

# Review of: "Is Fieldwork losing its grace? Encountering Western and Indian Experience"

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This article provides a wonderful overview of fieldwork and its epistemological and moral difficulties, as well as the challenges it has been facing. This is the kind of article that, were it updated to encompass the present, I would love to have my first-year graduate students read. However, I do wonder if, at present, the article's premise is really true: is fieldwork really losing its grace? As Midya points out, the 1980s and 1990s were a time at which fieldwork was particularly under threat in anthropology, at least in its American variant; postmodern theorists held that objectivity was impossible, and that the fieldworker was inevitably trapped in his or her subject position. If this is the case, why bother with fieldwork, some anthropologists felt; I remember encountering this attitude during my own graduate training at Cornell in the late 1980s. However, the postmodern wave subsequently receded. In today's anthropology, fieldwork has in many ways become more difficult in an age of globalization; multi-sited fieldwork has become increasingly necessary, entailing larger budgets. However, I myself see little evidence that fieldwork is less emphasized than in the past. Certainly fieldwork is changing, with so much of our lives on-line. But if anything, I think it is more emphasized than in the past among anthropologists.