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Toward an Ethic of Generosity

Alan D. Schrift



The Logic of the Gift

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Toward an Ethic of Generosity



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Alan D. Schrift

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Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent

. a gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue.

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*For Gail, who has given so much,
and for Benjamin, who gives without knowing,
and of course for Jill, who has taught me the joy of giving*

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More Blessèd

When the flight attendant offers me coffee
I offer him Extra Strength Bufferin, which I'm tapping
into my palm. No, he smiles,
—You wouldn't have any Sudafed?
Of *course* I have Sudafed,
I exclaim loudly. What I mean is I have
what he needs, I am a mother. We discuss his dose;
I think if he's used to two he should stay
with two. Can I give you a complimentary
Bailey's in that coffee? Oh no, I say, Thanks—
as if I would shift this new balance
of payments in the universe—it is
Love-Nothing. And the pills were in a packet,
the silver bubbles Sudafed come in, so he
didn't have to worry about my germs. Suddenly
I realize my mother taught me the bliss
of giving, she trained me in it,
the way one might become wise, with a lover,
in the bliss of loving. She so loved
to receive, she was so grateful for it.
Her father must have given her things before his
early death, because she claps her little
hands and yodels and twinkles—every
gift is erotic. The pleasure of giving
is a sexual pleasure. It is a power. I have it.

Sharon Olds

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Introduction: Why Gift?

Alan D. Schrift

Since Marcel Mauss's well-known and influential *Essai sur le don* first appeared in 1924, gifts and gift exchange have been frequent topics of inquiry within the field of anthropology. But for the other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, gifts and gift giving were not a theme able to sustain much attention. Until quite recently, that is. In fact, over the past two decades, the theme of gifts and gift giving has emerged as a central issue within a range of divergent fields. Whether inscribed within a tradition that traces itself to Marcel Mauss's *Essai sur le don*, to Georges Bataille's articulation of a general economy of expenditure, or to Martin Heidegger's reflections on the "*es gibt*" of Being, philosophers, literary critics, and literary theorists have with increasing frequency joined anthropologists and sociologists in reflecting upon various economic phenomena in the context of their attempts to theorize gift exchange.

This tendency in contemporary discourse to focus on questions of gifts, gift giving, reciprocity, and exchange can be traced to two important recent developments. The first is the appearance in 1991 of Jacques Derrida's *Donner le temps. 1. La fausse monnaie*, translated into English the following year as *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*. The date of publication for this text is misleading, however, for Derrida acknowledges that his text follows closely the trajectory of "a seminar given under the same title in 1977-78 at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris and the next year at Yale University."¹ His thinking on the aporia of the gift, therefore, has been known to many of his "students" for almost twenty years. And as Derrida himself notes in the foreword to *Given Time*, the problematic of the gift, whether or not named as such, had been at work in his texts "wherever it is a question of the *proper* (appropriation, expropriation, exappropriation), economy, the trace, the name, and especially the *rest*, of course, which is to say more or less constantly."² More specifically, although the gift was for the most part overlooked by his early commentators, I would suggest it was a central and recurrent Derridean theme in his texts of the 1970s, ranging from *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*,³ in which the giving of woman is joined to Heidegger's question of the proper, property, and the gift of Being, through *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*,⁴ in which

Derrida addresses issues surrounding giving and the gift in terms of *envois* and their failure to arrive at their destinations, the giving and return of the *fort/da* in Freud, the giving/theft of the purloined letter in Poe, and the *es gibt* of *Sein* and *Ereignis* in Heidegger. In fact, in the foreword to *Given Time*, Derrida draws attention to pages from virtually all his important texts in which the vocabulary of the gift is inscribed. While this problematic of the gift is curiously absent in most of the early discussions of Derrida's work, it is worth noting that one place it was not ignored was in feminist readings of Derrida's works and deconstruction in general. In this regard, one might go so far as to argue that a "sexual difference" among Derrida's "commentators" emerged concerning whether or not they regard the thematics of the gift in Derrida as a topic worthy of comment.⁵ With the publication of *Given Time*, however, this has all changed. And the economic question already is and promises to remain a major focus of future Derridean scholarship.

The question of gender points to the second development within contemporary critical theory that has brought the problematic of the gift to the center of critical attention. Within the discipline of anthropology, as Gayle Rubin put it two decades ago, an inquiry into the relation between gender and the gift has been ongoing since Claude Lévi-Strauss, in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, added "to the theory of primitive reciprocity the idea that marriages are a most basic form of gift exchange, in which it is women who are the most precious of gifts."⁶ Since 1980, a number of monographs have appeared that challenge some of the anthropological and economic assumptions that have become almost canonical since Mauss's *Essai*. For example, anthropologist C. A. Gregory, in *Gifts and Commodities*, makes a distinction that allows us to connect the economic reflections of anthropology with the more philosophical/ethical concerns of deconstruction. Gregory distinguishes between commodity and gift exchange in the following way: "Commodity exchange establishes objective quantitative relationships between the objects transacted, while gift exchange establishes personal qualitative relationships between the subjects transacting."⁷ Where commodity exchange is focused on a transfer in which objects of equivalent exchange value are reciprocally transacted, gift exchange seeks to establish a relationship between subjects in which the actual objects transferred are incidental to the value of the relationship established. Commodity exchange thus exhibits the values that, for example, Carol Gilligan associates with an ethic of rights based on abstract principles of reciprocity, while gift exchange exhibits the forming of and focus on relationships that she associates with an ethic of care based on interper-

sonal needs and responsibilities, an ethic that speaks in a voice different from the one that has heretofore dominated the moral tradition.⁸

The theme of the gift, then, can be located at the center of current discussions of deconstruction, gender, ethics, philosophy, anthropology, and economics. It is, I would argue, one of the primary focal points at which contemporary disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses intersect. And, as the essays collected in this volume demonstrate, while the problematic of the gift may not always have been at the center of critical attention, its appearance is not and has not been limited to the discourses of anthropologists. In fact, as Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay "Gifts," written in 1844, makes clear, the paradoxical and problematic character of the gift has been apparent for quite a while. This essay, which Mauss recalled at the opening of the conclusion to his *Essai* as "curious,"⁹ already noted that the unreciprocated gift left the receiver feeling inferior and vengeful at the intrusion on one's independence and the incursion of this debt to repay. And in so doing, Emerson's short essay already raised a fundamental question that all analyses of the gift must address, namely, should the analysis focus on the object given, on the relationship established between the giver and the receiver, or on the inextricable interconnections between these object(s) and relationship(s)?

