

PART ONE



Discovering the Gift Paradigm

How I got started

The circumstances of my life brought me to begin thinking about communication as based on gift giving as early as the 1970's but I began thinking about the logic of exchange and the market even earlier. In 1963 as a young woman I married the Italian philosopher, Ferruccio Rossi-Landi and moved to Italy from Texas (USA). The following year he was invited by a group of his colleagues to write about language as seen through the lens of Marx's analysis of the commodity and money in *Capital*. He developed a theory along those lines, which can be seen in his books, especially *Il linguaggio come lavoro e come mercato (Language as labor and trade)* (1968) and *Linguistics and Economics* (1974). I was completely fascinated by this project and spent a lot of time throughout those years trying to fit the pieces of the complex puzzle together. For me it was as if language and exchange (trade, the market) were in some ways really the same thing—but some of the pieces just didn't fit. There was a sense of sharing and cooperation, a kind of life-enhancing creativity in language that was just absent from most commercial relations as I understood them. During those years I gave birth to our three daughters and was taking care of them. Because I had been concentrating on the comparison between language and exchange I could not avoid noticing that they were learning to talk long before they learned about exchange for money and before they were doing anything that might be called work. Maybe, I thought, it is language that comes first individually (and historically) and exchange derives from language. It seemed improbable that exchange could have made the same kind of fundamental contribution to our being human that language made. I knew that the indigenous peoples of the Americas had not had money or markets as such before the European conquest, yet they certainly spoke. Meanwhile I tried not to manipulate my children, or anybody else because that was antithetical to the way I thought human relations

should be. The kind of—if you do this, I will do what you want—exchange, seemed to me to be a negative way to behave.

At any rate at the time I would not have thought of looking at communication as gift giving if I had not been trying to distinguish communication from exchange and to find a way to salvage language from the relations of capital and the market and even from work, considered as the production and use of tools. The theory my husband was developing, while fascinating, did not convince me. There was something else. An image came to me. The construction of Marx's analysis as well as of my husband's theory had a false floor. Underneath it was another layer where there was a hidden treasure, or perhaps better, a spring that was welling up, the spring of what I later began to call "the gift economy."

I spent two years in the US in the early 70's with my children, and used the free time I had there, to write and think about language and communication. From the work I did then I published two essays in semiotics journals and these are now included as the last two chapters of this book. I just want to describe them briefly now to introduce the ideas that developed into a theory of gift giving and language. The first essay is "Communication and exchange"(1980) where I write about communicative need, and describe words as verbal elements people use for communicative need-satisfaction. Money then appears to be a kind of materialized word, used to satisfy the peculiar communicative need that arises from the mutually exclusive relations of private property. The second essay is "Saussure and Vygotsky via Marx"(1981). I had read L.S. Vygotsky (1962[1934]) and linked his idea of abstract concept formation with Marx's idea of money as the general equivalent. In Vygotsky's experiment any item of a set can be taken as the exemplar for a concept of that set, but it has to be held constant or the concept does not develop as such. If the exemplar varies, the abstraction is incomplete and relevant common qualities cannot be separated from

¹ The fact that the abstraction is not complete alters but does not halt our understanding. There are various kinds of thought processes that Vygotsky calls 'complexes', for example, the 'family name' complex or the 'chain' complex. If

irrelevant qualities.¹ I realized that the general equivalent, money, could be understood as the exemplar for the abstraction of the concept of value in the market. Money measures the ‘common quality’ of exchange value in commodities and leaves aside as irrelevant whatever does not have that quality. Whatever is not commodified does not have the quality of exchange value and thus appears to be irrelevant to the market, outside its “concept.”

Although I had read Malinowsky (1922) and Mauss (1925) as a student many years earlier, I did not immediately see the continuity between gift giving and communication, perhaps because the term used to describe the process in indigenous cultures was gift “exchange” and I had made the distinction between exchange and unilateral need satisfaction. However I remember that by 1978 I had embraced the connection between communication and the gift giving of indigenous peoples. I also realized at the time that market bias was so strong that everyone, including anthropologists, used the term ‘exchange’ without questioning it. There could be a different perspective though, I thought. If communication was based on gift giving, maybe societies that did not have markets used their gift giving for communication. Then exchange and markets could be seen as altered gift giving, altered communication.

In that year also I encountered another important idea, which redirected my thinking. After my divorce from Rossi-Landi, I began going to a feminist consciousness-raising group. There I found out that women’s free work in the home is an enormous unrecognized contribution that women are giving, both to their families and to the economy as a whole. Part of that work of course is childcare, the free services that mothers give to children on a daily basis. Satisfying another’s communicative need is that kind of thing, I realized, a unilateral gift that even without an immediate counterpart, establishes a human relation. Even in dialogue, what is happening is not exchange

we can stop privileging abstraction perhaps we can re value the complexes. The image of the twisted strands of a rope is shared by Wittgenstein as well as indigenous people talking about human relations.(see Jeanette Armstrong). On the other hand, the family name complex seems to me to be similar to the relational pattern of private property.

but turn taking in giving unilateral gifts. I speak and you understand what I say, whether or not you reply.

Ferruccio had talked about a kind of inevitability of understanding the verbal products that come ungarbled to one's healthy ears and brain, if one knows the language. It seemed clear to me that if it is inevitable that others understand our words, our giving our words to others and their receiving them will not be contingent upon a reply. If there is a reply, it is couched in the same unilateral gift logic as the previous speaker's words. Even questions, which are asked in order to receive a reply, are verbal products, which are given and received as such, unconditionally. That is, they are understood anyway even if no answer is actually given. In market exchange instead, one does not give up one's product except in exchange for money. Both seller and buyer necessarily participate in the *do ut des* self-reflecting and contingent logic of exchange.

As the years have passed since the 60's when I first began thinking about all of this, it has become more important than ever to distinguish communication from exchange, and to refuse to see the logic of exchange as the basic human logic. In fact I think that as a society we have believed acritically in the fundamental value of the logic of exchange and we have consequently embraced and nurtured an economic system that is extending itself parasitically over the planet, feeding on the unilateral gifts of all. These are the unilateral gifts of tradition, of culture, of nature, of care and of love as well as the forced or leveraged unilateral gifts imposed by exploitation, the gifts of cheap or free labor. If we look at exchange as the basic human logic, those who do it best will seem to be the most 'human'. Conversely, those who do not do it well, or do not succeed in the market, will seem to be 'defective', less human, and therefore more exploitable. In Capitalism the values of Patriarchy—competition, hierarchy, domination—have been united with the values of the market. In order to understand this merger and justify some startling similarities in what are usually considered widely different areas, we need to look beyond both Capitalism and Patriarchy to the patterns underlying them.

I used my understanding of the similarity between Vygotsky's

concept formation process² and Marx's general equivalent to develop a theory of Patriarchal Capitalism in which neither male dominance nor the market economy is primary. Rather both are caused by epistemological distortions and incarnations of our concept forming processes, distortions that in turn derive from the social imposition of binary gender categories. For this reason the values of Capitalism are similar to those of Patriarchy. In Patriarchy, males vie to dominate, that is, to achieve the general equivalent or exemplar position, which has become not just an element in the distribution of goods on the market or a way of organizing perceptions, but a widespread cultural pattern as well as an individual position of 'power over' others. In Capitalism, those who have the most, who have succeeded in dominating economically, are the exemplars of the concept 'man' extended to 'human'. This masculine race to the top position can be seen at other levels as well. For example it can be seen in the way that nations vie with each other for supremacy, to become the 'exemplar' nation, which dominates economically and militarily. Different areas of life, the military, business, religion, even academia, seem to incarnate the concept form as a life agenda for many people when instead it should be functioning merely as a mental process of abstraction. In each area the 'exemplar' position is invested with special power or value, and is not seen as just any item that is being used as a point of reference for sorting members of categories.³ In fact a flow of gifts towards the item in the 'top' position is created and

² There are similarities between Vygotsky's experiment and what is presently called 'prototype theory' in cognitive psychology.(Roasch) In fact Vygotsky could be called a precursor of prototype theory though I have never seen him mentioned in this light. He showed experimentally how categories can be constructed using a prototype.(see ch. below) On the other hand Marx's general equivalent can be seen as the prototype of economic value. For a good description of prototype theory see Patrizia Violi ().

³ I found the work of Jean-Josef Goux to be very useful. His extensions of the general equivalent to explain positions of social power are more psychoanalytically based than mine, which come from cognitive psychology. While I agree with his critique of these positions as phallic I believe they have an epistemological basis stemming from concept formation distorted by socially constructed gender. Also his view of the phallus as general equivalent of body parts works

justified by the attribution of this special value.

This view of the 'top' as the exemplar allows us to see Patriarchy and exchange as embedded not in our brains or chemistry but in our minds and in society, not as something inevitable but as something we can radically change. It allows us to see the problem as deriving from our socialization of boys into the male gender in binary opposition to something else: a gift giving process, *which is actually the human way*. This socialization varies culturally but the problem has arisen particularly intensely with the Euro-American construction of gender, and the externalization of this construction in the market and Capitalism. Like the male exemplar, which is used in forming the concept of 'human', money, as the exemplar of economic value, is an incarnation of the equivalent position in the concept-forming process. This distorted logical structure can extend to all cultures because it is as familiar to them as the way they think. Patriarchy, which puts the father or male leader in the position of exemplar of the human, can infect previously non- or less patriarchal cultures in a similar way.

The exchange paradigm

Patriarchal Capitalism justifies itself by a worldview I call the 'exchange paradigm', which frames everything in terms of the exchange logic, from the marriage market to military 'exchanges', from justice as payment for crimes, to the equations of a self reflecting consciousness. This paradigm arises from and promotes an area of activity, the market, where gift giving is absent or concealed and where Patriarchal egos find a non-giving field of endeavor in which to practice the quest for dominance. The seemingly neuter and therefore neutral 'objective' exchange approach conceals and denies the importance of unilateral gift giving at every turn, while at the same time making it possible for many hidden gifts to be given to the exchange-based *system*. I just mentioned for example, the gifts of women's free labor in the home. There are also the gifts, which are

for males but not for females. Then only those having that peculiar psychological construction can become the exemplar of the human.

contained in the surplus labor of workers, and which create surplus value: that part of the labor that is not covered by the salary and is therefore a free gift given to and accumulated by the Capitalist (though constrained and leveraged) from the worker. Innumerable free gifts of nature and culture are given to the system, and through the system to individual capitalists and to corporations. These are not viewed within the exchange paradigm as gifts but rather are seen as 'deserved' by the investor who extracts, privatizes, exploits and pollutes. The gifts, which are given to those at the 'top' are concealed by renaming them 'profit' and as such they motivate the whole systemic mechanism.

Although Capitalism is now being extensively criticized by the anti globalization movement, a clear and radical alternative has not yet been collectively embraced because the logic of exchange itself has not been identified as problematic. While fair trade seems to be better than unfair trade, embracing it obscures the possibility that trade itself foments exploitation. Moreover, the logic of the unilateral gift continues to be unrecognized, discredited, and even sometimes despised. The women's movement, while decidedly anti Patriarchal, is not in many of its aspects anti Capitalistic. In fact the links between Capitalism and Patriarchy have not been clearly delineated. Instead it appears that only by being absorbed into the work force as persons with economic agency in the system, have women been able to free themselves from domestic slavery, disempowerment and 'dependency'. As happens in any situation in which the market takes over a previously free area of the world, causing at least short-term improvements for some of the inhabitants, some women who have been effectively absorbed by capitalism have had an improvement in the level of their lives. They have had an increase in personal freedom but have also become dependent on a market situation that is beyond their control. This state of transition or assimilation, like the transition from pre-Capitalist to Capitalist cultures, gives women a chance to participate in and become conscious of both paradigms. The recognition of a shared gift perspective could link the women's movement cross-culturally internally. It could also link it externally with movements of indigenous, colonized and exploited people of

both genders who continue to participate consciously or unconsciously in the gift paradigm. This is possible if we can leave aside the biological differences between male and female as the determinants of gender and base solidarity on processes and values coming from economic gender identities.

By recognizing ‘female’ and ‘male’ as economic behavior patterns, having to do with the modes of distribution—of gift giving or exchange—we can also look at some cultures as economically ‘female’ and others as economically ‘male’. The two economic ‘structures’, gift giving and exchange, give rise to characteristic and distinguishable ideological ‘superstructures’, which are the value systems and world views that I am calling the gift and the exchange paradigms. That is, the cultures issuing from the practices of gift giving or of exchange have to do respectively with celebration of the other, compassion, and the affirmation of life, or on the other hand with subjugation of the other, egotism, competition and the affirmation of ‘value-free objectivity’.⁴ These two cultures co exist at various levels, and, as I was saying, can also be found within the same person, who may also be practicing both economies.

There are various ways of adjusting to the contradiction between paradigms. For example a cutthroat business person can be nurturing towards h/er children and believe in the values of

⁴ Qualitative value has to do with our attribution or giving of importance to the valued item. We sometimes even attribute *intrinsic* value to things (or people). We make this attribution even when we *recognize* the value of something. The attribution of *exchange* value is done through the mechanism of market exchange where the aspect of the attribution as a subjective gift is left aside (or calculated as marginal utility). The cancellation of the qualitative gift from the understanding of exchange value gives the market an aura of objectivity and neutrality, which is accepted by all. Coffee really does cost \$5.00 a pound, just test it by trying to give the grocer less for it. (On value see the discussions below and those in my book, *For-Giving* as well as *Communication and Exchange* and *Saussure and Vygotsky* at the end of this volume). Exchange value displaces other qualitative evaluations on to a sort of competition among products to be the best of their kind, and therefore the most worth the price (as if they were competing for the top position most worthy of the money name, that is to be the exemplar accepted by all).

Patriarchal Capitalism as well as those of the family. Living within this paradox seems to be the right wing way. Another way of dealing with the paradox is to extend the gift values within the exchange economy, as happens in the welfare state, without however shifting paradigms or eliminating market exchange. (Also it remains to be seen how many gifts are given by external sources such as colonies to countries providing welfare internally. In this case the welfare actually consists of gifts given by economically and politically colonized countries.). Both the right wing business ideology and the Social Democratic welfare state position their opposition within the exchange paradigm.

The complex situation we are describing is further complicated by the fact that the two kinds of economic identities are not independent and unrelated but 'male', and especially Patriarchal, economies and cultures are based on the denial and distortion of gift giving and the direction of the flow of gifts towards the dominators. For example, the Global North is now acting as an economic 'male', attempting to extract the gifts of the South, which it is forcing or manipulating into an economically 'female' position.⁵

The market, like the Patriarchal identity, is a social construction that is made to receive free gifts. Because in the 'developed' countries women have been assimilated as market agents and their gifts are now being taken not as direct free work only but as surplus value, they have gained some equality with men as 'economic males' and have achieved some 'economic male' privileges. As the economy of Patriarchal Capitalism in the North has somewhat relinquished its hold on the gifts of women, allowing them more equality with men, and has sometimes been forced by the workers' movements to diminish some of its profits, it has displaced many of its gift-extracting mechanisms into other areas. The new gifts that come from the Global South to the North, are added to other gifts that for centuries have

⁵ In fact any person or entity forced into the gift giving position appears to be female as has happened with 'nature'. The gift characteristics of the category 'female' have been broadened surreptitiously to merge with 'nature' while the category 'male' has been narrowed to exclude both nature and gift giving, and made superior to them.

been flowing from women to men, from indigenous peoples to colonial powers, from people of color to whites, and from the general public to corporations. Patriarchal Capitalism is commodifying previously free gift areas such as traditional knowledge, seeds, species, water, even blood and body parts. Poor women and children are being commodified and trafficked for the sex trade. The 'female' economies of the South, and gifts of nature and tradition are being seized and transformed into new 'food' for the hungry market mechanism.

By recognizing that the market is not an inevitable *sui generis* process however, and looking at it dispassionately as a transposition and incarnation of the concept formation process as it is used in sorting, (particularly in the sorting and formulation of gender) we can approach it in a new way without fear, and we can peacefully dismantle it.

Subjectivities

The two logics, exchange and gift giving, also produce different kinds of subjectivities. The practice of exchange creates an ego-oriented ego according to its logic of self-interest while the practice and logic of gift giving promote more other-orientation. Exchange is a gift turned back upon itself, doubled and made contingent. It requires quantification while gift giving is mainly qualitative. Exchange is ego-oriented and gives value to the ego, while gift giving is other-oriented and gives value mainly to the other. Exchange places the exchangers in adversarial positions; each tries to get more than the other out of the transaction. The values of patriarchy are implicit in exchange, and drive Capitalism, as each contender struggles to reach the top of the hierarchy to own more and to become Big. The kind of ego that is based on the exchange logic is necessary for the market, while the gift giving personality is eliminated, or is easily victimized and becomes the host of the exchange ego.⁶

⁶ Looking at personality formation as deriving from the practice of the different logics, allows us to respond to questions about nurturing men and dominating women. Individuals of either gender can behave according to the economic

One superstructural consequence of ego formation based on the logic of exchange is that consciousness itself is considered in the light of exchange as self-reflecting in a sort of equation of value with itself. The subconscious is thus placed in the gift giving position, giving energy, memories, ideas to this self reflecting mechanism. We might say that our idea of consciousness in its capacity for self-evaluation is made in the image of preparation for exchange. The self-reflecting consciousness floats upon the gifts of the subconscious and of experience, without a clear indication of how those gifts come into the mind. Similarly the market floats on a sea of gifts without a clear indication of where they come from and how they constitute profit.

In individuals, the coexistence and conflict, as well as symbiosis of these two kinds of ego structures, one tending towards others and therefore somewhat transparent to itself, the other tending towards itself, and self reflecting, can be seen as a result of the exchange paradigm, not its cause. It is not that human beings are greedy and therefore create the market and capitalism. Rather, the system has an existence that is over and above that of its individual participants. Patriarchy, the market and capitalism create the human ego structures that are well adapted to their needs. Greed is one of the human qualities that is functional to the maintenance and development of the market as such. Competition for narcissistic self aggrandizement and dominance are played out on the economic plane because otherwise the market would not 'grow' and maintain its control over other possible ways of distributing goods i.e., gift giving. Patriarchy supplies the motivation that drives Capitalism, as well as the individuals who embody the motivation, with the ego structures and belief systems that justify the embodiment. Capitalism supplies the tools and rewards with which individuals and now corporations carry out the Patriarchal agendas on the terrain of so called 'distribution' of goods to needs through exchange.

Mothering, on the other hand, involves the unilateral free distribution of goods and services to young children and a consequent

logic, which is socially identified with the other gender. However, on a broader scale the logic of exchange dominates, while the logic of gift giving gives way.

creation of human bonds between givers and receivers. Society has assigned this role to women. Although we are characterizing it here as the distribution of goods, mothering is usually not seen as an economic category. In fact by overvaluing exchange and making it dominant, infusing it with Patriarchal motivations, the market devalues mothering, making it dependent and subservient. Categorization itself, of males as not-giving and superior, and of commodities as not-gifts, disqualifies mothering/gift giving as a non-category. Shifting to the gift paradigm allows us to see that the direct distribution of goods and services to needs that is present in mothering can be understood as an example of the practice of an alternative economy. As a mode of distribution, it is present in all societies because it is required, not by the biology of women, but by the biology of children. That is, for a very long period of time, children's biology does not allow them to independently satisfy most of their own or others' needs. It requires and elicits other-orientation and unilateral gift giving from their caregivers.⁷

Patriarchy

Children begin their lives with their mothers in a relation—creating communicative gift economy and they begin learning language at the same time. However binary gender categorizations in language and in society soon intervene and the boy child finds that he belongs

⁷ Perhaps it is partly this fact of being uncategorized that causes the unilateral gift giving that takes place in mothering to be unrecognized by European anthropologists and sociologists, even those who do pay attention to 'gift exchange'. Although mothering, like language, is a cultural universal, it is usually mentioned only as an aside, if at all, by those who study gift giving, from Marcel Mauss to the sociologists of the journal MAUSS. This lack is not only negative in that it distorts the picture of human gift giving generally but it also denies women their rightful place as the leaders of change towards an alternative economic way which they are already practicing and which is embedded in the human practice of communication. The existence of successful gift economies controlled by women in societies such as the Iroquois demonstrate mothering on a social scale. (Mann 2000). but they have been misinterpreted by European scholars and destroyed by colonization.

to a category that is the opposite of that of his nurturing mother.⁸ That is, if the mother's most salient characteristic for the child is the unilateral satisfaction of needs, the fact that he belongs to a binarily opposite gender category implies for him that he will not unilaterally satisfy needs. There is very little in the boy's life at this early age that is not part of the gift giving and receiving economy. He learns to deny its importance however, transform it into something else and even take categorization itself as part of the content of his identity. The father (who went through the same process when he was a child) becomes for the boy the exemplar of the human, taking the place of the mother who often paradoxically gives more to the father and son than she does to herself or her daughter. That is, she gives and gives value preferentially to those whose gender identity requires that they NOT give.⁹ The displacement of the mother model and take-over by the father of the role of exemplar of the (not giving) human is the seed of the dominance of male over female, categorization over communication, and eventually the exchange economy over gift giving. While the boy exchanges one model for the other, giving up the mother and gift giving and receiving the father and a masculine identity in her place, the mother gives way and gives him up unilaterally, encouraging him to be masculine and very rarely even considering that she might remain as his more human role model.¹⁰

The ego-oriented human relations of economic exchange are a socially-created opposite of gift relations and they provide a way for society to distribute goods to needs without appearing to mother. The market is an area of life where, by exchanging, we can give without giving and receive without receiving. In fact, in the market we must 'deserve' what we receive, that is, we must have previously 'given' an equivalent for which the present 'gift' is a payment. The equality of commodities and money in exchange cancels out the

⁸ See Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering*. I call this process, which I also discuss in *For-Giving*, 'masculation'.

⁹ This paradox is kept in place by denying importance to the gift giving that is embodied in mothering while on the other hand overvaluing exceptional or self destructive giving, as in sacrifice.

¹⁰ See Olga Silverstein: *The Courage to Raise Good Men* (1994).

gift. Since we get back the equivalent of what we gave, there is no visible transfer of value from one person to the other.

The market is one of the solutions society has provided for the conundrums created by the imposition of binary gender categories upon its children. It is an area of life and a location where people can deny their other orientation and turn production for others to their own advantage, a place where they will not be accused of mothering. The fact that women can participate equally with men in this ungiving arena simply shows that its roots are not biological but social, deriving from a social, not biological, construction of gender.

Hitting

The escalation towards dominance through competition can be done not just economically of course but also physically, psychologically, linguistically and institutionally, at the level of individuals and at the level of groups. One of the first non-nurturing interactions that boys learn is *hitting*. In fact hitting may be seen as a transposed gift in that one person reaches out and touches the other, transmitting physical energy, not to nurture but to hurt and to dominate. The fact that this is a transposed gift can be glimpsed in such linguistic expressions as “Take that!” and “You asked for it!” Such physical competition permits the one who can ‘give the most’ harmful blows, to dominate.

As many women have noticed, there is continuity in kind between the backyard brawl and war. The same principles seem to apply in both. The technology is different though symbolically concomitant. Since the penis is the identifying property of those in the non-nurturing social category, ‘male’, it is not surprising that the individuals and the groups that are competing for dominance provide themselves with ever larger and more dangerous category markers, from sticks to swords and from guns to missiles. Moreover, competition between sons and fathers for dominance pits those with the smaller phallic properties against those with the larger. Thus in an attempt to achieve the position of the exemplar (the dominant father) groups supply themselves with ever larger instruments of death,

which can destroy ever more people and goods. The aspect of size can then be substituted by the aspect of effect, in that WMDs whether biological or nuclear become the mark of the dominant male ‘exemplar’ nation.

This collective striving to achieve the dominant male position can have the effect of confirming the masculine identity for the men who fight and even for those who are just members of the nation. Women can fight or give support to those who fight or participate in other ways, also just as members of the nation. Society thus provides a way for groups to achieve a collective male identity that is independent from individual biological gender in that both men and women can participate in it. Male dominance is then read as neuter objective *power* over others and both women and men can achieve it as can, at a collective level, nations or corporate entities. Both women and men can also of course participate in a collective male dominant identity of their nation (or corporation) even if individually they are subservient or powerless. Such is the content of patriotism (or company loyalty). Racism is the participation in the collective male dominant identity of the supposed ‘exemplar’ race. Classism is the participation in the collective male dominant identity of a supposed ‘exemplar’ class.

Categorizing

Psychological competition for dominance can take the place of physical competition. Categorizing others as inferior replays the gender distinction over and over, placing some people who are usually also themselves the categorizers, in a ‘superior’ category to which those in ‘inferior’ categories must give both materially and psychologically. At the same time the positive gift giving and receiving that is actually continually being done in material and linguistic communication is unrecognized as such and disparaged—or over valued and made unreachable for ordinary people. In its place we have neuter and neutral ‘objective’ categories which reflect the neutral non giving market categories: exchange value, production, distribution (through exchange) consumption, supply and demand,

monetized labor, commodities, money, capital, all of which are constructed on the back of the gift economy.

The logic of categorization, undergirded by the selection process of the market, determines the kinds of things to which value will be given, and the degree of visibility they will have, effectively leaving out gift giving as an aspect of knowing. Inclusion and exclusion are made to precede the satisfaction of needs, which are “legitimately” ignored if for example, those who have the needs are not included in the category of those having money to pay for the products. The over-emphasis on categorization in the economic realm influences an over-emphasis on categorization in the rest of our thinking. We do not consider our intellectual production in terms of what needs it may be satisfying but only think of it as (giftless) acts of inclusion and exclusion of one kind or another that we are performing.

Gift giving is made arduous by its co existence with exchange. Since gift giving is cooperative while exchange is competitive, it loses the competition by not competing. The context of adversarial exchange creates suspicion in the community and gift giving can appear to be a moral ego trip or a veiled bid for power and recognition. In fact, especially in a context where exchange relations are the norm, gift giving *can* become manipulative, and can be used for ego-oriented purposes, deviating from its unilateral transitive path, and doubling back upon itself. The worst aspect of the competition between exchange and gift giving is that the exchange paradigm really cannot compete in a fair way with gift giving, because living according to the logic of the gift would be life enhancing, while living according to exchange is biopathic. Therefore in order to prevail, the exchange paradigm has created a system that cripples gift giving and makes it dependent on the market for access to the means of giving. By diverting the flow of gifts into the hands of a few,¹¹ by wasting ‘excess’ wealth on armaments, drugs and symbols of power (skyscrapers, monuments, jewels), as well

¹¹ The wealth of the 225 richest people in the world is equal to that of the poorest 2.5 billion people. The 3 wealthiest people have more than the 48 lowest GDP countries. In 1998, 20 percent of the world’s people living in the highest-income countries accounted for 86 percent of total private consumption expenditures while the poorest 20 percent accounted for only

as by privatizing the free gifts of nature and culture, Patriarchal Capitalism *creates* the scarcity that is necessary to penalize gift giving and keep it subservient. In fact even the flow of gifts to the wealthy must be regulated so that not too much will trickle back down. The tide must be kept low; otherwise all the ships would sail away.

Although girl children are not socialized to construct a gender identity that opposes that of their nurturing mothers, and many of them will have to do mothering themselves as adults, they can be encouraged to strive for inclusion in ‘superior’ social categories and to achieve the ‘male’ exemplar position. In a context of scarcity, where categorization itself has become excessively important due to the binary categorization of gender, girls may also strive to be included in the privileged social category of people to whom others must give. Nevertheless, because children require unilateral gift giving to survive, women who have been socialized towards this work (or at least have not been socialized in opposition to it), remain in the gift logic in many parts of their lives, even when they do not have children and even when they have been absorbed into the market and see the world mainly through the eye glasses of the exchange paradigm.

The practice of the gift logic at the material and at the verbal level can take place without our being conscious of it as such. In fact unilateral gift giving is transitive and gives value and attention to the other, while exchange requires quantification and measurement, reflecting back to the exchangers an image of what they are doing. We in the North are accustomed to the exchange way of knowledge and self-reflecting consciousness and so we embrace what we see in that way, which is of course NOT the gift. Gratitude might make us look more at the gifts we receive and give but if we make our gift contingent on the others’ gratitude, the gift is no longer unilateral. In the context of exchange, even gratitude becomes problematic. It risks seeming or actually becoming a payment for gifts received. There is also a sort of scarcity of gratitude because ‘deserving’ appears to be

1.3 percent. That’s down from 2.3 percent three decades ago) (UNDP 1998—on www.cooperativeindividualism.org).

more honorable than receiving. What is necessary now is to see gift giving and exchange from a broader 'meta' point of view that includes both as modes of distribution and as paradigms, look at the way they interact, and deliberately restore the consciousness of the gift where it has been erased.

Other points of view

It has become commonplace among philosophers to deny that there can be unilateral gift giving. I have already made the case for seeing this tendency as coming from the mind-set of the exchange paradigm and Patriarchy. However I would like to address a few of the objections that are proposed. First I would like to say that even if there were no concrete examples of unilateral gift giving (and I definitely do not believe this to be the case¹²) the logic of the unilateral gift would still function, just as if there were no actual cases of exchange, its logic would still function as a logic.

