**On not writing**

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Like perhaps many post-grads I was instructed by my eminent supervisor to read C. Wright Mills ‘On Intellectual Craftsmanship' to appreciate his ease with words and the many useful hints and tips on how to work at the ‘craft' of academic writing. True, it was lovely reading but it was also hugely dispiriting. Where are my carefully arranged cross-classified files? My creative journal that bridges personal experience with academic reasoning? I mutter to the wall above my computer but this is not perhaps the cultivation of helpful imaginary characters that Mills was referring to? All the encouragement to daily writing results in a paralysis of thought and deep-seated inertia where the trivial and unimportant triumph. My bathroom needs cleaning, shirts ironed and holes badly mended in cheap socks. Eventually I reach my desk where papers must be sorted and surfaces cleared before I could possibly think about writing. My ‘to do' list that I wrote last night or maybe weeks before glares up at me and then I remember I tore a hole in my new orange tights and replacing them with 100 denier ones becomes of primary importance. But google tells me there are so many online tight stores that this will demand considerable careful and nuanced searching and cross-comparison. A friend on facebook assures me that the Queen is really an alien with her UFO base hidden under Balmoral. A factoid on wikipedia claims that Mills and Boon sell a book every three seconds and perhaps I might have greater success writing about rugged hyper-masculine men and virginal but feisty heroines where the weight of intellectual giants is not so evidently apparent. This is perhaps my ‘nun in the toilet.' The ghost that terrifies school children from using that particular loo is staring down from my bookshelves in the form of Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Wittgenstein, Foucault and others. So many of them; the great minds that have said all that can be said about the world we inhabit, how can I possibly contribute and is it not pathetic arrogance on my part to even think that I could?

So I turn up whatever cheesy music mix I am currently listening to, something where the discovery of rhyming couplets is considered the height of poetic genius and dance away feelings of inadequacy, watching with glee as my inertia sprints for cover from the relentless pounding of the bass. I am invincible and the giants of past and present are benignly whispering words of encouragement that only I can hear. So what if it has all been said before? I will find my academic haven and there weather the storms of insecurity, failure, dreadful prose and the insidious oncreep of inertia once again. I will let grime gather in my bathroom, leave my partner to iron his own shirts and throw away the cheap holey socks. I will remember that I have a wardrobe stuffed full of orange, purple and cartoon coloured tights and even though the Queen, UFO's and Mills and Boon is sociologically fascinating, it is not my PhD and some other soul can apply to do that one. I will stop writing about not writing and finally start that paper my supervisor wants to read in the next four days ...

**REFERENCES:**
Mills, C. Wright (1959) ‘On Intellectual Craftsmanship' in The Sociological Imagination pp195 -226 New York: Oxford University Press

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