A few decades after Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche echoed these sentiments when he opened *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with a reflection on gifts and the necessity of giving. When Zarathustra first goes down from his cave to rejoin humanity, like the bee that has gathered too much honey or the cup that wants to overflow, he is overfull and needs to locate those to whom he can bring the gift of his teaching. Zarathustra soon comes to stand in relation to his followers as a giver of gifts, and his followers are only too eager to receive his teachings as gifts from on high. But unlike his followers, Zarathustra knows the dangers involved in gift giving; he knows that the gift is a *pharmakon*,¹⁰ for those who benefit from receiving the gifts often feel beholden to the one who gave to them. Zarathustra thus cautions those who have nothing to give to be reserved in accepting, because "Great indebtedness does not make men grateful, but vengeful; and if a little charity is not forgotten, it turns into a gnawing worm."¹¹

To be able to give gifts rightly, Zarathustra claims, is an "*art* [*Kunst*],"¹² and great care and skill is required in order to prevent feelings of indebtedness in the recipients of one's generosity. One repays one's teacher badly if one remains only a student, Zarathustra tells his followers at the end of part one, in a chapter entitled "On the Gift-Giving Virtue," as he urges them to lose him and find themselves. To remain a student is to return the

teacher's gifts in kind, either by simple obedience to the teacher's lessons or by presenting the teacher with a comparable counter-gift in return. Neither response takes the gift freely and with forgetfulness of its origin. For Zarathustra, overfull with wisdom, giving is a "necessity,"¹³ and while his followers may return eternally to the words of their teacher, the return on Zarathustra's gifts will not return to him, as he confesses not to know the happiness of those who receive. This, Zarathustra realizes, is his ultimate poverty: his hand never rests from giving. Yet by remaining committed to the affirmation of giving even beyond what he possesses, Zarathustra is never impoverished by this need to give, nor does he ever reconsider his judgment that the gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue.

While Emerson's and Nietzsche's reflections on the gift hover in the background of many of the discussions that follow, three early twentieth-century thinkers who have reflected on the logic of the gift occupy a much more central position in the current discussions: Marcel Mauss, Georges Bataille, and Martin Heidegger. Although this is not the place for an extensive discussion of their thought and its influence, a brief comment on their general views will help situate many of the following essays. As suggested earlier, Mauss's *The Gift* is without doubt the text that initiates the modern reflections on gifts and gift giving. Insofar as a reading of this text will be the focus of the essays in section two, here we need only mention some of the most basic features of Mauss's essay. First and foremost is Mauss's thesis that although the gift might appear free and disinterested, it is in fact both constrained and quite interested. That is to say, in the archaic societies he examines, Mauss finds that the gift is given in a context in which both its reception and its reciprocal return are obligated in terms of well-articulated social rules. Thus, much of Mauss's text involves analyzing gift-giving practices in an effort to disclose the underlying rules that govern the ongoing circulation of gifts. His purpose in this analysis is twofold. On the one hand, he wants to show that contrary to what has been believed, the phenomenon of the market did not first arise with the invention of money. Rather, as a human phenomenon, the market "is not foreign to any known society," and he argues that even in apparently non-market archaic societies, their exchanges are governed by rules and contracts that, insofar as they are different from our own, show the possibility of systems of exchange other than those based upon modern notions of money and commodity transactions.¹⁴

On the other hand, there is a clear political agenda guiding Mauss's analysis, for he is explicit in claiming that the analysis of the social rules at work in these archaic societies allows us to draw some moral conclusions concerning the organizational principles that ground our own society. He

closes his essay with a self-named lesson in “civics” that offers a response both to the recent violence of the First World War and the continuing unequal distribution of wealth. His analysis of the agonistic expenditure of the potlatch shows it to be in no way disinterested, for through such gifts a social and economic hierarchy is established. If our society is to avoid such hierarchies, and the social instability that results from them, it can do so, Mauss argues, only by more equitably distributing access to the “common store of wealth.” Mauss closes his essay by noting that what one finds, at the conclusion of the research he has provided, is that “societies have progressed in so far as they themselves, their subgroups, and lastly, the individuals in them, have succeeded in stabilizing relationships, giving, receiving, and finally, giving in return. . . . Goodness and happiness [will then be found] in the peace that has been imposed, in well-organized work, alternately in common and separately, in wealth amassed and then redistributed, in the mutual respect and reciprocating generosity that is taught by education.”¹⁵

Georges Bataille puts forward his economic reflections from within a paradigm framed very much by Mauss’s *Essai*. But he does so in order to accomplish a “Copernican transformation” of economic and ethical thinking.¹⁶ That is to say, Bataille’s goal, articulated first in his influential 1933 essay “The Notion of Expenditure”¹⁷ and revised over the next sixteen years until its final formulation in volume one of *The Accursed Share*, is to overturn the economic principles of utilitarian calculation that define the rationality of what he calls “restrictive economy.” This overturning will make possible a different economic logic, one based on the unproductive expenditure of excess that defines the workings of a “general economy.” According to Bataille, this unproductive expenditure animates the potlatch analyzed by Mauss, and Bataille goes on to argue that it is a necessary, albeit heretofore unacknowledged, requirement for continued economic growth. Basing his argument in part on a naturalism that sees the paradigm of general economy in the unreciprocated expenditure of solar energy (one of the many points at which Bataille is rightfully situated as an heir to the Nietzschean discourse on squandering),¹⁸ Bataille claims that modern economic forces of commodity accumulation obscure “the basic movement that tends to restore wealth to its function, to gift-giving, to squandering without reciprocation.”¹⁹ Like Mauss, Bataille’s reflections are motivated by political concerns: convinced that a part of wealth “is doomed to destruction or at least unproductive use without any possible profit, it is logical, even *inescapable*, to surrender commodities without return.”²⁰ In the past, potlatch, religious sacrifice, and, most destructively, warfare have been the means for expending that excessive wealth/energy that could no

longer be accumulated. The events of the Second World War only confirm Bataille's thesis that there are limits to what can be accumulated, and *The Accursed Share* ends on the hopeful note that perhaps the Marshall Plan will emerge as a new kind of unproductive expenditure of excess that can avoid the catastrophes of war.