Derrida and Bourdieu believe that there can be no unilateral gift that declares itself as such since this very declaration would promote recognition and therefore the gift would become an exchange. My answer to this is twofold. First, if we were to generalize gift giving to a whole community, everyone would be doing it. Therefore no special merit would be attached to individuals who do it and recognition for it would be irrelevant. The way to make people 'modest' about gift giving is to change society so that everyone is doing it. Secondly, in giving value to others it may sometimes be useful not to emphasize one's own gift, so that value is attributed directly to the receiver because of h/er own existence not because of the gift giver's understanding and satisfaction of the need. The gift giver thus self effaces, and the child or the husband or boss receives the kudos. This syndrome is fairly common among women who recognize a need of

¹² Indeed these examples are everywhere, though we do not usually interpret them as gifts. For example Wittgenstein's famous phrase about the task of philosophy's being to 'get the fly out of the bottle' does depend on our unilaterally satisfying the need of the fly.

the other for extra value attribution. Unfortunately, it strengthens the parasite's hold upon and denial of the host (as does the constraint present in exchange). On the other hand in a gift-based community, the attribution of value to the receiver would be more commonplace, and the extra need for the attribution of value might be less. There would also be less room for ego expansion of the receiver through the illusion of deserving.

I believe that an understanding of gift giving as an alternative paradigm and economy can resolve the paradoxes contained in recognizing it, even before it is actually practiced as an economy instead of exchange. First, if we look at gift giving as a fundamental aspect of the human, unilateral gift giving is not just an individual act and it is not very surprising that some people still succeed in practicing it in spite of the dominance of exchange. In fact by recognizing gift giving in the practice of mothering, care giving and housework, for example, we do not create an exchange that would 'pay back' women for the unrecognized gifts they have given through the centuries. Rather we normalize gift giving as a fundamental, though denied, aspect of humanity. Secondly, if women realize that they are contributing to the parasitism and placing themselves in the host position by not acknowledging the gifts they are actually giving, they can perhaps bring the paradigm itself, and the mechanism of the exploitation of their gifts to light. This would both illuminate gift giving as valuable and throw light upon the defects and limitations of exchange. These solutions to the problem of the coexistence of gift giving and exchange come from the generalization of gift giving, and the refusal to consider it only as an individual moral quality or psychological bent or worse, as a condition of oppression due to the unfortunate circumstance of being born into the wrong category.

Perhaps the recognition that is given to someone who is acting disinterestedly is really an excessive enthusiasm, which reflects the longing for the gift paradigm, due to the felt negativity of the self interested self.

Another unrecognized paradox that occurs when the unilateral gift is denied is that those who vehemently deny it are doing so in the name of the truth or at least of disabusing the audience of false

hopes. This is an altruistic motivation, in that the denier of the gifts is trying to satisfy the need of the listeners for the truth, for finding a way to behave appropriately and humanly. (See my definition of truth-telling below p.111). Thus the very motivation of denying the gift is a gift motivation. Such writers want to 'help' their readers by keeping them from hoping for gift giving. (Even the cynical phrase, "there is no free lunch" does not acknowledge the fact that women have been cooking lunch free for centuries).

One particularly widespread problem is caused by the term 'gift exchange' which frames the gift in terms of constrained reciprocity, implying that the relations established have to do with debt and obligation, and do not arise from the gift transaction itself. My attempt here is to start sooner, seeing the relation-creating capacity of the unilateral gift itself and recognizing that it is both widespread and pervasive. Even when there is some part of a gift that has become exchange, the creativity of the remaining gift is such that transactions are carried forward by it. For example, when a gift is returned in 'symbolic exchange' an extra amount is added to it. This addition can be considered a unilateral gift and expresses the 'honour' of the return giver.¹³ Like the self-effacement of the giver, the addition of an extra gift to the return gift is a cultural variation, a way of playing upon the logical implications gifts have. The return is no longer just the second half of an exchange, but the reciprocator is now a giver of a new gift in h/er own right, with a generous agency that is different from the balancing of the scales.

Trying to construct an ethic in a situation where unilateral gift giving is everywhere denied is a distorted endeavor. All of the roles: the subject, the other and the collectivity are necessarily misinterpreted. Thus the function of ethics is to try to limit patriarchy and exchange in favor of mutual respect or lack of harm, in the absence of positive gifts and in a situation of market dominance. In spite of the predominance of exchange many people seem to recognize and mourn the importance of gift giving. The appeal to ethics is informed by this nostalgia. However, the only way to actually achieve

¹³ See Godelier? on the addition of 'more'.

a peaceful and compassionate society is through a paradigm shift towards a gift economy. In the meantime, accessing the gift paradigm beneath the exchange paradigm allows us to see functional psychological patterns of transitivity and community that would construct us as human in a way that is different from the ways we are constructed as creatures of the market and Patriarchy.

If we can restore gift giving to our conception of the world (and more so if we can restore it to our economic interactions) we can find ways of interacting that do not require punishment for wrong doing or recognition for right doing, both of which are exchanges. The patterns laid down in gift giving at different levels are the patterns of material and linguistic communication that help to make us who we are. It is their apotheosis and ours, which would allow a felicitous and abundant society for all, not the use of laws based on patterns of exchange to regulate our worst impulses or force 'responsibility' i.e., increased gift giving, in the face of the increased needs caused by Patriarchy and the market. We can transition from one paradigm to the other by taking the responsibility to critique exchange and working to transform society. With the diminishing of exchange, a flow of gifts at all levels would allow for the development of new needs and new individual and collective gifts, a change in our subjectivities, an evolution of the human being away from the isolated patriarchal *homo sapiens-economicus*, towards community-oriented *homo donans*.

PART TWO



The Gift in Communication

Exploring gifts and signs

Over the last ten years I have written quite a number of articles about gift giving and semiotics, which I have given in a variety of conferences, and which have been published in semiotics journals. I decided to weave them together for this book. Since the idea of the gift in communication is new, I have had to present it over and over again from scratch. I hope I have succeeded in weeding out the repetitions that would have made this section boring to the reader, without damaging the contents. The following section is taken from a presentation at the School of Semiotics in Imatra, Finland in 1999.

By looking at communication as unilateral need satisfaction we can view mothering as communication, and exchange as altered and distorted communication, that is, altered and distorted mothering. We can see unilateral need satisfaction as communication not only on the plane of signs and language but on the material plane. Gift giving creates actual bodies, material subjects as well as minds, psychological subjectivities and human relations. The relations created in this way are bonds of a possible community that is not based on exchange but on turn taking, participation in a gift circle or circulation that does not require equivalent paybacks by receivers to givers. Such a communicative 'female' economy continues to exist within some indigenous communities and in Capitalism within some families and wherever there is common ground and a circulation of gifts to needs without the intervention of exchange. However both indigenous communities and all kinds of families and cooperative initiatives are presently altered and distorted internally by Patriarchy as well as externally by the context of the market and the exchange paradigm. The parasite of Patriarchal Capitalism has captured female economies whenever possible and on pain of death, made them its hosts.

From the point of view of the gift paradigm we try to see not only the victimization of gift giving but to go farther into the question and see it as positive, creative and fundamental, the source of our humanity. Language itself can be viewed as an ideal abundant gift economy in which everyone possesses the means of production and a sufficient supply of the products of previous labor to be able to give again in turn. Even if the market has captured and commodified many areas of language, the basic gifts and function of language are free.¹⁴

I want to include here at least a few indications of the steps I have taken towards this perspective because I think that embracing it can have far-reaching consequences for the rest of one's worldview. By discovering gift giving in language, and characterizing language as gift giving at many levels, we can re claim both language and linguistics, signs and semiotics for mothering. On the other hand, by re visioning mothering as the principle of the gift economy and then extending gift giving beyond gender and beyond economics to the pan-human processes of linguistic communication and sign processes in general, we situate human mothering as one particularly intense gender-identified moment of gift giving within a much wider context of gift processes which are not identified with gender as

such. These processes are constitutive of the human in a way that Patriarchy, Capitalism, market exchange are not. The parasitism of exchange and patriarchy upon gift giving and its identification with mothering due to masculation, have conspired to eliminate gift giving as an interpretative key for language and life. By restoring this key we can look at language in a very different way.

Recognizing the communicative relation-forming capacity of material gift giving, allows us to find something that words and things have in common, which in turn allows us to consider words not only as abstract values of combinatory mechanisms, but as verbal gifts which take the place of material gifts. Language can then be seen as verbal gift giving, which uses the patterns of material gift giving on another interpersonal plane. Words function as verbal gifts in their capacity for forming human relations among people in regard to parts of the world that are presently or potentially gifts. Verbal gifts can take the place of material gifts in forming human relations but they do not supersede them altogether. Indeed material gifts continue to be given at all levels whether or not we are talking about them.

Material gift giving creates human relations and gifts can also be given *in order to* create the relations (that is to satisfy a social and psychological need for relations) rather than primarily to satisfy material needs.¹⁵ Verbal gifts can perform this function as well and in fact, once the possibility of verbal communication is broached, a communicative need arises for verbal gifts regarding all the parts of the world with regard to which human relations can be formed. Words can thus be seen as verbal gifts which substitute for material gifts, satisfying communicative needs and thereby forming human relations regarding the interlocutors and at the same time regarding the gifts of the world that have been substituted. Words are verbal gifts originally given to us by other members of the community and we can give them again in turn. The question as to what words and things might

¹⁵ One can give a material gift to create a relation of solidarity with another, but also to create a relation of dependence/superiority. There is a basic level of positive giving and receiving both in life and in language however, without which the material-and-linguistic self does not develop. Manipulations and exchanges presuppose that basic level.

have in common is thus answered by the recognition of both words and things as relation-forming gifts. Would words or things have this capacity without the presence of human beings? No. To be complete, any gift needs a receiver. However when members of a linguistic community are available to receive them, they do have this common gift character. The logic of exchange causes epistemological problems, however, because it cancels and hides the gift and so makes it appear that there is no connection between the verbal and the material or non-verbal levels.¹⁶

Not only are words verbal gifts but they combine according to the gift principle as well in that they are given to *each other*. That is, syntax, which is considered by linguists to be a *sui generis* rule-governed mental activity, is actually a construction of transposed gift giving. (See also the section on syntax below). From the gift perspective, adjectives combine with nouns for example, because one word can satisfy the ‘need’ of the other, a need arising from the relation of the referents to the word and to the human beings involved. If a human being wants to communicate about a red ball, she finds ‘ball’ has a need for ‘red’ in order to convey that idea, and she gives ‘red’ to ‘ball’. On the reality plane I believe that we can also make a case for the way we understand the ‘properties’ of objects. That is, a ball is red because the ‘property’ red has been “given” to it. Some kinds of things can receive specific kinds of gifts, while others cannot. Some words can receive some other words as gifts, while others cannot. A plural ending prevents a word from receiving a singular indefinite article, an adverb cannot be given to a noun. Similarly humans can eat eggs but not justice or mountains. That is, there are constraints on the kinds of material gifts that can be given and received and there are constraints on the kinds of verbal gifts that can be given and received.

Even the noun-verb-complement structure can be understood as transposed giver—gift or service—receiver: “The girl hit the ball.”

¹⁶ The division between mind and body (or spirit and matter) also comes from a denial of gift giving because what the two have in common is made invisible at *both* levels.

Verb phrases are given to noun phrases with the help of transmitters like prepositions. Prefixes and suffixes determine what kinds of word-gifts can be given and received by other word gifts. Moreover as each person satisfies the communicative needs of other people, she also conveys her own ideas, feelings and intentions, stimulating as well as satisfying, the others' needs to know. The human relations that are created in this way are first, the basic and commonplace relation of the interlocutors to one another as both speakers and listeners of a human language, and therefore probably human beings themselves,¹⁷ secondly they are speakers and listeners of a specific language, for example, English, and some sort of standard or non standard version of that language. Thirdly they are persons who can give and receive the specific words that are combined as gifts in the sentences they are giving and receiving. Fourthly, through their communication, they are related together to whatever the sentence is being used to say or refer to. When one person satisfies the need of the other for a relation to something on the external by means of a word-gift, s/he creates a relation to that thing also for herself, a relation, which already has its equivalent in the relation of the other. All of these are relations of solidarity and similarity created by gift giving and receiving, which presuppose the possibility of continuing to give and receive verbally. Even if both persons categorize themselves and each other as human, they do not simply stop with the categorization, but continue to construct its content in the moment as they are speaking and listening or writing and reading. As they do this they are constructing their own and each other's variegated subjectivities as well as their relations to each other, to the world and to the topic. At these basic levels communication is positive even when at another, more particular, level it may be negative. "I love you" and "I hate you" both have the giver/gift/ receiver structure even if love is usually positive and hate is usually negative. Both are transmitted through a positive gift structure. I do not believe these structures are determined

¹⁷ I say probably because they could be computers or extraterrestrials who had learned a human language. These possibilities have not been present to mind of the interlocutors until recently.

by rules any more than material gifts are basically determined by rules. We eat with our mouths (we receive the gift of food) not with our ears or noses, because the mouth is where we can receive that kind of gift. This does not depend upon a rule but upon the qualitative nature of the gift given and the way we are able to receive it. Conceiving of language as functioning according to transposed gift patterns gives us a very different picture than conceiving of it as functioning because it is governed by rules.

We learn patterns of material giving and receiving from our experience as mothered children. We also learn and use, that is, we give again, the words and transposed gift patterns that have been given to us by our community. We invent new gifts with them, which express our individuality to others (who need to know us), and satisfy new needs that arise for human relations to changing circumstances.

At a purely material level, sound flows through air from the vocal chords and the breath of one moves towards the ears of the other. Writing is inscribed upon the page and is perceived/received by the eyes of the other. Words are gifts of the community to the community through us, but we also give them to each other as individual gifts, and give the words to other words within the gift constructions, which are sentences. We also transmit (give) information, feelings, attitudes, knowledge etc. in this way. Language is thus complex multi layered gift giving and receiving, and as such would require a treatment as thorough as theories of language now provide for a much more mechanical viewpoint. For example, calling a sentence an “assertion” leaves aside its gift aspects under a neutral cover. Instead renaming a sentence as a gift made up of many gifts at different levels and itself contained within larger gifts such as the discourse, also made of many sentences, and the text in turn, made of many discourses, gives a radically different view of what we are doing when we communicate linguistically. We cannot assert anything without satisfying communicative needs of the other, that is, without giving word-gifts.

Perhaps it appears that language considered as the giving and receiving of verbal gifts, cannot be hardwired in our brain circuitry. Yet we must also be able to satisfy needs on a material plane if we are to live and form communities, and that ability to give must also

be hard wired to some extent. Sex and mothering are two areas in which both human and non-human animals have to satisfy others' needs. Feral children, who have not been mothered and have not learned language, have brains that do not fully develop. The physiological connections do not take place *because* the social connections of giving and receiving do not take place. Perhaps our brains themselves can be considered from the point of view of need satisfaction in that a neuron fires and satisfies the need of another neuron, which can then 'pass it on'. At another level fetal brain cells even physically migrate from one area to another area where they are needed and become specific.

There is much more intentional and unintentional gift giving in the universe than we imagine due to our pathological entanglement with exchange and Patriarchy. The idea that humans are doing multi level gift giving when they communicate linguistically is therefore not farfetched. Nor does the hard wiring in this case diminish the social character of linguistic (or non linguistic) communication. Looking at language as produced by giftless brain mechanisms, like looking at life from the point of view of patriarchy and the market, leaves aside the issue of meaning. Looking at language and life from the inside, from the receivership of a wide variety of gifts at different levels and the ability to give gifts again, as well as transpose them from one level to another, gives us a point of view from which we can look back at physiological brain processes as possibly functioning also according to gift principles. If we look at this view as a projection of mothering, then we must certainly also look at supposedly giftless brain mechanisms as a projection of neutering and objectifying Patriarchy and exchange.

The fact that there is meaning both in language and in life speaks to the existence of gifts and gift giving everywhere. Meaninglessness is a result of Patriarchal Capitalism at both the level of life and the level of language. In fact exchange leaves everyone starving for the gift principle and for free gifts. This starvation for gifts could be seen as one main component of greed, which cannot however satisfy itself by taking. Meaning does not come by grasping through force and domination but it is created through transitive unilateral

other orientation and the receivership of such other orientation. While there are those in situations of privilege who are desperately searching for meaning, which they can only 'get' by giving and receiving unilaterally, there are billions of people who are actually starving because their needs are unsatisfied and their means of giving to one another have been taken away.

Meaning in language can be seen as the other-directedness of words and things, our ability to attribute a gift character to them as being potentially and/or actually for others, pertinent to their needs. That is, they are receivable by others, which implies that they can also be given, whether actually or only perceptually or experientially. Their receivability by others accounts for their significance.

The fact that we can also use both words and things by ourselves alone conceals their other-direction from us especially when we are living in a society that validates mainly self-reflection and self-interest. Meaning in life is the turning of goods towards needs, unilaterally giving to others that which is useful for them at whatever level. It is not the Patriarchal exemplar position that makes life meaningful. In fact the satisfactions of that position as such are usually illusory except to extreme narcissists. Though the exemplar position is used so often for domination, it is the capacity to satisfy the needs of the many that that position could *potentially* bring, that gives it the 'meaning' we see in it.

It is the great long term blind spot about gift giving caused by Patriarchy and the market that has made meaning in language such a mystery and meaning in life so elusive. It is not by following rules or imposing other orientation through morality that we will liberate and understand meaning, but by accessing and elaborating upon ever-present, underlying, creative patterns of communication.

The market, the law, the commons

The market and private property go hand in hand, because exchange allows private property to change proprietor. If property could not be transferred from one mutually exclusive owner to another, there would be paralysis. Commons have sometimes been left as gift

sources, without a proprietor, or with a collective proprietor. In a context where gift giving and the gift paradigm are not recognized as valid, however, ownerless or collectively owned property can be seized and made the host of any parasitic individual or corporate entity with the capacity to legally and materially enforce its ownership. Gifts are logically prior to the law because they are prior to exchange and the law mainly regulates exchange from an exchange point of view, that is, by categorizing actions as crimes and making criminals pay for them. Gift giving does not require retribution but functions according to the recognition and satisfaction of the unmet social, psychological and material needs that cause people to commit crimes. The mercy movement and the movement against the death penalty are gift-based initiatives but they rarely have a chance to generalize their values. The generalization of the gift paradigm would connect the issues of mercy vs punishment to seemingly unrelated issues such as public or private ownership and the privatization of the commons.

Because gift giving is prior to exchange and the law, it is relegated inside private property, as happens in the home. Thus to the exchange paradigm it seems that any free area can and perhaps even should be privatized, becoming the property of individuals, corporations, or the state, and thus regulated by law. As long as gifts continue to be unrecognized as such, even by the very activists who are trying to defend the commons, the only appeal will be to the law itself, which is structurally based on patriarchy and exchange. Even winning such battles brings the gift into the patriarchal capitalist camp and co-opts, denatures and disqualifies it. The same might be said about the rights discourse, which legitimizes the law as arbiter, leaving needs in second place. As we said above even morality can be seen as an individual attempt to mitigate some of the worst aspects of the exchange paradigm, while the gift paradigm (which is what actually motivates morality unconsciously) is completely invisible.

At another more abstract level the law may be seen as a gift—to the patriarchal capitalist system itself. The needs that are satisfied by the law are the needs of the system to maintain itself and ex-

pand. With regard to the perpetrators of personal crimes, these are systemic needs for the defense of property and proprietors. With regard to the privatization of the commons or the corporate commodification of the gifts of seeds, water, and genes, these are systemic needs for growth and expansion. They are not the human needs of individuals but the impersonal needs of the system to expand and of collective entities to make ever-larger profits.

The corporate entities do have human 'carriers' of course, and these carriers have human needs as well as points of view that are typically based on the exchange paradigm and promote ego orientation and self-aggrandizement. They may also involve gift-based abilities however, such as cooperation and teamwork within the corporation itself. As individuals these carriers are presumably required to obey the law while as members of corporate categories or entities, other rules apply.

Non-human corporate entities have many resources for protecting themselves from regulation by the law and from the protest of those they harm. However they are presently being undermined from within by the individual crimes of their CEO's who have stolen and pocketed the money of investors, as in the cases of ENRON and PARMALAT. Though a few of these persons are caught, the market really *requires* the kind of greed and dishonesty that drives people to implement the expansion of the system, so others soon replace them and try similar maneuvers. The law works to some extent to regulate the crimes of the individual, though it rarely works to regulate the corporations themselves. The more general, broader injustice usually remains even when some of the more particular injustices are remedied. These considerations, while depressing, point to the fact that the most impelling need at present is for general, big picture social change. In order to create this change a paradigm shift is necessary. Without it, both individuals and corporate entities are continually validated in their parasitism. By reducing this validation at all levels of society we can create a new context where the need for systemic change can be more easily satisfied.

The paradigm of exchange justifies the spread of the market into ever-new areas by occupying the top (exemplar) place in our

individual hierarchical priority systems and characterizing itself as the main, or only, need-satisfier. Not only does there appear to be no clear alternative to Capitalism but (apart from a growing number of courageous attempts to choose sustainability and live in alternative communities) most of us, especially in Euro/America, cannot recognize any viable alternative to the market logic for our own lives, nor do we see what we might do to change things for the better. Although ethical systems, compassionate religions and simple human kindness continue to pull individuals away from the market logic, the values of self-interest that the market promotes and the general scarcity for the many that is artificially created by Capitalism keep most people stuck inside the exchange paradigm. Indeed everyone's survival is made to seem contingent upon it. People who do not share the values of the exchange paradigm are considered 'failures' by those who do, and may be ostracized, subjected to ridicule and punished by poverty. The overvaluing of the exchange paradigm by the culture of Capitalism focuses the attention of the entire society on exchange, distorting the perspectives even of those who are practicing gift giving or who are on its margins. The market seems to be natural and unavoidable, a necessary fact of life, so the institutional alternatives, like religions, merge with it or find ways of co habiting with it. Even the people who are most driven by market values can justify gift giving in their personal lives by moral or religious conviction, practicing charity and family values. As Capitalism globalizes and intensifies so does Fundamentalism because it gives a social location for gift giving framed within Patriarchy and dominated and controlled by it. Thus it allows people to find some meaning in their lives while continuing to practice the exchange paradigm, competition and domination.

We can alter this negative picture if we realize that there is in each of us the core of an alternative paradigm that already exists and is based on our human experience as mothered children, which gives rise to the unilateral gift logic we use to communicate. Bringing gift giving to the foreground and understanding its processes rather than those of exchange, as constituting the basic human logic, gives a leverage point with which we can reduce the hegemony of

exchange over our thinking, and understand how and why this ‘creature’ of ours has taken over and turned against us. Whatever place in society we occupy, we can find the gift paradigm within ourselves if we can look beyond the exchange paradigm.

The devastating, real world, life and death consequences of the expansion of Patriarchal Capitalism hide the fact that even the people working for businesses and governments in the North and elsewhere have beliefs and value systems they are putting into practice, which they have learned growing up, in homes, religious institutions, schools and universities, which make learning those beliefs and value systems a point of pride. They have also been educated to derive their self-esteem within the exchange paradigm framework and to consider gift giving, not as an economy or as an interpretative key, but as an (at times ‘unrealistic’) moral or religious stance.

Nor is academic endeavor ‘value free’. Indeed it usually promotes the exchange paradigm while appearing neutral and objective. The reason for this is not so much that academics are in bad faith, though some are, but that for centuries the exchange paradigm and Patriarchy have had free reign in defining the terrain upon which questions are addressed, and in determining the questions themselves. Perhaps we could say that misogyny and the devaluing of the gift paradigm are one and the same, at least they coincide to a great extent. Women were kept out of universities for centuries. When they were finally admitted, academic endeavor was already deeply and firmly patriarchal, allied with the exchange paradigm. The result is that the gift paradigm has been deleted from academic disciplines. Mothering has not been considered as having an economic character, and perhaps even more importantly, gift giving has been eliminated from epistemology. Yet humans are intensely mothered children. Patriarchy and exchange have made us turn against that common legacy as a model for understanding, and deny its importance, as is typical when one is exploiting something or someone. Yet it is only by *projecting* mothering in terms of giving and receiving, onto the Universe that we can understand it in a way that does not leave us orphans among lifeless stars, ready to plunder and prey upon each other.

Academic disciplines

The gift paradigm needs to be reinstated throughout science, not only in economics, psychology, semiotics and linguistics, but also in biology and the ‘hard’ sciences. We need to extend the deep metaphor or “metaform” (Sebeok and Danesi 2000) of giving and receiving to perception as the creative reception of experiential data, as well as to atomic-level electron ‘donation’, and the ‘transmission’ of hormonal messages. Even the transmission of motion can be seen as a variation of the gift syllogism: “If A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C.” However we need particularly to revision signs, language and communication from the point of view of the gift paradigm. Otherwise a central aspect of the way we are human is invisible to us, and we misinterpret what we are doing in ways that validate both the suicide of ‘mankind’ and its matricide of mothers and of Mother Earth.

It is not that material gift giving, language and sign behavior are not to a certain extent brain functions as well as social gift constructions, but that brain functions should also be understood in terms of gift giving and receiving need-satisfying, eliciting-and-educating impulses. The release of adrenaline in the bloodstream is a gift from the hormonal level to the human being as a whole, who needs to fight, to flee or to tend.¹⁸ The brain can be seen as organized according to giving and receiving, and capable of internalizing those patterns in consciousness when it encounters them in language and life. If language is based on gift giving, it serves as a model in that sense, as well as in its capacity for abstraction and concept formation. Mothering must take place for children to survive. Since mothering happens from our earliest moments, inside as well as outside the womb, the patterns of gift transmission must be at least as familiar to us as those of abstraction, if not much more so. Only because as a patriarchal and capitalist society we renounce our mothering heritage, do we cancel the deep metaform of gift giving.

By extending our notion of gift giving to nature, revivifying it/her as the locus of multilevel processes of gifts to needs, from the

¹⁸ See *The Tending Instinct* (Taylor2002)

atomic level to the level of the centrifugal and centripetal swirling of galaxies, from the biological level where the heart sends blood with nutriment and oxygen to the cells, to the level at which the other-turning and other-tending activity of our attention becomes the mind, we can find and restore our commonality with Mother Nature. It is by erasing the idea of the gift at all these levels instead of extending it to them that we have created a blind spot, which permits the destruction of the environment by a non-nurturing economy.

Misogyny could be seen as an economic emotion, a hatred and devaluation of gift giving in women, which allies with a hatred and devaluation of the gift aspects of nature and extends to a class hatred of the parasite towards its gift-giving host. On the other hand, it is against the image of the mother, robbed of all the connections with gift giving in the rest of life, victimized by misogyny, and giving gifts to extenuation, that the feminist movement has rebelled. However this rebellion is misdirected. If we refocus and consider mothering and gift giving as the *human* norm, we can see that it is not mothering but patriarchy-and-exchange that are the aberration and the cause of the problem. Mothers and other gift givers *are* often victimized, but this not caused by their defects, weaknesses or masochistic tendencies. Even the image of their victimization distracts women (and men) from the truth, which is that it is the whole Patriarchal Capitalistic context of artificial scarcity and power-over that is responsible for the suffering of all and must be changed. Women cannot solve the problem by individually rejecting the image of the depleted and suffering mother, though perhaps by refusing that model, they can become strong enough themselves to do something about its social causes.

Mothering and the Gifts of Language*

“Look at the world through women’s eyes” was the motto of the UN NGO conference in Huairou, China, which accompanied UN

* I gave the following paper in a slightly different version at Rice University, Houston, Texas in 1998 at a conference on “The Enigma of the Gift and Sacrifice.” The paper is now published in the book of that name. (...)

Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. 40,000 women from all over the world attended the NGO conference. The critique of essentialism that is made by academic women's studies now makes us question whether there is any point of view "through women's eyes." This fact divides the women's movement for social change. I would like for this paper to help to bridge that divide and show a direction in which women and men can move, both theoretically and practically to solve the devastating problems caused by patriarchy and capitalism. The gift I am trying to give is not only academic but is directed towards social change.

Mothering is a practice called forth from adults by the biological dependency of infants. This dependence creates a social constant in that someone must care for the children unilaterally for an extended period of time or they will not survive. Societies have ensured that adults will take on the care-giving role by assigning it to females and encouraging girls to imitate their mothers. It is the dependency of children that requires the intense care giving activity not the biology of the mothers. In fact men could as easily engage in child-care and some do, but males are usually given an identity and gender role whereby they are encouraged to be different from their nurturing mothers.

