locating culture – the ethnographic encounter
the colonial encounter - after 1492

1541 - Spanish discovery of the Amazon - Gaspar de Carvajal records vast cities

by the nineteenth century - a devastated population
ethnographic field work

formalized at the end of the nineteenth century

focusing upon pristine societies in colonial territories - sub-saharan Africa, the Americas, Oceania

two major philosophies - evolutionary anthropology, and the cultural relativism of Anglo-American anthropology (particularly after Boas and Malinowski)
constituting experiences in ‘classic’ ethnography

travel away from Europe

encounters with an ‘other’ society - exotic, non-western, or just different

the notion of fieldwork - travel across distance, immersion, participant observation, writing, distanced objectivity

the idea that the studied society is about to disappear

the field as a ‘laboratory’
time - back then

0 - here
and now

distance - over there

the other society
Claude Lévi-Strauss

mid 1930s

Peoples and places visited by Claude Lévi-Strauss between 1935 and 1939.
... in an ambiguous relationship with this tradition - 'I hate travel', olfactory experience, sunsets ... humanist components

self conscious, literary, and connecting with an anthropological as well as ethnographic tradition, with other genres

never wrote a conventional ethnography

quite different to the classic ethnographers such as Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski

NB distinction between anthropology and ethnography/ethnology
... as much as this
the current ethnographic crisis

the myth of disappearing societies

the crisis of representation - how do you write about other people?

globalism - the spread of the capitalist market

post colonial politics

a challenge to the scientific neutrality of ‘the field’

... and at Stanford! - departments of Cultural & Social Anthropology and Anthropological Sciences
Lévi-Strauss’s interest in corporeality

the passages on the senses

the focus on the body of the native informant
located bodies nine
the primitive body
modernity and progress

cultural evolution - a nineteenth century mindset

Rousseau, nature and civilization

paradoxes and dilemmas of modernity - from Frankenstein to globalism
modernism’s poetics
Gauguin’s tropics of exoticism and paradise lost/found
Henry Moore
Picasso
time - back then

0 - here and now

distance - over there

the other society
located bodies six
the primitive body

located in a time-space, a chronotope of travel/displacement, otherness (with respect to the imperialist nation state of the nineteenth century and since), ambiguous ethical relationships, ambiguous cultural relationships