Martin Heidegger takes a decidedly different approach to the gift, locating it not within a cycle or circle of exchange but within the context of a fundamental ontology quite different from the one sketched in *Being and Time*. That is to say, Heidegger's reflections on the gift come in the context of a reflection on *Ereignis* as the gift-event of Being. While there are many ways to develop the implications of Heidegger's turn away from Being/*Sein* and toward *Ereignis* (which has been translated as "the event of appropriation"), the point I want to emphasize here is that this turn makes the non-substantive and event-ual nature of Being more explicit than was the case when Heidegger earlier tried to express his thinking through the language of ontological difference (Being vs. being, *Sein* vs. *Seiende*). Oversimplifying to the extreme, to say that *Ereignis* appears in the context of Heidegger's reflection on the "*es gibt*" of *Sein*, the "there is/it gives" of Being, is to say that Being *is*, not as a thing, but as an event, a happening. To say that "there is/it gives Being" means that Being happens, that Being *is* as event. When Heidegger comes to speak of *Ereignis*, he is reformulating the fundamental ontological insight of *Being and Time* that temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is the meaning of the Being of Dasein. Heidegger's earlier account of the forgetting of the ontological difference, of the difference between Being and beings, now gets refigured as the forgetting of the gift-event of Being. And the call to recollect this event (*Ereignis*) of the gift (of Being) that has been forgotten is thus a call, if not an imperative, to receive this gift appropriately. The overcoming of this forgetfulness is, for Heidegger, the task of thinking that is at present called upon to think of Being not as "what is" but as "what happens," "what unfolds in time." Whether or not Heidegger's own reflections take us very far toward understanding the gift may be debated, but what is beyond debate is that by posing the question of the gift in terms of time and forgetting, his thought continues to inform many of the positions articulated in the following pages.

The selections that follow fall loosely into four groups. The first section includes three "documents": Ralph Waldo Emerson's "curious" essay, "Gifts" (1844), Marcel Mauss's early note on the etymology of 'gift' "Gift, Gift" (1924), and Émile Benveniste's important philological-linguistic account of the peculiarities of 'gift' and 'exchange' in Indo-European languages, "Gift and Exchange in the Indo-European Vocabulary" (1948–49).

Together, these selections point out several of the conceptual and linguistic peculiarities that must frame all reflection on the gift. Emerson, for example, notes that the only true gift is a gift of one's self, for a "real gift" must be something painful to give. That gift must also be unnecessary to the receiver; it must be excessive, for if it is needed, it loses its status *as* gift. While gifts challenge the autonomy of the receiver, the true gift nevertheless unites the giver and receiver, and Emerson concludes that the gift finds perhaps its most perfect expression in the gifts of love.

Mauss focuses in his "technical" account on the peculiar and ambivalent etymology of '*gift*' in Germanic languages. Noting that the single word '*gift*' has given rise to meaning both 'present' and 'poison', Mauss traces this back to the "typical prestation" for the ancient Germans and Scandinavians: the gift of drink. Anticipating quite specifically the undecidability of the Derridean *pharmakon*, Mauss notes that the recipient would always be uncertain whether the gift about to be drunk was a drink-present or a drink-poison. This uncertainty, he suggests, anticipates the conjoined pleasure and displeasure "we still feel when receiving presents" (31), and this, he concludes, sets the stage for his future study on "the obligation to return presents." That study turned out to be, of course, his essay on *The Gift*, a work that Marshall Sahlins described as Mauss's "own gift to the ages" in his essay republished in this volume.

Benveniste, in his widely cited essay, delves further into the ambiguous and ambivalent etymology of both gift and exchange. Where Mauss stops with the undecidability of the gift as present/poison, Benveniste locates a more foundational undecidability in the notion of giving itself, which he argues can be shown in Indo-European languages to have evolved from the root **dō-*, which can mean 'give' or 'take' depending on the construction. Benveniste then draws the startling conclusion that "'to give' and 'to take' thus proclaim themselves here, in a very ancient phase of Indo-European, as notions that were organically linked by their polarity and which were susceptible of the same expression." (34) He goes on to trace a link philologically between certain early forms of expenditure and the institution of potlatch, noting that the distance between the ostentatious expenditure of food and wealth associated with "archaic" potlatch and the great festive banquets of today may not be as great as is often assumed, as evidenced by such contemporary expressions as the "giving of a reception."

The second section reprints selections from three important readings of Mauss's *Essai sur le don*. Claude Lévi-Strauss was one of the first readers of the *Essai* to develop Mauss's suggestion that the implications of his research extended far beyond the field of Melanesian anthropology. For Lévi-Strauss, the importance of Mauss's essay lay in the fact that it attempted to

explain empirically observed behavior and communication in terms of a society's unconscious rules of exchange. And insofar as it sought to formalize these unconscious rules, Lévi-Strauss reads Mauss's essay as the first attempt at a structural anthropology. In introducing the notion of a "total social fact," Mauss named those social phenomena that involve "the totality of society and its institutions" that "are at the same time juridical, economic, religious, and even aesthetic and morphological, etc." and that must be analyzed in terms of the totality of their connections.²¹ In these phenomena, "all kinds of institutions are given expression at one and the same time—religious, juridical, and moral, which relate to both politics and the family; likewise economic ones, which suppose special forms of production and consumption, or rather, of performing total services and of distribution."²² Yet Mauss's analysis fails in the end and, according to Lévi-Strauss, his failure—a failure ultimately to become a structuralist—rests on his resorting to a mystical quality, the *Hau*, to explain the circulation of gifts that he observed. What Mauss should have done, Lévi-Strauss claims, was to account for this circulation in terms of a single *structural* relation of exchange involving three parts: giving, receiving, and reciprocating. Lévi-Strauss argues that Mauss missed this point because he forgot his own central discovery of the total social fact; that is to say, he mistook as three distinct operations what were in reality simply *parts* of the complex social *whole* of exchange. Because he mistook parts for wholes, he found it necessary to posit the *Hau* as a principle to explain the interconnection among giving, receiving, and reciprocating. Had he seen these three operations simply as parts of the primary structural process of exchange as a whole, Lévi-Strauss concludes, there would have been no need to posit the *Hau*. (55)

For Lévi-Strauss, the *Hau* is a conscious attribution by the indigenous group of a name to the underlying unconscious rules that govern social practices. (55–56) These rules cannot be recognized *as* rules, however, for if they were, the gift would become simply a barter or a loan. The appeal to *Hau*, Lévi-Strauss argues, takes Mauss away from his fundamental assumption regarding the understanding of social life as a system of conscious and unconscious relations. Thus, Lévi-Strauss concludes that the *Hau* is a "floating signifier," a "magical name" that gets attached to a variety of signifieds and thereby allows the indigenous peoples, or any linguistic community for that matter, to make sense of their social world.