The values of patriarchy and capitalism combine to make us look at mothering through the wrong end of the telescope, relegating it to a very specific area of life disconnected from the rest, unmonetized, almost mindless, uninformative. Instead, the unilateral satisfaction of another's need, which is necessary in mothering contains a basic recognizable logic with many positive consequences. This logic functions *prior* to reciprocity and informs it. I call it 'unilateral gift giving' in order to emphasize its continuity with other kinds of gifts and exchanges—which I believe are actually variations on the theme of the unilateral gift. By unilateral gift giving I mean that for example, a mother feeds her baby its lunch, the baby does not feed the mother lunch in return. (The transaction is thus at least deeply asymmetrical—the child may respond but that does not transform the unilateral or unidirectional gift into an exchange). From the child's point of view she or he is the recipient of unilateral

gift giving coming from the other. This would be the case even if the adult is being paid to do the care giving.

Before I begin to describe some elements of the logic of the unilateral satisfaction of another's need, let me say that there is also a logic of commodity exchange for money that lays down a very strong base metaphor or magnetic template that influences us to interpret everything in its image. It is because of this strong pull towards the logic of exchange that we tend to ignore, discredit or over-sentimentalize unilateral gift giving and over-value exchange patterns. Exchange is a doubling of the gift but has the effect of canceling the motive and motion of the unilateral process. The generalization of exchange results in a very different configuration of human relations than would the generalization of unilateral gift giving.

Since we are living in a society of 'advanced' Patriarchal Capitalism in which commodity exchange for money is the order of the day, we are practicing exchange all the time and we have become blind to the continued existence and the importance of unilateral gift giving. This blindness is also emotionally invested. It occurs in all areas of life and study, and progresses from a denial of the existence of the unilateral gift process to a denial of its validity, a knee jerk de-legitimation of gift giving as instinctual, sentimental privilege, saintliness, or at the other end of the spectrum, victimism or masochism.

The doubling of the gift in exchange forms the basis of a paradigm or world-view, which opposes and cancels the values and views coming from the unilateral gift process. Exchange, the process of giving-in-order-to-receive an equivalent, appears to contain a basic human logic of self-reflecting consciousness, self-respect, justice, fairness, equality. Quantification according to a monetary norm can be counted upon to assess the even-handedness of transactions so that all the parties seem to get what they gave, and what they 'deserve'.

In Western culture this pattern of interaction and its criteria are accepted as the normal human way of behaving, diminishing harm to the other while promoting the well being of the self. From economics to politics, the idea of not impinging on the other rules over the idea of helping (giving to) the other. Feminists have embraced the idea of equality with men and have shown that they can also embrace the

values of Patriarchal Capitalism. While continuing to identify and give importance to needs, women do not usually consciously step outside the exchange paradigm. Instead they take up a struggle for rights within the system rather than trying to change it altogether. One unchallenged Patriarchal ideal for example is justice, which is based on the model of exchange, requires 'appropriate payment' for crime, and gives rise to big business (now called by activists "the criminal-industrial complex"). The values of kindness, and the prevention of crime through the satisfaction of needs are not considered as relevant to the exchange-based discourse of justice and rights. The paradigm of exchange is actually conducting a continuous struggle against a hidden paradigm based on unilateral gift giving, an (ideological) struggle, which it is winning. We do not notice the gift paradigm or even know that it exists. Rather we attribute isolated instances of unilateral giving to individual virtue, quirkiness, disguised self-interest or even co-dependency.

Here I hope to provide a glimpse of what the world would look like if we restored unilateral gift giving to its place as the core human logic of which symbolic gift exchange and commodity exchange are both variations. I realize that using unilateral gift giving as an interpretative key gives some very different perspectives on a number of issues. It is important to conceive of a different way in order to create it, to liberate it from its surroundings like the statue from the stone. In fact I want to show that unilateral gift giving is THE basic mode of human interaction, which is already there and functioning, but half of humanity has been alienated from it by the imposition of the social construction of the gender of males, thereby deeply altering also the circumstances and the social construction of the gender of the other half of humanity.

If we can stand back and look at the exchange paradigm critically for a moment, we can begin to recognize the positive existence of the gift paradigm. The exchange paradigm has to dominate over the gift paradigm because the gift paradigm threatens it by making it unnecessary. Indeed if unilateral gift giving were the norm, no one would need to exchange in order to receive what she or he needs. The exchange paradigm requires scarcity in order to maintain its leverage and control. In capitalism, when abundance begins to

accrue, scarcity is artificially created to save the exchange-based system. Agricultural products are plowed under in order to keep prices high. Money is spent on armaments and other waste and luxury items, or cornered in the hands of a few individuals or corporations in order to create and maintain an appropriate climate of scarcity for business-as-usual to continue. These mechanisms have other advantages, which also reward successful exchangers with social status and power and penalize gift givers by making their gift giving (in scarcity) self-sacrificial.

A context of abundance would allow gift giving to flower while a context of scarcity discredits gift giving by making it painfully difficult. Because of the conflict of paradigms and the tremendous real world effects it has, it is not surprising that our individual views of the world have been deeply distorted. We are members of a society of advanced capitalism and have to succeed in it in order to survive, so that both women and men have adapted to the exchange paradigm and its values, allowing it to make us in its image. In everything we do we are looking through the distorting glasses of exchange. Nonetheless through an effort of imagination, and because capitalism is destroying the gifts of the earth and humanity, we can also take the point of view of the gift paradigm. Women, who are still being brought up with the values that will allow them to do unilateral care giving often maintain both paradigms internally, validating the exchange paradigm even while acting according to the values of the gift paradigm. It is important for all of us to resolve this contradiction and affirm that the gift paradigm is a valid way of viewing the world.

Indeed I believe that the conflict between paradigms may be an important cause of misogyny. Women bear the brunt of the fact that the unilateral giving, which they have to practice as mothers conflicts with and challenges the paradigm of exchange. In fact, because of the context of scarcity in which many mothers are forced to live, practicing the gift logic may even appear to be a punishment for not having succeeded in the system of commodity exchange. Alternatively it may appear to be the reason for women's supposed 'inferiority'. Women themselves sometimes attribute the source of their oppression to the role of gift-giving rather than to the context

of scarcity that has been created by the system based on commodity exchange. They think that by giving up gift-giving and convincing others to do so as well, they can improve their lot. Instead the solution is to change the context of scarcity and the economic system that is causing it, so as to make gift giving viable for all.

The conflicts of values, which many people, both women and men, have regarding patriarchal capitalism, are usually seen as individual propensities, not as the values of a different hidden vestigial or incipient system. By giving positive attention to unilateral gift giving we can begin to recognize its general social importance.

One result of the predominance of the exchange paradigm is that needs have become invisible unless their satisfaction is backed by the money required to pay for them, as 'effective demand'. Looking beyond the exchange paradigm to a theory of gift giving as need-satisfaction would also require an expanded visibility of needs to include those needs for which the people who experience them do not have the wherewithal and those needs, which are not part of the monetized economy. Marx's discussion of consumptive production and productive consumption could be used as the basis for such a theory since it suggests how needs can become specific and diversify according to the means by which they are satisfied (Marx 1973 p 90-94). New needs arise on the basis of the satisfaction of the old in a dynamic way. For example, a child who first needs only milk begins to need solid foods, prepared with specific cultural procedures etc. A child who was dependent begins to need to be independent.

The gift process in coexistence with exchange gives rise to many needs. As adults living in the exchange paradigm we also have complex social and psychological needs having to do with power relations. For example the need to be respected may be more important than the need to receive a gift. Much damage has been done by givers who paternalistically ignore the variety of needs and the sensitivity and creativity of the receiver.

The concealment of the gift paradigm has extended to our terminology, rendering the gifts we are already giving invisible. For example we place the neutral term 'activity' over the loaded term 'gift' in many aspects of life. At the same time we have taken away the

loaded terms 'satisfaction of need' and replaced it with the term 'effect'. For example building (or taking care of) a house can be considered satisfying a complex combination of needs by as many activities. The dishes need to be washed, the broken window needs to be repaired. I propose that in order to reveal the gift paradigm we reconsider even such practical activities according to the theme of unilateral gift giving and receiving

Aspects of the gift logic

The process of unilateral gift giving as evidenced in nurturing has its own logic with consequences and implications. I will list some of the aspects of this logic as I see it.

One: The gift interaction requires the giver's ability to recognize needs of others and to procure or fashion something to satisfy them. The satisfaction of needs is not done by humans ahistorically, but always takes place at a certain cultural and historical level with the means and methods that are present in the society at a certain degree of development of productive forces, and within some mode of production. Thus whatever is received in satisfaction of a need is formed with some degree of cultural specificity, which also educates further needs.

Two: The gift interaction has three parts, the giver, the gift or service, and the receiver with her/his need. Leaving out the receiver as an important element in this process would make us look at gift giving as an ego based process, done for the good of the giver, as happens in exchange. The transitivity of the gift process depends upon the reception and use of the gift by the receiver.

Three: A dynamic change of state occurs in which the giver is in possession of the gift, s/he gives it, and the gift comes to rest in the possession of, or incorporated into the body of, the receiver. This is a transitive interaction.

Four: The purpose of the gift is the satisfaction of the need and well being of the receiver. The interaction is other-oriented.

Five: Giving a gift to satisfy another's need gives value to that person because the implication is that if that person were not valuable to the giver s/he would not have given the gift. This has the effect that attention goes to the (valuable) receiver rather than the giver. The giver can satisfy a receiver's need to be valued by giving to her and can modify and intensify that value by self effacing (or self sacrificing). A further variation is that the receiver can refuse to recognize the giver as the source of the gift as if the value and the gift came from himself or herself through 'deserving'. Note that I am not recommending these variations but am simply acknowledging them as possible aspects of the process.

Six: The receiver is not passive but creative. The gift must be used in order for the transaction to be complete.

Seven: Gift giving creates a bond between giver and receiver. The giver recognizes the need and the existence of the other, fashions or provides something specific to satisfy the need. She is assured of the reception of the gift by the well being of the other. The receiver finds that her need has been satisfied in a specific way by another, with something, which she did not procure herself. These two poles can be seen as the basis of interpersonal bonds. The receiver can recognize the positive existence of the other. Potentially she can also experience gratitude, a response by which she affirms the gift she has received as well as the giver. She can also become a giver in her turn.

Eight: Turn-taking occurs when individuals each give unilateral gifts sequentially without making their gifts contingent upon equivalent gifts given by the receivers.

Nine: These gift processes also construct the psychological and physiological subject as a giver and/or creative receiver. The body itself is both a product and a source of gifts. The subject as giver and/or receiver is different from the subject of exchange where debt and reciprocity are necessary.

Ten: There is logical consequence in gift giving as in 'If A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C'. (B is then mediator between A and C).

This list is not meant to be comprehensive but only to bring forward several aspects of unilateral gift giving: the relation-making capacity of unilateral other-oriented gift giving; the informative capacity of satisfying needs and thus of educating them; the implication of the value of the other; the creativity of the receiver etc. No debt or obligation to reciprocate is necessary for the formation of these interpersonal bonds through gift giving. In fact I believe that there are several reasons why we have focused so much on the relations created by the obligations of reciprocity. For now I will mention two. As I said above we are looking from the perspective of capitalism where reciprocity is enforced as the mechanism of market exchange and debt is a salient factor of the economy. Secondly, gift giving is labile, mercurial, and can easily switch before our eyes from unilateral to bilateral. An other-oriented gift can transform into an ego-oriented one simply by instrumentalizing the gift to satisfy the needs of the manipulative giver. When this happens we sometimes summon our cynicism and decide that the free gift was an illusion.

Manipulation through gift giving is always possible, through leveraging gifts, giving competitively and withholding gifts. The exchange paradigm continually pushes us in that direction. We use this tendency of gift giving to transform itself as evidence that unilateral gift giving does not exist. Mothers, and other people who have done a lot of gift giving on a daily basis, know that it does. Despite this unfortunate tendency the unilateral gift continues to function in the area of mothering, and it has also many developments which have been attributed to other aspects of life and given other

names. By restoring the name 'gift' to these developments, we can see that unilateral gift giving is one of the load-bearing structures of society and not just wishful thinking or a good intention often transformed into its opposite.

Material Communication

If we consider the movement of goods and services provided by care givers to needs of children and other family members to be unilateral gift giving, we can also see that gift giving in large part forms the material bodies of the people in the community. I would call this 'material non-sign communication'. It is a transfer of gifts from one person to another by which the bodies and minds of persons grow and become specific, due to the fact that needs become specified or are educated by what satisfies them. It is no wonder that the words '*co-muni-cation*' and '*co-muni-ty*' remind us of the process of giving gifts together. By giving unilaterally and receiving gifts from others we mutually include each other with regard to all the parts of our environment.

It is only because maternal material communication, i.e., nurturing, has been so misunderstood and problematized in our own society that we have not been able to see the processes it provides as having a continuity with the rest of life. Denied this continuity, nurturing appears to be, and becomes, even more specialistic and limited, carrying the 'domestic sphere' into some unconscious never never land upon which consumerism and advertising nevertheless feed. Exchange is self-reflecting and self-validating, difficult to oppose. However if we look at unilateral gift giving as the core process from which mothering, symbolic gift exchange and commodity exchange all derive, we can re-integrate nurturing into the rest of life and childhood along with it. We can find the continuity between capitalistic and pre-capitalistic societies. By giving value to the gift giving process we will also be able to recognize the non-metaphorical aspects of the idea of Gaia, our Mother Earth. If we can reactivate the attitudes of creative receiving that we used as children in our experience of gift-receiving-and-giving, rather than covering

them with a neutrality deriving from the exchange paradigm, we can rebirth our gratitude for life and for the abundant planet on which we live and which we are now destroying, because we are caught in the egocentrism and solipsism of the exchange paradigm.

Exchange relations

Exchange is giving-in-order-to-receive an equivalent. It requires a return 'gift', which is determined by the value of what has been given. The exchange of commodities requires measurement, quantification, and assessment in money. Exchange is ego-oriented. The need, which is satisfied by exchange is the exchangers' own need. Therefore satisfying it does not attribute value to the other but only to the self. Commodity exchange for money mediates generalized private property, where all property is owned in a mutually exclusive way by private owners. Exchange is adversarial in that in each transaction each person is trying to get more and give less. Exchange establishes mainly human relations of mutual equality as exchangers. (In fact we will see that this equality is an illusion because many exchangers are receiving free gifts disguised by the equality of the exchange and many others are giving free gifts because the 'just' price covers a source of free gifts).*

As a template or deep metaphor for other interactions, exchange is very powerful. The self-reflecting aspect in the equation of value (x commodity $a = y$ quantity of money) creates an artificial standard for what humans are and what their relations should be. We think of consciousness as self-reflection, and we appeal to relations of equality, balance, and justice. These seemingly positive qualities function in the mode of exchange but by accepting them our way is blocked to the higher goods of unilateral gift giving: celebrating qualitative difference, caring, mutual imbalance towards the other, attention to needs, and kindness.

* Debt and obligation do constitute human relations, making the exchange long term and carrying a penalty for non compliance. The relation of debt centers around dominance and submission.

Psychological origins of exchange and patriarchy

Nancy Chodorow ⁽¹⁹⁷⁸⁾ discusses the plight of the boy child who finds he has to learn or invent an identity that is not like that of his nurturing mother. The boy begins life without knowing he is different. Then he discovers that he has a different gender name, and thus belongs to a different category. If the fundamental unilateral gift giving that is his daily experience through which he is also bonding with his mother is interpreted as a female characteristic only, where does that leave the boy? What can his identity be? Society has interpreted our physiological differences to mean that we must construct different gender identities, and it has unfortunately seized upon gift giving as the central characteristic of the mother, from which he must deviate. But if the unilateral gift giving way is the basic human process, what other identity can there be for the boy?

I believe naming has a lot to do with this identity, that the word 'male' itself (in its binary opposition to 'female') categorizes the boy and provides a model of categorization and alienation, which has widespread repercussions. By taking the father or other important male as the model or prototype of the human, the boy is consoled for his departure from the nurturing category. The mother is then seen as not the prototype for 'human', her nurturing appears to be of little value, and her status appears to be inferior to the boy's. In fact she often chooses or is forced to nurture males *more* because they are *not* nurturers. Males then vie with each other to be the prototype (male) human while women are in a category which nurtures them and which is considered 'inferior' because women do not vie to be the prototype. The 'essence' of women appears to be that they are not even in the running. The fact that the contest is artificial and unnecessary does not diminish its social significance for everyone.

If almost everything that little children have is or seems to be a gift from their mothers, the penis would also seem to be a gift, given to boys but not given to girls. It may appear that the boy has been put in the non-nurturing superior category because he has it. Yet because the identity constructed through giving and receiving with the mother is necessarily more satisfying than an identity of similarity

with the father—where he has to compete to be the prototype—the child still longs for participation in the gift mode. Unfortunately, since the mother doesn't have a penis and the boy's gender appears to be determined by his having one, castration would seem to be the way to return to the nurturing identity and he would therefore desire it. At the same time he would necessarily fear castration, making the whole issue confusing and traumatic.

The fact that the boy will never have breasts though he may envy them as the gift of nurturing, would enter into this psychological pattern as well. Thus it seems that the basic category is male and the mother is in the opposite and inferior category because she has the gift of breasts for nurturing, which the boy will never have. The boy therefore puts himself out of 'dependent' receivership of the care of the mother and begins to feel that he deserves such care because of the gift of his penis and his name. He sees himself as 'made' or 'engendered' by the father who traveled the same psychological itinerary himself as a child.

I believe this childhood pattern repeats itself in many areas of social life in the creation of privileged categories by naming, based on the naming of gender. The privilege involved is the direction of gifts and services by others 'upwards' *towards* the person who is in the superior category, and the giving of names and commands 'downwards' *by* the person in the superior category. In this way hierarchies are created and those with important titles in top places, prototype positions, rule with their phallic symbols in hand. From the scepter to the mitre to the missile and the gun our leaders are *made* male again and again. The division into genders due to our physiological differences is an easy mistake for cultures to make. In fact we put things that look different into different categories. The problem is that humans are so sensitive and intelligent they take up their categories and use them as self-fulfilling prophecies. This very capacity however would give us a way out, an ability to create ourselves differently, undoing the categories, changing gender expectations.

The transfer of category away from nurturing and into a relation of similarity and competition with the father is remarkably similar to the transformation of a product from a use value into an exchange

value. The product is taken away from the production process (which itself could be viewed as a combination of need-satisfying ‘activities’) placed on the market (the binary opposite of gift giving), compared to the monetary norm and given a ‘money name’ (a price). (Marx makes a comparison between price and proper names and adds “We know nothing of a man simply because he is called ‘James’”(Marx [1868] 1930). I have to differ with Marx. We do know that if he is called ‘James’ he is male.)

Girls travel more slowly, remaining like their mothers in the gift realm, but they too are given up at last in marriage, re named and placed in a new family category with its ‘exemplar’ male, the husband towards whom they will direct their gift giving. Commodity exchange, which cancels the gift, requiring an equivalent, seems to do the trick of nurturing while not nurturing, satisfying needs while competing to have more, making it an apparently ungendered area more appropriate for masculine endeavor.

Manhood script

According to David Gilmore in his book *Manhood in the Making*, (Gilmore. 1990) the values, which males embrace for the formation of their identities can be seen as having to do with a ‘manhood script’, which is relatively similar cross culturally. Such values as independence, competitiveness, performative excellence, courage, large size, form the parameters of this script, which is embraced and constructed by males so as to distinguish themselves from the nurturing mother. I think that we can recognize that these values are similar to the values of capitalism: autonomy, competitiveness, performative excellence, risk taking and high status due to social ‘size’: having more wealth or power.

Having given up unilateral gift giving both as a gender and as a mode of production and distribution it appears that it is only through the rule of law or the strictures of morality and religion that men (and women living in capitalism) can be convinced to pay attention to others’ needs. Yet self-interest is a psychological dead end. People find their lives without ‘meaning’. Searching for meaning

individually is an almost impossible task since both in language and in life, meaning has to do with communication, with orientation towards the other. We seize upon the law of the male prototype as the measure of our behavior but this does not bring us back to the gift way, which seems an impossible, unrealistic Eden. Meanwhile the economic way of the manhood script continues to make an anti-Eden creating poverty where abundance should be, rewarding the few with ever-greater havings while penalizing the many, erecting a wall behind which the gift giving garden is no longer visible.

One advantage that capitalism has had, the silver lining of its cloud, is that by institutionalizing the values of the manhood script and bringing women into the monetized labor force, it has shown that those supposedly 'male' values were not biologically based, given that women can also embrace them successfully. A society based on unilateral gift giving, institutionalizing the script of nurturing, would demonstrate that those processes and values are not limited to biological females either.

Language as a gift economy

One attempt that we can make to institutionalize nurturing is to reveal it in areas of life where it has been canceled and made invisible by the paradigm of exchange. I believe that we need to re-vision language itself as an ideal gift economy. As such it can function as the missing link between mothering, symbolic gift exchanges and commodity exchange. In my book *For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange* (1997) I suggest that language can be conceived of as a construction of unilateral gift processes taking its communicative power from the ability gift giving has to create relations. Words could thus be seen as verbal gifts, which substitute for co-municative gifts, which humans give to one another to satisfy communicative needs. Communicative needs are needs for relations and for the means for creating those relations regarding something. Unmotivated phonemes¹⁹ and morphemes are combined to make up word-gifts,

¹⁹ That is sounds which do not have a meaning on their own.

which become common possessions of a community. Word-gifts are made on purpose to create relations, to satisfy communicative needs, not direct material needs. They are put by individuals into contingent so called 'rule governed' combinations, creating momentary present-time common relations among interlocutors regarding the many aspects of the human and natural environment. Even the 'rules of syntax' by which word gifts are combined with each other can be viewed as transposed gift processes.

If it is possible to create a mutually inclusive relation with someone by satisfying her need with a material object, we can also give that gift in order to create that relation.²⁰ However, need satisfying objects are not always available and there are many parts of the world, which we cannot use to satisfy needs directly. Thus we use words, verbal gifts, to satisfy other's communicative needs for a means to create a relation to something. The speaker or giver recognizes the listener's lack of a relation to something in the present and speaks or gives the word, which has become the general social substitute gift for that kind of thing in her culture. By combining constant word-gifts she is able to make a contingent word gift—a sentence or group of sentences, which expresses the specific relevance of the kind of things in the moment. By satisfying the other's need for a means to a relation, the speaker has satisfied her own need for a common relation with the listener in the present. The listener's relation to the means of communication, which the speaker has given to h/er is at the same time the speaker's own shared relation with the listener. S/he has created a mutually inclusive relation with another person regarding a thing or kind of thing by means of combined word-gifts. The listener or receiver has to be able to creatively use what has been given to h/er—or the relation is not established. According to Marx's idea from the *German Ideology*, language is 'practical consciousness that exists for others and therefore really for me as well'.^(1964:21) What the word-gift is for the speaker is determined by what it is for the listener. The use of the gift by the receiver is as important to the transaction as the giving of the gift by the giver. In

²⁰ See below 'Communication and exchange'.

fact if we want to communicate we have to speak in a language the listener understands. If even one word is unknown to h/er we have to define it or give her a different one.

I think that even syntax can be viewed as transposed gift giving. I started out by saying that the unilateral gift process has at least three parts, a giver, a gift or service and a receiver with a need. In old fashioned grammar terms, these would correspond to subject, predicate and object. In more current terms we would say that the relation 'noun phrase + verb phrase' is a gift relation. The plus sign stands for a unity between the two created by a transposed gift relation. In 'The blonde girl hit the ball', we give the word 'blonde' to the word 'girl' because the girl is seen as having that property. She has it because it was 'given' to her on the reality plane and we are able to say it because we are giving one word to the other word on the verbal plane. The word 'the' is an article, which can be given to the word 'girl' because 'girl' is a noun, the kind of word that can receive and use the gift of the article 'the'. The adjective 'blonde' is also the kind of word-gift that can be given to a noun. In fact on the reality plane, only certain kinds of gifts can be given and received by certain people. 'The blonde girl' constitutes the subject of the sentence, the transposed giver. The verb 'hit' is the transposed gift' and 'the ball' the transposed receiver. When the sentence is made passive, the emphasis is on the reception of the gift: 'The ball was hit by the blonde girl'. I can only briefly sketch here what could be an alternative feminist approach to the understanding of language. What I want to suggest however, is the deep information-bearing capacity of the gift relation. In fact I believe it would be possible to translate language analysis back into gift terms.

I think there are two aspects of language corresponding very roughly to Saussure's *langue-parole* distinction. The *langue* side comes from naming and the definition while the *parole* side comes from the use of the words we have gained through naming, definition, and through participating in speech interactions. I think that exchange corresponds to the naming and definition (*langue*) side of this distinction, while unilateral gift giving corresponds to the use of words, sentences, discourses (*parole*). We usually tend to confuse

the two, not realizing that the definition has a structure and implications, which are different from non definitional sentences. Thus we believe that by putting things in categories, seeing what they are like or unlike, what the categories include or exclude, we understand them. By concentrating on categorization we are leaving out the gift motivation and communicative power, which could explain how language is connected to the extra linguistic world, how words are connected to each other and how people communicate. The definition is actually a meta-linguistic gift while language in context functions as a linguistic gift satisfying ongoing and contingent communicative needs.

Communicative needs arise with regard to all parts of our environment and with regard to some parts more often and more constantly than others. Thus we have socially invented some means which arise as constants (but each of which is a variable regarding the others) and we combine them in a contingent and fleeting relation to each other, to which we relate parts of the environment in the moment. Our inter personal relations acquire a specificity regarding each kind of thing as mediated by the constants, which are assembled in ever new combinations according to the relevance to each other of things to which we respond in our ongoing experience. We can also consider the verbal gifts we are giving as having value and we can construct other gift combinations in the present, forming still other relations with the listener in their regard. The listener can in turn contribute her gifts.

In language the lexicon constitutes a basic abundant supply of word gifts (the constants), a competence which members of a community all possess (specialistic and elite languages of course exist but I am trying to describe the basic case). This supply provides people with a situation of common possession of linguistic means of production. Due to the facility with which we speak we are in the position of having a limitless supply of gifts to give. We are also in the position of producing for others what they could potentially rather easily produce for themselves. This abundance and ease contrasts with the scarcity and the difficulty of procuring and giving gifts in the extra linguistic world. Communicative needs may appear much less

stringent and compelling than material needs. Nevertheless verbal communication can have a use value regarding the satisfaction of material needs because humans can use the gifts they receive from it as information upon which to base their behavior. Verbal communication thus has a gift value which creates human relations with regard to things and a use value—which arises from our ability to use these relations as the premise upon which to base further behavior, relations, and interactions. For example if I say ‘The book is on the table’ your communicative needs are satisfied for the moment and I have satisfied your need to know where the book is. I may have saved you an hour of time looking for the book. Whether or not you asked me, I have unilaterally satisfying your need. My sentence has a use value and also a gift value—because I use it to satisfy your communicative need and your extra linguistic need for finding the book, both of which give value to you by implication.

In the definition we are taking words out of context and looking at them as constants. The process in the definition is much like that of exchange in that it is based on the substitution of equivalents. In the definition, the definiens is substituted by the definiendum. The gift of a ‘new’ word, the definiendum, is given to the listener. Similarly in exchange the commodity is substituted by money, which can be used again to take the place of another commodity of similar value. There are important differences of course. Because money mediates the exchange of mutually exclusive private property and it is not infinitely reproducible like words, it is given up as property in exchange for the commodity. Word-gifts can be used again and again and they mediate human relations of mutual inclusion and community rather than the relations of mutual exclusion and the market. They provide an infinite qualitative variety of relations to the world while money only mediates one relation, the exchange of property, in quantitative variety according to its standard.

The infinite variety of qualitatively different relations that humans create with each other through language regarding things has had an important gift value for the human community. The cultural environment which humans have made for themselves has been deeply

altered by the contributions of verbal communication. Straw mats and tables, gardens and factories would not be there if humans had not had language. The natural environment has acquired new gift characteristics which depend in part upon the ability of the collective to respond to the environment with their verbal gifts and their verbally mediated interactions. Even more distant parts of nature become gifts to us because we alter our response in their regard and this alteration requires the use of language. While the moon remains relatively untouched by humans, the kind of gift it is for us has changed over the centuries and cross culturally because we alter our response to it through ritual and through science, through astrology and through astronomy. In all of these endeavors language has contributed a use value in that it has served to create human interpersonal, individual and collective relations to the world and it has had a gift value, implying the value of people and cultures.

Unilateral gift giving is transitive. By satisfying a need we give value to the other, to the need and to its object. In so doing we create ourselves as giving and receiving subjectivities. In speaking to someone about something we also give value to that person, to the part of the environment with regard to which we have satisfied her communicative need and to the means of communication we have used. In this way we also create ourselves as subjects, linguistic givers and receivers of verbal gifts and implications of value. We continue to give and receive verbally even when we are not giving gifts materially. We can create our subjectivities as linguistic givers and receivers even when we are mainly subjects immersed in commodity production and exchange, exploitation, violence and war. Language can be used to dominate and manipulate others just as material gift giving can. However the basic transitive logics of both language and material gift giving function because they create positive *co-muni-tary* human relations and the material and psychological subjectivities of the members of the community.

