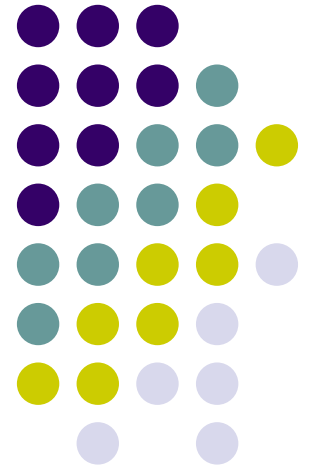
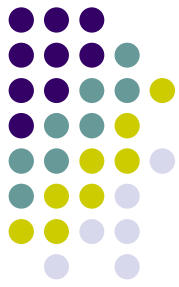


“I hate travel”

Claude Lévi-Strauss and the
journey of the 20th century
November 24, 2003



“Claude L. Strauss,” 1908-

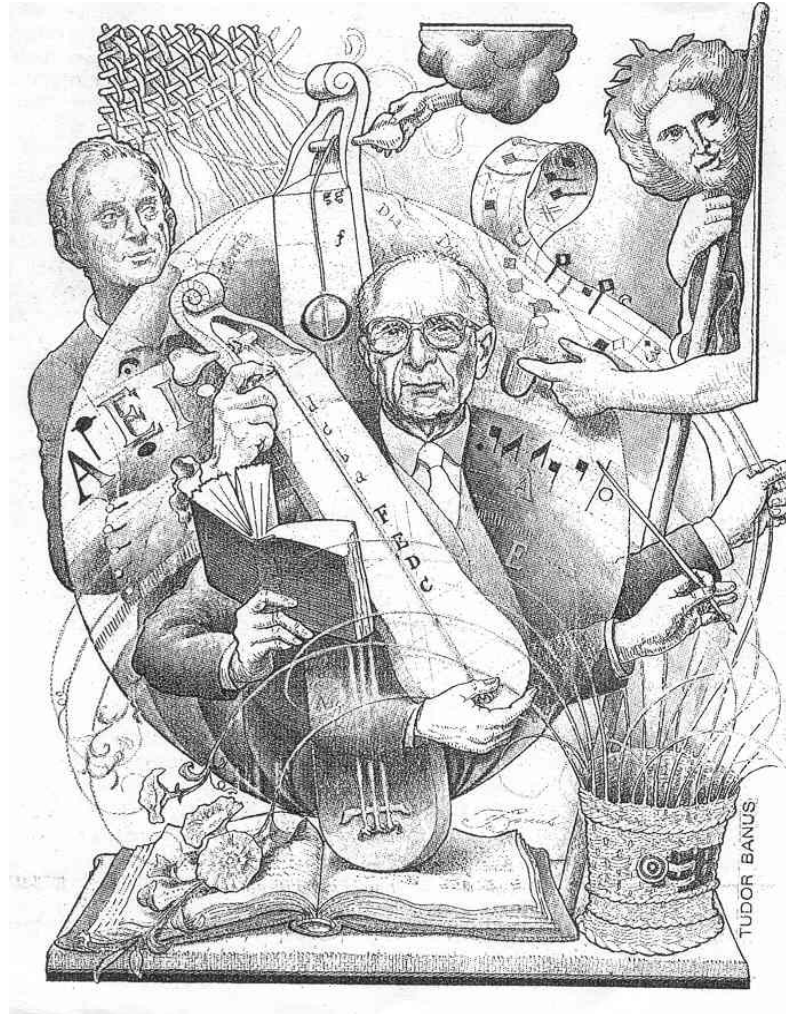
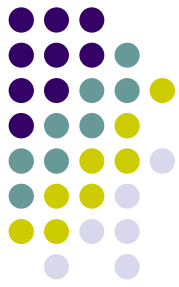


1938



1990

The mythic CLS



I was a Teenage Structuralist

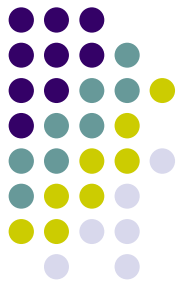


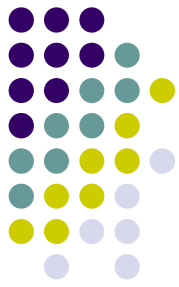
- Saussure, Troubetzkoy, Jakobson, Lacan, Kristeva, Lévi-Strauss...
- Not things, but relations
- The linguistic analogy



The chess example







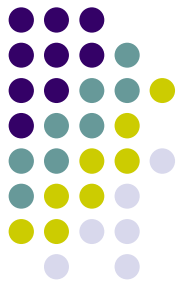
Structures as relations

- The cryptographic eye
- Substitutability, equivalence and function
- “Pish” and “Foof”: contacts among systems that are differently-organized
- A contact zone between **epistemology** (the question: what can we know?) and **politics** (the question: how can we act to bring about the good communal life?)