Marshall Sahlins, in "The Spirit of the Gift," offers an extended commentary on the Maori *Hau* and its relation to the general theme of social contract. He argues that rather than a first attempt at a *structural* anthropology, Mauss's essay shows the way to a future *economic* anthropology.

Responding to three critical commentaries on Mauss's essay—those of Lévi-Strauss, Raymond Firth, and J. Prytz Johansen—Sahlins reads Mauss in the context of Hobbes's political philosophy and claims that “for the war of every man against every man, Mauss substitutes the exchange of everything between everybody” (83). The parallels Sahlins brings out between Mauss's essay and Hobbes's *Leviathan* are striking. Both Hobbes and Mauss show society choosing reason over war: for Hobbes, the rational motivation is the fear of violence; for Mauss, it is the choice of economic over military competition, a choice that also opts for a mode of opposition other than violence. And both Hobbes's and Mauss's theories are shown to rest upon a paradox. When Hobbes argues that the power of the sovereign is necessary to ensure reciprocity, he faces the paradox of realizing the natural condition of a reasoned peace only by means of something artificial: the State. Similarly, when Mauss resorts to the *Hau* in order to ensure reciprocity, he faces the paradoxical situation of grounding reason (social stability) in the form of the irrational: the *Hau* as a spiritual-magical force. Sahlins concludes by suggesting that while close to Hobbes, Mauss also remains close to Marx insofar as he seeks, with the concept of the *Hau*, to understand the force within things as something akin to their fetishized “exchange-value” that makes equivalences possible. Mauss's importance thus resides in his moving the alternatives of war and trade from the periphery to the center of social life as he demonstrates that exchange, as a material transaction, is always already a social relation.

Rodolphe Gasché, in his “Heliocentric Exchange,” offers yet another reading, this time deconstructive, of Mauss's *The Gift*, arguing that the logic of Mauss's argument depends on his falling victim to the same ambiguity that he seeks to clarify in his analysis of primitive exchange. In Mauss's effort to distinguish the obligations to give, to receive, and to reciprocate, Gasché shows him resting his supposedly clear distinctions on the very ambiguities (reciprocity as rivalry, generosity as interested, the free return as obligatory) that he sought to clarify. More to the point, Gasché argues that Mauss's appeal to the *Hau* as the force in the gift that obligates the receiver to reciprocate establishes the circulation of the gift by virtue of avoiding a central feature of the practices analyzed, namely, asking what obligates the donor's giving of the gift in the first place. Insofar as Mauss sees the movement of the gift as circular—from giver to receiver and back again to the giver—he never explains why the donor gives at all. In other words, why is there gift? As Gasché argues, were Mauss to have asked this question, he would have recognized that there is no ordinary gift, no first prestation. Rather, the donor is already implicated in the cycle—not the circle—of exchange: any prestation is always already a counterprestation,

(112) “the donor is always already a *donee*” (115). This implication is Mauss’s “unthought” as he fails to recognize that whenever a gift is given, relations of exchange (obligations to give/receive/reciprocate) have always already been established. Gasché concludes that because he fails to decenter the circle of reciprocal exchange, Mauss is unable to think beyond a restricted economy to the sort of generalized expenditure that Bataille had sought to make room for in his own articulation of the logic of the gift.

The third section presents selections from four of the leading voices in contemporary French theory that intervene in the space opened by Mauss’s reflections on gift and exchange. Two of these, Jacques Derrida’s and Pierre Bourdieu’s, respond directly to the problematic of the gift as framed by Mauss. The others, essays by Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, respond less directly to Mauss’s discourse as they address broader social issues concerning the economics of gift and exchange.

As mentioned earlier, the problematic of the gift and questions of (textual, libidinal) economy have been at work throughout Derrida’s writings. In the selection reprinted here, chapter one of *Given Time*, Derrida outlines several dimensions of what he regards as the fundamental aporia of the gift. Moving from Mauss’s gift to the gift of Being in Heidegger, Derrida seizes upon the impossibility of the gift, an impossibility comparable to the impossibility of *différance*,²³ namely, the conditions of the possibility of the gift are precisely the conditions of its impossibility. That is to say, once the gift is recognized *as* gift, it is no longer a gift; it becomes an obligation that demands reciprocity and once reciprocated, Derrida argues, it has been annulled (128). Because he framed the gift in terms of the circle of reciprocal obligation, Derrida suggests somewhat playfully that “Mauss’s *The Gift* speaks of everything but the gift: it deals with economy, exchange, contract (*do et des*), it speaks of raising the stakes, sacrifice, gift *and* counter-gift—in short, of everything that in the thing itself impels the gift *and* the annulment of the gift” (138). For Derrida, on the other hand, the gift defies the metaphysics of presence—it appears but can never present itself as a gift, it can never be (a) present. The gift, therefore, is intimately connected with forgetting; it is, in fact, coextensive with a radical forgetting that demands that the gift be forgotten by both the donor (who will resent the gift until it has been returned) and the donee (who will feel it as a duty to repay until such restitution is discharged). Derrida concludes that the structure of the gift, like the structure of Being and of time, is not a thing, is nothing (140); it has, instead, the structure of an event, an event of forgetting and deferral, an event of *différance*.²⁴ In fact, what the gift gives, in the end, is time, nothing but time—time to forget, time to return, time for a delayed reciprocation that is no longer simply a return. Insofar as the gift reciprocates an

obligation that is always already forgotten, he suggests that it escapes the economic logic that governs relations of simple exchange. Derrida closes by offering (as a gift?) Baudelaire's "Counterfeit Money," to which the remaining three chapters of *Given Time* make constant reference. But already in this selection, the pertinence of Baudelaire's story for Derrida's account is clear: like the gift, counterfeit money retains its value only so long as it is not recognized; and like the narrator's friend, who Derrida suggests is reproached for not knowing how to give, we might ask whether we must fault Mauss for his own attempt to calculate the circulation of the gift under a law of return somewhere between the economic and the noneconomic.

