



A Quick Guide to Fieldwork

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Fieldwork is...

- Visiting the site of your research interest to gather data



I want to know how people in Osaka live



I'll go to Osaka and see for myself



Why is fieldwork carried out?



Cross-cultural fieldwork





Writing an ethnography

Urban cultural fieldwork



Occupational fieldwork

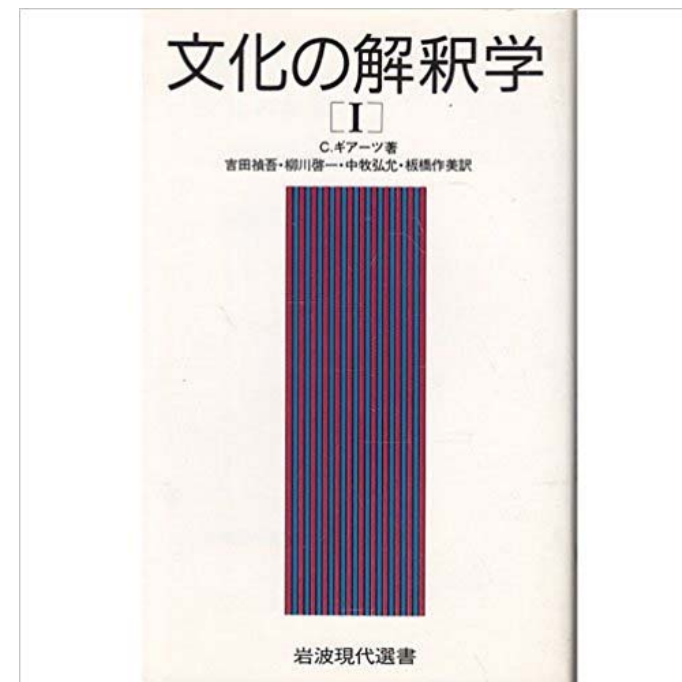
ethno- <i>combining form</i>	-graphy <i>noun combining form</i>
Definition of ETHNO- : race : people : cultural group	Definition of -GRAPHY   1 : writing or representation in a (specified) manner or by a (specified) means or of a (specified) object <stenography> <photography>
Origin of ETHNO- French, from Greek <i>ethno-</i> , <i>eti</i>	2 : writing on a (specified) subject or in a (specified) field <hagiography>

Writing on culture

Thick description

- “Closing the eyelid” vs “winking”
- The problem of description
- How is it possible to make adequate description

"But the point is that between what Ryle calls the “thin description” of what the rehearser (parodist, winker, twitcher ..) is doing (“rapidly contracting his right eyelids”) and the “thick description” of what he is doing (“practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion”) lies the object of ethnography (Geertz, 1953)



Culture is...

All that is “everyday.” The natural way of doing things.

It’s something we don’t think about, except when relativizing it to other cultures

→ So, how do we describe a culture?

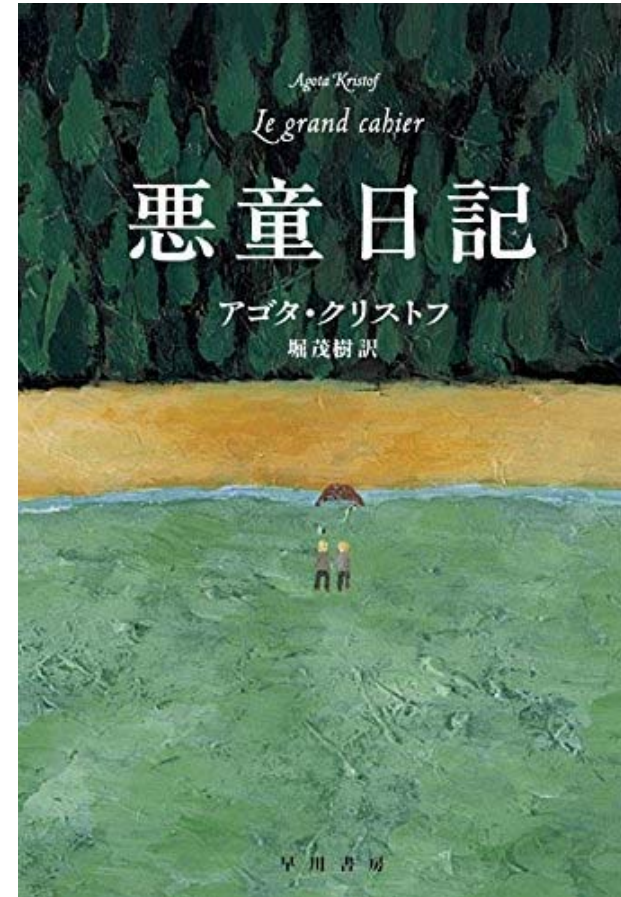
Pro tips

- Don't refrain from bringing your own culture and norms into your observations
- Look closely at the details. Then look even closer.
- Take good field notes
- And photos, too
- Don't be shy. Ask!

