**Challenges of Writing up**

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I am anxious. I feel I must know every bit of information published on my chosen subject, because I am working on a PhD.  It follows that I have to read a great deal of subject material to be able to write up. I cry out, "There is not enough time!" Then, luckily, I remember my supervisor's two useful suggestions. The first one is, "Start writing up before you read anything." "Writing before reading" allows my ideas to flow freely.  I do not confine myself to any theoretical approach at this initial creative stage. This helps me avoid influence from other sources to a certain extent. Most of all, it reflects a change in attitude towards my research: I have started to appreciate my own fieldwork experience.

Her second suggestion is equally invaluable, "Don't lose the joy of writing." I have also come to know by now that when I enjoy writing, my fingers on the keyboard follow helpful muses. Usually the paper in the end perplexes me: How could I think of those ideas? It makes me feel very expressive.

I should start writing now. Instead, I am distracted by: reading emails, articles and news, preparing tea, Skyping my parents overseas, cooking, reading over field notes, ferreting out funding, and researching conferences and concerts. It is already 6 pm. I have spent all day doing little tasks that must be finished before writing up. It seems now that the time for writing up has arrived at last. It is not that I do not enjoy writing, indeed I do very much, but I do not enjoy starting up! I feel worried for not having a clue on how to start.

I wrote down some ideas while looking at my field notes earlier today.

There are two things that I usually do for inspiration in this circumstance. The first is reading the field notes. I try to see if they can make a chapter. It seems promising enough at this stage. Despite this, I am preparing tea again, but still not writing. I have to bring myself into the mood. I will not be writing unless I do enjoy it. So, comes the second thing to do. I put on a tape in the voice recorder, any tape from the field will do. I listen to the voices of my lovely informants. I listen to their laughs and their sorrows. Being immersed in the images of the field gives me a strong push. I remember a conversation that took place in one of the houses in the village where I was staying. Five women (including me) were gathered around a round wooden table on the floor, having a substantial breakfast and chatting. We were talking about a number of issues regarding marriages and sexual life (My PhD topic is about involuntary childlessness). Aunt Cevriye, a fifty five year old woman with a radiant smile always on her face, gazed at my voice recorder and cheerfully noted: "Merve, you have everything about us in there. That recorder is a part of you. When we think of you, we will remember you with it."

Kerime (my best friend in the village): Merve, when will you come back?  
Merve: I really don't know. I hope to finish up in a year. But, who knows? It won't be easy.  
Kerime: We will pray for you.

All the women around the table: We will pray for your success. Don't worry; you are going to succeed.

Oh, God, I have to write! I feel indebted to them. Now, I feel I have to write. Before losing the triggering sense of enthusiasm to the stress the feeling of compulsion brings, I open a Word document. Something comes to my mind. Although it may seem trivial initially, I want to write it down before it totally disappears and before I start writing the chapter. But, yes, words follow one another and that small note becomes the chapter. I enjoy very much going through these inspirational moments. The more I write, the more I feel like a creator of worlds of words from memories, images, theories, stories. In my words, "others' stories" become "my chapters", "my theories". Am I appropriating their worlds to construct new ones - probably not much familiar to them? Now, I have to fight with feelings of guilt. I have found out that I feel less guilty when I think they were already "our stories", "our encounters", produced together. Yet, I am still concerned about being unfair to them:

Perhaps I am losing the messages they wanted to convey through me. In my efforts of being a participant in the field, I am not the "previous me" any more. I am not "them" either. Just like what Clifford (1986: 23) said: "Every version of an "other", wherever found, is also the construction of a "self"."\* I have become a hybrid during the fieldwork and writing process. I carry on writing with the hope that their messages are not totally lost in mimesis.  
  
\*Clifford, J. 1986 "Introduction: Partial Truths" in Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, eds. J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus, pp. 1-26, Berkeley: University of California Press.