



# İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi

Research Article

Open Access

## Lévi-Strauss: Reason And Sensibility



Sylvia Caiuby Novaes<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of São Paulo, Department of Anthropology, São Paulo, Brasil

### Abstract

There is a possible comparison between Lévi-Strauss's conceptions of photography and his discomfort with travel narratives. My goal is to show that understanding this association is only possible when we consider Lévi-Strauss's reflections on works of art and the role he reserves for ethnography. On the other hand, it is his own ideas about the artist that must be considered if our goal is to evaluate Lévi-Strauss as a photographer and his highly sensitive images of the people and places he captured during his travels in Brazil.

### Keywords

Lévi-Strauss • Photographs • Ethnography • Art • Travel diaries

### Author Note

"This article is a revised and expanded version of *Lévi-Strauss, razão e sensibilidade*, published in the Revista de Antropologia, vol. 42 pp 67-77. São Paulo 1999, on the commemoration of Lévi-Strauss's 90th birthday. I thank Jeferson Carvalho for his attentive and generous reading of this new version."



“ Citation: Caiuby Novaes, S. (2025). Lévi-Strauss: Reason and sensibility. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi*, 45(1), 129-142. <https://doi.org/10.26650/SJ.2025.45.1.0771>

This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

2025. Caiuby Novaes, S.

Corresponding author: Sylvia Caiuby Novaes [scaiuby@usp.br](mailto:scaiuby@usp.br)



## Lévi-Strauss: Reason And Sensibility

"I hate travel and explorers."

(*Tristes Trópicos*, 15)

This is exactly the first sentence of *Tristes Tropiques*, the book in which Lévi-Strauss recounts his journey to Brazil in 1935. It may seem strange that someone would begin a travel diary with such a sentence. His resistance to travel narratives is such that nearly twenty years passed between his explorations of the Brazilian interior and the publication of the book, which was released in 1955 (Plon) and, by the way, it is not just a travel diary.

My goal here is to understand Lévi-Strauss's ideas of photography, starting from his own conception about works of art. I will attempt to demonstrate that, from a Lévi-Straussian perspective, photography can only be understood when associated with the travel diary and in opposition to the role he reserves for ethnography. On the other hand, if the activity Lévi-Strauss privileges—ethnography—leans much more towards reason than sensitivity (although, even in this case, he cannot entirely dismiss sensibility), it is his own reflections on art and the performance of the artist that must be considered when we focus on Lévi-Strauss's product of sensibility, which can be properly assessed when we examine the images from *Saudades do Brasil*.

*Saudades do Brasil* is a beautiful book of photographs that Lévi-Strauss published in 1994 (Plon) — in which he treats his photographs with the same disdain with which he referred to travel narratives. In a 1995 interview with Antoine de Gaudemar from *Libération*, he explicitly states: "A photo is a document. There are beautiful photos, but for me, it's a truly lesser art." His mental images of Brazil, its savannas, and forests, can be evoked by the smell of creosote with which he impregnated his notebooks, but these sensations do not return when he looks at the photos he took. For him, the photographs are simply evidence, "beings, landscapes, and events" that he knows he saw and encountered. Photography, in ethnographic terms, is like a kind of document reserve; it allows the preservation of things that will not be revisited. "Photographic documents prove their existence without witnessing in their favor, nor making them sensible to me." (1994, p. 9). Vincent Debaene



says that “Lévi-Strauss s’attarde sur l’infériorité congénitale de la photographie réaliste – que est d’abord infériorité de la vue par rapport à “l’ouïe et l’odorat, ces sens plus proches de l’âme”. (Lévi-Strauss, 2008, p. 358; Debaene, 2018, p. 26).