There are some aspects of language that seem to be reincarnated in gift exchange. For example giving the return gift of the 'same thing' in gift exchange, a practice discussed by Godelier (1996) and many others, could be interpreted as functionally analogous to language

where speakers of the same language possess and are able to combine, give and receive normatively identical words, demonstrating that they belong to the same (linguistic) community. Moreover the practice in gift 'exchange' of reciprocating with something more than the original gift shows that at least that *extra* portion of the return gift is unilateral and free. In fact the exchange of gifts could be seen as material dialogue (with some of the same competitive potential as verbal dialogue when patriarchal values come to the fore).

The process of substitution of one gift for another itself creates a new area of gift giving with new consequences. It has been said that gift exchange is different from language because gifts are not referential. Substitute gifts however, can be referential. They can bring us back (re-fer) to the gifts they have taken the place of. In gift exchange not only are the respective human interactions structured in a similar way, with the second gift transaction reversing the first but the relation between the two gifts is affirmed by their similarity so that the act of giving the return gift refers to the original gift (by repeating it either as a similar gift—a gift of the same thing—or as a similar value). Beyond this reference the addition of 'more' places the return giver in the position of giving unilaterally again. Thus gift exchanges might be seen as occupying a communicative position somewhere *between* unilateral gift giving and language proper. I believe this may have happened because language itself is functioning as a deep metaphor upon which humans base other behaviors, not only regarding structures deriving from the relations in Saussure's *langue*, as Levi Strauss showed, but also regarding a *parole*, which is based on satisfying communicative needs through gift giving and from which *langue*, which is after all an abstraction, derives.

As I have been saying, I believe that living in a society based on the exchange paradigm prevents us from seeing the gift giving that is before us. Exchange value appears to be the most important kind of value, different from other kinds of moral, linguistic, and spiritual values. Indeed, exchange value can be seen as a transformation of (unilateral) gift value canceling and hiding it. In fact it is the single-minded concentration on the need of the giver rather than

the receiver that cancels the transitivity (and the inclusiveness and creativity, which would accompany the transmission of a variety of qualitative values) of the gift transformed by exchange. Exchange value is the value of the need-satisfying product—the ex-gift or would-be gift—for others in the system of alienated mutually exclusive co-muni-cation, which is exchange of private property. After the commodity has passed through the market, its use value has had gift value deleted from it because in fact the gift value was transitive (implying the value of the other). The product, which has been exchanged on the market does not give value to the buyer beyond what she or he originally gave. In fact in a mediated way the seller has given it to her or himself.

There are many other characteristics that separate language as a verbal gift economy from material gift giving. I will not go in to them here. I just want to mention though that I think it is possible that if we were living in material abundance and doing generalized unilateral gift giving, new unexpected results would arise from those relations, social epiphenomena by which our communities would be empowered and our collective artistic and spiritual abilities enhanced. The fact that gifts-in-exchange have been used competitively or in status-conferring ways has more to do with different modes of Patriarchy than with the logic of unilateral gift giving itself. The patriarchal exchange paradigm (and the ‘manhood script’) have blocked the development of the gift paradigm in many different ways and thereby have deeply alienated and altered our human potential, preventing the spiritual, economic and cultural evolution of both women and men.

Marx’s semiotics of the market gives us the clue for a semiotics of the unilateral gift, of language, and of gift exchange. All of these areas have to do with human value-conferring activity, activity ‘for others and therefore for me’ (again according to Marx’s dialectic of linguistic inclusion from the *German Ideology*), the activity of satisfying needs at different levels. If we consider the process of commodity exchange as a descendant of language (in its aspects of definition and naming) and language itself as a descendant of gift giving we can understand different kinds of value as variations upon

a single theme of need satisfying gift activity. In this case we can see that exchange value is the value of abstract labor, labor which is “for others” that is, gift labor, in a situation of private property, which is not “for others.” Only the labor, which is for others, but private property, i.e., a commodity (not a gift), is counted as having value. That is, the mutually exclusive aspect of private property and the accompanying process of exchange cause the abstraction of labor (for others), ‘homogenizing it’ and as the common quality of commodities, which has its exemplar in money, leaving aside gifts as apparently irrelevant. In fact the market thus appears as a gigantic sorting mechanism, sorting gifts *out*. Nevertheless portions of the abstract labor are given free and constitute surplus value, the part of the value of labor not covered by the workers’ salary. These portions are actually free gifts, which are taken by the capitalist and constitute profit. Surplus value can thus be considered a (leveraged) gift from the worker to the capitalist.

Commodity exchange, gift exchange, language and unilateral gift giving continue to co exist, and reciprocally influence each other.²¹ They are difficult to disentangle. By giving attention to unilateral gift giving we can uncover it in many areas where it is called something else or where it is mixed in with exchange. Recognizing the gift aspect of profit reveals that the gift is the motivating element of the whole market system. The exchange economy is sustained by gifts in other ways. The housewife’s free labor, which was once called ‘leisure’, is a gift to the market system. It has been calculated that if housework were monetized 40% would have to be added to the GNP in the US, more in some other countries (Waring 1988). This unilateral gift is transitive, passing through the household and the salaried worker to the profit of the capitalist, and giving value and validation to the system itself.

Free gifts travel upwards in hierarchies bearing with them the implication of value and power of those above over those below, while

²¹ Marx said that the “anatomy of man gives a clue to the anatomy of the ape.” In this case though, if we think of man as exchange and the ape as language, the ape is holding the man in her arms, taking care of him with her sweet mothering ways.

those at the top use some of the gifts they receive to pay for the creation of other hierarchies of constraint such as police or military so that the direction of the flows of gifts upwards can be maintained. Countries of the Global South give and give way to the countries of the North nurturing them with hidden gifts of all kinds. The flow of gifts goes away from those with the needs towards those in the hierarchies in the South and thence towards those in the hierarchies in the North who have invested there for their so called 'just profit'. The flow of gifts goes upwards also from the earth into the hands of the few, away from the needs of the many in the present and in the future who will not be able to sustain themselves and their children with the toxic soil and polluted air we are presently creating.

Those of us who are to any extent the beneficiaries of this transfer of abundance should creatively receive it to try to devise ways to peacefully change the system of exploitation. We can begin by creating a 'translation', which will re validate unilateral gift giving as the basis of communication and community, and stop validating the universalization of the practice, categories and values of Patriarchy and exchange. Communication and economics appear to be completely different things because they are located in different categories. Yet the enigma of the gift and the enigma of the commodity form can both be unraveled by studying economics as co-muni-cation. Language, gender, gift giving and exchange all continue to be *made* enigmatic by the cancellation of unilateral gift giving and the mother.

Looking at the world through women's eyes would mean resolving these enigmas, approaching our lives with the sure knowledge that the kind of unilateral gift logic we learned from our own mothers is not an isolated propensity to nurture, secondary in importance to the values of the manhood script, but the basis of the way we all form ourselves and each other as human. It is exchange, the doubling back of the gift upon the giver that obscures the truth and creates the many problems to be solved. We are living in a pathological system. The solutions that the system proposes only aggravate the problems. We need to base a new cure on a new diagnosis.

I believe the disease is Patriarchal Capitalism. The cure can begin by giving value to unilateral gift giving.

In the following pages I have tried to weave together excerpts from articles and presentations in Semiotics that I have given over the last years. Because the gift economy is a new topic, I have had to present it over and over in many different venues, making my presentations somewhat repetitious. Here I have tried to delete the repetitions and create a continuity among the more interesting parts. I have also added a few excerpts from unpublished manuscripts.

Women and Signs*

Gender and economics

In Western society at this time two social factors alter our view of the world and therefore also of semiosis and of semiotics. One of these is socially constructed gender and the other is our economic system. The idea that these two factors are intimately united and intertwined allows us to view Patriarchal Capitalism as an economic system in which the values of the masculinist agenda are the driving force.

Our constructions of gender and our economic patterns are entwined around an invisible center, which is constituted by unilateral gift giving. My hypothesis is that unilateral gift giving contains a logic that gives rise to many important human processes, but it has been rendered invisible or inferior by the construction of the male identity of boy children in contrast to their nurturing mothers. Then gift giving has been rendered invisible or inferior for a second time by our use of the exchange of commodities for money in the market. In fact we will be looking at the market as a derivative of the construction of masculinity. Both gender and the market influence our perspectives profoundly.²²

* The following is taken from a presentation at the International Association of Semiotic Studies conference on Women and Signs in Imatra, Finland, 1999.

²² Attempts to derive the market from gift giving (MAUSS review) are incomplete because they lack a discussion of the market and gift giving in terms of concept formation/communication and gender construction. That is what we are attempting to supply here.

By recognizing that there are deep distortions of our gaze upon the world we can attempt to find out what we would see if we were we to correct for them. If we can achieve a different vision, not only will we do better semiotics but perhaps we can create a different and more peaceful world. In the United States young boys are shooting their schoolmates in order to achieve a masculine identity, while the leader of the country asserts his manhood through bombing another country (Serbia) into submission in order to stop another leader from asserting his manhood by mass killings.²³ Economic policies of so called “Free” Trade cause a flow of wealth from poor countries to rich countries, further impoverishing poor people while concentrating stratospheric wealth in the hands of the very few. The environment is degrading rapidly due to toxic waste of all kinds produced by a system based on the maximization of profit. In these conditions of crisis, it is supremely important to attempt to find the causes of the problems. No discipline is exempt. Such grave social maladies must necessarily show up everywhere and we can address them everywhere. I believe that the alterations of our perspective, which occur because of our constructions of gender and the market actually hide a way out of our philosophical, political and personal difficulties, a way which is an open door that we neither see nor believe in.

it is gift giving, not exchange which is comparable to and actually the basis of communication. Exchange is a distortion of this more basic economic mode. Both gift giving and exchange may be considered *material communication* and for that reason we need to study them within the perspective of semiotics. Moreover, comparing these two modes of material communication to verbal (and other non verbal) sign communication gives us a new united view of three kinds of communication, gift giving, exchange, and language, which have usually been seen as separate and independent. Then we must add the construction of the male gender to these areas of communication as a distorting factor, which has been as powerful and as forgotten as a meteor slamming into a planet, influencing individual

²³We can recognize here the exemplar-to-many constructions we found above.

males, the cultures in which they live, and the women who have had to adapt to them.

The Paradigms

As a result of the construction of gender, there are two paradigms with which we interpret the world, one based on unilateral gift giving and the other based on exchange. The gift paradigm is usually invisible and devalued while the exchange paradigm is visible and overvalued. Gift giving, which is transitive, and bestows value on the receiver by implication, is need directed and it creates a syllogism: if a gives to b and b gives to c then a gives to c. By identifying a good or product as satisfying a need, the gift process places the focus on something as directed towards others, and so involves the subject of the action in other-orientation. Thus it also brings in information about others and the world. Its completion is in the use of the gift by others, so it confirms one's own usefulness through the satisfaction of another's need. Gift giving is cooperative rather than competitive. It transmits value to the other by implication, since it is probable that the giver would not satisfy the receiver's need if s/he were not important to h/er in some way. This very transfer of value has the paradoxical consequence of hiding the value of the giver. The attention is focused on the receiver, not on the giver or the giving of the gift. In fact if the giver insists on recognition the transaction may paradoxically appear to be, or actually transform into, an exchange.

Exchange, which may be described as giving in order to receive an equivalent, requires the quantification and measurement of the products that are given and received. Commodity exchange requires an assessment in money, which is determined by the wider context of production for the market in that society. Exchange is ego-oriented, because the motivation of the transaction is the need of the giver, not primarily the need of the receiver. It is adversarial because each party is trying to get the most and give the least. Exchange does not establish human relations beyond mutual equality as exchangers. It promotes indifference to one another's needs be-

yond those, which may be pertinent to the exchange. The equation of value between products or between products and money creates a moment of assessment and mirroring which repeats itself endlessly in countless daily interactions in the society.

Exchange serves as a metaphor or deep magnetic template for many other areas of life and it hides gift relations by mis-explaining them in its own terms. From self-reflecting consciousness to 'military exchanges' the relations of exchange broadcast their patterns throughout society. Exchanges of glances, of ideas, of information, of verbal and nonverbal messages, seem to provide the explanatory key for understanding society. Often, I believe, we interpret gifts as exchange.

Gift giving may seem uninformative with respect to exchange, or unconscious or only semi-conscious because it is not explicitly self reflecting. It may also seem to be just an incomplete exchange.

The problematic place of mothering in many cultures and especially in our own, has to do with the conflictual relation between the gift paradigm and the exchange paradigm. Because mothering is usually identified with women, misogyny can also be seen as an element of the paradigm conflict and as an attack upon gift giving. For example, women are paid less than men for similar work in order to keep them in a *disempowered* gift giving position.

Patriarchal religions and moral codes discredit gift giving by overemphasizing it, sentimentalizing it, making it saintly (and thus beyond the capacity of ordinary people) or imposing it by law. Economists (and co dependence therapists) discredit gift giving by considering it irrelevant or pathological. Instead I believe it is an organizing principle of many aspects of our lives, aspects that we usually take "for granted" or interpret in other, more neutral, 'intransitive' ways.

Our blindness to gift giving makes us keep drawing distinctions in the wrong places. The dividing line should be drawn between the unilateral gift and exchange, not just between barter and exchange for money or barter and so called 'symbolic gift exchanges'. When we talk about gift *exchange*, unilateral gift giving and its connection with mothering become invisible. Instead unilateral gift giving has its own logic and creative process. One proviso: turn taking is different from

exchange because the return gift is not the motive of the original gift initiative. Those who have received from others can give in turn to others or to the original giver without interposing the logic of exchange or obligatory reciprocity. Gift circulations can be created within groups where the gift is passed on or 'given forward' unilaterally without requiring a counterpart. Such gift giving creates social cohesion (Hyde 1979:3-109). Unfortunately most authors who have written about gift giving from Marcel Mauss to the equipe of the journal MAUSS continue to emphasize the obligation of reciprocity as the relation-creating factor of the gift. Thus they remain within the exchange paradigm. Instead the simpler movement, satisfying another's need in an other-oriented way without requiring reciprocity from the receiver, already creates a relation between giver and receiver, and this is at the same time a common or shared relation to the thing given as a gift. Moreover if we understand that the relation varies qualitatively with the kinds of gifts given, we can see that there will be as many kinds of relations as there are kinds of gifts. Giving, receiving and using similar gifts, creates similar relations among people regarding each other and the environment. Unilateral gift giving has more in common with the transmission of messages than does exchange. Messages do not depend on reciprocity to be received and understood, though a reply is often welcome.

From this viewpoint, words can be seen as broad scale and long-term substitute gifts, which are put together in short term, contingent gift sentences, creating shared human relations to the material or cultural gifts they take the place of. One specific area of language, comprised of naming and the "equational statement" (Jakobson 1990) or definition, provides the mechanism by which the word-gifts are given by definers—persons performing that service—to learners. This process is different from the process involved in the *use* of words as gifts in ongoing communication. The definition provides layers of substitution by which a new word-gift is transmitted. It is this aspect of language that is transformed into exchange while gift giving remains both at the material and at the linguistic level as the active principle of communication, understood as the creation of communitary subjects and the transmission of values,

messages and information. Exchange, which is a constrained double gift, is thus distorted communication. It creates distorted communitary subjects and transmits only material exchange value. Exchange does not transitively transmit value, messages and information to people. That is not to say that we cannot buy and sell messages and information, but that if they are bought and sold, they are not transmitted basically as gifts, as they are in linguistic and other sign communication. In fact, the level of linguistic gift giving, communication is very much more basic than exchange.²⁴ We can sell a book (or a few sentences) at one level, which at a more basic level continues to convey information by using the logic of the gift.²⁵

It is my hypothesis that language is a transposition of unilateral gift giving onto the verbal plane, while exchange, especially the exchange of commodities for money is a derivative, a kind of second incarnation, of the definition and naming. The logical progression is: first, material nurturing and gift giving, then verbal gift giving, then the transposition of the part of language that is the definition process, back onto the material plane in the evaluation and exchange of commodities for money. The unilateral gift process is a common thread, which underlies the different, more complex processes woven from it. Even the doubling-back of the gift in exchange derives its relation-making-and-breaking capacity from the gift and the variations it imposes upon gift giving. The simpler process can be used to explain

²⁴ I believe the main way we create human relations is through gift giving and receiving. This basic level can be elaborated upon in many ways. There are many variations, which specify human relations, while maintaining the continuity with mothering. Thus for example though traditions of reciprocity in indigenous cultures may look like exchange to European eyes, it is the basic relation-creating capacity of gift giving and the duty of emulation of the mother-gift-giver that creates the bonds. Language continues to weave and be woven by its mediation of human relations at the same time, and we may wonder whether the human groups who have not renounced the model of the mother may not be emulating linguistic processes as well.

²⁵ Advertising, which is financed by the purchase of the very products it promotes, and thus by its success in manipulating the buyers, also functions on the basic need satisfying free gift character of the words and other signs it uses.

the more complex one (and vice versa), if we can detach ourselves from the altered perspective and values of the more complex one and look through it or around it to see the unilateral gift thread.

Let us look not only at what happens in gift giving in mothering but also in unilateral giving among adults. The process is similar though adults have many more levels of needs than children: complex psychological, social, political, economic, spiritual, artistic needs etc. Adults' needs are often linguistically mediated while young children's—at least from their point of view—are not. The adult giver has to recognize the need of the other and devise or procure something that will satisfy the need, giving something to the other in a way in which she can receive it. The receiver is not passive but must creatively use what has been given to her. For the giver the other exists as someone who can receive and be benefited by the gift or service she has given. She knows the other person is really 'out there' because she has satisfied her need appropriately. For the receiver, someone outside her self has satisfied her need with something appropriate to it. In a successful gift transaction a bond is established of mutual inclusion regarding the gift, the self and the other.²⁶ The giver transfers value to the receiver by implication.

The receiver's needs are educated by their satisfaction and they diversify accordingly. A child who has been nurtured with milk begins to need solid food. When s/he gets older and begins to walk s/he needs both independence and protection, and the mother has to satisfy those needs as well. Sometimes, as in the need for developing independence, the child needs for the mother not to intervene. The mother's gift is then to refrain from giving.

²⁶ It is interesting that Chomsky's *Cartesian Linguistics* begins with the question of whether other people exist. The question is resolved by Chomsky through the idea of linguistic creativity. Such creativity is an abstraction from the need-satisfying activity of gift giving. The listener's (receiver's) needs are not considered, rather the speakers' need for self-expression is the salient factor. This ego orientation fits with the logic of exchange. It is not the ability to produce a lot that is the proof of the existence of others but the use of that production to satisfy their needs and vice versa, of their production to satisfy our own. In many ways we are 'made' by receiving the gifts of others, which proves they exist, and by giving gifts to them, a second proof.

Among adults as well there are many times when it is more important to be independent than to receive a gift, and the would-be giver can give the greater gift by not giving, respecting—and thus satisfying—the other's need for independence. Givers also acquire a specificity as givers of particular kinds of gifts. A giver's interactions with others make h/er who s/he is. It is not that women are better at relationships than men as the truism goes, but that because they are so often required to do the social practice of gift giving, they have more concrete experience of using its logic, which does indeed create relations.

The logic of gift giving is other oriented, inclusive and transitive. It creates bonds with the other directly—not by imposing a debt or pay back, but by satisfying needs. Each person is at least momentarily oriented towards the other and towards the need-satisfying good. Each can potentially recognize the other-directed existence of the other for the moment. The relation between the two (or more) is mutually inclusive and results in a common construction of the world as shared. This shared relation contrasts with the mutually exclusive relation of private property, which is mediated by exchange for money.

We can distinguish three kinds of value: Exchange value is value by definition—it locates the product on the market with respect to all the other products it is not, according to its assessment in money with respect to the assessment of all other products. Gift value is the value of the other implied by giving to satisfy her or his need. Use value is the utility value of the product with the exchange value removed, after the gift value has already been removed by exchange. The motivation of self-interest of the exchangers cancels the value that would have been given to the other by implication, because in exchange the implication is that the needs of the 'giver' are more important than those of the 'receiver'. After the exchange is complete, the product, which is no longer seen as an exchange value because it is no longer on the market, is seen as a use value and may be put in new gift processes, but the continuity with the source of its production is broken. Recently 'First World' social change activists have begun to publicize sweat-shop conditions in 'Third World' countries, allowing 'First World' consumers to see the source of some

of the goods they buy. NIKE tennis shoes are a good example, but there are many others. The gifts of activism have revealed many of the leveraged unilateral gifts that are being given by poor workers to rich corporations.

Withholding recognition from the original source of the good derives somewhat automatically from the logic of exchange, and a similar thing has happened with mothering. Value is denied to gift giving and to mothering in order to focus value on the market and the values of masculinity. It is a gift of feminist activism to focus attention on gift giving and the mother while it is a ploy of patriarchy and exchange to deny the source—in favor of the so called ‘freedoms’ of exchange. Gift giving is a practice that is performed according to a fundamental logic, which is the logic of communication. It is not a pre existing essential behavior though its practice produces value and values, which are in opposition to the value(s) that are produced by and necessary for exchange. (For more on this issue, see the chapter on essentialism here below).

Market exchange itself pushes gift giving out of the focus, making it seem irrelevant, though gift giving is sometimes re introduced as an adjunct to exchange as in sales and gimmicks. Even the unrecognized free labor of shopping is a gift to the market system. The paradigm and practice of exchange become parasitic upon the paradigm and practice of the gift. The powerful force the weak to give to them, then blame their victims for their weakness.

The many exploitative variations on the theme of gift giving have discredited it in practice. Yet gift giving actually threatens the paradigm of exchange by making it unnecessary. There would be no need to exchange if needs were being satisfied in other ways in an economy of abundance. Exchange, and the market economy built upon it, require scarcity while gift giving requires abundance if it is not to become self-sacrificial. If abundance accrues, exchange is no longer necessary for the satisfaction of needs. When the supply is too great, prices go down and products are destroyed in order to keep them from being given away. Excess is a problem for a society based on the exchange paradigm—not for a society based on the gift paradigm. Abundance makes a society based on the gift paradigm not only

possible but delightful, not for the few but for everyone. Arms production and other kinds of waste and luxury spending allow the exchange paradigm and the hierarchies built upon it, to achieve two goals: to funnel wealth to the few and to create a context of scarcity in which the gift paradigm is almost impossible to put into practice.

A narrow foregrounding focus occurs with exchange and consequently many of us do not recognize what is happening in the bigger picture. The gifts that are given by the South to the North or by the poor to the rich are seen as a 'deserved' return on investment. The free gift labor that is done in the home by women is still read as women's non economic 'duty'. The 60% of agricultural work that is done by women world-wide is invisible, at least to Euro-Americans, because so much of it is unmonetized.

These factors and many others have impaired our view of gift giving in practical life but they have also kept us from looking at it as a basis of language and of other sign systems. The neutrality proposed by the relation of equal exchange hides the privileged position and exploitative function of exchange and discredits the gift giving that is actually going on. From the cashier's smile to the worker's extra hours, from the housewife's ironed shirt to third world farmers' diminished access to land, innumerable gifts are continually being given to the system, which is based on exchange. The market seems to be the answer to our problems not their cause. Our narrow focus keeps us looking at it with admiration, considering it an abstract construction of equal relations and the source of all our good(s). We look at language and other sign systems as ruled by similarly abstract principles²⁷ to which gift processes are irrelevant. By restoring gift giving to language we can restore language to mothering and mothering to our idea of the human norm. In fact if language is based on gift giving, even those people who have renounced the nurturing maternal identity are still practicing nurturing at the linguistic level.

²⁷ The body is included here not as a giver and receiver of gifts but as the hard wiring of the brain which is the substratum of the abstract principles. The 'rules' of syntax are more abstract than linguistic gift relations while the 'underlying' brain functions are more concrete than material gift giving.

The physiological difference of males from females has been interpreted by most societies in a binary way, aided by the linguistic opposition between 'male' and 'female', to imply that males must have an identity different from their mothers, a non nurturing identity. If in contrast to this social (mis)construction, we can restore unilateral gift giving to our interpretation of a variety of human activities, we can consider all humans as nurturing beings. Unfortunately nurturing or gift giving has been deleted from the construction of the male identity and from our interpretation of the world as well, with the consequence that we interpret the world as being constructed according to a male norm.

Similarly the discipline of neo classical economics has excluded nurturing from its purview: The satisfaction of needs is considered pertinent only if it is understood as driven by 'effective demand'. Yet satisfying all needs is a necessary activity for a society to continue as such and large amounts of free labor continue to be performed everywhere, housework being an important example. Such free labor is economic in the wide sense, and it is this wide sense that could be the basis for a woman-led alternative economic mode of distribution (and production for that distribution), which could provide for the needs of all.

The gift paradigm, which values cooperation, mortally threatens the exchange paradigm by making it unnecessary. Consequently, the exchange paradigm competes with the gift paradigm... and wins. One of the ways it wins is by hiding the gift giving that is actually happening, while it is actually taking from it, another is by relegating gift giving to an inferior status and making monetized exchange 'superior'. Psychologically, this ploy makes gift givers feel like failures and exchangers feel like successes. The definition of gift giving as 'non economic' skews the discourse of economics towards the viewpoint of 'economic man' and justifies the values of self-interest and economic domination as the functional motivation of a 'free' market society.

In a way which is similar to the construction of the male identity in opposition to the nurturing mother, what *homo economicus* calls 'economic' is constructed in opposition to what he calls non-economic, to gift giving. Actually 'economics' originally meant 'care of the home'

but that care has become marked as opposed to the market, which is unmarked. (The word ‘market’ gives us instructions about what to do: we should make market exchange much less important than gift giving—i.e., we should ‘mark it’.)²⁸

Considering gift giving as a mode of distribution which is already being practiced in the home and could be extended to the rest of society, allows us to look at it as an economic structure-in-formation, which would have its corresponding superstructure-in-formation in women’s caring values. Thus what we see as the female gender and ‘women’s values’ do not depend upon some feminine ‘essence’ but are the result of a necessary economic practice of care. The mistaken social interpretation of physiological sexual differences has caused males to be socialized away from that economic way and the market has been created through various transmutations which are made in the image of the process of the artificial construction of (the male and consequently also of the female) gender

That process at this time expresses itself as globalizing Patriarchal Capitalism. The exchange mode of distribution is embedded in the giftgiving mode and vice versa, but even more harmfully, the exchange mode of distribution and production is asymmetrically parasitic upon the gift mode, which gives to it.

The “manhood script” again

The imposition of the mistaken social interpretation of physiological sexual differences makes the male identity oppositional and artificial almost from the beginning. In fact boys are removed from the category of their mothers by the gender term ‘male’ in opposition to ‘female’, though until they understand language and categorization they have usually been intimately identified with the mother because she is the person who is nurturing them. The father or other significant male is proposed as the new model or exemplar upon which they should base their gender identity.

²⁸ See the discussion of marked and unmarked terms in *For-Giving* and in Jakobson(1990).

Thus boys have to switch exemplars for their identities, from mother to father, at a time when they are still dependant on the mother's care. Then *being* the exemplar not only of 'male' but also of 'human' becomes the goal of the male identity while the female identity seems to be that of those who cannot compete to become the human exemplar.

The construction of a female identity is less artificial in the beginning because the model of nurturing is immediately at hand in the person of the mother. However, later, women find they are almost not members of the category 'human' because they are not male. The (male) human norm appears to be non-nurturing and females differ from that because they are socialized to nurture. They seem to be a secondary kind of human being. Replacing the female norm by the male, has the effect of unmarking what was before a marked category. This unmarking of a marked (male) category has also had the effect of hiding and discrediting nurturing as *a* human or, as we have been saying, perhaps *the* human process. Similarly, as we just saw, the economic market is unmarked while gift giving appears marked as non economic.

Males are placed in a superior category because of their physiological difference from their mothers, thus any desire they have to return to that category (or to the state of their understanding before they recognize that they are required to be different from their mothers) is stymied by the seeming requirement of losing the physiological difference: that is, fear of castration. At the same time they desire to return to the gift giving way so...they desire what they fear and fear what they desire. The opposition to the nurturing or unilateral gift giving mode is thus not just philosophical, sociological and economic but it is psychologically invested and distressed. Of course, if gender is indeed constructed through socialization, physiological changes such as castration would not create a return to the nurturing category anyway. The solution to the problem lies not in castration (as it may appear to children, and deeply buried in the unconscious, to adults) but in socialization. If we socialize both males and females towards gift giving, by emulating the model of the mother, we can create a society of *homo donans* . Of course we must

also change the many social institutions that are based upon the process of becoming male, which I call ‘mascultation’.