In the excerpt published in this volume from her contribution to *The Newly Born Woman*, Hélène Cixous rephrases Mauss's and Derrida's insights that the gift is inscribed under the law of return in terms of a gendered unconscious. She notes the lack of ease with which a masculine economy confronts generosity: "Giving: there you have a basic problem, which is that masculinity is always associated—in the unconscious, which is after all what makes the whole economy function—with debt."²⁵ The phallogocentric desire that animates the Hegelian dialectic of self and other is a desire for appropriation: one confronts the other as different and unequal and one seeks to make the other one's own. The desire to possess, to receive a return on one's investments, animates an economy that Cixous suggests we call "masculine," in part because it "is erected from a fear that, in fact, is typically masculine: the fear of expropriation, of separation, of losing the attribute" (151). Founded on a system of returns, economies of the *propre*—proper economies, economies based on the possession of private property—are driven not so much by the desire to appropriate; they are structured instead around the fear of loss, the fear of losing what is already possessed: a fear of being expropriated that Cixous qualifies as "masculine." Where masculine economies can make only quid pro quo exchanges to recoup a direct profit, Cixous claims that feminine economies transact their business differently. They are not constrained to giving as a means of deferred exchange in order to obligate a counter-gift in return; instead, they encourage giving as an affirmation of generosity. No longer understandable in classical "exchangist" economic terms, a feminine economy allows for the possibility of giving without expectation of return, for giving that is truly generous. It is not that women's gifts escape the law of return; rather "all the difference lies in the why and how of the gift, in the values that the gesture of giving affirms, causes to circulate" (158) Which is to say, playing on the polysemy of the French "*rapport*," for a masculine economy the only return (*rapport*) worth securing is conceived in terms of revenues and profit, while a feminine economy seeks not to secure profit but to establish

rapport/relations. A feminine economy, she writes, “is an economy which has a more supple relation to property, which can stand separation and detachment, which signifies that it can also stand freedom—for instance, the other’s freedom.”²⁶ It is an economy, in other words, in which direct profit can be deferred, perhaps infinitely, in exchange for the continued circulation of giving.

Cixous emphasizes the difference between feminine and masculine economies in terms of the former promoting the establishing of relationships through the giving of gifts. In particular, she draws our attention to maternal gifts as ones that escape the logic of appropriation that structures the commodity economy she labels “masculine.” Mother and child do not stand in a relationship of self vs. other, opposing parties with competing interests, and the gift to the child of a mother’s love or a mother’s breast is not comprehensible in terms of quantifiable exchange values or the law of return that governs an economy based on the exchange of commodities. Nor are these maternal gifts understandable in terms of the fear of expropriation, for the mother, she suggests, is willing to expend these gifts without reserve or expectation of return. In fact, like Bataille, Cixous emphasizes and affirms the positive value of plenitude, but unlike Bataille, she wants to gender this positive value feminine as she articulates a set of economic principles that refuse to accept the assumption of conditions of scarcity as given. By escaping the proprietary constraints on subjectivity, women are able to exist in a “relationship to the other in which the gift doesn’t calculate its influence” (163). And she argues that this escape is what makes possible *écriture féminine* as a writing that puts the isolated, autonomous self at risk, questioning and being questioned in the between of same and of other. Such radical questioning goes to the roots of our historical-cultural gender constructions, and she hopes it will make possible radical transformations of gender relations and intersubjective identities.

Luce Irigaray, in “Women on the Market,” also focuses on gender as essential to our thinking the economic because our society, so we are told, “is based upon the exchange of women” (174). But whereas Lévi-Strauss framed this economic order in terms of gift exchange, Irigaray argues instead that women are exchanged not as gifts but as commodities. As such, she appeals to Marx’s analysis to help disclose the social status of women as objects of exchange whose value is split between its natural form (as a [re]productive body) and its social form (as a body possessing value insofar as it can be exchanged). She thus brings to bear Marx’s analysis of use vs. exchange value, suggesting that the stereotypical male fantasies of woman as mother, virgin, or prostitute exemplify woman respectively as use value, exchange value, and usage that is exchanged. Moreover, Marx’s analysis of

the fetishism of commodities helps explain how women have been framed as fetish objects: while Marx's commodity fetishism substitutes relations among things for relations between men, as fetish objects, women's role in exchanges manifests and circulates the power of the Phallus as it establishes relationships of men with each other. Like Cixous, Irigaray suggests that it is an exclusively masculine form of desire that has "presided over the evolution of a certain social order, from its primitive form, private property, to its developed form, capital" (183–84). And like Cixous, she concludes that were women freed from their objectification within an exchange system that prohibits their occupying the position of subject, the current social order could not be maintained. Instead of an economic and social order committed to rules of commodity exchange under conditions of scarcity, a new social order would be possible, an order characterized by a different "relation to nature, matter, the body, language, and desire" (189).

In his first selection in this volume, reprinted from *The Logic of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu develops an analysis of gifts that seeks to avoid the pitfalls of both phenomenological and structuralist theories of the gift. Grounded on a theory of practice, Bourdieu accounts for gift exchange in terms of a specific logic that, by focusing on an economy of symbolic goods, offers two advantages: it can account for the ambiguity of the gift as it passes through time, and it permits an understanding of the agent of gift exchange neither as a phenomenologically construed intending subject nor as a structurally constructed and self-deluded follower of social rules. Like Derrida, Bourdieu focuses his account of gifts on the theme of time, specifically the time lag between gift and counter-gift. It is, he argues, precisely this time lag that stands as the condition for the possibility of the gift. Bourdieu is critical of an objectivist account like Lévi-Strauss's for focusing almost entirely on the relation of reciprocal equivalence between gift and counter-gift. This focus on reciprocity renders the objectivist account unable to distinguish gift exchange from either "swapping," which "telescopes gift and counter-gift into the same instant," or "lending, in which the return of the loan, explicitly guaranteed by a legal act, is in a sense already performed at the very moment when a contract is drawn up ensuring the predictability and calculability of the acts it prescribes" (197–98). But the alternative to the objectivist account is not a subjectivist account that distinguishes gift from swap or loan exclusively in terms of the differing intentions of the giver and receiver. Rather, Bourdieu's account of the gift is grounded on the necessity of a deferred and different counter-gift that is made possible by the individual and collective misrecognition of the social rules that govern the act of reciprocation. This misrecognition, moreover, does not facilitate a violation of the social rules; instead, it is itself part of

the social rules, part of the *habitus*, by which Bourdieu names the “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to obtain them.”²⁷