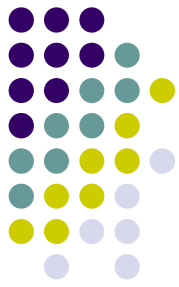
“Items” and “operations”

- Vocabulary and grammar
- Individuals and their combinations (e.g., marriage laws)
- Signifying elements (motifs) and myths
- Or, translated into chess talk:
 - Pieces
 - Moves
 - Plays (states of play)
 - Games (series of states and outcomes)



Where necessity resides

- Identity the counterpart of difference, and vice versa
 - Look / see / watch / observe...
 - Male / female, civilized / primitive
- Identity emerging from difference, not vice versa
 - Pawn and penny
 - Compare Richard: “The breath of mortal men”

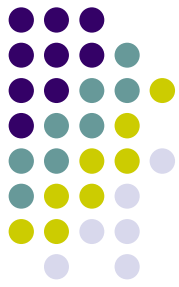
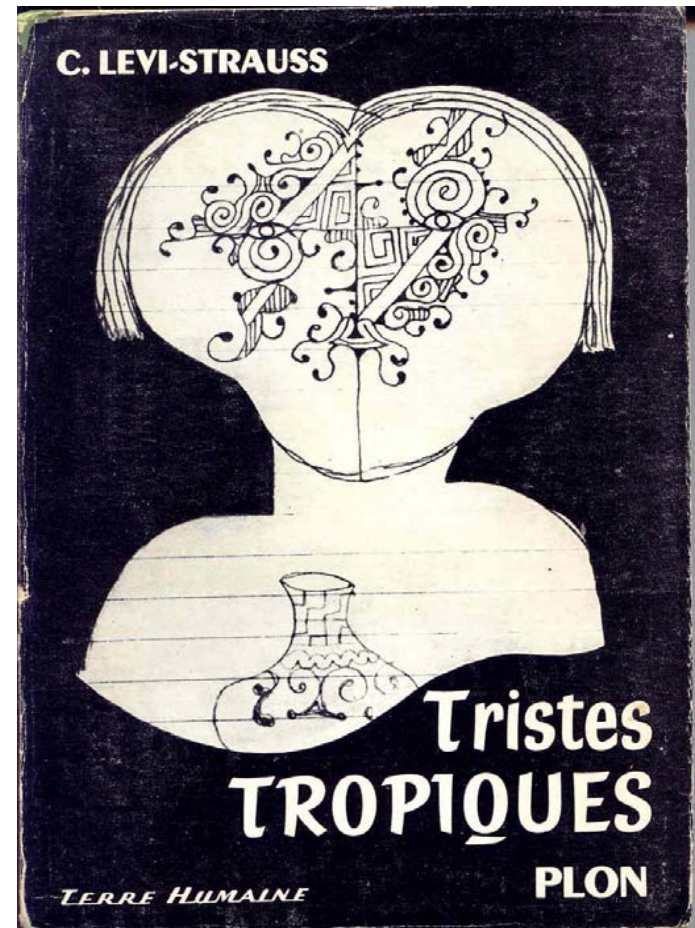


Is this relativism?

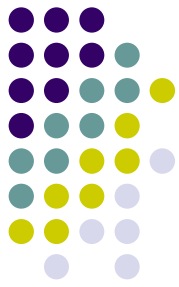
- The short answer (according to me): no.
- Need to see the “relation” at the core of “relativism”
- The interesting questions follow after we admit relativity.
 - Difficulty of negotiating the boundary zones of a “system”
 - Examples of sound change, dialect, translation

France, 1955

- Sartre, existentialism, and new humanism: philosophies of freedom
- The Left: the party and the march of history
- Anxiety about technology
- Decolonialization



Dien Bien Phu | Algeria



1954



1957-62



“I hate travel”

- What kind of travel does the narrator hate?
- Why?
- What happens when this narrator moves from place to place?
- What here is “non-travel”? What, if anything, stays put?

