspect, as just

another setting under which daily betrayal might occur. These questions are of direct relevance for my own project to understand what role might betrayal (especially in the name of "development") have in shaping notions of self and other?

In this section, I look at three epistemological concerns I have about my project, which are amplified by questions of betrayal: representation, solidarity, and privilege.

Presenting and Representing

While working in Kenya, I observed pushback from a colleague who did not want to be the subject of various World Bank and development events. "But why don't you want to participate in this good opportunity? It's a chance to have your voice heard by governments and donors," she was questioned. My colleague refused because she did not want to be made to speak on behalf of the continent of Africa, usually as the sole black person and also sole woman on a panel. In this double marked category slot, she felt like a token representative. Yes, she was being given a chance to speak, but at what cost? Was her presence not silently also providing the World Bank narrative of development a stamp of approval and credibility by her sheer presence as a "Third World woman" minority voice?

My colleague's story is especially relevant as I look at the politics of location in the production and reception of academic theory. Instead of terms of inquiry like "inviting" and "granting space to others," it is key for me to become accountable for my own investments in cultural metaphors and values. Kaplan argues that "this accountability can shift the ground of feminist practice from relativism to interpretive practices that acknowledge the historical role of mediation, betrayal and alliance in the relationship between women in diverse locations" (1994, 139). It is an assumption both within and outside of academia that the privileged should ensure

they give voice to more marginalized groups. But who are "we" to assume that "they" want to talk? Is it not just a continuation of one's own privilege to offer a speaking role to those who do not have it? Visweswaran suggests that polyphony and multiple voicings are not a solution to the problems of power and authority. Rather, we must be attentive to silence as a marker of women's agency. She argues that a feminist ethnographer should not assume the willingness of women to talk. "A feminist ethnography," she writes, "can take the silences among women as the central site for the analysis of power between them. We can begin to shape a notion of agency that, while it privileges speaking, is not reducible to it" (1994, 51).

For my own attempt at a feminist ethnography, the study of silences will be of key importance on two levels: first, at the level of the Kibera research subjects and what they say and do not say to the researchers who study them; and second, at the level of the research subjects and ICTD researchers and what they say and do not say to me. Key in these encounters and what will be said and unsaid is the positioning of the various actors. How will I present myself and my research to the other researchers whom I am studying? How will I present myself and my research to the Kibera residents? How might I position myself so that I am not just doing the same violence of studying those in Kibera who may already be "overstudied"?

Up to now, I have been examining the representation of self and other in the research encounter. However, another important consideration is also the representation of self and other in the research output. The *Writing Culture* critique of the 1980s problematized the way ethnographies are written and highlighted the ways in which ethnographies construct the authority of the anthropologist through the use of particular tropes. Feminist ethnographers built on the critique, which called for greater innovation in writing culture, by highlighting the longstanding experimentation with form by greats such as Ella Deloria and Zora Neale Hurston

as well as lesser known wives of anthropologists whose works, while not categorized as ethnographies, were in fact ethnographic texts (Visweswaran 1997).

Contemporary feminist ethnographers continue to experiment with form, especially playing with and between genres of autobiography, historiography, fiction and creative non-fiction, to name a few. At first I was enthralled by the notion of writing a fiction, especially as presented by Behar (1997) and Visweswaran (1994). But working through their texts revealed to me that even with fiction, if it is fiction read to be true, a sense of betrayal remains. No matter how much I may remove names and change details, unless, I simply refuse to write it, there is no way to avoid betrayal. Again here I find that betrayal in the research process cannot be avoided. Even stories of fiction will be based on some sort of "truth" and to write is to therefore also betray. I thus join other feminist ethnographers still on a quest for genre, but reconciled with the fact that no matter which genre, betrayal in representation may be inherent in both the writing and conducting of research.

Solidarity

Anthropologist and feminists alike grapple with questions of sameness and difference. The feminist notion of solidarity attempts to overcome problematic assumptions of sameness while still acknowledging and working on shared interests. Mohanty defines solidarity in terms of "mutuality, accountability, and the recognition of common interests as the basis for relationships among diverse communities" (2003:7). Rather than supposing a common experience of oppression, her notion of solidarity focuses on communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together. Feminist theory uses mutuality to identify a mutual quality or character shared within the group of diverse individuals. In this view, diversity and difference are

central values to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances. By promoting connections across differences without collapsing or homogenizing into universals to which all women should live, a feminist solidarity as described by Mohanty, provides a tool for thinking about similitude both across and within identity categories.