It is worth noting that Lévi-Strauss took around 3000 photographs while he was in Brazil conducting an expedition through various Indigenous societies in Central Brazil. His then wife, Dina Lévi-Strauss, made some ethnographic films and before talking about Lévi-Strauss’s photographs, let us have some words on these films. *Funeral Ceremonies among the Bororo* was filmed in December 1935 by Dina and among the Bororo she also filmed *The Life of a Bororo Village* on the Rio Vermelho. Other films were made during this same trip, such as *Nalike I and II*, about the Kaduveo in the Serra da Bodoquena, and some footage in cattle farms in Mato Grosso.<sup>1</sup>

The entire film *Funeral Ceremonies among the Bororo* was shot at eye level, often without a tripod. In one part, the focus is on the execution of the ceremonial wheels made from the stems and leaves of the *buriti* palm, and the ritual dance of Bakororo, a mythic hero. The sequence of images shows the ethnographic concern to record and describe aspects of material culture, in this case, the making of these two palm stem wheels, which will be used in one of the funeral rituals.

There are no close-ups, no intimacy with the people being filmed. Various cards explain what is happening. It is an objective, descriptive camera with wide shots where one can also observe the various men who gather in the central courtyard for the ritual. It is a good example of the ethnography conducted in the 1930s – the objective collection of data, without more personal dialogues with the people the ethnographer is studying. There is a great separation between the observer and the observed.

In *Nalike I and II*, the film made in the Serra da Bodoquena about the Kaduveo, the images are poorly filmed, with excessively fast pans, and a camera that seems unsure of what to film and searches for objectives. Nothing is observed closely. There are images of weaving hammocks, but they are very dark due to poorly resolved backlighting. The

<sup>1</sup>All these films were restored by the Cinemateca Brasileira and are available in their collections.

only close-ups are of hands weaving, and details of the hands making the hammock. A man makes a cat's cradle by himself with string, but the light string against the man's light shirt prevents any details from being perceived. Details of the facial paint of the Kaduveo can be observed with a closer camera that zooms in on the face. Interestingly, the dresses of the women who paint themselves are similarly geometric. Perhaps the most beautiful images from the film about the Kaduveo are the ones of the Indians crossing the river in their canoes.

Lévi-Strauss's appreciation for different forms of artistic expression is well known. Although in many of his books Lévi-Strauss writes extensively on the fine arts, specially painting but also about music, he rarely speaks about photography. Lévi-Strauss enjoys comparisons and maybe we could go on with some of his comparisons to understand his relationship with photographs – both in terms of what he thinks about photography and in terms of what he himself photographs.

*The Raw and the Cooked*, the first volume of *Mythologiques*, highlights the common characteristics of music and myth, as languages that transcend, each in its own way, the level of articulated language, requiring, like this, a temporal dimension to manifest, which is not the case with painting (1964, p. 24). A machine for suppressing time, music allows us, as we listen to it, to live a kind of immortality. The first volume of *Mythologiques* follows the structure of a grand symphonic orchestra, with an overture, presentation of themes and their variations, sonatas, and fugues.

Lévi-Strauss's publications rarely fail to address the arts. *Tristes Tropiques* ("An Indigenous Society and Its Style"), *Structural Anthropology I* ("The Unfolding of Representation in the Arts of Asia and America" and "The Serpent of the Body Full of Fish") and II ("Art in 1985"), the final chapters of what would have been *Structural Anthropology III*, which Lévi-Strauss chose to title *The View from Afar* (all chapters from the last part, called "Constraint and Freedom"), along with his interviews with Charbonnier and books entirely dedicated to the arts, such as *The Way of the Masks* and his final publication, *Look, Listen, Read*, all focus on the analysis of music, literature, and poetry.

