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Sommario/riassunto	<p>The "structuralism" that Claude Levi-Strauss advocates does not constitute a total innovation in the tradition of the social sciences. It rather represents a formalization and a systematization of a principle of global approach that can already be found for example in Marcel Mauss with the notion of "total social fact" (cf. "Essay on the gift") or in Ruth Benedict with that of "patron of civilization" (see "Samples of civilization") and of course especially with Ferdinand de Saussure in his "synchronic" study of language (see "Course in general linguistics"). It is always a question here of distrusting both the always arbitrary divisions of certain social objects artificially isolated from others ("the family", "work", "justice", "the economy", etc.), like distrusting the historical point of view which claims to explain a present fact by the series of facts which precede it (to the point of seeing for example in the educational institution the effect of an evolution internal to it but also external at his present moment). On the contrary, here, we attempt to consider the present social whole and its current unity through the elements (the various institutions among others) which take on meaning as inseparable parts of a common movement, the dynamic structure of society which must be perceived in its general personality, the parts interpenetrating and modifying each other producing a new entity which in turn at the same time penetrates and modifies them. This social personality always represents an organized set of choices, acceptances and refusals, a selection made from human potentialities</p>

that are always too numerous and too contradictory, a selection arranged and operated according to environmental possibilities and opportunities, which makes it good a structuring of human plasticity and therefore a structure, which remains mainly unconscious and is transmitted collectively above all through practice (we will find, with some variations, the same methodological approach in Pierre Bourdieu). This is how, according to Levi-Strauss, in a society the forms of kinship are organized firstly in such a way as to allow as much as to follow the principle of "exchange", "reciprocity" and " rule" which make up the social dimension of humanity. The prohibition of incest, which obliges as well as authorizes children to obtain sexual partners outside their biological family, introduces culture into nature by breaking and opening the biological core of the family to the law of the exchange of women, an exchange which constitutes not only an exchange of people but a more global exchange, of an economic, political, religious, artistic, scientific order, etc. The fundamentally exogamous "elementary structures of kinship", as vectors of societal integration and cohesion between subgroups, then also participate in the general structures of the functioning of a society which each time must appear fully personal in relation to to others. With this extract we will first be interested in the problem of the distinction as well as the relationship between nature and culture, notably through the concepts of human generality and its constancy in space and time (thus quasi-biological) of a on both sides of the social (cultural) particularity and its geographical and historical variations. The social science researcher will occasionally ask himself if he is well positioned in this last pole, how and why. Then we will be interested in the way in which the study of an element of society (here kinship and its rules, particularly sexual) contributes to the total study of this society and, vice versa, as the apprehension of it promotes the explanation and understanding of the former, all this in the reciprocal exchange of the same rule.