In my project, I am interested in studying solidarity that develops along and across lines of gender, race, tribe,[3] profession, and nationality. For example, how do ICTD researchers relate to each other and do they tend towards shared identity ("we are all Western academics doing fieldwork in a foreign place") or disassociation ("I want [my work] to be unique from others whose field site is Kenya so I want to distance myself from other white Western foreign academics")? I recall the frustration that a white American colleague felt in Kenya when a visiting white American intern constantly came to her to talk and hang out. She did not share the feelings of solidarity along lines of race and nationality and in fact wanted to distance herself from such associations since she felt they impeded her ability to build lines of solidarity *across* race and nationality. What kinds of solidarity will I observe and feel myself between the ICTD researchers and research subjects? How will such feelings of solidarities be fostered or inhibited?

A common trope in anthropology that legitimates the knowledge claims made by researchers is the establishment of rapport, which claims a greater "truth" through "insider" perspectives. Such rapport often emerges out of a sense of solidarity. I am curious as to how this solidarity may also impact the sense of betrayal possibly experienced. Anthropologist Kimberly Simmons (2001) explains that Dominicans used language that acknowledged her shared blackness and automatically marked her as an insider as opposed to terms that marked white

[3] While the term "tribe" has come to be regarded as an outdated in Western countries, Kenyans use the term as part of everyday language to describe one's ethnic community. When Kenyans use the word "tribe" in their general conversation, they do not draw on the negative connotations of primitivism that the word has in Western countries. I have therefore decided to use their term to reflect how they describe themselves in their everyday language.

researchers automatically as outsiders. "To me these terms…signify an acceptance of my phenotypic similarity, which for many Dominicans means that I have to *be* Dominican. Importantly, these words are used by Dominicans to describe other Dominicans and serve to reinscribe, among other things, who is a Dominican and what they look like" (2001, 82). I wonder here what it means to be seen as belonging to your subjects? How does that change the fieldwork you are able to do? Is there another level of possible betrayal when people assume that you are "like them?" In my case, this betrayal of solidarity would likely occur with other researchers in the ICTD sector who will assume I am "one of them" as an American researcher and peer. The concept of solidarity is of interest in that it maps closely to rapport and claims to knowledge. Betrayal of bonds of solidarity is an important nuance to consider within the more general betrayal inherent in research, as it may reveal a possible reason for a particular community to feel "over-researched." The level of research done in a particular community may not in fact be part of the criteria for feeling "over-researched," but the feeling of exploitation may have more to do with the initial bonds of solidarity established and subsequent betrayal of such solidarity.

Privilege

My fascination with the role that research plays in Kenyans' everyday lives stems from firsthand experience living and working in Nairobi, Kenya from 2010 – 2015. While in Kenya, I became aware of how perceptions of one's identity could impact research findings, portraying a reality that respondents think researchers want to hear. I attended the ICTD 2012 conference in Atlanta, Georgia where Kenyan researchers openly criticized the quality of the data collected in Kibera by a team from a prestigious American university. "There are so many slums within

Nairobi – Mathare, Dandora, Korogocho, Kawangware – why do so many Western researchers focus on Kibera?" This experience opened my eyes to the contestation between local and international researchers in Africa over who is portraying "reality" and whose "reality" is being expressed. To me, the experience also clearly revealed an implicit pushback from Kenyan researchers: *Who are you, white researchers from the Western academy, to come to Kenya and choose a study site as if you could do research anywhere in the world?* At this conference, I attended with Kenyan researchers as a representative from a Kenyan organization. I deeply felt that my own alliance and solidarity was with the Kenyans and not the "Western white privileged academicians." My colleagues appeared to also feel I was "with them." But although we did not mention it, there was no way to overlook the fact that I was also Western, white, privileged, and an academic.[4]

My time working and living in Kenya instilled a hypersensitivity in me around these issues. After being in Kenya for such an extended period of time and with Kenyan in-laws and friends, I felt the line between being a cultural "insider" and "outsider" was blurred and complicated. But at the phenotypic and national level, there is no denying the identity categories I fit into and the accompanying privilege. Thus, the more aware I have become of the identity categories to which I am bound by birth, the more my insecurities have grown about what I can and cannot say. As a European-Asian mixed American woman with friendship ties and affinal connections to Kenya, what are the boundaries of my own knowledge? How might I acknowledge the privilege from which I speak, while also moving beyond oversimplified

[4] It is important I be cognizant of the categories imposed by the larger infrastructure of research and global development politics while observing daily usage and manipulation of such categories by individual researchers and research subjects.

dichotomies and identity politics to a more accurate representation of myself and those I will study?[5]

My insecurities leave me anxious to demonstrate how I am not like the "usual" privileged *wazungu* (Swahili for foreigner, usually white*)*. But no matter how I attempt to "other" myself from those who share my skin color, accent, class, or nationality, I must acknowledge and accept that my position is built on privilege. I cannot stop at self-reflection on my position, but I must also acknowledge the betrayal and history that took place for me to speak from a particular location.

