

Caroline Brettell's edited collection *When They Read What We Write* (1993). Furthermore, those among whom you study may wish to, or may insist on, reading drafts prior to their general circulation.

It is advisable to anticipate how disagreements—or sometimes just “unhappinesses”—are to be negotiated. My practice has been to offer to share pre-release drafts with interested informants and to inform them that I will *take under consideration* any reservations they express. I think one is ill advised to offer full veto power, even to key informants or anyone with whom you are writing a personal life history. If someone holds that power, your project remains in jeopardy throughout its entire duration. Researchers, too, are human subjects who need protection from unnecessary risk.

Let me repeat: I have always delayed sharing a developing manuscript for as long as possible. I want to be sure I've said what I want to say, and have tried to say it well enough that my ideas are clear, before subjecting my words to the scrutiny of others. During the academic year I devoted to writing my doctoral dissertation (following a full 12 months of fieldwork), I deliberately lived away from the Stanford campus and made brief visits only when I needed to use the library. I did not need the company of other anxiety-ridden dissertation writers to get my own writing done. I had a story to tell. I was determined that, should the initial draft prove satisfactory to only myself, I first needed to recount the story my way. I sought little advice from my dissertation committee prior to submitting a completed draft to them. Had that draft been unacceptable, I was prepared to undertake whatever rewriting was necessary, but not until I had made my own version a matter of record.

I'm happy to report that except for reservations about length, and some useful editorial suggestions, the thesis was accepted as submitted. Little doubt that having one's thesis accepted without hassle can prove a great incentive toward further academic writing! Although the expected audience for your thesis may be small, don't lose sight of the importance of the thesis to your career, *especially* if you intend to pursue further qualitative research in which you expect writing to play an important role.

Although I avoided premature “official” feedback during that period of angst and authorship, I eagerly anticipated long work sessions with my fellow graduate student Ron Rohner and his wife Evelyn. We met regularly to discuss our progress, exchange information, and share and critique drafts of our developing chapters. Our