In the chapter "To a Young Painter" of *The View from Afar*, he contests the recurring claim that photography has declared the death of naturalist painting (in fact, the most common claims are that photography frees painting from its naturalistic tradition). For him, art must still be understood, as Da Vinci did, based on its role in selecting and organizing information from the external world that reaches us through the senses. But it is precisely by omitting some information and highlighting others, or softening them, that the painter introduces some coherence into this multiplicity of styles, in which a style can be recognized. It is exactly this possibility of selection from a model that is not available to photography, and that transforms photography, for Lévi-Strauss, into a document, or lesser art. The photographer is subject to the physical and mechanical limitations of the apparatus, to the chemical products needed to develop the film. His possibilities for choosing the object to be photographed, the angle, and the light leave him with much more restricted freedom compared to the painter, who can make use of the eye, the hand, and the mind.

This is an unconvincing comparison and seems like an echo of the criticism that painters and critics from the mid-19th century made about photography. Lévi-Strauss appears to fail to see that there are styles that can be recognized in different photographers, there is indeed selection, cropping, and assigning of meaning, even without considering the possibilities of manipulation and organization introduced by computers.

But I believe it is much more in the comparisons he makes between Impressionism and Cubism (*The View from Afar*) and in his comments on the photos that appear in *Saudades do Brasil* that we can understand this paradoxical relationship of the great photographer that Lévi-Strauss is with his disdain for photography.

For him, it would be ridiculous to try to explain Impressionism through the physics of colors or through the invention of photography; one of the problems of Impressionism, which led these painters to a deadlock, was thinking that painting should have as its only ambition "to capture what the theorists of the time called the physiognomy of things, that is, their subjective consideration, as opposed to an objective consideration that aimed

to capture their nature" (Lévi-Strauss, 1983, p. 334). If Impressionism, in this sense, fell short of nature, to escape this impasse, Cubism will go beyond nature and, in a different way, will also unbalance it. While Impressionism sought, regarding the moment/instant, to capture suspended time, Cubism will unfold or extend time. There are no successive views of the object in Cubism, but an atemporal view that renounces perspective and places the spectator in its duration. (1983, p. 335). What Lévi-Strauss admires is the humility of the artist before the inexhaustible richness of the world, and this also means the impossibility of apprehending it from its concreteness or momentary figurative reality.

Lévi-Strauss is not interested in the physiognomic aspects of the real world. We know that the impressionist painters as Monet and others were very much influenced by Ukiyo-e, a school of Japanese painters in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. The term Ukiyo-e, which translates as "pictures of a floating world," refers to the woodblock color prints that were first created in the Edo period, by combining the talents of painters like Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige with the absolute mastery of block carvers and printers. Lévi-Strauss is fond of Utamaro and Hokusai, but he disregards the impressionists and in his view their mistake was "to catch what the authors of that time considered the physiognomy of things, their subjective appreciation/judgment, instead of objectively apprehending their inner nature" (1983, p. 334). The true pictorial art, which Lévi-Strauss recognizes in a painter from this school like Utamaro, is the one that manages to conceive through the spirit the images of living things to be transferred onto paper. (1983, p. 338).

The mistake of the impressionists was then to fix or to freeze time (isn't this exactly what in a sense, photography does?). On the other hand, the mistake of cubism was to unfold, to dissect the object and extend time. Cubism presents a timeless perspective; actually, there is no perspective at all: the spectator is thrown in the duration of time and the object fails or escapes. The artist should be a humble man, Lévi-Strauss says. This means that it is impossible to seize the world in a realistic or concrete way, or the momentary, passing figurative reality. The artist apprehends the world through his eyes, but it is through the mind that these images should be transferred to the canvas or the paper. (1983, p. 338).

I suggest a stop here to think about Lévi-Strauss conceptions on the relationship between the sensible and the intelligible and his attitude towards time. I do agree with Beatriz Perrone-Moisés (2009) when she says that Lévi-Strauss has a strong interest in facts, that he has a constant move towards the empirical world, that he has an almost maniac attention to concrete details as he himself said in an interview with Eribon. In this sense we both agree that he is not solely interested in the construction of great abstract models. But at the same time, as Perrone-Moisés puts it, in 1934, the year Lévi-Strauss decided to come to Brazil, he was interested in a radical withdrawal from himself, something that ethnography requires.