Don't refrain from bringing your own culture and norms into your observations

- We have a very simple rule: *the composition must be true*. We must describe what is, what we see, what we hear, what we do.
- For example, it is forbidden to write: 'Grandmother is like a witch', but we are allowed to write: 'People call Grandmother the Witch.'
- Words that define feelings are very vague; *it is better to avoid using them and to stick to the description of objects, human beings and oneself; that is to say, to the faithful description of facts.*

↑ This does not constitute ethnography



Agota Kristof's *The Notebook*
(tr. Alan Sheridan, Methuen, 1989)

Look closely at the details. Then look even closer.

- There's a door...see what's on the other side
- Touch that desk, feel that chair
- Now that you've seen it, look again from a different angle
- Cross the street to see what's there
- How do the locals use things? Took a close look at their behavior

Take good field notes

On site

Jottings

- Write for yourself
- Abbreviate
- *Writing down*



That night

Field notes

- Write for others
- And for you in the future
- *Writing up*



In the lab

Writing the ethnography

- Describe the culture comprehensively
- Write from a theoretical perspective



And photos, too

- The photos you take won't be for nothing
- But don't make them artsy
- Capture the whole scene; trimming can be saved for later



[Natasha d.H](#)

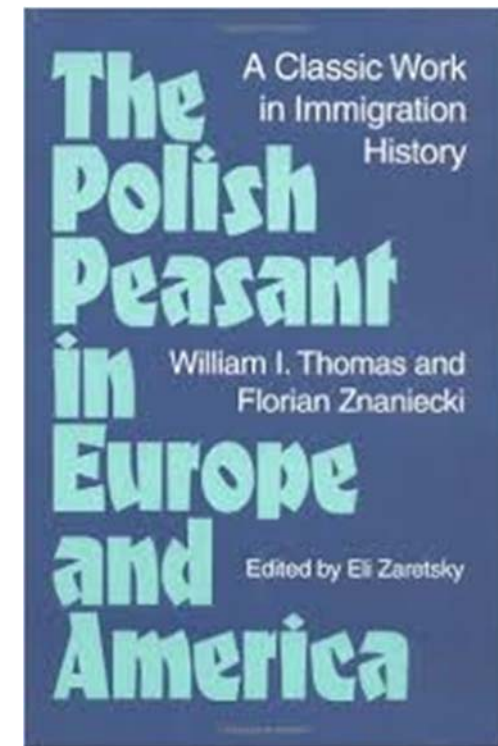
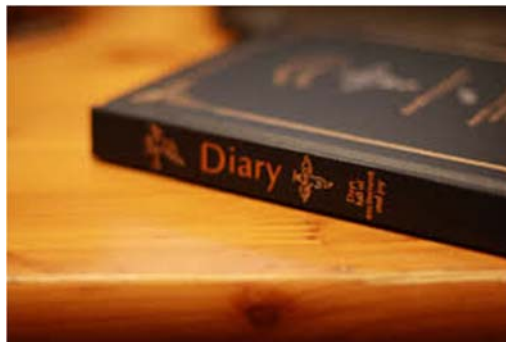
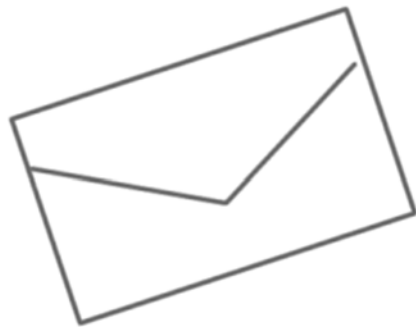


- The things people tell you are more than just information
- The way people speak embodies data that help you to understand how they perceive the target culture
- Speaking with a broad range of people gives you a clearer picture of the types of segments that make up the culture
- Another reason why this is important:
Asking questions can provide opportunities to build rapport with the subjects

Reading is part of fieldwork

Read what the documents have to say

Gather and analyze diaries, letters, public records, and other documents



- Try your fieldwork, assuming that the theme of “promoting student use of the Design Innovation Center” is given
- If you’re someone who frequents the Center, act as you always do
- Focus your work on taking notes and doing interviews (no photography for this project)