Behar notes that saying, "I am an anthropologist, this is fieldwork," is a classic form of using method to "drain anxiety from situations in which we feel complicitous with structures of power or helpless to release another from suffering, or at a loss as to whether to act or observe" (1997, 17). As researchers, we suppress the unease of not being able to act in the face of horror by hiding behind the scientific objectivity of method, shielding ourselves by using the lens of a camera, tape recorder or pen. Haraway highlights the Western researcher's sense of culpability: "With whose blood were my eyes crafted?" (1988, 585). I continue to grapple with how one can productively acknowledge and confront these structures and the unease of one's own position within it, without becoming frozen to inaction by guilt or feelings of illegitimacy.

I find solace in the recognition that, as Visweswaran points out, "the issue extends beyond my own agency and culpability" (1994, 47). She proposes a notion of the "Feminist as Trickster" to overcome knowing and representation. The feminist ethnographer as trickster is one who does not profess faith in what she believes. She writes, "This notion of feminist trickster

[5] Questioning and complicating the overlap of identity categories and material inequalities is an important part of this research. For example, questioning of "privilege" and how it can be measured and studied. Do Americans always have more "privilege" than Kenyans or only in the research encounter? As part of being reflexive with my research, it is important for me to be mindful and intentional about my use of dichotomies.

hinges on the supposition that we can 'give voice' and the knowledge that we can never fully. … This requires a trickster figure who 'trips' on, but is not tripped up by, the seductions of a feminism that promises what it may never deliver: full representation on the one hand, and full comprehension on the other" (1994, 100). Visweswaran asserts that holding these two terms in tension—the desire to know and the desire to represent—enables feminist ethnographers to "question the authority of the investigating subject without paralyzing her, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility" (1994, 100). Trying on this notion of feminist as trickster, I begin to work towards my own feminist ethnography.

Conclusion

If betrayal is inherent in research, who am I betraying with my proposed research project? Do I pull the rug out from under my peers in academia or from the Kibera residents on whose trust I am depending. Despite a level of "othering" to distinguish myself from other researchers to open up a space of reflection for their Kibera research subjects, I cannot hide behind such "othering" to shake my own complicity within the system. As a Western academic asking Kibera residents about other Western academics who conduct research on/with them, if I am not careful, I may quickly appear hypocritical.[6]

How I frame my research project to the different research subjects will be an epistemological moment in and of itself. What do I tell my interlocutors and what does that reveal about my research? What kind of "truth" am I constructing? Since I am an ICTD researcher as well, I should include myself in the study of ICTD researchers. How can I build a layer of self-study into my analysis that is beyond being reflexive? In other words, how,

[6] In this case, there is a thin line between *seeming* hypocritical and *being* hypocritical. Even if I am reflecting on these issues deeply, to the outsider who cannot see the internal struggles and debates, I could appear un-reflexive and very hypocritical. The *perception* of my being hypocritical is in a sense as important as being hypocritical itself.

methodologically, will I direct the questions I ask of the researchers in my study also at myself? By doing so I endeavor to move beyond self-reflexive anthropology that questions its own authority, towards deconstructive anthropology, which attempts to abandon or forfeit its authority knowing that it is impossible to do so (Visweswaran 1994).

My project follows Scott's call to "to take as [my] project not the reproduction and transmission of knowledge said to be arrived at through experience, but the analysis of the production of that knowledge itself" (1991, 797). Through my project, I seek to embrace my partial and biased position to reveal greater insight into the practice of research in and on everyday life. Inspired by Visweswaran (1994) and Behar (1997), this paper represents my current state of thinking about the project through a feminist lens of betrayal. Instead of taking for granted or burying the internal thought process of the researcher, I believe we must redefine the research process to include the formulation of the research itself and the desires of both the researcher and the researched in its shaping.

By speaking to the epistemological concerns I have in my own ethnographic project, I have attempted an example of such a written artifact from an early point of conceptualization in the research process. Through this paper, I hope to have offered a window into the question of what and how feminist ethnography might be constituted, not to overcome or resolve its inherent contradictions, but to move ahead despite—or perhaps along with—them. Ultimately feminist ethnography is not a product but a process and through the sharing of intermediary artifacts such as this, I believe we can reveal the fictions of objective research and work towards making explicit the personal, internal processes implicit behind the envisioning of all research projects.

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