Therefore, we are dealing with an intellectual whose attention has frequently turned to the artistic sphere and who, as is known, was the son of a painter who used photography to record details to be reproduced in his paintings. Debaene states that Lévi-Strauss's photographic practice is caught up in a playful rivalry with his father, Raymond, a painter, and portraitist. (...) Raymond Lévi-Strauss took photographs as painters did, not for the pictorial result itself, but in order to obtain control proofs (to check proportions, angles, and refine perspective effects) (Debaene, 2018, p. 22).

But where does his resistance to valuing what he himself accomplishes through the writing of light come from? Why such disdain for his photographs?

Let's see how this author conceives of art, as well as the role he attributes to artistic activity and artists. For Lévi-Strauss, "a work of art is a sign of the object and not a literal reproduction; it manifests something that was not immediately given to the perception we have of the object, and that is its structure, because the specific characteristic of the language of art is that there is always a very deep homology between the structure of meaning and the structure of the signifier... by signifying the object [as surrealists do with everyday objects], the artist manages to elaborate a structure of meaning that maintains a relationship with the very structure of the object" (1968, p. 80). Even an artist like Ingres, who mastered the technique of producing the illusion of a facsimile, managed to reveal a meaning that goes far beyond perception and reaches the very structure of the object

of perception. (1968, p. 81). For Lévi-Strauss, it is up to the arts to go much further and maintain, between the model, the raw material, the physical or chemical laws, and the artist himself, a patient dialogue, and only then could a work emerge that would sensibly condense the terms of a pact between all these parts. In this sense, a work of art is not a mere document, even if it is original.

For Lévi-Strauss, art is also a language, but whereas articulated language is a system of arbitrary signs, with no sensible relationship to the objects it seeks to signify, art differentiates itself from verbal language precisely by establishing this sensitive relationship between the sign and the object, and this is precisely its function. Moreover, art is a guide, a means of instruction, almost like a learning process about the surrounding reality. (1968, p. 120). This is also why Lévi-Strauss is fascinated by both still-life paintings and illustrations used in 19th-century natural history books. His own books feature these illustrations of specimens from fauna and flora, such as the *viola tricolor* (*pensée sauvage* in French), which illustrates the book of the same name, various types of monkeys, sloths, lynxes, birds, etc.

This possibility of learning through art, which, for Lévi-Strauss, comes from its ability to unite sensation with the mind, is present, as he shows in *Look, Listen, Read*, in figurative arts that, through trompe l'oeil, especially in still-life, do not represent but reconstruct. And the artists do it selectively, as they do not reproduce everything or anything from the model. Art, in this sense, implies both knowledge and reflection. This is exactly what fascinates him in the work of Anita Albus, the artist who illustrates the cover of *The View from Afar*. Referring to her work, Lévi-Strauss says she manages to "put painting to the service of knowledge and make the aesthetic emotion have an effect of coalescence, uniting separate parts, a union that the work immediately achieves between the sensitive properties of things and their intelligible properties" (1983, p. 338).

But, as he himself says, would the photos be mere documents?

What about photography? Photography catches what the eye catches – the tangible level of things. It should be clear here that photographs catch, they do not represent.



Photography does not reproduce reality, it produces and reproduces what is worth looking at, the visible aspects of the world that the photographer selects. Photographs register, as did the photographer Lévi-Strauss a fleeting moment, a beautiful Indian woman carrying her baby, the smoke of a fire that has been extinguished long time ago, moments from a specific journey, urban landscapes we can no longer recognize so much they have changed. Photographs, as travelogues state what was and is not anymore. As Sontag says, photographs are simultaneously a pretentious presence and a sign of absence (1986, p. 25). But at the same time Sontag thinks that photographs teach us a new visual code, they transform and widen what is worth looking at and what can be observed. For this philosopher photographs are like a grammar, an ethic of vision. In this sense, photography also implies knowledge. Lévi-Strauss knows this. In *Tristes Tropiques* he says (1955, p. 45-46) "... only a fleeting scene, a corner of the landscape, a reflection caught in the air, allow us to understand and interpret horizons that would otherwise be barren".