As mentioned above, David Gilmore (1990) describes the male identity, as created according to a ‘manhood script’ and thus as being a performance in a way that being a woman is not. The girl child is typically encouraged to continue nurturing like her mother while the boy is encouraged to perform according to a ‘script’. Other recent books, *Real Boys* by William Pollack and *Boys will be Boys* by Miriam Miedzian show the difficulties of adolescent boys trying to adapt and to perform according to a gender identity script constructed around values of ‘manhood’. These values: independence, competitiveness, aggression, risk taking, and rationality, are very similar to the values of capitalism and while they undoubtedly have some positive aspects and many men (and women) and some institutions succeed in tempering them with kindness or do not embrace them, they often degenerate into isolation, fighting, aggression, carelessness, egotism and authoritarianism.²⁹

The ‘manhood script’ together with the exchange economy cancel and neutralize gifts, by (mis) interpreting behavior as merely based on stimulus and response, cause and effect, transmission of energy and of information etc. or even just egotistical motivations which do not transfer value or cause human bonds of mutual inclusion. This neutrality however can degenerate into violence. ‘Hitting’ takes the place of giving as one person tries to ‘make an impression’ on another, or control the other by force. This transposed ‘gift’ might also be considered as a form of material communication, creating a hierarchical community.

Needs, expressed and unexpressed

We have created a manipulative society in which every action anticipates and is contingent upon the reaction towards us that it

²⁹ Considering these capitalist values is interesting in that boys have a hard time adapting to them. That is Patriarchal Capitalism is harmful not only to girls but to boys as well, even privileged white boys.

will cause, rather than a society in which we can simply receive from others and the universe and give to them as well in a communitary circulation of gifts. Exchange has taken the place of turn taking. (It has taken a turn and has never given it up). The best we can do seems to be to take responsibility for some of the negative consequences of these manipulations. Yet the main reason why gift giving seems dysfunctional is that the context around it has been made so hostile to it. Scarcity has been created where abundance should be. The exchange paradigm with its competitive and hierarchical manhood values, has won the competition and is the model upon which the context is interpreted (and based), while gift giving in its non competitive and nurturing way, has given way and seems to have lost the competition. Exchange does not take responsibility for the scarcity it creates or for its battle with gift giving but rather conceals these issues, considering the scarcity 'natural' and gift giving 'instinctual' while making survival of the fittest the principle of evolution and of economics.

In patriarchy not only do we diminish the givers of gifts, but we also diminish the receivers, believing that receiving is passive and inferior. (Similarly women have been considered passive receivers for centuries though they have been active both as givers and receivers.) We all need to revive the attitudes we had as mothered children and turn our creative receptivity towards the world to which we are (or were) perfectly adapted, to understand it in terms of gift giving—and receiving.

No matter how many messages we may be giving and receiving in the sea of infinite semiosis there is a level of perception and interpretation of the world at which *things* are given and received—a level having to do with intentionally nurturing one another, with material communication. At this level we must be able to distinguish between signs and things. We must plant and harvest, cook food and feed children, supplying them and adults with the material goods without which their bodies and therefore also their minds would not exist. We must be able to distinguish between communicative needs and material needs, between word gifts and material gifts, for survival purposes. This ability gives us an evolutionary advantage. The

alternative is simply non adaptive. Value is transmitted first at this level of life—the gift value of things for people who are giving and receiving, nurturing each other with them.

I believe it must be at this level that, as cultures of mothered children, we learn the gift patterns that are transferred into language. However, because in Patriarchy and Capitalism, boys are required to give up their nurturing identities, and the economic mode in which everyone lives is based on exchange, these gift patterns have been interpreted as cause and effect, and as far as language is concerned they are regarded as a genetic ‘inheritance’ (a gift word) or as *sui generis* abstract patterns of signs, usually originating directly in the brain.

Needs have been looked at narrowly and unkindly because they are part of the gift transaction and because of the imposition of the market category of ‘effective demand’ as we said above. Similarly communicative needs that are unexpressed seem not to exist because explicit questions draw to themselves all of the attention regarding need-satisfaction. Instead I believe communication actually functions by guessing and satisfying the *unexpressed* communicative needs of the other. That is, when we speak, we satisfy the need of the other for a relation to something, which we have recognized, but which we guess that s/he for the moment has not. We do this by giving h/er the words, which we think she knows and which are the social gift means for creating such relations, which s/he could also use if s/he were the speaker. Questions actually put the listener in relation to what the speaker says s/he doesn’t know. Answers to questions are formed by satisfying both the expressed and unexpressed communicative needs of the questioner. To the question “Where is my hat?” the answerer can respond “Your hat is in the closet in the other room,” putting the questioner in relation to the closet, satisfying h/er communicative need in that regard with the word ‘closet’, and guessing that s/he needs to know which closet is the one in question. An extended and revisited idea of needs is a corollary of the gift paradigm. It could hardly be otherwise, if gifts are seen as the satisfaction of needs at all levels and not simply an impulse of the giver, which does not even require a receiver.

Economic needs have usually been seen as individualistic, the needs of *homo economicus*, whose internal marginal priority list is manipulated by advertising and the media to the advantage of the corporations. Instead needs should be honored as necessary for the well being of humans in their development and for the completion of the gift transaction. Needs are educated by their satisfaction and each of us arrives at the specificity of h/er experience as the result of all the ways h/er needs have been satisfied, together with the ways s/he has satisfied the needs of others. It is the manhood script that denies the emotions that are necessary for identifying and responding to needs, and therefore denies the needs themselves along with the process of giving to satisfy them. Moreover the (artificially constructed) need for status comes from a society in which male dominance is replayed in many different areas. By owning a superior consumer object, for example, a person succeeds in being put into a superior category, that is, he or she is made 'male' again and again—and then seems to deserve even more nurturing by others. The greed that motivates our society is largely based on this kind of constructed desire which is all the stronger because the relations which would have been constructed through gift giving are absent or distorted. The values of the manhood script have been projected into Capitalism, and the powerful can now vie for supremacy, not only physically, psychologically and politically but also economically. Women can embrace these transposed manhood values as well as men since they are no longer specifically identified with biological gender. Meanwhile the condition of desperate need for life-sustaining goods in which billions of people now find themselves is a direct result of an economy based on the (patriarchal) hegemony of the exchange paradigm.

The values of dominance are dominant. The paradigm of exchange exchanges itself for all the others and thus achieves its hegemony carrying to the top a few of the individuals who embrace it. Those individuals are thus rewarded for their beliefs and expertise in practicing the ego-oriented logic while the many who have to practice the other oriented gift logic whether they want to or not, are penalized. The individuals who succeed in Capitalism then become the exemplars of the human, especially for those who embrace the

exchange paradigm and hope to succeed in the market but often also for the gift givers who appear to be 'failed' exchangers, even in their own estimation. The paradigm of exchange also infiltrates gift giving in businesses of charity and aid, which have huge overheads and little output, thus further discrediting gift giving and masking its everyday creative character.

Co-muni-cation

I call adults' nurturing behavior 'gift giving' in order to connect it with gift economies of indigenous peoples (where mother-centered societies were/are common) as well as with the celebratory gift giving that is still done individually probably everywhere.³⁰ The unilateral gift giving, which adults do for children actually forms the bodies and life experience of the children and to some extent also of the adults who are doing the nurturing. The word 'co-muni-cation' is a clue that language gives us, telling us that giving gifts together is what forms the bodies and minds of the co-muni-ty. Displacing the area of communication beyond signs allows a view of signs that avoids some philosophical problems, which can be attributed to the construction of the male gender and the ideology of exchange. In fact, as we have been saying, human signs and sign-interpretation are not primary and *sui generis* but are infused with the logic of gift giving and receiving. Reconnecting with the gift-giving-and-receiving way has advantages both on a theoretical and on a practical plane.

A description of signs as gifts of gifts allows us to locate them in (allocate them to, give them to) the same context as their referents (the same background with regard to which their referents have been foregrounded), since gift giving is something that maintains its logical form on a variety of levels. Whether something is a sign depends upon the ability of the receiver to receive it and its referent as gifts. Thus the odor of the flower is a sign of nectar to the bee, the gift of a

³⁰ There are other examples of gift giving, for example internet open source soft ware production is often seen as a gift economy. The exchange of 'recognition' for software gifts is an extension of the patriarchal exchange economy ideology over this new area of giving however.

gift, but it is not a sign of nectar to the human who cannot eat or receive the nectar. (Though we can watch the bee doing it, and receive the gift of its receiving). Spots are a sign of measles, which are not themselves a gift—but seeing them gives us the gift of warning us to stay away, if we can receive it, i.e., interpret it as such. Among humans, signs are usually used to create, alter, or maintain communitary relations of some kind. Thus they have a gift character regarding human relations even when their referents are not given or are not seen as positive.

The bonds that are created by gift giving and receiving become particularly important for us, because they aid us in forming our subjectivities as human individuals and as members of groups. Consequently a need arises for establishing those relations, which can be called a communicative need. We use verbal and non verbal signs to satisfy one another's communicative needs. We also use material gifts to establish those bonds in non sign communicatio.³¹ Unfortunately the scarcity of material goods, which is being created in order to maintain exchange as the dominant economic mode, alters the area of non-sign co-muni-cation making it difficult to recognize and understand as such. This is not the case for the gifts of language. Verbal and nonverbal signs are almost infinitely produceable and therefore almost infinitely abundant. If we can say that words and syntax are the means of production of sentences, (Rossi-Landi:1969) language can be seen as an ideal gift economy where the means of production are shared, and we satisfy one another's communicative needs, in abundance. There are of course specialis-tic languages, advertising, copyrights, and many other ways of using language according to the logic of the exchange economy. At an abstract level, however, gift giving continues to provide the logical structure, which creates mutually inclusive relations. In fact whenever mutual inclusion is evident and we need to explain it we can look for the presence of the gift logic.

³¹ Its importance derives from its materiality even if in order to interpret this kind of communication we have to be able to paradoxically recognize the sign of the non sign.

Language functions as a sort of ideal gift economy. The effect of this is that each of us can give to the others what they could potentially also make for themselves or for others. The speaker/giver recognizes before the hearer/receiver does that the hearer has a need for the means to a relation regarding something in the world. The speaker satisfies the need for a means to that relation by giving her a word-product regarding it. The hearer is thus related to that word-gift, and the speaker is related to it as well because indeed, she has just given it to her. Since the word-gift is the common substitute gift for a kind of thing in a culture, the word-gift brings forward this common relation. That is, there is a common relation between the interlocutors, which is specified by the relation of the word gift to a kind of thing as a gift for many other speakers and listeners in a society. In fact that word has been given to us by others, constructing a relation to them, implying our own value as recipients of the cultural legacy of words and things while as we give our word-gifts to others, we imply their value as well. The thread of unilateral gift giving is woven into a linguistic tapestry of infinite variations because verbal gifts can be given and combined in many ways, giving a great variety of tones, tempos, and intensities to the human relations mediated by them.

There are many reasons why material gifts are not given in communication much or most of the time. They may be too large or too small, too faraway or too complex. The only thing that we know about all of them is that they are valuable to human beings in some way, and that communicative needs arise regarding them. There are also many cultural elements that arise as gifts, from unicorns to justice, which cannot be physically handed over but can be substituted by word-gifts. Communicative needs can arise with regard to them and we can communicate about them. (We have common access to their cultural value—though not to their use value). In market exchange material gifts are not (usually) given, because indeed they are private property. A communicative need arises regarding them as private property. (We have to include each other regarding them if we are to exchange them to our mutual satisfaction). That material communicative need is satisfied by a specified quantity of money—also a substitute gift, now functioning within

the realm of the doubled or contradicted gift, which is exchange.

Access to another's material good is obtainable only through the substitution of the equivalent amount of money for it, because it is the giving or transfer of money that alters the relation of ownership of the two persons involved. ((This process maintains the common relation of mutual exclusion by allowing the mutual exclusion and substitution of the money and the commodity together with a relation of mutual inclusion regarding their quantitative value) The money actually physically takes the place of the commodity. Similarly the word (or sign) gives *common* access to something it substitutes, by altering the human relations regarding it from mutual disengagement and indifference to specific relations of attention and mutual inclusion (which also vary qualitatively according to the type of gifts involved). The word is the substitute gift on the plane of verbal communication, while what is substituted may be present or not, existent or not. One of the many reasons why a particular extra linguistic gift is not being used at some particular moment to create material non sign communication may just be that we are talking or writing about it. That is, talking (or writing) about things has created its own realm of verbal mediation of human relations, which carries on independently of the presence or absence or even the existence of the gifts on the extra linguistic plane that are being talked about.

By satisfying the needs of others and receiving the satisfaction of our own needs both verbally and materially, we develop our own and each others' subjectivities creatively in a wide variety of ways. On the other hand, subjectivities based on the market lack the variety and interconnectedness that is made possible through gift giving. Placing the market between us cancels our other-orientation and the transitivity or implication of value that we would otherwise give to each other. In our quantitatively 'equal' exchange, each of us gives value through the other to her or himself. Categorization of goods according to a monetary exemplar (leaving out gift giving) pervades our lives and establishes a pattern that is repeated in the over-emphasis on categorization and on exemplars in other areas. Moreover assessing the value of abstract labor in terms of a money-

exemplar imposes a process by which the value of other aspects of human beings is wrongly assessed.

The relation of the material or cultural gift and the word-gift to others-in-general can be seen in another area by looking at the way we give a price or an exchange value to commodities in relation to all the other commodities on the market, and most specifically in relation to products of the same kind, in a particular branch of production. The totality of each branch of production and of all production for the market is related to all the others-in-general, who constitute effective demand in that they have a quantity of money they can spend to buy commodities with which to satisfy their needs. The quantity of money embodying the specific price is used as the exchange value of the commodity in any particular exchange. Prices are like a quantitative *langue* allowing the determination of the value of one commodity with regard to all the commodities on the market. (Alternatively words are qualitative 'prices', which, with the aid of syntax, allow the determination of any cultural item in the society with regard to all the others.) The idea that numbers are mutually exclusive is not as obvious as the idea that qualitatively different words are mutually exclusive, however, numbers are, or are expressed by, qualitatively different (mutually exclusive) words in a quantitative sequence. Perhaps we could say they express the gift of the human capacity to quantify (which is anyway necessary in the identification of one and many, singular and plural.)

The verbal commons

We have been taking the market as a point of comparison for language, considering it as alienated non-sign communication where money functions as an incarnated word-gift-exemplar, bridging the relation of mutual exclusion of the owners of private property. The shadows cast by the market put into relief some aspects of linguistic communication we may not have seen so clearly before. Among these are the relations of mutual inclusion which language creates among us regarding the immense variety of gifts of perception, of emotions, of sensations, of objects and ideas, all the internal and

external, natural and cultural items that make up our environment. Shedding light on these relations can be used in turn to illuminate aspects of the market, which have not been altogether visible.

Human relations of inclusion are formed not just in regard to words and sentences but in regard to extra linguistic shared 'reality': the perceptual and material gifts, which are held in common as such. In this regard a gift-based theory of language can enhance our understanding of the world as 'commons', by showing how it is not only collectively used but collectively created as shared reality. Our perceptions and experience can always be mediated through language, so our reality has a common gift character for us in so far as we can speak about it (form inclusive human relations regarding it), even when we do not share any actual property.

Words function as substitute gifts for forming human relations-in-common to the world. These relations construct and imply a world as a shared ground or 'territory', from which goods flow to satisfy our material and perceptual needs.³² These linguistically mediated, human relations are thus the opposite of the relations of private property mediated by money. Exchangers use money to alter their relations to their products and to each other much as speakers use words to alter their relations to their physical and social environment and to each other. However, money mediates among the owners of mutually exclusive private property, providing inclusiveness regarding only the one area of abstract value, while words mediate among communicators altering their relations to all the aspects of the world, moving them away from mutual indifference and towards mutual inclusion and a shared focus. Language provides us with the world as a perceptual and relational commons at one level and is itself a commons at another level in that the means of production of linguistic gifts are shared. Indeed both language, and the world as mediated by it, provide need-satisfying abundance in a way that is similar to that of the creative and abundant mother. These maternal aspects are rendered invisible to our thinking by the logic of the exchange paradigm and because private property and the market

³² As sensory deprivation experiments show, we do actually need to perceive.

negate and commodify the commons at the level of material reality. At the level of language, words and sentences in the form of product names, trademarks and advertising slogans are enclosed as corporate property by means of copyrights and patents and used for exchange and manipulation. Lies are ego-oriented like exchange, while the truth is useful to the other like a gift. Lies and propaganda are important tools of Patriarchal Capitalism and its governments. They help to feed those who propagate them.

On the other hand, even the topics that we construct, upon which we draw, and to which we contribute as we converse, are momentary commons. Our fleeting as well as our repeated and constant common topics form a common ground for the creation of our subjectivities. What we say, what we give verbally, regarding this ground identifies us as the kinds of givers we are, that is, who we are, to others who receive from us and give again. We could consider our physical topoi, common grounds, homes and homelands, in a similar light. Their seizure and enclosure have deprived the community of its ability to access material gifts, and thus to communicate materially using them however. The connection between common topics and common topoi, linguistic gift constructions and shared reality has therefore been lost.

The relation between the earth and humans is like a relation in common with a great giftgiving mother, a gift source shared by a family, a group, a people. When the land of a people is taken over by foreign powers and free, collectively or tribally owned land is privatized, a polarity is set up in which the gift aspect is made secondary to the aspect of control and domination. Sometimes a people finds that its whole basis of livelihood is being taken away, and they therefore also try to assert control and fight to defend it. In fact a gift basis is necessary for prosperity, which the market itself cannot provide. Moreover, gift giving, and the long term presence of gift sources are the basis of love and identity, beyond the exchange identity, transcending it. The handing down of the land from generation to generation creates a diachronic community, which is interrupted by war, occupation, colonialism. Palestine is now in that situation while Israel is trying to assert ownership and its own common ground. Indig-

enous people have been dispossessed again and again by Patriarchal Capitalist colonial powers because their gift-based ways were vulnerable to groups that had the collective masculated purpose of domination, seizure and accumulation of what had been common land.

The land base of a culture is like the mother, a source of gifts and identity, which is necessary to make any of our human gifts bear fruit, a repository for our culture, and the place of memory of the ancestors. But this land base is also similar to our commonality as (gift giving, mothered) humans that we construct through communication, which is enhanced by our having the same common ground, as a content of our communication: similar topics, topoi and territory as well as a common language. Perhaps under the view of the exchange economy the land is just a commodity to buy or sell, or to conquer or defend. However as our physical environment, it is really what much of our consciousness regards, and thus is the basis of our character, and the source of a gift economy that could be.

Now, so many live in the cities, in an unfree territory and artificial perceptual commons, where gifts are all human made, and enclosed as private, where there is an estranged commonality made through exchange, through the lack of communication, and according to the adversarial values of separation, competition, power over. Nevertheless there is often a sense of a shared gift among the population even though concrete (created by abstract labor) does not allow any free gifts to grow from the land.

The topics that are constructed linguistically function as common ground to which speakers can contribute in turn and from which they can gather information together, as they construct their relations as (linguistically) giving and receiving subjects. A common focus allows the sharing of something as a gift source. The gift syllogism is appropriate here because if B has received perceptions from A and tells C about it, C also receives from A. That is, if B goes on a trip to country A and tells C about it, C has received some perceptions from that source, country A. S/he shares that common ground as a topic even if s/he hasn't been there.

The common ground of the topic is being undermined, commodified and privatized by advertising. The body especially is

the place of shared and frustrated desires, which are brought into focus in order to sell commodities. The presentation of a sexually engaging woman's body on television uses the common focus to stimulate the acquisition of products or pornographic arousal. Manipulation of political topics covered in the media, narrowing the field of information, keeps the public from making many aspects of the government's behavior their true common ground. For example the recent 'embedding' of US journalists with the troops in Iraq effectively made their troops' actions the topic of their news reports, not the effects of those actions on the population. Both advertising and propaganda enclose and commodify the common ground of information, restricting the givers who have access to contribute to it, narrowing the focus and using the resulting artificial construction to feed the public with lies, to sell commodities or a war or a political program. They function according to the logic of the lie and exchange, in that they contribute to a common ground in order to satisfy the needs of the 'givers' not of the receivers.

Where do words and money come from?

I believe that the answer to this question is that when any aspect of the world becomes important enough (enough of a gift) for people to create inclusive relations regarding it, it becomes a topic and a communicative need arises which can at first be satisfied by sentences (using words to which aspects of the topic have been previously related). Sometimes the communicative need arises often enough that it develops into a shared (common) need for a word-gift, for a specific mediator with which to construct human relations regarding that kind of thing.³³ Word-gifts are themselves combined in sentences by using syntax, which is also constructed according to the logic of gift giving as we said above.

Looking back at the market from this point of view, the aspect of the world that we are mutually excluding each other regarding

³³ There is more on this topic in the chapter below, Communication and exchange

property, is important enough for us to develop a shared communicative need and a material 'word' (money) which we give each other to fill that need. We do not have a common topic or topos except for the mutual exclusion itself so the material word is unique and holophrastic. We are able to bridge (and re establish) our mutual exclusion by a repeated mutual substitution of the money-word for commodities. In the market this substitution is contingent upon quantitative equivalence. The quality of which the items exchanged are quantities is, according to Marx, the value of abstract labor. In this light, abstract labor value is the *gift* of the labor which is *not* for giving—but for exchanging—that is, production 'for others' in a mutually exclusive market-based society where everyone produces primarily for him or herself.

Word-gifts can be substituted for things, events, cultural items, etc. as we have been saying, because there is a shared gift character at the extra linguistic and at the linguistic level. Apart from some cases of onomatopoeia, words and their referents do not 'sound like' or 'look like' each other, that is, they are not perceptual equivalents. Nor is money physically like commodities. I believe that in spite of what one might expect, the shared gift character still holds in the realm of money. Money is equal to commodities on the basis of the gift (social utility) of not-gifts. In a way language does already mediate not-gifts by the fact that words and sentences have their own kind of materiality and cannot be produced and consumed to directly enhance biological processes. That is they are not material gifts but gifts at another level, a level, which creates mutual inclusion, as the communicators give them to one another and 'consume' them in common.

In contrast to the gifts of language, the substitution of a commodity by a quantity of money creates a relation of mutual inclusion only with regard to the relation of mutual exclusion. The money-word-gift, which functions by being physically given by one person to another, expresses the one thing all the products on the market have in common—exchange value. Actually exchange value as gift value turned back on itself, answers the question 'What is the value of others for others in a society in which each one gives

value only to him or her self?' Any quantity of abstract labor value is a quota part of the total gift value of production for others in the society, which has gone through the filter of exchange, returning to the 'giver' who gives so as not to give. It is the value given to others that returns to the self in another form, in order not to be given, in the form of the commodity, or in the form of money. Indeed exchange value is the value of the commodity not of the person who receives or gives it. Value is not transmitted from one person to another because the interaction is actually intransitive.

The seller gives up the commodity so that (like a language learner) s/he will get its money name.³⁴ Value is given only to the social total of all the labor that has been abstracted from concrete other-oriented gift-giving processes and passed through to the individual commodities. If we look at this process from the point of view of concept formation, we can see that as the common quality of value is being found in commodities in relation to the general equivalent, a polarity is being set up between their aspects of exchange value and use value. This polarization takes place on the background of another invisible or 'unnoticed' polarity, the polarity between relevant exchange value and irrelevant gift value or more broadly, between the market as valued and gift giving as unvalued. Because of the polarity between gift giving and exchange, and the fact that exchange in this moment is in the foreground, unseen gifts are actually given and received beyond the intransitive interaction, and obtaining them motivates the whole process.

Money has the complex job of creating a relation of mutual inclusion for exchangers regarding their mutual exclusion as private property owners. Like a gift or like a word, money functions by being given to others. It satisfies a communicative need, a need to create mutual inclusion, but here the inclusion regards mutual exclusion. The one is re established every time the other occurs, through the assertion of the equality of the value of the commodities and therefore

³⁴ Like one of the subjects in a Vygotskyian experiment, she takes her item to compare it to the exemplar, and takes the exemplar in its place, but s/he doesn't really want something of that category, but something of another category for which the money exemplar also functions as equivalent.

of the exchangers as proprietors and givers (who give not to give), creating a balance between opposing relations on two planes, between humans and between commodities.

In commodity exchange, there is only one common need and that is the communicative need for the means of communication by which the relation of all can be altered to their own and others' property. That means of communication is money. Money functions as a single but quantitatively divided material exemplar/word. It is a relational tool, the means for altering our relations to each other regarding our property.

Words proper are also relational tools for altering our relations to each other to our common topoi, from relations of mutual indifference (before we speak), to gift-based relations of mutual inclusion. Language is made of a large collection of qualitatively different words with which we mediate, that is, with which we change, our relations to each other in regard to all parts of the world. As money is exchanged for commodities as their substitute gift, it expresses their value regarding each other (in all of the other exchanges that particular one is not). Words too function according to a qualitative differentiation and a 'value' regarding all the other words they are not. They are embedded in a system of qualitative differences (de Saussure 1966) much as prices are embedded in a system of quantitative differences.³⁵

Private property is a mutually exclusive relation in which each person's property is what it is because it is not the property of any of the others. It is as if in the market, the mutually exclusive relation of words to each other in the *langue* has been transposed onto the mutually exclusive ownership of private property (or perhaps we should also say vice versa, that the mutually exclusive relation of private property has been projected into linguistics, into the idea of

³⁵ The value of words is their potential gift value (for others and therefore for oneself.) By giving words to others (speaking) we give value to those others, treating them as human. (Withholding communication, or the 'silent treatment' demonstrate the opposite.) By giving words to each other—creating gift relations in syntax, we give words syntactic value(s). That is, we give them importance in specific ways which becomes part of their value 'for others'.

langue, and exchange has been projected into the relation between signifier and signified (Ponzio 2006 [1973])) Money is the substitute gift, which quantitatively expresses the not-gift (exchange) value for others of each of the exchangers' products in turn, with respect to all the others. (it substitutes for the direct act of substitution of one product for another in barter, functioning like the verb 'to be' in equational statements. (See *For-Giving* Ch. 9.)³⁶

The exchange metaform

In the market there is one communicative need regarding all the life sustaining production of the society taken as mutually exclusive private property. This human relation of mutual exclusion is widespread and totalizing and can be bridged by the one substitute gift in which everything in that relation is expressed and is therefore 'linguistically' shareable, money. Money causes an alteration of a person's relation to h/er private property but only by substituting for the commodity so that a new private property relation can be established. Money is a sort of meta linguistic or meta communicative device that is not allowed to go to the level of language. Actually it is meta economic, meta gift, regarding the contradictory labor value 'gift' but not the actual free gift, while language regards and is made up of free gifts. This meta economic device of money is harnessed to market economics and cannot function as a collective gift, which would say 'share!': this is 'ours together', which is what language does, thereby creating a common ground, a shareable reality. But with private property, reality is not shareable—though we do share that fact. There are innumerable experiences of

³⁶Money seems able to pass from hand to hand infinitely in an endless *renvoi* like the process of infinite semiosis as Charles Sanders Peirce sees it. This capacity of money for circulation may be seen as a vestige of material gift circulation merged with word-gift circulation. Perhaps that is the reason why Peirce's idea of semiosis seems convincing, though it does not explicitly include gift giving as part of the structure of semiosis. Unfortunately because exchange for money has taken the place of gift giving as the social nexus, it also takes the place of gift giving as the metaform for semiotics.

other people's property that we will not have. Though our senses would be ready to receive those gifts, they are hidden behind many insurmountable walls and fences.

We have been reading language like everything else through the eyeglasses of exchange, according to the exchange 'metaform' (Sebeok and Danesi 2000). The reason this reading is convincing is that exchange itself is so similar to the definition of the form ('a' is 'b') and we are used to thinking in that way. Mutual substitution appears to be what constitutes the moving parts of this equation, whether the contents are things *or* words, things *and* words or commodities and money (or money and other money as in making change or foreign currency exchange). The equation apparently changes little when money is added to barter. However with money, the important polarity of the general equivalent is added to one side of the transaction (much as a more general *definiendum* is substituted for a more particular *definiens* in the definition.) Indeed money is a kind of material *definiendum*, the name of the value of commodities. It is constant while they are variable, the one while they are the many, the standard and signifier while they are the signifieds.

Linguists, semioticians and even native speakers who use market exchange as the unconscious 'metaform' for linguistic signs are made to concentrate too much on the definitional and 'correspondence' aspects of language which look like exchange: equality, substitution, and categorization. Not only do they leave aside gift giving as an alternative and more appropriate metaform, but by concentrating on the forms of exchange they validate its deep principles and worldview as real and right.

Exchange does not give value to the other exchanger but uses the satisfaction of h/er need to satisfy the need of the 'giver'. Self-interest cancels the other-interest. The value of the product, not the person, is not only implied but is necessarily made explicit by 'objective' quantification based on the product's relation to all the other products on the market. Gift giving is seen as inferior or as an incomplete exchange, yet as the principle of material and verbal communication, it brings with it all the qualitative variety, which exchange is forced to eliminate in favor of its single relevant quality. That single quality

is exchange value, based on the one relation of mutual inclusion that takes place regarding mutual exclusion. Exchange is the common ground made of no common ground. Money is a 'language' that regards a single relevant useful cultural item—abstract economic value (i.e., the 'gift' of exchange value).