Gift exchange is, for Bourdieu, “the paradigm of all the operations through which symbolic alchemy produces the reality-denying reality that the collective consciousness aims at as a collectively produced, sustained and maintained misrecognition of the ‘objective’ truth” (203). It is precisely this “symbolic alchemy” that objectivist theories overlook. By overdetermining “value” and “interest” exclusively as “*economic* value” and “*economic* interest,” Bourdieu claims that objectivist accounts are guilty of ethnocentrism in that their economistic assumptions render them incapable of recognizing any form of value or interest other than that produced by capitalism (205). Archaic economies, Bourdieu reminds us, operate in terms of the double-sided conceptual vocabulary analyzed by Benveniste, in which giving is taking, gifts are debts, and the line between the economic and the noneconomic is constantly blurred. In his attempt to understand the logic of practice that blurs this line, Bourdieu develops the notion of “symbolic capital” as capital whose social value is recognized by virtue of its material value having been *mis*recognized. Taking account of “the acts of cognition that are implied in misrecognition and recognition,” he puts forward the theory of agency that underlies his theory of practice, a theory of agency that acknowledges these acts of cognition as part of the social reality produced by a “socially constituted subjectivity” that itself “belongs to objective reality” (215).

In Bourdieu’s second selection, written especially for this volume, he returns to his earlier analysis of gifts to highlight the ambiguity of the gift that must play between the “individual and collective self-deception” that, reminiscent of a Sartrean collective “bad faith,” refuses to attend to egoistic and interested calculations of exchange while at the same time remaining aware of that very logic of exchange. The appropriate response to this ambiguity, however, is not to reduce the gift, as perhaps Derrida does, to an antinomy whose conditions of possibility are precisely its conditions of impossibility (e.g., the gift that is recognized as a gift ceases thereby to be a gift). Rather, in a move that brings him close to Cixous, Bourdieu argues that we must challenge the very ethnocentric economistic assumptions that have led gift economy “to shrink to an island in the ocean of equivalent-exchange economy” (235). For these assumptions, Bourdieu suggests, frame giving and generosity in a context in which the demand for return is

so foundational to social practice that economic capital is transfigured into social capital and “economic domination (of the rich over the poor, master over servant, man over woman, adults over children, etc.) [is transformed] into personal dependence (paternalism, etc.), even devotion, filial piety or love” (238).

The question of the gift, Bourdieu concludes, is ultimately a *political* question. He writes, “The purely speculative and typically scholastic question of whether generosity and disinterestedness are possible should give way to the political question of the means that have to be implemented in order to create universes in which, as in gift economies, people have an interest in disinterestedness and generosity” (240). When established in conditions of “lasting asymmetry” that exclude the possibility of equivalent return or “active reciprocity, which is the condition of possibility of genuine autonomy,” the apparently “most gratuitous and least costly relations of exchange”—e.g., expressions of concern, kindness, consideration or advice, acts of generosity or charity—“are likely to create lasting relations of dependence” (238). An analysis of gift and exchange thus is doomed to fail if it does not begin with a logic of practice but begins instead with the assumption that agents act as isolated atoms; for by doing so, it ignores “the economic and social conditions in which historical agents are produced and reproduced, endowed (through their upbringing) with durable dispositions that make them able and inclined to enter into exchanges, equal or unequal, that give rise to durable relations of dependence” (239).

The fourth and final section presents recent discussions by four thinkers who represent the diversity of ways the logic of the gift—framed in part by the selections of the first three sections—can be seen at work in the critical discourses of the humanities and social sciences in the United States and Great Britain. Allan Stoekl, in “Bataille, Gift-Giving, and the Cold War,” examines the closing chapters of volume one of Bataille’s *The Accursed Share* (1949) and argues that Bataille’s comments on the Marshall Plan, written at the start of the cold war, may suggest the continuing importance of a “general economy” in the contemporary, post-cold war context. Where the notion of a general economy as a gift giving without return has been appropriated in a wide range of literary and philosophical contexts, Stoekl suggests that Bataille introduced this concept not so much for its literary implications as for its social and cultural effects. The “logic” of *The Accursed Share*, which begins with a theoretical account of the meaning and laws of general economy, thus works toward a conclusion that reads the Marshall Plan as “an immense, State-sponsored potlatch” (248). Stoekl recalls that for Bataille, where the Soviet system was based upon “conservation and recuperation, the American is one of expenditure without return”

(249). Bataille argued, in fact, that the American expenditure of the Marshall Plan arose as a (calculated?) response to precisely this Soviet conservation, and Stoekl suggests that in this way, Bataille's work may already be a post-cold war document in that it predicts that, with the fall of the Soviet conservation, another force of conservation will need to arise to rival the opposing tendency toward excessive consumption. In this way, the opposition between the US and Japan in fact may be reproducing the early cold war relations between the US and the USSR as functions of "the same profound posthistorical opposition, that between conservation and expenditure, sense and show" (253). And, by implication, Stoekl leads us to consider whether this same opposition between conservation and expenditure is not being played out in the contemporary cultural battles over the conservative agenda of cutting back on foreign aid and care (read "gifts") for the poor, closing the borders to those who will consume without returning, and, in general, the call for eliminating the state-sponsored gift giving that has rested at the heart of the social welfare state.