Photography has a dual relationship with time and space. While an oil canvas is a space that takes us to another space, photography also refers us to another space but at the same time photographs speak of another time. This is certainly the reason photographs were used in the beginning mainly for archives, for consultation, instead of contemplation as the works of art in galleries or museums. Photography does not have the irreversibility of myth or music, as Lévi-Strauss rightly points out. In this sense, it is closer to poetry. It depends on the receiver who revives images and rhythms and summons this floating time that it registered, and which returns through the image. But it returns to remind us of what no longer is. Hence, the role that Lévi-Strauss assigns to himself as both a photographer and ethnographer: to record that which will inevitably be erased by time. In *Tristes Tropiques*, he says: "In a few hundred years, at this same place, another traveler, as desperate as I, will mourn the disappearance of what I might have seen, and which escaped me. Victim of a double ineptitude, everything I perceive hurts me, and I reproach myself for never looking enough" (1955, p. 40). Something very similar to his opinion on travel narratives: "Then I understand the passion, the madness, the mistake of travel narratives.

They create the illusion of what no longer exists and still should exist, so we can escape the overwhelming experience that 20 thousand years of history have passed" (1955, p. 39-40).

If, for Lévi-Strauss, photography and travel narratives are equivalent in that they both demonstrate a certain complacency with the immediate perception of things, as they are both testimonies of a past and irreversible time, it is ethnography that attracts him. According to Lévi-Strauss, this attraction is due to an affinity between the civilizations it studies and his own thought. His intelligence is akin to indigenous slash-and-burn agriculture: "It scorches soils, sometimes unexpectedly; perhaps fertilizes them quickly to extract some harvests, and leaves behind a devastated territory" (1955, p. 51). For Lévi-Strauss, science demonstrates that "to understand is to reduce one type of reality to another; that the true reality is never the most obvious; and that the nature of the truth already shows itself in the care with which it hides. In all cases (Lévi-Strauss refers to Marxism, geology, and psychoanalysis) the same problem is posed, which is the relationship between the sensible and the rational, and the intended objective is the same: 'a kind of super-rationalism, aiming to integrate the first into the second without sacrificing any of their properties'" (1955, p. 55).

If this is the great merit of science, what Lévi-Strauss privileges in art is the possibility it offers for the passage from nature (the object) to culture (the plastic representation of the object). The artistic object is a sign when it can express fundamental characteristics both of the sign and of the object, which were once concealed. These properties of the object, highlighted by the artist's work, are, for Lévi-Strauss, also common to the structure and functioning of the human mind. Thus, art is art when it translates the structure common to both the mind and the thing.

As Simonis (1968, p. 313) shows, this is precisely the activity proposed by structuralism. For this interpreter of Lévi-Strauss's methodology, it is about making structuralism into a science and moving from art to science. His desire is to say scientifically what is aesthetically perceived in art (*ibid.*, p. 317-318). Here, Lévi-Strauss's considerations on the "reduced model" come into play, which is, for him, a masterpiece, one of the elements of aesthetic

pleasure that art has to offer. This is because the reduced model (and everything that is a product of artistic activity, where aesthetics and intelligibility are intertwined) offers the possibility of knowing the thing, exactly the opposite of our intellectual operations—where, to know, we seek the whole through the parts.

If painting can abstract reality and represent it based on what the painter deems essential, the same does not happen with photography, where reality is imprinted and leaves its marks. When the sensitive film captures the light emanating from the object and imprints it onto the film, the human being does not intervene; and it is only in this sense that Barthes sees photography as a "message without a code." It is this same reality, also momentary and fleeting, but with all its referential reality, that is transposed into travel diaries.