Exchange effectively neutralizes and neuterizes the gift. Masculated males (and females who have embraced the market) can participate in exchange without being accused of nurturing. An immense area of life, the market, is made appropriate to the values, which males need to express and embody as part of their socially imposed gender identity. In fact the values of the manhood script—dominance, lack of emotional identification with the other (lack of empathy), independence (atomism), aggressiveness, growth to a large size etc. are also those which allow a privileged few to become successful in Patriarchal Capitalism.³⁷

Commodities are not gifts. They are the members of a special category of products with a common 'essence' of exchange value, grasped in the moment of naming or definition. They have value as gifts that are not-gifts, circulating among not-givers and not-receivers. Like males, commodities are named as members of a special category. We have filled up our shared reality with them, a reality that is no longer overflowing with immanent gifts but only with the gifts of not-gifts, the not-sharing of which we share.

Thus the market and patriarchy come together on the basis of concept formation and language to determine what is valuable in our society. It is not surprising that they influence us so profoundly, since they unite the way we think with what we think about, how we interact with each other and how we form our individual and social identities. The 'channels' through which the market and patriarchy 'broadcast' their values to us are *derived* from and are therefore *part* of the very way we think and communicate.³⁸

³⁷Perhaps we can add luck to this list. Being a member of the category 'male' can be attributed to luck and so can success in Capitalism. Males, like Capitalists are thus rightly rewarded for the risks they have taken: the risk that they might have been born female, or might lose their 'wherewithal'.

When we talk about Capitalist Patriarchy or Patriarchal Capitalism, we are talking about one system in which the supremacy of the exemplar over the many is acted out at different levels and in different areas. First it is embodied in the relation of the male one to the many, competition to be the one, and force to maintain the one position. These structures are prevalent in the home but also in public life divided from the home. Gifts flow upward in this system. Second, the one-to-many polarity is set up between money and commodities, and this concept relation among things, the market, is used for the purposes of patriarchy: the accumulation of capital is repeatedly reinvested, in order to create ever greater havings, which function within the patriarchal script to mark stages in the race to the top. Ambition and greed, which derive from the masculated attempt to *become* the exemplar, provide capitalism with the motivation it needs to spread and “grow” and capitalism itself becomes the exemplar economic system and the standard for human relations. This is not just a casual merging of two separate systems but a growth of both from the concept formation process. Each is a sort of variation of the other, and they fit together. Two thorny vines that have sprung from the same root and twisted around each other to form one plant, together they make up the same system, capitalist patriarchy-patriarchal capitalism. People in the capitalist system can oppose patriarchy and patriarchal people can oppose capitalism, but until both oppose both together, the changes cannot come.

The gift metaform

There is a distinction that must be made between turn taking, where the giving remains unilateral, and exchange where one gift is made contingent upon an equivalent return. When people take turns they are able to experience and practice the different roles involved

³⁸This influences the way the government monopolizes and manipulates information broadcast through corporate owned media channels, manipulating us to make us want that government, those corporations, that ideology. One more example of the way life imitates the mind.

in unilateral giving and receiving and develop their subjectivities both as givers and as receivers. Material giving and receiving create a kind of material non- or proto- sign communication, which precedes both exchange and conscious human communication by means of signs. Though material giving and receiving begin in earliest childhood, and even in the womb, they continue throughout life when sign communication is already well established. In the light of this idea we can look at the market as distorted gift giving and receiving, where the equation of value and the requirement of an equivalent in return create an altered community of atomistic mutually exclusive individuals who compete for profit rather than giving, receiving and cooperating materially, psychologically and linguistically.

The interaction of exchange forms a very strong magnetic template according to which we interpret our lives, and it clouds our view, making us see everything in its image, including gift giving.³⁹ I believe that many interactions, which should be interpreted along a spectrum of gifts from the most unilateral to the most manipulative and finally doubling back into exchange itself are all called 'exchange' without distinction. Along this spectrum lies the symbolic gift giving that is called 'gift exchange' by anthropologists, who I believe are projecting the market back into interactions that actually had material and linguistic gift giving as their original model or metaform, not economic exchange. Similarly, philosophers and other investigators of language and the mind, project the exchange model even further by abstracting it and extrapolating its aspects of categorization, substitution and identity, using them as their most important interpretative keys.

³⁹ Interestingly the postal metaphor directly recalls the sending of a gift. Packaging, sending, receiving and unpacking a message maintains the unidirectionality of unilateral gift giving, though it is mechanical because of the deletion of nurturing and need. In fact, unilateral gift giving leaps over the distance between self and the other both materially and verbally with its qualitative variety intact, conferring value upon the receiver. The important aspects of why the sender sends the message and what the receiver does with it are left out of the postal metaphor.

It is not distinguishing in order to categorize or generating according to rules but giving free gifts in order to satisfy needs that is the operational part (the dynamic) of the relation-creating communicative interaction. Gift giving creates relations at many different levels. Using the perspective of the gift paradigm we can re vision language in a way that will help us revision society. This revisioning allows us to understand the human being not in a way which justifies or is merely neutral and indifferent to patriarchy, domination, exploitation and war, but in a way which is antithetical to them.

Needs, whether at the material level or at the level of communication, are not static. They change, expand, become more specific and diversify according to the ways they have been satisfied. Each different gift creates a different relation to the means of satisfaction of the need, a relation to the extra linguistic gift, which has been substituted by the verbal gift, and a relation between the giver and receiver or speaker and listener(s). Words have been given as names to kinds of things collectively and over time by groups of language users. Things of a kind have received a name from the group and are related to their name together as its receivers. The name is a sort of 'straw' or virtual gift through which things, seen as the source of perceptions, can pass their gift-quality on to the people who are establishing relations with each other in regard to them through co-muni-cation.

The kinds of relations that words are used to establish are shared relations of community, the opposite of private property. With regard to communication, things *have* properties and names, in an open handed way that allows them to give, to be given to and to be shared by humans. Because anyone can potentially produce an unlimited quantity of word gifts, the kinds of human relations we construct with them do not require, as relations of exchange do, that we lose or give up anything.

Things 'have' a name though it is not their private property.⁴⁰ Because in our exchange-based society we are used to looking at

⁴⁰ As we said above, it is perhaps the relation of word, exemplar and items within a category in relation to the context of mutually exclusive words in the

everything as bound within a mutually exclusive property relation, we misunderstand any relation of ‘having’ which is not based on private property. In Patriarchal Capitalism, private property is the deep metaphor or pattern for ‘having’⁴¹ so the difficulty in understanding the sense of ‘having a name’ or ‘having a property’, comes in part from the fact that both the name and the property (the perceivable characteristic) are basically free. In our investigations of language, consistently with a self-reflecting exchange mentality, our emphasis is usually on ourselves as the ‘transmitters’ or speakers, and not on the receivers’ satisfiable communicative needs. (These are needs, which we are actually satisfying without realizing that we are doing so). The key to understanding the gift aspects of language is to consider the receiver or listener as the one whose needs are being satisfied, not the giver or speaker. If we believe, according to the exchange model, that the speakers are satisfying only their own needs, we blind ourselves the transitive, relation-creating aspects of language.

The names philosophers of give to sentences, such as ‘proposition’ or ‘assertion’ leave aside any sense of the satisfaction of others’ needs. In fact there can be no proposition nor can we assert anything unless we create a linguistic product that will satisfy the communicative needs of the (actual or possible) receiver regarding the aspects of the world that the sentence is being used to propose or assert. It is clear that considering sentences in terms of the needs they and their elements satisfy, would give us a radically different kind of philosophy of language. Proposing and especially asserting are more consonant with the masculated identity because they omit the consideration of the satisfaction of needs, like staircases that

langue that forms the original template for the relation of ownership of private property—actually more like one of Vygotsky’s complexes than the abstract concept. Subsequently that influence could “bleed back” in that the patterns of mutually exclusive ownership of private property vice versa influence the ideas we form of language as made up of a *langue* of mutually exclusive words put into operation in speech or *parole*.

⁴¹ There is a phallic aspect of having as well.

lead nowhere.⁴² Instead sentences are unilateral gift packages made of embedded gifts and gifts to gifts, and they are consonant with the human being as *homo donans*. Moreover our subjectivity as gift givers in part derives from and is confirmed by our first person sentences where “I” is the giver and expresses the agency of the individual who is speaking (giving those words) at the same time that it is in the syntactic position of giver as the subject of the sentence. Moreover, “I” is the subject—the giver—in all my first person sentences, and that is who I am. We identify with our gift giving subjectivity even though we don’t recognize it as such.

⁴² It is typical of the market to privilege new objective knowledge whatsoever because it becomes a pool from which new profit making enterprise can develop. Gift giving is left out of this new knowledge except as a potential source of profit. See below in section on Masculation and Categorization.

PART THREE



Verbal Gift Giving

Tracking gifts and third party relations*

Communicative needs can arise from the verbal or from the non verbal context. The speaker addresses the listener as having a need regarding the context that s/he, the speaker, can satisfy. If s/he says for example 'The girl hit the ball' she is relating the parts of that experience to word-gifts, which satisfy the listener's (socially educated) communicative needs regarding girls, hitting and balls. By creating a package of word gifts in this way she puts the listener into a relation with the context which is now actual rather than potential, and she changes and socializes h/er own relation to the context, since that relation now has an equivalent in the relation of the other.

In looking at language as gift giving we can see not only that a gift relation is established between speakers and listeners with regard to words, sentences, texts and contexts but that the various linguistic elements give to and receive from *each other*. I believe they do this not according to 'rules' as such but according to transposed functional patterns of giving and receiving of material gifts and services, and according to the implications of value that derive from giving and receiving. Not just words or strings of words, but the way they are put together, syntax, is a gift based process.

In order to try to justify this unusual approach to syntax let me digress briefly. In his book *Grooming, Gossip and the Origins of Language*, Robin Dunbar (2001) makes the hypothesis that language developed from pre-hominid mutual grooming as a sort of verbal grooming which could be performed at a distance. I see grooming as the performance of a service, an activity that is part of mothering or

* Portions of the following were presented at the Semiotics Society of America meeting in 2002 in San Antonio, Texas.

nurturing and that is extended into adulthood. That is, grooming is a kind of gift giving.⁴³

According to Dunbar grooming is done to maintain the relationships between individuals within the group.⁴⁴ Group size, which is correlated with brain size is correlated with social complexity because, Dunbar says, “primate social life is characterized by the ability of the animals to recognize relationships between third parties” I recognize “Jim’s relationship with John as well as John’s relationship with me” (p.63) Presumably the pre hominids’ recognition of these relationships would come about through watching who groomed who in their social group (and Dunbar sees this as the basis of gossip.)

In our terms we could understand the tracking of third party relationships as finding out “who gives gifts or services to whom.” It is a relatively short leap then to ask also “what gives gifts to what?” In a society where gifts are passed on from one person to another and then to another, it would be commonplace to think that someone (or something) had a ‘property’ because she received it as a gift or service from someone else, and that she might possibly give it again. The tracking of the giving of gifts and services and the establishing of relations among third parties could thus also be extended to the gifts and services themselves. With still another leap, it could be extended to the substitute gifts, the verbal products, which are given by humans to each other to establish communicative, community-forming relations. The ‘third parties’ would thus be both the material gifts or services and the words, both gifts and substitute (‘straw’) gifts. The tracking would impute ‘community’ relations among the ‘parties’ much as it imputes community relations among the groomers. I believe that in language the gifts among verbal substitute gifts and the relations, which are thereby formed, are what we call ‘syntax’. If grooming

⁴³ Dunbar studied particularly bonobos, great apes who live in female-led tribes and engage in a lot of mutual sexual pleasuring.

⁴⁴ My argument here does not depend upon whether or not language actually began in this way though it may have. Rather I am using Dunbar’s idea of the tracking of gifts of grooming among third party group members as an illustration of a process of knowledge, the tracking of gifts and relations among others, which is still taking place.

(nurturing) or giving gifts and services is a basic process of social cohesion it would not be surprising that it would be projected onto other human processes and onto the non human world as well. Syntax works because gift relations are projected into the sequences of verbal gifts we give each other.⁴⁵ The kind of property or service (or the grooming capacity) that someone or something has or gives, which is to be used for establishing relations of solidarity with others, is addressed towards others' needs, towards sharing, from the beginning. It is free, not private property. If it is a human activity like grooming or speaking it is also not destroyed through consumption (as happens when an apple is eaten for example) but it can be recreated again and again by everyone and therefore shared again and again. Production is elicited by consumption, and by the understanding of what has been produced for what need.

The verbal gift giving and receiving of language can also be shared by several people at once, in that a speaker can speak to more than one person at a time (while grooming takes place one by one) (Dunbar p. 121). Word-gifts are shared in a general way by the group, which uses them to make innumerable particular sentences and discourses. Sharing verbal gifts also creates group cohesion as opposed to those who do not share them, who speak no language, or who speak other languages. (This sharing gives the members of the group a common ground, a common "property" by which they can categorize themselves as a community among other communities).

It is as if human society had taken the process of mothering, generalized it into gift giving and turned it every possible way, using it at different levels, backwards, re applying it to itself, to its own parts, transposing it onto substitute gifts, and collections of substitute gifts, attributing (giving) it to nature, to culture, to language and to human and non human and imaginary individuals and groups, generally and particularly, in parts and as wholes. Unfortunately these different kinds and levels of gift giving are not being recognized, and we have also drained the gift character out of practical activity, and out of our idea

⁴⁵ A projection is happening now in market society where the exchange relation is what is being projected everywhere with negative, gift defying, results.

of activity, neutralizing it and hiding the gifts, taking the mother and mothering out of the mix. As we do this we are also depriving the mother of her original continuing connection with language, in favor of a bleak paternal Symbolic Order which rules in ignorance of the patterns of the gift.

The reasons why we do not recognize the creative many-faceted gift process are several. First there is the problem of patriarchy, as we have been saying. Second there is the problem of the canceling of the gift by the market processes of exchange, which ideologically appear to be the basic natural human activity and become the norm. Third, there is the problem that the various aspects of gifts and gift giving at different levels in language and communication have been homogenized and made invisible because the levels have been flattened together. Meta levels are placed at the same level as their objects, and meta gifts are unrecognizable because both material and communicative gifts themselves are unrecognized.⁴⁶ I believe that language is altogether a gift medium which is all and only about gifts and gift giving. Signs are gifts of gifts. Indeed life itself is a gift giving and receiving process. What is not about gift giving is the non-nurturing ‘manhood agenda’, together with the mechanisms we have made out of the doubled self-canceling limited and limiting ‘gift’ of exchange.

More about syntax

In a sentence like ‘The girl hit the ball’, there is a certain begging of the question of gift giving, since the content ‘hit’ is a transposed gift. Hitting is like giving, nurturing or grooming in that it touches the other and establishes a relation, but hitting causes harm, and the relation established is one of domination rather than mutuality.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ There are also ways in which activity and passivity seen according to heterosexual gender stereotypes, are played out in the form of the definition, but are just understood as part of the way the definition ‘works’, further obscuring the gift process (See *For-Giving* p.230).

⁴⁷ Dunbar is curious about the fact that language is located in the same part of the brain as the capacity for throwing. Indeed throwing something to someone is, like speaking a kind of gift giving at a distance, to be received—caught—

Nevertheless we can look at the noun-verb-complement structure of this sentence as transposed giver, gift or service, and receiver. In a sentence like “The girl gave the ball to the boy” there is one kind of receiving that the ball has with respect to the girl’s giving and another kind of receiving that the boy has with respect to the girl’s giving of the ball. The speaker can decide how much of the whole gift process s/he wishes to include in h/er sentence. S/he can say ‘The girl gave’ in which she proposes the subject as giver and the verb as a kind of gift or service. She can say ‘The girl gave the ball’ in which she gives a receiver to the verb. Or she can complete the process with a receiver for the complement: ‘The girl gave the ball to the boy’. Emphasis can be placed on the receiver rather than the giver as in passive sentences: ‘The ball was hit by the boy’. The gifts can be re-applied to themselves, and further gifts given to previous gifts: in ‘The boy hit the ball that was thrown by the girl’, ‘that was thrown by the girl’ is a gift given to ‘ball’ as its receiver.

Questions are a particularly interesting case in that they specify and make explicit the communicative need of the speaker. They are like exchange in that it is the need of the speaker that is in focus, and they are spoken in order to receive a response. For this reason they require a form or at least a specific inflection that is different from the basic verbal gift transaction. Inverting word order seems particularly felicitous because there is an inversion of direction or roles.⁴⁸

by another. On the other hand throwing something at someone is hitting at a distance. Hitting is masculated gift giving. Without an idea of gift giving and the creation of positive communitary relations, hitting may appear to be the reason for substitution. That is, the use of force may appear to be just necessary for the process of substitution, as when one person takes the place of the other as the one at the top, the exemplar. Then exchange appears to be a more civilized process, which takes the place of such brute force. Re-naming used in the description of syntax employs the process of substitution used by exchange, and like exchange it leaves aside gift giving. My point is that neither the market nor language can be explained without gift giving.

⁴⁸ The term ‘effective demand’ is the economic equivalent of the question, in that what is needed is made explicit by the money-words of the buyer. The pat phrase “I am not a mind reader” in answer to those who feel their needs are ignored, is an exchange ego defense against the kind of empathy and other orientation that are part of the gift giving way.” Intuition” unites non verbal

'Giving' is a verb that takes four predicate places. Giving is also a complex action in that it involves a giver, a gift or service and, if it is complete, a receiver. The relation gift-giving establishes is not just between the giver and receiver but also focuses on the gift or service itself. The inclusion of the gift or service in the relation specifies the relation to that particular gift or service. Specific kinds of gifts combine with or can be given to other specific kinds of gifts, which can use or accept them. We therefore have more than just a general sense of mutuality enhanced by the 'release of opiates in the brain' as Dunbar says happens with grooming. We have a specification of mutuality regarding every one of the immense variety of gifts and services, givers and receivers we can be, or find, or produce. The basic noun-verb-complement structure is a complete transposed gift process (giver-gift/service-receiver) in miniature. Many other partial gift processes can be *given to* it in dependent or conjoined clauses and phrases, embellishing and refining the basic gift transaction.

Within the arc of the particular sentence there are even smaller gift interactions, as the various parts of speech combine according to certain restrictions and specifications, which are not *rules* but the '*givens*' of gift giving.⁴⁹ Just as there are different kinds of gifts, which are appropriate for different kinds of needs, (we cannot eat the air or wear a mountain) different kinds of word-gifts can be given to and received from each other. Adjectives are given to nouns but not all nouns have the same needs. In 'green leaves' for example, the noun 'leaves' has a need that 'green' can fill, while 'ideas' as Chomsky showed us long ago cannot be modified by (that is, it cannot receive the gift of) 'green'. It does not have that need.

Which needs word-gifts have depends in part upon their linguistic and grammatical character as parts of speech, nouns or verbs etc. On the other hand, we could describe their grammatical char-

cues and past experience in understanding others even when they do not make their needs explicit with a demand or question.

⁴⁹ These gift patterns give the sequential positioning a scope, a *raison d'être*.

acter as collections of kinds of needs. The needs of word-gifts also depend upon the needs of the kinds of things or cultural elements for which they are substitute gifts. Leaves in the world can be green—we can see them as having that property—and green can be the color of leaves, so at the level of reality the one has been “given” to the other. Consequently at the level of word-gifts, we attribute to ‘leaves’ a need that ‘green’ can satisfy. This attribution is a kind of projection of a process we have learned by being mothered, and which has become more complex as we grow up, and it has been mediated by the use of language (that is, the use of language has mediated the multiple possibilities of gift giving but it is also itself a part of the process of gift giving).

Recapitulating: at a general level, we can say that human communicative needs arise regarding green leaves that is, people for whatever reason want to create human relations with each other regarding green leaves and they need a means to create these relations. The needs for these means are satisfied using the verbal substitute gifts, ‘green’ and ‘leaves’. The way this process works is that by using our ability to track third party interactions, we see that a green color has been ‘given’ to those leaves, and is now one of their ‘properties’. Thus on the verbal plane we can give the word ‘green’ to the word ‘leaves’ not only because generally adjectives are the kind of word-gifts that are given to nouns (for which nouns have satisfiable needs) but because needs and gift interactions that are identified on the non verbal, ”reality” plane have been transposed and attributed to elements on the verbal plane. ‘Leaves’ can have a need, which can be satisfied by ‘green’ because people can have a need to communicate regarding those properties and their ‘owners’ which are the color green and leaves. This is done by attributing (giving) a need to the verbal substitute gift and then giving it another verbal substitute gift to satisfy that need. The projection or identification of needs and gifts on the reality plane and their re projection onto the verbal plane can only be satisfactory as an explanation if gift giving-and-receiving is understood as a very basic and important process. But we are all mothered children; our needs have to be satisfied by someone and we learn to satisfy needs in turn

as we mature. The giving and receiving process is the basic human process and its logic can be used again and again whether or not we realize that is what we are doing.⁵⁰

Conjunctions

Linking words or phrases by ‘and’ is a way in which we give the listener two or more word—or phrase—gifts together. We do this because communicative needs arise regarding both items separately. Neither word-gift has been given to the other word-gift but the speaker gives the listener a word or sentence gift about one of them, together with a word or sentence gift about the other (perhaps deleting one sentence gift in order to avoid redundancy). ‘The girl and the boy threw the balls’. Though the two subjects of the sentence (givers) are joined, they can only be said to be given to each other in a contingent way.

On the other hand, the giving of an adjective to a noun such as ‘red balloon’ expresses the fact that on the extra linguistic level, the balloon has received the property red in an ongoing way. The words ‘the girl’ and ‘the boy’ joined by ‘and’ are given as gifts together to the receiver/listener but the relation expressed, of those two people to each other, is not ongoing in the same way.

The mathematical “translation” of ‘and’ as ‘plus’, as in ‘plus one’, provides the addition or giving of one more to an existing item or series. In fact the items in the series are given to each other to such an extent that a new number name expresses their collection from the point of view of the giver. ‘Three’ expresses the collected gift, the belonging together or aspect of ‘having been given to each other’ of two plus one, i.e., two to which another one is given. (For more on numbers see below)

Interestingly we can see here how the word ‘and’ or the plus sign is not really appropriate for use in the notation of semantic factors

⁵⁰ At the unconscious level of pheromone communication we are giving and receiving physiologically, also without knowing it. That is we are satisfying each other’s needs to know and be known at that level.

such as ‘man’ = + human + adult+ male because the + indicates a somewhat different kind of ‘having properties’ than is indicated when we say ‘a man is an adult male human’. ‘And’ or ‘+’ provides more possibility of disjunction than the use of adjectives to modify ‘male’. In fact both in the conjunction of numbers with + and the conjunction of properties with +, the idea of gift giving and receiving has been further obscured.

Ideas are not green so ‘ideas’ does not have a need that ‘green’ can fill. That is, communicative needs do not arise in people regarding green ideas (barring artificial situations like the need for examples for philosophical and linguistic investigations). Ideas do not ever have the property green (nor does green ever have the property colorless) because it has not been given to them on the reality plane and perhaps cannot be given to them because of degrees of materiality or logical contradiction—though the reasons for this impossibility could be due to anything and do not concern us here. We recognize that ideas do not have that need, and that we do not need to communicate about them in that way so we will not say ‘green ideas’, that is we will not give ‘green’ to ‘ideas’, or ‘colorless’ to ‘green’. ‘Green’ can be received by ‘leaves’ but not by ‘ideas’. You can tell by looking at leaves that they have received that property—just for a quick confirmation—but you do not have any such possibility of confirmation about ideas, in fact no need will arise regarding their being green. (The listener who is the receiver of a communicative gift may have a need to know that ideas are exciting but not that they are green. In other words a communicative need may arise for one but not for the other. That is because there are no contexts in which I can identify a need of the other regarding green ideas that I can satisfy by communicating with h/er using the words ‘green ideas’.)⁵¹

⁵¹ When Chomsky first used the example of ‘green ideas’ there was no Green Party. Now reality has changed and the environmental movement has spread everywhere so that Chomsky himself may be said to have green ideas, though like others of his ideas they could not be called ‘colorless’. The change in the social context has produced a change in the needs we attribute to the word ‘ideas’ and the capacity of the word ‘green’ to satisfy them.

Articles

Nouns need articles in a more constant way than they need adjectives. The reason for this is that communicative needs continually arise among people regarding the way things are being given to them, that is, how things are being selected to be given by the giver. (Selecting how to give to satisfy communicative needs is an activity, which all speakers have to do when it is their turn, so they have it in common). The specific selection gives the listener/receiver a way to discern which of her needs are being addressed, and to know whether it is a need regarding a kind or a need regarding a particular individual. This distinction is a generally useful, even a necessary one, as are those of singular and plural. Pronouns, tenses, case endings have to do with locating the specific givers, gifts and receivers on the so called 'reality plane', which the speaker sees as occasioning the listeners' communicative needs at the moment. The modes of addressing communicative needs regarding the world in its various aspects are culturally specific and linguistic gifts are systematized differently of in different languages.

If we recognize that there are different levels in language we can see that there are other transposed gift processes at a somewhat different level from the noun/verb/complement miniature gift pattern, and gifts made through substitution. Gifts of adjectives to nouns, and adverbs to verbs take place at a slightly different level from gifts of articles or case endings to nouns or tense modifiers to verbs. Still other levels can be seen in negative discourse, both with the use of 'not' and when someone is communicating something negative that does not seem to be a gift, e.g., 'I hate you'. The gift of the negative satisfies the need of the receiver to know so as to be able to behave accordingly. That is, there is a need regarding negation and negativity, the satisfaction of which can be considered a gift at a different level from combination or conjunction for example. The flattening of the levels is another factor in hiding the gift aspects, which different parts of speech have in common. ('Not' seems to be at the same gift level as a positive statement but it is not).

Many of the *parts of giving* can be seen in language: prepositions such as 'to, in, by' can be seen as aspects of gift-giving: 'to' is an aspect of transmission towards, 'in' is an aspect of holding or property, and 'by' is an aspect of the source or giver. English 'have' as an auxiliary verb for the past perfect and imperfect 'I had gone, I have gone' combines the aspect of property with that of a trajectory verb to form the past. 'She has thrown the ball' uses the property verb 'has' to make the past tense of the gift given or received: the subject gave the throwing to the ball, and she remains the possessor of the act which has been done. This use of the verb of property to form the past is not necessary but felicitous and reasonable. It seems to make a property of past actions, something others could track as a given.

Viewing syntax only as brain function, eliminating gift giving, divides the brain from the mind and what is from what should be. If brain function is what is, gift giving is relegated only to what should be. If we incorporate gift giving into our idea of language we can justify morality in a very different way. Our social, communicating and community-forming selves become the basis of our individual selves. We need to do materially what we are already doing linguistically, which we developed as a species from what we were already doing materially. The kind of political and economic behavior that is espoused by Chomsky and Lakoff, can be more easily promoted if we restore gift giving to language. This does not mean that we have to believe in a *tabula rasa*, but that the huge social importance of mothering as laying down the early humanizing gift patterns in ontogenesis and phylogenesis should be recognized. The hostility of man against man (and men against women), which seems to be primordial and natural, is an effect of patriarchy and the market system, which both exploit gift giving and make it invisible.

I have added the following unpublished speculations, which I think may interest readers who have gotten this far..

Translating Language into Numbers: a conjecture

In using numbers we are putting into practice a process we learn from using language, which can be seen as a derivative of linguistic

gift giving and the exemplar-to-many process described above. For example, the word 'three' is easily produced and given and a material exemplar of three items is so immediately formable with our fingers that perhaps we are confused by its availability. Almost anyone can produce this exemplar (with the exception of very young children or people with physical malformations) so that we have in common a visible exemplar for the basic integers, differently from exemplars of most other kinds of things, which are buried deep in our private memories. This disappearance of most exemplars from our memory happens because their function has been made unnecessary by being replaced by words.

Because people have to learn to count, and this can be done by taking each finger as corresponding to some item in a group, more action is actually performed with the exemplars of integers than with linguistic exemplars. The question of the materiality of numbers is similar to the question of the materiality of exemplars and can be addressed in the same way. As in language, the exemplar is replaced by the word-gift as equivalent of the exemplar, with regard to which the other items under consideration are found to be equal to each other. Once we have learned to count, the word 'three' can be given in the place of all sets of three and therefore no set of three needs to be physically given, or given to view, as an exemplar in order to create human relations regarding it or to imply that all sets of three are related to each other as equal. That is, the exemplar has become unimportant in that it has been replaced by the word 'three'. Exemplars of integers can be produced any time on the fingers. But we can say they become merely examples after the concept of each of them and of numbers has been developed.

The basic terms of the quantitative language of numbers are those from one to nine. The rest are adjectival constructions. 14 is an adjectival construction of 4 and 10, 21 of 1 and 20. 4 is given to 10 on the verbal plane, in much the same way as 'red' is given to 'ball'. On the experiential plane we can consider the items also as given to each other or given to view together. The contingent adjectival gift construction has become more permanent in number words.

The 'needs' of numbers are the 'needs' of words, flattened, abstracted, and denatured. These needs are projected onto numbers by us, so that our needs for relations with others can be satisfied regarding the quantitative aspects of our world. We could say that numbers are words in a serial progression with an altered or vestigial syntax.