Robert Bernasconi, in "What Goes Around Comes Around: Derrida and Levinas on the Economy of the Gift and the Gift of Genealogy," juxtaposes Derrida's account of the logic of the gift with that of Emmanuel Levinas, and he argues that while these accounts appear to differ on many points, they both in fact share the same assumption of the gift's fundamentally aporetic nature. Their proximity on this point is obscured somewhat in that Levinas presents the problem not in terms of the gift but in terms of work, a work that must be "radically generous" and a "departure without return" (258). Here, like the gift, work must be undertaken outside the context of any return or reciprocity. Therefore, Bernasconi suggests that neither work nor gift can be thought of in terms of the model of exchange. In this sense, he wants to read Derrida's discussion of the gift as a challenge to the very heart of Levinas's ethics, which must be construed not in terms of reciprocal duties but as an absolute, asymmetrical duty to the Other. Like the gift, ethics must be without calculation—goodness, if it is to be, must be absolute, that is, it must be undertaken with no thought of reward or of benefit returning to the self. Bernasconi suggests, however, that Derrida and Levinas might be able to avoid the aporia to which they are both led were their accounts less ahistorical and more *genealogical*. To show this, he examines almsgiving, a topic discussed by Derrida in *Given Time* and a topic central to Levinasian ethics. While Derrida is critical of Levinas for focusing on the ahistorical (and paradoxical) notion of "duty without debt," Bernasconi argues that Derrida is guilty of the same lack of genealogy that Derrida himself recognizes (in "Force of Law"²⁸ and elsewhere) as central to the deconstructive project. That is to say, both Derrida

and Levinas are guilty of the same totalizing gesture that too quickly combines the Hebraic with the Greek traditions and takes the Greek/Western concept of rationality to be universal. Were they to attend more explicitly to the genealogy of the concept of intention, Bernasconi suggests, they would “avoid some of the mystifications that a lack of historical awareness produces” (270). And in the case of the gift, they would recognize that the specific account of the aporia to which they both assent is grounded on a Kantian/Judeo-Christian version of intention (and goodness) that is not only not universal but is challenged directly by the Aristotelian notion of *proairesis*. By indissolubly linking the “intention in giving” to the “inherent value of what is given” (267), Bernasconi concludes that *proairesis* allows us to think “intention” other than as it is conceived within the “ethics of intention”; that is to say, it gives us a way to address the value of the gift without necessarily disconnecting it from the intentions or motivations that led to the gift being given, the very disconnection that leads Derrida and Levinas to their aporetic conclusions.

Gary Shapiro, in “The Metaphysics of Presents: Nietzsche’s Gift, the Debt to Emerson, Heidegger’s Values,” offers a provocative reading of the gift in response to Nietzsche’s Zarathustra’s naming “the gift-giving virtue” as the “unnameable.” Along the way, he puts Nietzsche’s discourse on gifts and gift giving in contact with Mauss’s *The Gift*, which claimed that the gift practices of the Melanesians could not be named or understood from within the perspective of the market, and he brings to light Nietzsche’s debt to Emerson, with whose essays Nietzsche was familiar, and whose affinities with Nietzsche on the logic of the gift Shapiro makes explicit. Like Emerson, Nietzsche sees the gift as both valuable and dangerous. And like Emerson, Nietzsche sees genuine giving as a difficult virtue to master. In the end, Shapiro argues that Nietzsche/Zarathustra’s account of the gift more closely resembles Bataille’s wasteful and transgressive expenditure than Mauss’s account of the gift as a force of social stability. In so doing, he positions Nietzsche to respond to Heidegger’s critical account of Nietzsche as the culmination of the Western metaphysical tradition. For, among other things, Heidegger places Nietzsche at this culminating point precisely because Nietzsche, while escaping many of the prejudices of the nineteenth century, was in his view not able to escape the perspective of values and value thinking. Shapiro, on the other hand, shows that Heidegger’s own account of value in Nietzsche fails to place any value on Nietzsche’s affirmation of squandering, an affirmation that, rather than reckoning on returns of equal value, puts forward as a sign of power the disengaged and disinterested destruction of what is valued. Where Heidegger sees Nietzsche offering his “transvaluation of values” as a rever-

sal of the traditional hierarchy of values, Shapiro suggests that we view Nietzsche's transvaluation, as exemplified in his account of the logic of the gift, as a transformation of valuative thinking. The gift-giving virtue names the unnameable, therefore, precisely because as the highest virtue, it is the destroyer of the value of presence/presents par excellence.

Marilyn Strathern, in "Partners and Consumers: Making Relations Visible," extends her analysis of gift economy in Melanesia (put forward in *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* [1988]²⁹) toward analyzing certain practices within Euro-American consumer culture and, in particular, toward practices pertaining to the new reproductive technologies. The propriety of this extension would seem, on the surface, to be obvious. We speak, do we not, of organ or sperm *donation*, of *donor* eggs and *donor* sperm, of the *gift* of life. The procedure itself of gamete intra-fallopian transfer, she notes, is not by mere coincidence referred to by its felicitous acronym GIFT. She cautions, however, that the surface similarities may obscure more profound differences, differences that derive from the contrasting conceptions of persons that animate each culture. In late-twentieth-century Euro-American consumer culture, the person is understood as a free-standing individual and "gift-giving seems a highly personalized form of transaction" (295). Gifts in this context are conceived "as extensions of the self insofar as they carry the expression of sentiments" (302) and gift giving "presupposes two kinds of relationships: an individual person's relations with others and an individual person's relations with society" (307). For the Melanesians, on the other hand, persons are understood relationally and the gift is understood in the context not of an initial establishment but of the *re*-establishment of these relations. Rather than presupposing two kinds of relationships, "Melanesian gifts on the other hand presuppose two kinds of persons, partners divided by their transaction: paternal from maternal kin, fetus from placenta, clansmen from the ground they cultivate, descendants from ancestors" (307). The coercive nature of gift giving in Melanesia, Strathern notes, makes the partnering relationship established between donor and recipient both finite and enduring. Furthermore, gifting, as it takes place in the altruistic and voluntaristic context of the new reproductive technologies, is anything but enduring, and Strathern concludes by asking whether it is, for all that, any less coercive.

The trajectory of the essays reprinted in this collection should make one thing quite clear: the question of the gift is a political question, a question of the *polis*, which addresses fundamental issues of intersubjective interaction. From Emerson and Mauss to Bourdieu and Strathern, the discussions of the gift never stray too far from basic ethical and political questions con-

cerning how human beings do and should treat one another. This should not be surprising inasmuch as giving gifts is a social act that unavoidably takes one outside oneself and puts one in contact with an other or others. That the logic of the gift, then, is infused with assumptions of reciprocity should also not be surprising given that our fundamental notion of justice, embodied in the image of the balanced scales, is a notion of equitable exchange. Justice as equity demonstrates the depth to which contractarian notions of equal exchange inform our most fundamental model of human interaction, a depth reflected in many of the essays that follow whose discourse on the gift remains to some extent infected by a contractarian thematic of quid pro quo exchange between individuals.