Lévi-Strauss, the talented photographer took his photographs without realizing that the photographer is no closer to the real than the painter working in front of his canvas. (Rouillé, 2009:19). "The photographic image is neither a cut, nor the catching of the direct automatic, analogic register of a preexisting real. Quite the contrary". As André Rouillé (2009, p. 77) notices, "it is the production of a new real (the photographic real) in a process that registers and transforms something in the given real but not in any sense assimilable or possible of incorporation to the real".

Lévi-Strauss photographs do what he claims are the main characteristics of an artwork: they link the sensation, the aesthetic emotion to the spirit. I see no representation in his photographs, not even illustrations as in Malinowski's ethnographic photographs. If we carefully look at Lévi-Strauss photographs, we will notice that the images he caught in São Paulo and were published in *Saudades de São Paulo* (1996) express his closeness to geology. When analyzed in a series, and not one by one, as he teaches us, it is possible to see that they point to layers of time, not superposed, but scattered in the urban space of São Paulo of the thirties. With the other professors of the French Mission, as the historian Fernand Braudel, the geographer Pierre Monbeig and the philosopher Jean Maugué Lévi-Strauss enjoyed exploring the surroundings of São Paulo, the sea landscapes in Santos,



the coffee plantations in the vicinities of town, almost as if they were archeological researchers. His photographs of São Paulo, which are not, I must say, as sophisticated as the ones he caught among the indigenous people, show modern avenues and buildings, and at the same time urban spaces that look as if we were in the country, rural, provincial hills with oxcarts, modern cars with wagons and trolley cars. In a sea landscape in Praia Grande, we can see fishers using the cattle and oxcarts to help them pull their nets for the fishery. In São Paulo Lévi-Strauss also took pictures of posters for the Japanese migrants who went to Paraná and political posters calling people to gather on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, the day Princess Isabel signed the law against Slavery. Another poster stimulates the cotton plantation, an effort of the state government to develop a more diversified farming.

It is easy to see that in these images Lévi-Strauss is interested in the city itself, its diversity, the possibility of finding places that belong to different phases of the urban development. In São Paulo he is not interested in people at all. We can see people in the streets, or in the trolleys, but they are not the focus of his lenses. The urban spaces he catches register the transformation of the city through time and this seems to be his main interest. In this interview in 1995 with Antoine de Gaudemar, the journalist of *Liberation*, when *Saudades do Brasil* was published, Lévi-Strauss says that he learned photography with his father, but he never got an interest in aspects of daily life. He would construct all kinds of bizarre objects in farfetched illumination and then photograph them, in a pure expressionist German style. For him photography was an aesthetic game.

On the other hand, it is people that he shows in his images among the indigenous societies he visited. In this same interview to Antoine de Gaudemar, he says that the Caduveo would always ask him for a gift after he took a photograph, especially if it was a beautiful woman who had just painted her face. Except for the small Caduveo boy, all the women are posing. The same with the Bororo man who is wearing a beautiful *pariko*, or headdress.



Everything changes among the Nambikwara, which are, for me, his most beautiful photographs. As he said in this interview with Antoine de Gaudemar, the Nambikwara

were not aware of cameras, they did not know what the camera was and would never pay any attention to it. Lévi-Strauss shows them as affectionate people. Travelling in a boat with their baskets, playing football, chasing lice, or just having fun. The images of the Nambikwara are spontaneous, magnificent people not damaged by civilization. The erotic life he says they praise are evident in the images he caught. I would say that it is among the Nambikwara that Lévi-Strauss spent more time, that he got closer, and really enjoyed himself as a human being. The Nambikwara formula, as they told him is “To make love is good” (1955, p. 326) piques p. 326).

The images on the Tupi-Kawahib also show how much Lévi-Strauss was fascinated by them. The difference is that he could not speak their language, he had no interpreters and stayed only for 15 days among them. (1955, p. 411). He counted on information on the Tupi by Jean de Léry, Curt Nimuendaju and Rondon and most of his observations on them regard the chiefs and their women. These photographs have the aesthetic flavor he says he enjoys and are at the same time nostalgic. Lévi-Strauss fears that the Tupi that so much fascinated the Europeans would disappear as soon as he would leave their village (1955, p. 415).