Quantification has to do with satisfying a need to know, to categorize and sort. The counters are 'unseen' givers and they leave aside other needs while they are counting, that is, while they are performing operations of giving to and giving from (another way of looking at taking from) according to this vestigial syntax. Basic arithmetic processes of adding and subtracting are transposed human operations of giving to and giving from.

Multiplication and division are sorting, according to an exemplar. In these operations we describe a kind of 'many' by indicating the number exemplar or its quantitative word gift substitute with regard to which the items are related to each other as similar. The items forming 20 are related to each other as 2's, regarding an exemplar of 2 (or its replacement, the word 'two'), 10 times so also to an exemplar of 10 (or the word 'ten'). In 3 times 2, and 6 divided by 2, we relate these items to an exemplar or word 3 and to an exemplar or word 2. That is, if we look at 2 as the exemplar, we can see that in 6 there are 3 sets (related as sets to the exemplar of three), which are related to each other as equal in that they are all related to 2 as their exemplar internally. If we look at 3 as the exemplar for the sets internally, we see that there are 2 sets. Multiplying 5 times 10, a person gives 10 to itself the number of times that is related to the word, or exemplar, 5. Multiplication and division take place by relating items to two or more different quantitative exemplars or their word-gift substitutes, together.

Any number can 'need' to be operated on by any other. That is it can 'need' to be added to, subtracted from, given to (receive), given from (give). Both giving to and giving from numbers are equally valuable as operations. The 'needs' of numbers of course are really our needs to collect or sort them as sets. Multiplying a number by itself gives us a way of exploring reiteration and self similarity in that the number is not only the exemplar but also the number of sets and number of times or repetitions of the sets. The difference

between addition and subtraction or multiplication and division is giving *to* vs giving *away*. These sorting processes can serve to calculate quantities of gifts and quantities of needs, a calculation which presumably serves the efficient filling of needs.

We still have the idea of command and obedience regarding numbers. “Give 2 to 3,” “Take away 2 from 3.” These ‘rules’ appear to be abstracted from the practices of giving. They do not eliminate them, however, because the gift practices continue to be used without rules and without quantification as well. In fact the gift processes underlie both qualitative and quantitative giving, and the rules of both qualitative operations (grammar) and quantitative operations (arithmetic) derive from them.

Rule-following requires the suspension of the attention to one’s own subjective state and interpersonal interaction until after the act is done. It can constitute a moment of instrumentality, and appear as a suspension of material and linguistic giving and receiving, even if projected aspects of the gift process are what we are actually using as instruments. In fact I believe that both mathematical and linguistic ‘rules’ are false explanations for the functioning of projected aspects of the gift process that we do not recognize as such.

Things, words and value

Words as values are not divorced from the relation-creating gift value of the world we live in. That value has to do with gift giving by the material world, by nature, by individuals, by human cultures and communities, in so far as we are able to receive them and gifts are also given to the material world, to nature, to individuals and to cultures and communities, in so far as we and they are able to give gifts and pass them on. If we retain the gift character of our heritage as mothered children we can understand perception as the perceptive reception of the gifts of the world around us. The relation between things and words starts with things⁵²—gifts given by and of things

⁵² Similarly Marx said that the relation between money and commodities starts with commodities.(p.)

unilaterally⁵³ to humans at the level of perception (both individual and collective perception, received both individually and collectively) which causes human relations to things as their receivers (and to other humans as givers and receivers, passing gifts along). If we consider ourselves receivers of the gifts of the environment, projecting the mother, we will receive also the implication of value that we receive when human mothers give to us. This implication of value comes from the unilateral giving of gifts to us by our surroundings, and the word-gifts which represent them also receive this implication of value, which is augmented by the fact that the words come to us as a social inheritance from the linguistic community, transmitted initially by our mothers and families who either give them to us directly, by teaching them to us, or put them there for us to use, by speaking to each other. To this we must add the value we attribute to others when we give the words to them (and they to us), satisfying their communicative needs, as well as the value words give to each other by satisfying each other's needs in syntax.

Words have value or are values ('value accents' Volosinov called them) because they are a means of satisfying communicative needs, because they represent non linguistic gifts, which satisfy a great variety of material, cultural and perceptual needs, and because they are means of transmitting (giving) value. We give value to words in all these ways and therefore Saussure's *langue* represents only one of their aspects, seen in a sort of cross section, the aspect of mutual exclusion by which we recognize them as qualitatively different.

⁵³ It is easy to ignore the source of a *unilateral* gift especially when gift giving is itself ignored by a society. Also as we have noted elsewhere, giving gives value to the receiver especially when the giver does not take credit for it. Nature and culture are the source of the givens of our experience and perception. Our perceptive and interpretative apparatus are very active in our receiving of these 'unilateral givens' from outside. While it may actually be the case that our mode of perception transforms what we perceive into gifts by singling out and foregrounding their most important aspects for us, at the conscious level we receive these givens free of charge, as unilateral gifts from our environment. We can also foreground experiences for each other unilaterally, calling others' attention to something, that is, directing their creative receptivity towards it.

Saussure believed the values had no ‘positive content’ but that was because he modeled his ideas upon the marginalist conception of the market in equilibrium (see Ponzio 2006 [1973]), which itself reflects the mutually exclusive relation of private property.⁵⁴

The infinite renvoi from one linguistic value to another, that has been suggested as the process of semiosis by Eco and others on the basis of Peirce’s infinite semiosis (Petrilli and Ponzio 2006), functions like the endless list of commodity equations in Marx’s discussion of the formation of the General Equivalent. If there is no money, each commodity can be seen as equal to some quantity of any other, and similarly any word can be related to any other. Meaning is then made to depend upon the place the word or sign occupies in the chain, or in the system of *langue*. (A hierarchy is the vertical organization of such a system).

Nevertheless the comparison of exchange and meaning, of the market and *langue* opened up the area of the common root of material and linguistic communication, of the homology of material and linguistic production (Rossi-Landi 1975). The dial of the phylogenetic and ontogenetic time machine has to be turned back even farther than it has been however, before the market and masculation, to allow us to understand that the root of the homology lies in gift giving. Thus the description of material production to which the notion or interpretative key of gift giving has been restored will include gift giving not only in the destination of work but also recognize the gift logic in the primary articulations of work. (Rossi-Landi’s “matteremes”) In this light for example, the head of the hammer is given to the peen in a permanent way, and using the hammer gives the nails to the wall in order to create a shelter, which will satisfy the ongoing needs of a family. The linguistic work of assembling sentences and discourses is actually gift work and much of it has been done for us by those who have come before us, leaving us a network of relations between humans and the world, and means to those relations not as linguistic ‘capital’ but as a treasure trove of

⁵⁴ Ponzio also discusses the ‘exchange’ relation between signifier and signified in Saussure. For more discussion on this issue see the final chapter in this book.

free gifts and possible gift constructions that are the result of their own giving and receiving materially and linguistically. Much of this activity might be called 'relational work'. Although it includes the "labor" of abstraction, it is not, or has not been until recently mainly abstract labor in Marx's sense. That is, "linguistic labor" has not been mainly labor for the market. In fact like the other free areas such as water, seeds and air, and traditional practices, linguistic gift labor is now being accessed and taken over for the market by the parasite of Patriarchal Capitalism. The gifts of language, which create relations of mutuality and trust, are used against the linguistic "workers" to extort more gifts of profit from them. Their labor is abstracted by giving it a destination in exchange. This is all the more harmful because the workers have to continue to use the gifts of language to construct their own positive relations, and it may be difficult to distinguish commodified language from free language. Even linguistic commodities function because at a deeper level they are still gift constructions.

By restoring gift giving to the description of material and linguistic production, and by recognizing a value-attributing agency of giving, we can see in contrast with Saussure, that value does indeed have a positive content. Gift-value given by implication, reinforces the social existence, capacity, and esteem of the receiver and the agency of the giver. It also shows that what is valuable is something we need to give our attention to as others have done before us, and that we can pass gifts regarding it on to others, sharing the implications of its value, which enhances rather than diminishing its value for us as well. We can transmit gift value by giving to someone either materially or linguistically or both.

Just as a piece of property is not seen as having exchange value when it belongs to someone, but is only evaluated when it is put into relation with other products by the use of money, the positive value of a word in the *langue* is not seen in its absence or abeyance but only when it is being used, that is, when it is being given. Unless this transmission is taking place in the definition, a special case as we have been saying, or worse, decontextualized as part of a philosophical investigation, the word is always in relation to other words,

to extra linguistic things and to the people who are using (giving and receiving) it.

The positive linguistic value includes the positive gift quality that is given to words by things when words take their place in the construction of human relations. That is, if we project the mother, or at least the source of gifts onto the world around us, we receive the gifts of perception of our natural and cultural environment in a way that implies our value as their recipients and we can transmit or pass on part of this value to others as we share our perceptions with them linguistically through giving them our word-gift substitutes, by this gift implying their value also. There is a use value of the word arising from its function in the creation of a human relation. That is, there is a use value that accrues to the word by being given from one human being to another with the expectation that it will be understood, received and used as a relation-creating gift. Words are instrumental in our creation of species-specific relations to one another, our linguistically mediated relations as human relations.

Value is a social quality, which is derived from gift giving, and should be viewed as separate and prior to exchange value (which is only its contradictory variation). Exchange value is derived from labor for exchange, labor, which is abstracted by the exchange process. However the exchange value of a commodity can also contain some abstract gift labor, constituting surplus value.⁵⁵

Creativity, including linguistic creativity, is important but it is not itself the source of value. Unless creativity has value for others, that is, unless its products satisfy needs and can be given as gifts, it does not have value. It is only play, dis-play or unfortunately, a resource for harmful inventions and consumer manipulation through

⁵⁵ In a gift economy labor is gift labor satisfying the needs of individuals and the community. It is not abstracted or 'homogenized' but maintains its specificity. The distinction between living and dead labor, that is, the present expenditure of labor versus the use of artifacts made in the past (fixed capital) is thus less important than it is in capitalism. Similarly the distinction between labor and what we might call 'activity', between for example, work in the fields and preparing and participating in festivals, is less important.. (See Mann 2000 on the Iroquois gift economy).

the invention of the 'new' as an end in itself—with marketable spin offs. In which case it acquires exchange value.

By passing words and constructions of words, both new and old, on to others, and by giving and receiving material, cultural and linguistic gifts, we mediate a world that is meaningful to all. Thus we can understand the continuity that unites linguistic values and 'human values', meaning in language and meaning in life, and we can also understand the distortion of both that has taken place through the aberration that is the market.

If we recognize the importance of gifts for creating human relations we can see how as receivers we also bond in an ongoing way with our *environment* as the original source of the gifts of perception and of the unmediated and mediated satisfactions of our needs. Our relation to the environment and even to the gifts of our perception will be altered if the gift relation regarding the satisfaction of our material needs is unrecognized or especially if it is canceled by privation and privatization. This is the case when the environment is comprised of private property owned by mutually exclusive proprietors, who deny access to all others. Even the perception of nature is denied to those living in poor urban environments where trees and grass are private property of the rich who always live 'somewhere else'.

Having made it difficult to give and receive gifts freely on the material plane through private property we find an increasing importance of perceptual and linguistic gifts for the development of our subjectivities as givers and receivers. Because the source of material gifts is usually denied to us, and goods are accessible only through participation in exchange, we now do much of our giving and receiving linguistically, not materially. As speakers and listeners we share the collection of mutually exclusive word-gifts, which is the *langue*. As participants in the society we share the mutually exclusive relation to each other's property. In communication this sharing of linguistic gifts ready to be given (the *langue*, the means of giving) provides us with the ability to create ever-new gifts and supply ever-new needs with the means for their satisfaction. It also provides the possibility of our allowing a pass-through of perceptual gifts to each other in a

way that is abstracted, focused and simplified, sensorially less complex than the gifts of unmediated perception. On the other hand perhaps unmediated sensory gifts (without language) would be less able to satisfy our needs because the linguistic giving enhances their gift character by adding to it. The possibility of giving and receiving linguistically arouses communicative needs, which would not exist in that way without our ability to combine linguistic gifts creatively to satisfy them. Because of this we are able to focus together upon some aspects of the world around us and modify them together. These modifications call forth new communicative needs, which we satisfy with new sentences and discourses, and sometimes, rarely, new words. As we give and receive linguistically, materially and perceptually we continually construct our subjectivities as givers and receivers. Presently we are constructing our subjectivities as material exchangers more than as gift givers because we are living in a market-based society and most of the material 'gifts' we do give have to go through the mechanism of exchange. This mechanism also influences our linguistic and perceptual gifts, by focusing them on exchange, as well as exposing them to commodification through advertising and propaganda.

Alignment

Each time we speak to others we are using the gifts of the past to make new gifts, to satisfy new or ongoing needs (communicative needs and, in a mediated way, material, psychological, social and spiritual needs). Even if we speak to ourselves or just think in words we are using the general social gifts for establishing relations (see the discussion of inner speech below). However when we actually speak to others, the sentences that we give are transmitted from one to another. We perform a transitive act, which aligns with or corresponds to the gift structures inside the sentence itself. The miniature gift processes of syntax correspond to the larger scale relation-creating gift processes of speaking and listening (or writing and reading). These in turn correspond to the relation-creating aspects of material giving and receiving. Speaking itself is a process of material production of vibrations of air, which are emitted (given)

by the speaker and received by the listeners' auditory apparatus. Writing is given to the page and received by the eyes. This correspondence of relations is not a reflection or *wiederspiegelung*, though perhaps those theories unwittingly allude to the repetition of gift giving at different levels. Rather, this carrying out of gift giving in similar ways at different levels provides a deep pattern, which holds the levels together, organizes the variety of sentence structures and even allows the possibility of exceptions and variations upon the structures.⁵⁶ The pattern of events between interlocutors is the matrix, which holds the focus on the miniature gift processes of syntax even when there are other processes involved, which seem to be different from gift giving. The gift giving between speaker and listener also maintains a gift structure when speech is colloquial, and does not use complete sentences or when on the other hand it is academic and extremely complex and convoluted.

Gift giving is continually going on between speaker and listener. The speaker has to use the social substitute gifts and gift patterns for the construction of her sentences, satisfying the other person's communicative needs for those means. Abundant additional non-verbal phatic gifts of tone, emphasis, body language and proxemics are also given which satisfy the listener's need to know how and why the verbal gifts are being given.⁵⁷

In order to better understand communicative needs we can draw upon Vigotsky's thinking about a passage from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (Vigotsky 1962: p.140) in which lovers communicate with each other in elliptical ways. Vigotsky compared this ellipsis to inner

⁵⁶ The alignment of patterns internal to the sentence with other gift patterns outside it at different levels is similar to the alignment of different levels in the mathematical golden mean, where lines on each level are in fixed proportion to those on other levels external to it. To me this seems to be an unnoticed resonator with the English word 'meaning'.

⁵⁷ It is worthwhile looking at the correspondence of grammatical subject and speaking subject in this light as the construction of subjectivity would be informed by gift giving rather than just generic agency while the formation of the creative-receptive subject would be achieved by alignment of grammatical objects of various kinds with the listener.

speech in which we do not usually speak to ourselves in full sentences but usually only use a few key words. Vigotsky believes that inner speech is an internalization of external, interpersonal speech. I think that in inner speech we are satisfying our own needs for a relation without actually creating the relation externally. We use the general social means, words, for this purpose, a fact, which socializes and organizes our thought. However we do not need to form complete sentences since we already understand many aspects of our subject matter. The need is already satisfied. We don't need to relate ourselves socially to everything in our internal (or external) context because much of it is already a given. It already 'belongs' to us. There is no need for the mediation. If needs arise for more specificity or clarity we can use a few words mentally to satisfy those needs for ourselves.⁵⁸ Moreover because we are not speaking to someone else we are not actually enacting the relation-creating giving and receiving process with another person. That is, the 'glue' of alignment with the interpersonal gift is lacking, so our internal speech can be 'unglued'—somewhat outside the syntactical gift form.

There seems to be a principle of 'economy' or good stewardship in language by which we do not over-satisfy a need nor do we satisfy needs we don't have. If we do not have a need to think a word we don't think it. Although we have an abundance of word gifts, our inner discourse can be telegraphic because we do not need to satisfy as many communicative needs of our own as we would if we were satisfying someone else's (and academic discourse is the contrary).

Material needs are being ignored by patriarchal economics where they are considered relevant only as 'effective demand'. Similarly communicative needs have been ignored by patriarchal academia in general. We have not been asking questions specifically about communicative needs because we have not been noticing gift giving.

⁵⁸ Our subconscious usually seems ready to supply us with any words we need although, under pressure of a need at a different level, perhaps a psychological need, it can refuse to give us the 'right' word, thus creating a verbal symptom or sign of a problem, as Freud showed us. The wrong gift would thus come about through the conflict of needs at different levels both of which the subconscious giver is trying to satisfy.

(There has been no “effective demand” regarding communicative needs, that is, the questions have not been formulated). Psychologists talk about the ability to put oneself in the place of the other, and to understand that they have ‘mental voids’ we need to fill. However they do not use the terminology of needs because the gift paradigm does not appear as a possible interpretative key. It is as if the language of cognitive psychology and language acquisition had been sanitized to keep gift giving out.⁵⁹ It is therefore a big challenge to try to restore attention to communicative needs to the interpretation of language, and attention to material needs to our thinking about economics. Recently questions have been raised about the legitimacy of the market system, questions which in the North derive to a great extent from ‘putting oneself in the place of the other’ (sometimes even literally by traveling to the South, as in the World Social Forums). In recognizing and trying to satisfy the need for social change, the anti-global movement has opened the way towards a paradigm shift. It has not yet recognized however that the shift that is needed is one towards the gift paradigm and mothering.

Patriarchy has invaded all aspects of life, carried by the market. It has also ridden inside the Trojan horse of a scientific method that has expurgated gifts and qualitative understanding in favor of rule-based neuter, neutral, ‘objective’ and quantitative knowledge and a technology that substitutes mechanical for human processes. The study of language has also been modeled on such an approach.

I have been trying to show how an alternative approach in this area might begin, but a thorough description of language in terms of needs and gifts is an immense project, and the restoration of needs to the attention of economics is a revolution, hopefully a peaceful one. In order to take up these projects, which are interconnected—because of the importance of language, signs and gender for epistemology and of epistemology for economics—we have to work from

⁵⁹ Perhaps this has to do with the conceptualization of a need as a lack, bringing up castration issues? I have always considered the phrase ‘nature abhors a vacuum’ as purposely misleading in that the positive sense of filling a void is transformed into hate of the void.

both directions, critiquing patriarchal structures on the one hand while revealing and restoring gifts and gift based structures on the other. Both the critique of Patriarchal Capitalism and the foregrounding of the hidden but already-existing alternative are necessary and useful as a two pronged approach, a kind of pincher with which to grasp the paradigms and distinguish them from each other. It is as if patriarchy only uses the index finger while disentangling the threads of misunderstanding requires also enlisting the support of the opposable thumb.⁶⁰ The fact is that some of the leading anti-global activists continue to embrace the Patriarchal exchange paradigm and epistemology, and in the end this keeps the paradigm from shifting for everyone.

⁶⁰ See chapters on pointing in *For-Giving*.

PART FOUR



Epistemology and gender

Definition, classification, the market

The definition, or equational statement, has a number of peculiarities with regard to the rest of language. The definition is a gift transaction that takes place between definer and learner-listener. However it is a kind of verbal gift giving that is structured differently from the gifts of the flow of speech and to some extent from naming. The definition repeats at the linguistic level, the substitution relation that takes place between verbal and non-verbal gifts in naming. It 'imitates' this change of levels, re enacting it by means of substitutions on the linguistic level itself. The definition isolates and decontextualizes a word-gift, and gives it by making it take the place of a *definiens*, which itself is made up of a phrase, a complex word-gift. Some non verbal⁶¹ gift-exemplar is identified by the verbal gift-complex of the *definiens*. That is, the *definiens* is given by the definer and received by the listener who then proceeds to remember or imagine an item, which is one of that kind. The *definiendum* is then taken by the listener as the name (word-gift substitute) of any of the items that are related to each other as similar because they are related to that exemplar as their equivalent. The *definiendum* is therefore the substitute of the exemplar, the equivalent of the equivalent, after which the exemplar itself is no longer necessary and the word can continue to take its place in the equivalent position, as the verbal substitute gift with regard to which the members of that kind can be understood as similar. The word is obviously not the physical equivalent of the things of a kind. It is their equivalent as a gift, something with which to establish human relations of inclusion. It is also their equivalent as an exemplar, something that is used to form a concept with regard to a kind of

⁶¹ An exception is the meta linguistic discourse which identifies exemplars of verbal elements, e.g., 'noun', 'sentence'.

thing. Thus the two characteristics we have been discussing, that of the gift and that of one-to-many exemplarity come together in naming and the definition.

In fact the word's exemplarity can be demonstrated any time it is taken by itself as a sound out of the flow of speech, in order to define it or to use it as a name, (and perhaps even when it is used holophrastically).⁶² Any member of a kind can be taken as an example, but it is not an exemplar unless it is used as the term of comparison, held in the equivalent position. In naming, the namer identifies the exemplar, perhaps by pointing at it, and gives the name directly or s/he uses an equational statement such as "That is a crow." In a definition the definer uses the *definiens* to locate the exemplar. That is, s/he gives the *definiens* to the listener so that the listener can identify an exemplar for h/herself. The definition is constructed according to an assertion of equivalence such as "A cat is (=)⁶³ a four legged animal with a tail that says 'meow'." It functions according to a mechanism in which the substitution of a word-gift (*definiendum*) for a phrase-gift (*definiens*) relates a non verbal gift-exemplar to a word, giving the word to the listener as a new linguistic gift which s/he can then give to others. The mechanism of substitution in the definition may appear very simple but it influ-

⁶² In order to look at words as exemplars we have to see them as physical objects, which can be reproduced vocally by speakers. Not only do we repeat and imitate the sound form of the word we hear, but there is an implication that all the instances of that word are like it. That is, words taken singly have a kind of exemplarity (because of the way we use them) which things taken singly do not unless for some reason they are purposely put in that position. Written words are substitute exemplars for spoken words which are substitute exemplars for non verbal gifts. The way in which the written word takes the place of the spoken word is similar to the way the spoken word takes the place of the non verbal exemplar. Then, just as the non verbal exemplar is no longer necessary for constructing the relation of similarity among members of that category because the word has taken its place, the spoken word is no longer necessary for the functioning of the written word, which can function also as the exemplar of the category. The written word "cats" can refer to cats without speaking that word or even hearing it mentally.

⁶³ See For-Giving for the discussion of 'to be' as the substitute for the act of substitution of both the *definiens* and the *definiendum* for the non verbal gift.

ences us perhaps more than we know because of the harmonics it establishes with exchange.

All the parts of our world have an immanent gift potential in that they can be given and received, or used to create human relations of mutuality even if they are only given to perception or to the imagination, and it is as potential gifts that they 'give themselves' to language, to the words that re-present, i.e., re-give them, and give to each other in syntax, creating the linear flow of speech. A definition can be seen as aligned either with the gift giving world and the linguistic gift it is transmitting or with the aspect of substitution between its elements. It is aligned with the gift when we use it in consonance with the gifts of perception, the gifts of the flow of speech, the formation of inclusive human relations: teaching and learning, the transmission of emotions, images, imagination, information, knowledge and understanding. It is aligned with the gift in mothering, in caregiving and services of all kinds, in complex communicative gifts like writing a book, or good decision making that satisfies human needs, but also in all communicative activities such as caring conversation, singing, and the arts generally as well as the gifts of nature. As we noted above the gift aspects of the definition are also aligned with the transmission of sounds through the air from one person to another (and with writing and reading).

On the other hand, there is also a possible alignment with the process of exchange, because the substitution aspect of definition has been transposed onto the material level. The substitution aspect can also be found in assessment mechanisms like the scales as we will see below, in patriarchy where the male takes the place of the female, and in the processes of categorization, which is used so extensively in our society.

In the definition, the *definiendum* takes the place of the *definiens*, which itself is functioning as a verbal substitute gift for a non-verbal gift. The mechanism of substitution and equivalence is repeated on a much expanded scale⁶⁴ in the exchange of commodities for

⁶⁴ A kind of social self similarity is created between different scales, the minute and fleeting level of the sentence and the macroscopic level of the market. In

money. Money (the general equivalent/exemplar/incarnated word) takes the place of each commodity in turn, substituting for it in the hands of the seller (as a means of communication used to not communicate), according to specific quantities of value pre established by 'market forces'.

It may appear that the exchange of commodities for money is more similar to naming than to the definition. The *definiens*, which would have been used by the definer to identify or locate an exemplar of the non verbal gift for the language learner in her memory or her present experience,⁶⁵ appears to be absent in exchange for money but is actually supplied by the market place. In the exchange, the need of the listener to locate an exemplar is parallel to the need of the buyer to locate a product, which is a member of that kind. That need is satisfied by the sellers who bring their commodities to a place where they may easily be found by those who wish to supply their money. The function performed by the *definiens* is taken over by the marketplace itself. The buyer goes to the market where s/he chooses one or some of those products, examples of kinds, as the items for which h/er money name is an equivalent. The money as exemplar overtakes the product as a potential exemplar for that category, making it simply one of a kind with that quantitative value.

Money is the exemplar of economic value and the commodity is a member of a category of things having value, of a particular kind. By relating the item to the money exemplar as its equivalent, we show that the equivalent can take the place of the members of the kind as far as value is concerned. Since both money and commodities exist on the material level they are more similar to the definition in which the *definiens* and *definiendum* also exist at the same level.⁶⁶ In both cases the one, the equivalent, is actually given again in place of

this we have created something similar to the fractal configurations found in nature by Bennoit Mandelbrot.

⁶⁵ The learner would have located this exemplar in her past experience or perhaps in the present environment.

⁶⁶ There is a new change of level towards the verbal, a sort of disincarnation of money now as credit cards and on line banking have become prevalent, and money is understood only as numbers in a computerized bank account.

the other. That is, money is given again to someone else, as the seller becomes a buyer, while the *definiendum* is given again as a word in the flow of speech when the listener becomes a speaker and wants to use it. The market place is made possible because each seller brings h/er commodity as something, which will be substituted by the money/exemplar/word and which is thus related to all other commodities through their relation to the same equivalent, especially those of the same value for which that money could be exchanged. In this gigantic material concept-forming process, gifts are left aside as irrelevant in favor of the relevant quality of commodities and money, which is exchange value, and the relevant interaction, which is the mutual substitution of products and money in exchange.

Exchange is like the definition because the 'money word' and what it takes the place of are at the same level, here the material level, while in the definition, differently from naming, the definiens and definiendum are both at the linguistic level. The aspect of substitution is particularly clear because of this and indeed, in a third step of abstraction, logical notation can be substituted for the definition, e.g., $A = B$.⁶⁷

In definition (and to some extent in naming) there is a momentary exit from the flow of speech, a decontextualization. In exchange this exit is repeated on the material plane when the product or good is isolated (in the 'exchange abstraction'), taken out of the flow of gifts, evaluated, placed on the market, kept in the store window, until someone comes to 'say its name' with money, agree with the price, allowing h/er money to take the place of the commodity for the other.

The abundance of commodities for sale and the qualitative neutrality of money make it appear that the individual could buy anything, thus placing self interest in opposition to other interest, increasing greed and envy and discrediting the importance of the need of the other. Because of the scarcity artificially created by the

⁶⁷ This notation is not completely correct however because it does not capture the general equivalent aspect of the *definiendum*. Thus if it represents a definition $A = B$ is not completely reciprocal because one side is more general than the other.

market, satisfying others' needs almost always seems to require the sacrifice of one's own needs and pleasures. Thus the psychological implications of the market discourage gift giving.

The abstraction and depersonalization of production and need-satisfaction through the mediation of money and the market also transform into 'supply and demand' what on an individual level are gifts and needs. The concept of 'effective demand' is functional to this abstraction as it displaces human interaction away from the personal level and makes the market primary. That is, the satisfaction of needs is dependent on market exchange and the possession of money. 'Marginal utility' is the quantitative estimation of need in a situation of scarcity, with access to goods coming only through the market. Giving and receiving have been translated into 'economese' not only on the plane of language but also on the plane of material interactions, due to the constraints that the market imposes on them.

Definition, naming and exchange

The marketplace allows us to act as if we were naming products directly with money. When we are doing naming we usually speak in the presence of the item we want to name, similarly when doing exchange in the market we usually pay in the presence of the item we want to buy. The sellers engage in display and ostension of their products as one might do in naming. There are more levels of substitution in market exchange than in direct naming however, which make exchange more like the definition.

After the definition has been given, the presence of the *definiens* becomes unnecessary for the use of the word that has been defined. Similarly after naming, the presence of what is named is unnecessary for the use of the word, which is its name. The presence of h/er commodity also becomes unnecessary for the seller after the exchange because the money has taken its place as a means for altering other human property relations in regard to other commodities. Money can also be given by the buyer for something that is absent. The change of the property relation takes place anyway, much as the relation of the interlocutors to a non verbal gift or to a topic of conversation,

changes from mutual indifference, to mutual inclusion, even if what they are talking about is not present.