The widespread appearance and urgency of the contemporary discourses of the humanities and social sciences on gifts and gift giving may, therefore, itself be viewed as a response to the current political climate. That is to say, the appeal of the gift as a topic for consideration and research may reflect a renewed concern for the establishment of more politically acceptable relations between citizens in response to the recent neoconservative attacks on many of the fundamental principles underlying a notion of social welfare and the accompanying neoconservative championing of a return to a fundamentally contractarian notion of human relations. This attack has allowed a narrowly self-interested notion of reciprocal return to emerge and dominate the current political discourse on giving. Focusing only on those “gifts” that can, should, and must be returned leads, among other things, to viewing foreign-aid decisions exclusively in terms of national self-interest; viewing welfare as a “free ride” that must be replaced by a more contractarian relation in which repayment can be assured (“workfare”); viewing taxes as the unjust extortion of “gifts” that “givers” are forced against their will to give to those who need and benefit from the social programs supported by those taxes; viewing charity not as a generous donation to society’s less fortunate members but as a prudent tax-avoidance strategy; etc. One must wonder what sorts of assumptions regarding gift giving and generosity are operating in a society that views public assistance to its least advantaged members as an illegitimate gift that results in an unjustifiable social burden that can no longer be tolerated while at the same time viewing corporate bailouts and tax breaks for its wealthiest citizens as legitimate investments in a nation’s future. To combat such views requires challenging some of the assumptions basic to the modern liberal democratic state, including perhaps the very notion of a property-possessing individual empowered to demand full and unimpeded authority to control all that he or she owns.

If we depart from the more traditional accounts of gift exchange that presuppose a misrecognition or forgetting of the debt that its reception

entails, would this allow us to avoid describing gift-giving practices as a misrecognition of what is in reality reciprocal exchange? Might we then retrieve gift giving from the economic necessities imposed upon it within an exchangist economy and reframe the practices of giving in an account that does not restrict transactions to private proprietary relationships in which loans and loans paid back masquerade as the bestowal of gifts? Could we escape the limits of the Hegelian ideal of autonomy—the *nomos* of the *autos*—as a law of the self, which might make it possible to exceed the limits of ourselves and enter into the between of self and other without losing ourselves in the process? To free ourselves from the oppositional logic of “self vs. all others” might allow for our self-construction as something other than isolated and atomistic subjectivities. Freed from the constraints of an atomistic and autonomous individualism, might possibilities be opened for establishing nonproprietary relations of cooperative ownership in which a fully intersubjective self could be at home in the between of self and other? And might such nonproprietary relations facilitate the formulation of an alternative logic of the gift, one liberated from the presuppositions of more classical exchangist logics that imprison gift giving within the constraints of the economic assumptions of commodity trading? Mauss looked to “archaic society and to the elements in it” to find “the joy of public giving; the pleasure in generous expenditure on the arts, in hospitality, and in the private and public festival; social security, the solicitude arising from reciprocity and co-operation,” and the like.³⁰ It is toward facilitating such possibilities that the essays in this collection have been compiled, in the hope that we might move closer, at last, to an ethic of generosity.

Notes

1. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. ix.

2. *Ibid.*, p. ix.

3. Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

4. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

5. I am thinking here of the work of Peggy Kamuf, Christie V. McDonald, and Alice Jardine, among others. One might also cite Hélène Cixous's discussion in her chapter “Sorties” in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). While by no means a “commentary” on the work of Derrida, here Cixous nevertheless seems to be responding in part to Derrida's economic discourse on Nietzsche/woman. For a discussion of Cixous in this context see my “On the Gynecology of Morals: Nietzsche and Cixous on the Logic of the Gift,” in *Nietzsche and the Feminine*, ed. Peter J. Burgard (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994),

pp. 210–229, reprinted with minor revisions in my *Nietzsche's French Legacy: A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 82–101.

6. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1975), p. 173.

7. C. A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (London: Academic Press, 1982), p.

41. Gregory's sharp distinction between gifts and commodities has been challenged, however. See, for example, Arjun Appadurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 3–63; and Alan Smart, "Gifts, Bribes, and *Guanxi*: A Reconsideration of Bourdieu's Social Capital," *Cultural Anthropology* 8, 3 (1993): 388–408, esp. 396.

8. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

9. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: Norton, 1990), p. 65.

10. Derrida frequently draws attention to the gift as *pharmakon*, often in the context of a comment on Mauss. For example, in "Plato's Pharmacy," he cites Mauss's call to examine the etymology of "gift," which comes from the Latin *dosis*, Greek δόσις, a dose of poison (*Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981], pp. 131–132). More recently, he makes several references to the gift as *pharmakon* in *Given Time*.

11. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Viking Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1967), "On the Pitying."

12. *Ibid.*, "The Voluntary Beggar."

13. See *Ibid.*, "On the Great Longing."

14. Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 4.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

16. Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy, Vol I: Consumption*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 25.

17. Georges Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure," in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–39*, ed. Allan Stoekl, trans. Allan Stoekl with Carl R. Lovitt and Donald M. Leslie Jr. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 116–29.

18. We should here recall that Zarathustra's very first words are directed toward the sun's overflowing expenditure.

19. Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, p. 38.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

21. Mauss, *The Gift*, pp. 78–79.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

23. Derrida recalls in a later footnote that the question of the gift was inscribed in the essay "*Différance*": "In recalling the Heideggerian remark ('the gift of presence is a property of Appropriating [*Die Gabe von Anwesen ist Eigentum des Ereignens*], *Zeit und Sein*, p. 22), I was interested then in underscoring that 'there is no essence of *différance*,' that 'it (is) that which not only could never be appropriated in the *as such* of its name or its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the *as such* in general. . . .' Which is, in effect, what is being said here about the gift, and thus one must hesitate to say: about the gift *itself*' (*Given Time*, pp. 127–28, note 12).

24. Ibid., p. 40.

25. Hélène Cixous, "Castration or Decapitation?" trans. Annette Kuhn, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7, 1(1981): 48.

26. Hélène Cixous, "An exchange with Hélène Cixous," trans. Verena Andermatt Conley, in *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), p. 137.

27. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 53.

28. Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" trans. by Mary Quaintance, *Cardozo Law Review*, 11, 5-6 (July/August 1990): 920-1045.

29. Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

30. Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 69.