For these reasons, in my view, the Lévi-Strauss ethnologist does not come to realize the greatness of his photographs, the sensibility they denote, and which also lead us to know and think. Unlike Malinowski, who increasingly uses photography in his works, giving the pictorial element a role that complements (more than illustrates) the verbal text (see Samain, 1995), Lévi-Strauss rarely uses photography, and when he does, it is from a much more aesthetic than ethnographic perspective. Perhaps we should treat Lévi-Strauss the photographer just as he treats artists. In interviews with Charbonnier, he himself says that with regard to artists, what is important is what they do, not what they think (1968, p. 101). Once again, he is right.



Peer Review	Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest	The author declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.
Grant Support	The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.
Author Details	<b>Sylvia Caiuby Novaes (Prof. Dr.)</b> <sup>1</sup> University of São Paulo, Department of Anthropology, São Paulo, Brasil  0000-0002-7415-2010  scaiuby@usp.br

## References

- Caiuby, Novaes, Sylvia. (1999). Lévi-Strauss, razão e sensibilidade. *Revista de Antropologia*, vol. 42 nos. 1 e 2. (pp. 67-77). Seleção de fotos e textos de Claude Lévi-Strauss, publicado como encarte no vol. 42, no. 1 e 2 da *Revista de Antropologia*, volume especial em homenagem a Claude Lévi-Strauss.
- Debaene, Vincent. (2018). Cadrage Cannibale. Les photographies de Tristes Tropiques. *Gradhiva*, 27, pp 90-117.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude.  
 (1955). *Tristes Tropiques*. Librairie Paris : Plon.  
 (1964). *Le Cru et le Cuit*. Plon.  
 (1967). O Desdobramento da representação nas artes da Ásia e da América (ps, 279-305) e A Serpente de Corpo Repleto de Peixes. (pp. 305-309). IN *Antropologia Estrutural*. Tempo Brasileiro.  
 (1968). *Arte, lenguaje etnología Entrevistas con Georges Charbonnier*. México: Siglo XXI Editores. 2ª edición.  
 (1976). A arte em 1985. IN *Antropologia Estrutural II*. Tempo Brasileiro.  
 (1979). *A Via das Máscaras*. Editorial Presença.  
 (1983). *Le Regard Éloigné*. Plon.  
 (1994). *Saudades do Brasil*. Plon.  
 (1995) Entrevista a Antoine Gaudemar (Liberation). Folha de São Paulo, 15 janeiro 1995.  
 (1996). *Saudades de São Paulo*. Companhia das Letras.  
 (1997). *Olhar Escutar Ler*. Companhia das Letras.  
 (2005). *De perto e de longe*. Claude Lévi-Strauss e Didier Eribon. Cosac&Naify.  
 Paz, Octavio. (1993). *Claude Lévi-Strauss ou o novo festim de Esopo*. Editora Perspectiva.  
 Perrone-Moisés, B.. (2009). Os Brasis em Lévi-Strauss. *Revista Diacrítica*, vol. 23, núm. 2, pp. 57-73. Universidade do Minho. Braga, Portugal.  
 Rouillé, André. (2009). *A fotografia; entre documento e arte contemporânea*. Editora Senac.  
 Samain, Etienne. (1995). “Ver” e “dizer” na tradição etnográfica: Bronislaw Malinowski e a fotografia. *Horizontes Antropológicos*, n. 2.  
 Simonis, Yvan. (1968). *Claude Lévi-Strauss ou la “Passion de L’Inceste”*. Éditions Aubier Montaigne.  
 SONTAG, Susan. (1986). *Ensaio sobre Fotografia*. Publicações Dom Quixote.