Because we can't say anything with money except the quantitative names of commodities, we can't make sentences⁶⁸ and we maintain ourselves only as a rudimentary or contradictory communicative community. We all relate ourselves to a commons of the uncommon, the collectively addressed 'commons' of exchange value. The accumulation of capital and its re-investment serve to organize this rudimentary community into forces of production of not-gifts to 'make' more of the general equivalent by satisfying 'effective demand'.

When it is work that is being bought and sold, the money name of the work, the salary, becomes a part of the lived experience and identity of the worker, almost in the same way as the gender term does in masculination. From this perspective, the dependant worker who does not exhibit the qualities of autonomy, ego-orientation and dominance required by the manhood agenda is placed in the dependent position of the boy child and has to 'deserve' h/er (gender or) money name over and over. Moreover the relation to the general equivalent puts one (one's time) in a situation like that of a commodity brought to the market, and thus interchangeable with any other of the same value. Thus identity is undermined by being made impersonal, and people are placed in a position where it is all the more important to vie with one another to emerge and to be the masculated 'exemplar'. On the other hand, for the successful capitalist, making a lot of money is like 'making a name' for h/himself, which can last after h/his death (and be handed down), in a sort of permanent male identity, fulfilling the masculated agenda's goal of exasperated individuality and the achievement of the 'one' position.

In the definition we have a linguistic structure of substitution at the verbal level, which allows us to freely give each other new words, creating a qualitative and relational similarity between us (as 'possessing' the same words, the same means of verbal gift production). We are receivers and givers of the same gifts. This construction of similarity is transformed into equality between products and money

⁶⁸ Sums might be considered vestigial sentences.

when the definition is transposed onto the material plane.⁶⁹ The commodity on the market and in relation to all other commodities is the '*definiens*' and the money '*definiendum*' is seen as equal to it. Money as a name does not take the place of the commodity as a gift, (as it would if it were a word in language proper) because in exchange, the commodity is not in fact a gift. Nor is money a gift even if it will be given away again in the next exchange. Because of the equality and reciprocal giving not-to-give, no gift value is transmitted by implication from the 'giver' to the 'receiver'. Rather, through the exchange, the value of the commodity and the money are stated and equated, and the over riding importance of the self-interest of both of the exchangers is implied. On the other hand, owning a lot of money causes others to attribute value to the owner because, first, it implies (though not necessarily accurately) that s/he has 'contributed' a lot, and second, because the money gives h/er power-over others. The first of these considerations is not usually true and the second, while it may be true, hypostatizes the idea of power, which as we said above, is actually the ability to determine, even verbally determine by commanding, the gift giving of others.

Exchange does also create a momentary equality between the exchangers who can be categorized together as possessors of the same exchange value. This equality does not attribute gift value to them; it only classifies them as regards their ability to participate in the exchange process. Ostensibly, they only obtain the value of their own commodity in return. However, if one is able to extract a gift from the other in terms of a high price, value as wiliness or power-over is also extracted, not because one has intentionally given to the other, but because the other has *made* h/er give. This value is similar to the power-over given by women to men because of their masculated gender categorization.

From another perspective, the gift that the commodity-*definiens* takes the place of, is the commodity *itself* as it would be if it were used a different way, given as a gift, which is something that could be done

⁶⁹ See the fetishism of commodities, human relations transferred onto relations between objects—Capital.

at any time, just by making that decision.⁷⁰ In fact, the whole complex of relations between commodities and money, *definiens* and *definiendum*, takes the place of products (commodities) as gifts. The decontextualization of the ‘definition’ on the plane of material communication takes the material goods out of the flow of need-satisfying gift giving, and places it in a meta gift position (really a meta economic position if we look at ‘economics’ according to its Greek root which meant ‘care of the home’) which is driven by one collective communicative need, the (socially *created*) need for the money-word. In a process that is still going on, the mode of distribution of the market based on exchange is continually taking the place of the mode of distribution based on gift giving. It is as part of this mode of distribution of exchange that the commodity takes the place of the gift, and money takes the place of the commodity (and that Patriarchy is still taking the place of mother based societies.)⁷¹

Perhaps what we have with the market is a ‘translation’ from the material ‘language’ of gifts to the material ‘language’ of exchange. We could also say that the communicative aspect of the commodity and its physical aspect divide and part ways, in that the money takes the place of the commodity as a communicative device, and re-presents it,—gives it again—in this money form to the next seller and then re-presents the next commodity again to the next seller etc. The circulation of the money-word takes the place of the community-making circulation of gifts that would have happened in a gift economy.⁷² After the commodity is bought, its physical

⁷⁰ That is, leaving aside the consequences that giving it away would have on its owner, due to the scarcity necessary for the system to work. This scarcity imposes a penalty, that is, an exchange, for giving because at the meta or systemic level we have “chosen’ exchange over gift giving, patriarchy over matriarchy.

⁷¹ Heide Gottner-Abendroth has researched matriarchies and hybrid societies, which combine elements of both matriarchy and patriarchy. My point is that Patriarchy cannot completely prevail.

⁷² It would be interesting to compare this circulation of money to the kula of the Trobriand islands (Malinowsky 1922) where gifts circulate in a (psychologically and spiritually) communicative way without this division of the communicative aspect from the physical aspect. Everyone attributes a particular kind of communicative aspect to certain objects, which gives them a spiritual value or hau.

body becomes a use value, but it still does not carry gift implications or pass-throughs, which it would have had if it had been distributed communicatively.

In spite of the repeating patterns of substitution these replacements of gift giving by the market are not permanent nor are they as solid and unchangeable as they seem, because individually exchange can be transformed. Gifts of products, services and money can be directly given and people are doing it all the time in acts of charity, voluntarism, friendship and kindness. They just have to choose to do it. They are also receiving the gifts of perception and giving them as well, as they present themselves to others.

On the broader scale, exchange and the market are actually embedded in a gift giving universe. Moreover the gifts that have been re named 'profit' are the market's reward and motivation. Clarity about the parasitic character of the market together with a validation of gift giving is necessary for social change. This understanding can bring about not only a shift in the paradigm but a behavioral shift towards gift giving as the mode of social and interpersonal distribution. Moreover patriarchy can be modified at both the individual and at the institutional levels as personal and political experiments have shown. We simply need to realize that both the market and patriarchy are the wrong road(s) for us to take as a species of *homo donans*, and not allow ourselves to be convinced by their endless self-similar reflections. We need to stop placing our hopes in a more equitable market and start placing them in a gift economy. The values and patterns of the exchange paradigm are the cause of the problem and they are self-confirming. They will not allow the necessary deep transformations to take place.

As we have been saying, a variety of individual substitutions riddle Patriarchal Capitalism: the masculated male takes the place of the woman and the children, the owner takes the place of the sharer/giver, the adult man takes the place of the giving boy child, the subservient woman is the negative adaptive development of the freely giving girl child and takes her place as an adult. The categorizer takes the place of the giver as a member of the privileged category and receives gifts from h/er. There is also an unacknowledged

privileging of principles, processes and values coming from exchange: substitution (domination), ego-orientation, construction of atomistic relations and subjectivities, equivalence, quantification and definition. All these take the place of (substitute for) principles, processes and values coming from gift giving: other orientation, transitivity, construction of communitary human relations and subjectivities, gift circulations, gift implications or pass-ons of value, the implication of value of the other, as well as of the source, a trajectory of creativity satisfied in the use of the gift by the other(s), problem-solving and social change as gift giving etc. Gift giving promotes a variety of human relations depending on needs and their objects while exchange promotes mainly the masculated needs for possessing, for individuating, for achieving the exemplar position, for dominating in opposition to nurturing and for imposing the superiority of the category of the categorizers.

Patriarchy sometimes plays out as a mixture between the two modes, in that the gift givers are locked within the family where they are dominated by, and required to give to, a patriarchal male. Males assert the right to their 'property' by 'protecting' their wives and children from the dangers caused by other patriarchal males. Once again it is the context of scarcity, competition and plunder that causes the danger. If there were no scarcity there would be no need for competition. If there were no patriarchal males there would be no need for patriarchal males. If there were no patriarchal nations there would be no need for patriarchal nations.

In the market, the kinds of human relations created by the equivalence of values in exchange are abstract and focused to such an extent that they conceal the kinds of relations we might have in a society of generalized nurturing. Those relations would depend on the concrete qualitative differences of all the kinds of material and immaterial goods and services given and received, human needs that would develop in accordance with the varieties of their satisfactions, and personalities that would develop with the free satisfaction of each others' needs in this way. It is not surprising that there is a longing for the gift mode throughout society, a hunger for free gifts and for the relations of trust and sensitivity to others' needs that

would be necessary for gift circulation and gift based communities.

Unfortunately patriarchy and the exchange paradigm have conspired against gift giving throughout the history of the spread of capitalism, finally resulting in the globalization of Capitalist Patriarchy where countries and corporate entities with the manhood agenda, practice patriarchy on a social rather than an individual scale, so that the one country or corporation achieves dominance over the many, making them nurture 'him'. Relations of trust become 'unrealistic' and sensitivity to others appears to be a laughable sentimentalism, while these macro patriarchal entities are parasitically consuming the gifts of all.

Categorization: a mechanism of oppression

Beyond the market, language continues to take the place of material gift giving in communication but does not supplant it. In fact material gift giving continues alongside language and alongside the distorted communicative mechanism of the market. Probably in the individual personality, gift relations also continue to some extent. The inner child survives within the adult, the sharer within the skinflint, the mother within the patriarch. Gift giving in language maintains us as givers and receivers at that level even when we are immersed in the ego oriented and self reflecting practice of exchange. In fact when we practice gift giving in daily life, our material subjectivity aligns with our linguistic subjectivity.

We learn about substitution by doing it with language where it is positive and necessary. When 'linguistic' substitution is incarnated in the other areas, such as patriarchy and the market, it can become the main mechanism of oppression, but it is nevertheless confirmed and validated by its still-healthy linguistic roots. Exchange for money is an incarnated definition process that has mushroomed and expanded out of all proportion, enveloping an enormous area of human relations. It is as if a distorted cellular process had grown to take over the whole body. Exchange is not only very odd, but it is extremely toxic to our gift-based humanity and the Earth. Nevertheless the definition and naming validate it and vice versa.

The transposition of mechanisms of the definition/naming onto the material level also retro-resonate in a self-similar way with the linguistic structures from which they descended. The definition and naming as used in verbal categorization are continually validated by their harmonics with the material-level practice of exchange, which has descended from them. Exchange for money categorizes products as commodities rather than gifts and categorizes them also as having specific quantitative values. This process of categorization also constitutes the transformation of gifts into commodities. Performed as a part of daily life and as an important mediation of human interaction, the monetary categorization of products as commodities, emphasizes and legitimates defining and categorizing generally. Thus categorization and membership in categories have become not only a way of life—where we find our identities as members of professional categories, and classes, races, religions, nationalities and of course genders—but the ability to categorize is used as the interpretative key for all our thinking. The qualitative creativity of the process of gift giving is simply not seen though it crosses all these categories and they are embedded in it (just as the market is embedded in gift giving.) This is particularly important now as the commodification of previously gift based areas of life makes evident the losses people sustain when gifts are transformed into commodities through restricted access and legally enforced categorization. Gifts can be received by those who use them and pass them on or by those who seize them as their own property. The categorization of gifts as private property is put on the same footing as the reception and use of gifts, because there is not yet a recognition of gift-giving as such. Like women, gifts are somewhere beyond (privileged) categorization.

Value Commons

Exchange is material definition—it uses the same definitional processes somewhat rearranged—and functions according to the substitution of the general material word-exemplar, money, for commodities. Since nothing is actually given consciously in the

transaction, there is no gift relation as such between persons (except the gift of no gift) in an equal exchange (because the exchange cancels the would-have-been gift).

The value which each person held, and which was proven to exist as a value through the exchange process may, after the moment of exchange, be squandered, destroyed, re sold, reinvested, consumed, while the words that are successfully transmitted through definitions usually remain in the minds of the listeners implying at least an abstract similarity among the members of the community of speakers and listeners, as possessors of the same gift-making ability (competence) for producing linguistic 'values' in relation to the world as a gift, a value 'commons', full of immanent, potential and actual gifts and gift relations. The qualitative equality of the exchangers as holders of the same quantitative value is used only to transfer goods from the hand of one to the hand of the other without giving. The relation between exchangers to their products and money is much poorer than their relation as communicators to the immanent gift world. The value commons to which the exchangers refer is only exchange value, the commons of the uncommon, the sharing of the not-to-be shared. Since they are still speaking even though they are for the most part caught in market relations, they still refer to the world as valuable but do not recognize it in this way. The category of everything that is on the market, is shared by the community only in its knowledge of the reciprocally related prices of commodities expressed in money. The sorting process of the market using the money definition, de facto leaves the value-attributing gift out of the exchange value 'commons'. Thus by its very process, it *automatically* creates a collective denial of the value of gift giving.

Exchange is like the musical theme of communication played backwards at the material level while that theme is still being played forwards at the linguistic level. We do not stop communicating linguistically so we do continue to create a perceptual gift-commons and relatively similar linguistically mediated—gift based—subjectivities while at the same time the logical pattern of exchange on the material level produces an effect which is the opposite of

communication, an effect of separation rather than unity, individual independence and indifference rather than sharing, adversarial positions rather than cooperation. (If we were doing more or only gift giving at the material level we would be creating material common grounds and subjectivities which would correspond or align with our verbal common ground creations and subjectivities). Nevertheless, since nearly everyone is exchanging, a similarity of independent actors is created. This similarity results in another kind of categorization—first as exchangers—similar to each other in this as opposed to those who are not exchangers. Second, exchangers are categorized as such while participating in work for the market, but their activities are classified differently when they are participating in the domestic sphere. Third they are classified quantitatively as exchangers at a certain level of value, from the highest-paid-richest to the lowest-poorest—as evidenced also in the quantity and quality of their possessions, by which they are identified as belonging to social classes. Then there are classifications having to do with the qualitatively different kinds of work done for exchange, from professions to trades, to salaried labor, to menial jobs.

The emphasis on categorization according to similarity, which derives from the exchange of similar quantitative values, creates the emphasis on the deep identity logic of classificatory epistemology. Instead a more appropriate epistemology could be based on the logic of the satisfaction of needs at all levels, from perceptual, to material and linguistic gift giving-and-receiving communication.

Epistemology and gender: Knowledge as gratitude

Theories of value that eliminate or diminish the importance of gift giving usually consider nurturing as imposed by instinct (or duty), thus taking away the need for a response of gratitude towards gifts and givers. ‘Essentialism’ is a kind of ‘folk’ theory of value of this sort. Considering mothering as ‘instinctual’ seems to eliminate the need for gratitude towards mothers. Moreover, without gratitude for gifts, knowledge of them is less motivated, more instrumental and more

consonant with the manhood agenda. Gratitude is a response of the receiver who can welcome gifts in their specificity while maintaining a warmth of feeling towards their source. Knowledge as we know it can be seen as a response of this kind that takes place in denial of the gift. When no value is given to gift giving and receiving, the response is neutralized, narrowed down, without the emotion, as is our 'objective' knowledge. From this point of view, *Homo sapiens* is actually a derivative of *homo donans*. S/he is just *homo donans* (and *recipiens*) in denial.⁷³

Knowledge from which gift giving and receiving have been deleted, registers the gift as a not-gift. Within the exchange paradigm knowledge functions according to the logical pattern of acquisition and possession⁷⁴ together with a sexual metaphor of 'penetration of mysteries' where the woman who is penetrated is considered as an object, that is, not able to report reliably about the gifts of her own experience and therefore mysterious. Knowledge in this guise is similar to the penetration of colonial explorers into foreign lands or of troops behind enemy lines. Such metaphors do not cast the knowers or penetrators as receivers, but present them as having achieved their penetration due to their own intelligence, wiliness or force. They 'deserve' their knowledge while what they penetrate is supposedly 'unconscious'.

Moreover, in the exchange mentality, gratitude for gifts may be interpreted as an exchange. From the point of view of the gift paradigm, gratitude is not exchange but is a response to gifts that is helpful in forming the receivers' ongoing relationship to the givers in circulating gifts. In knowledge as we know it in the exchange paradigm, the relationship to the giver is not acknowledged but is transformed into an emotionally attenuated relationship to one's surroundings. This type of knowledge serves not to prepare the receiver to participate in the

⁷³ Is this division of gratitude and knowledge perhaps the original sin? By disobeying God and eating the apple, Adam and Eve demonstrated a lack of gratitude, which effectively changed their knowledge, deleting the gift. Later they could not be grateful because they were punished.

⁷⁴ This pattern is similar to Vygotsky's family name complex, not yet a concept because there is no common quality among the properties except the fact that they are owned by someone, that is related as many to one in h/er regard.

circulation of gifts, but to prepare h/er to participate in exchange. Without gratitude there is an indifference (or even hostility) towards the source, which does not prompt receivers to use the gift well or to imitate the source by giving again to others. Nor does s/he bond with the source, whether it is seen as a person or as a state or condition. Because of the ego orientation of exchange and the equivalence of the equation of value, the source of the commodity is unrecognized and attention is concentrated on the dyad of exchangers. No gift value given by a source is implied. The producer of the commodity may be exploited in a sweatshop in the South but that is of no concern to the exchangers in the North.

Without gratitude there can also be less emotional attachment to the objects, an attachment which might keep us from us alienating them, and less sense of responsibility to care for them. On the other hand, our desire to become the 'one' or exemplar with regard to the many can make us greedy and can extend to acquisition of knowledge, the possession of many notions and capacities. Thus we seem to be able to achieve the detachment and independence that the masculated agenda requires. We only think we get what *we* 'give' or 'deserve' while we actually are already receiving from many others and giving to them in unsuspected ways, immersed in a flow of gifts.

The response of gratitude is altered if it is imposed as an exchange or a duty, and many resent the gratitude they are supposed to feel towards others for their gifts, thus changing the character of the relationship, infusing it with the patterns of exchange such as guilt, the onerous obligation to pay back, even revenge. (No good deed ever goes unpunished.) Theories of value, which are based on exchange and the market do not recognize⁷⁵ gift giving in a program-

⁷⁵ Recognition can be a kind of gratitude but it is also a cognate of exchange, as a self reflecting process having to do with equating—possibly equating an item with an equivalent as part of a category (sort of 'this is one of those')- as in pricing and exchange for the general equivalent. Recognition as categorization takes the place of recognition as gratitude. Categorization is as we have said above, similar to the 'complex' of ownership. So called 'open source' internet technology which is now also seen as gift economy is becoming assimilated to exchange as a 'recognition' economy.

matic way (they are not grateful for gift giving). Such theories keep patriarchy in place, in the same way that theories of value, which eliminate or are unconscious of gift giving, keep class in place. They eliminate or rename the sources of gifts so that they are hidden, unknown or unrecognizable as such.

A similar thing can be said about the attribution of the source of gifts to non human mechanical processes for which we are not expected to be grateful, such as biological processes, ie brain functions and hormonal interactions, from our knowledge of which the notion of gift giving has also been deleted, by the exchange paradigm. Since seen in these terms the source gives only biologically, for example, through genetic inheritance, we do not need to be grateful to it. The kind of penetrating knowledge that we turn upon it sometimes also disrespects what has already been given and intervenes to alter it so as to make it better. Rather than passing the gift on, we appear to be remaking it, so that we seem to ourselves to be the original creative giving “ones.”

The denial of gratitude

The low costs of oil production (see below) and control of access to the source of oil, create a situation in which the many give a great quantity of gifts to the few oil producers in the price of all petroleum based products. According to the gift logic, the gifts of the many to the oil producers should create a relationship. But the oil owners, like most other capitalists, do not see it that way. The gifts are invisible and the extra money they receive is attributed to the ‘fact’ that oil itself is ‘valuable’. It has a use value, it is objectively scarce, and it therefore has a high exchange value. The oil owner thus does not engage in a relationship of gratitude towards the many for their gifts. This denial of gratitude turns the owners away from knowledge of the gifts and the givers. Thus theories of value that eliminate the consideration of gift giving actually function to create class differences by shielding the owners from gratitude towards others and thus from knowledge and from relationship with the many

who have given to them.⁷⁶ In this way a defective epistemology has an important influence on practice, and changing the theory to understand knowledge and value differently, including gift giving and gratitude, could have important consequences for consciousness and political change.

A theory of value that eliminates gift giving does not give value to the gifts of women and diminishes gratitude towards women and recognition of them, at the same time over valuing the (post masculated) gifts of men and of the process of exchange. This allows men to maintain the stance of power-over, dominance and the flow of gifts in their direction and the market to maintain its hegemony. Women's gratitude towards men, for their work in the market as providers, keeps the men *over known*. Women are often seen in their relationship to men as inferior or dependent receivers (of the salary as means of giving) rather than as givers to the men and children. They acknowledge and know the men while in many cases men consider the services of women as due them—as an exchange—and thus do not experience gratitude for them or much knowledge of them (they *under know* them). Their relationship becomes limited and it is the woman who nurtures and maintains it. (Similarly the market is over known and gift giving under known. The givers give to the market but do not realize that is what they are doing.)

Gift giving and exchange are interlocking logics and we need to understand them as such rather than framing gift giving as a moral issue, as altruism, and exchange as a sort of alternative to altruism, a morality of justice, equality, equilibrium. We are caught in the interactions, contradictions and paradoxes of the coexistence of these two paradigms, both of which are operative at many different levels in society, and the interaction of which perhaps even *creates* many of the different levels.

⁷⁶ I Locating the givers in places far from the receivers also diminishes occasions for gratitude. Thus the South/North divide allows the North to ignore the gifts that it has received from the South and to 'know' what is happening there only intellectually if at all. Vice versa people in the South are made to consume the culture of the North and its models.

The logic of substitution and the logic of gift giving are both necessary in language where they function together in a positive way to create communication and community. The substitution of a verbal gift for a material gift and the substitution of a verbal gift for another verbal gift also create the possibility of levels of substitutions of substitutions. That process of substitution of substitutions is then used again by the market to create a material level of mutual exclusion and not giving, where exchange for the general equivalent substitutes for gift giving in bridging the gap between ego oriented exchangers. At another level, tools and technology substitute for our bodies in many capacities but they are used to produce goods for the market not for gift giving (though they could be). At most, the gift aspects can still be seen within the production process itself where one kind of product is combined with another, or fed into a machine, and there is a programmed co operation among the workers. All of the new levels⁷⁷ created by the intertwining of the two logics are influenced by masculation, creating a very complex web indeed.

The construction of common ground

Perception can be understood as common ground if it is not preparation for exchange. Even if we can't know if others' subjective sensations are the same as ours, that is, we can believe that the perceptual gifts and the 'giver'—the external world—are the same. Of course the world is considered more as a giver when we project the mother on it, less when we take her away. Like sisters (a word that can include all unmasculated humans), we could all have common access to the mother and her gifts, a common access, which would imply and require the ability to relate the world to others (through

⁷⁷ Other examples include, as we have been saying, the home which supports the market where free housework is channeled through salaried work into profit. The market takes the place of the home as the model for human relations and value. Another example is that of the arts which can be considered gifts to the receivers but are now highly commercialized. The reproduced image now takes the place of the individual work of art. Advertising and propaganda take the place of person to person truthful communication, etc. etc.

language) uncompetitively. We attribute (give) reality to the common ground that satisfies the basic need we all have for perceptual stimulation. When our receptivity increases regarding something or our need for it intensifies, its gift character intensifies. It calls out to our attention, our creative receptivity. We use language to elicit the creative receptivity of others regarding it, if we think it has not already been elicited. That is, we give them word-gifts satisfying the communicative needs we attribute to them (or guess or recognize that they have). In this way we construct common relations to the external and internal world as a gift and a given, something we share at the level of language and perception, a communicative commons, and the basis of a conscious co-muni-ty.

Most of us grow up in homes, in environments, which are modified by the deep daily tending of women. Any philosopher who tries to put h/erself into relation with pure immediacy has to abstract from the work of others upon that environment, as well as from the work of child rearing, socialization and the variety of experience that has brought h/er to that place of immediacy in the moment.⁷⁸ Housework creates the common ground of homes, which function as a sort of perceptual capsule or bubble for young children. From the beginning this bubble is shared, at least with the mother.

As adults making a philosophical experiment, we can hold in abeyance all our experience, language, our relation to others, but this is a very limited and circumscribed 'zen' moment with many alternatives, which we can access at any time. The focus on the ego and the mutual exclusion of private property perhaps makes us feel that we should begin our discussion of 'being' from this artificially 'uncommon' unmediated position. However even when we are in more or less direct contact with nature we bring with us the textures of our socialization.

Access to land as common ground is denied by private property and thus there are many perceptions that are denied especially to poor people. The gardens behind the walls of the rich, or the goods

⁷⁸ Thus *cogito ergo sum* is wrong. It is not by thinking that we exist but by being cared for by a mother.

behind store windows that say “look but don’t touch” are instances of perceptual experiences that are denied to the many. The privatization and destruction of the commons also denies the perceptual commons with the consequence that some things will not ever enter into the perceptual ground of most people. The river of pure water that was once the source of life for many has been privatized or polluted and drained, while the people who live alongside it now have to buy drinking water from corporations. The fish that were the mainstay of life have disappeared and children whose ancestors had fish as a daily diet may never taste (perceive) one. Traditional notions and practices of husbandry (ways of transforming the environment into material gifts), which were passed down free from generation to generation have been commodified and privatized. The wisdom of the past is no longer a common source of gifts for the livelihood or even the perceptual commons of the next generations.

Using language we construct the common ground of perception and experience as we explore topics. We share experiences ideas and information, that is, we give them to and receive them from each other. Sharing requires giving and receiving. Giving and receiving are its active principles.⁷⁹ In conversation, we contribute to a shared topic which then appears as a common ground and common source. Topics are not always free but can be requisitioned and controlled by specialization, academic authority or by propaganda and lies, which falsify future contributions. There is a continuity of common topic and common ground in the sense of shared property, and common construction of reality through shared perception and linguistic and material mediation. The world around us, the elements, the gifts of life, and the gifts of culture, tradition and history are common ground from which we collectively make our material, and in a mediated way our psychological, subjectivities. At the same time we use our experience as mediated by language and other sign systems, to create a construction of reality as a common ground from which our psychological, and in a mediated way our material, subjectivity arises.

⁷⁹ Partnership societies, as described by Riane Eisler require the ability to practice the gift logic.

When either or both levels of these common grounds are modified, there is a modification in the subjectivity of the interactors. Thus the privatization of the material commons has an effect on the psychology of the participants as well as on their material well being. Vice versa the alteration of the common construction of reality by eliminating some perceptions—such as the rivers of clean water which were previously available as gifts for all—has a negative effect not only on the material well being of the whole population but also on their psychological subjectivity. The common topics, collective elaborations of discourse regarding the rivers are altered and polluted by the lies of corporations and government. On the other hand, the topic of water can no longer be treated as neutral. An apolitical poetic discourse on water becomes compromised as part of the denial of the privatization now taking place. The ‘commons’ of the topic of water is undermined and divided as lies are used to hide the devastating theft that is being carried out by the corporations who rewrite their take-over as “for the public benefit.” Only the truth, which is sometimes difficult to discover, can actually provide the common ground that can serve the many for the conduct of their lives and the creation of community. There is a continuity between the common ground of the truth and the commons of the gifts of nature and culture. Those who believe the lies often do not have access to the informational or material wherewithal with which to sustain themselves and their families. On the other hand, the subjectivity of the liar or propagandist becomes distorted and disaligned from its gift giving basis,⁸⁰ a condition which leads to still more lies.

Masculation and categorization

Because exchange is so pervasive in our society and gift giving is unseen, exchange re broadcasts its backwards communicative logic,

⁸⁰ Lying, we rationalize and save our self respect by considering that we are satisfying commercial needs, for example the need for advertising in a competitive market. Constructing a reality in which the market is normal and the common source of goods allows us to look at its needs as primary and to function as gift givers of a sort, by satisfying *its* needs. Similarly with political propaganda.

structure and values into society at large and also into our idea of communication...which we begin to read AS exchange. This has the effect of further excluding gift giving from our consciousnesses and we look at language as one among a number of *sui generis* abstract sign systems (based in concrete biological processes, hard wired into our brains) used for neutered, seemingly de gendered categorization, in which gift giving—and mothering—still have no part. Moreover words and the definition/naming process (influenced by the definition process incarnated in exchange) become tools in the hands of those who divide and conquer, categorize, devalue, over value. In short, they become verbal tools of domination, finally coming full circle again every time a boy child is born, in the continued use of these tools for the categorization of the boy as a non-female, non-nurturing and superior categorizer while at the same time categorizing women and the 'other' generally as inferior. We think categorization is neuter when in fact it arrogates the categorizer role to the human exemplar, who is usually male and is validating the values of hierarchy and competition to be placed in the category of exemplars. This is particularly visible in the star syndrome mentioned above.

In this framework there is no place for a view of the world as the common ground of community; the motion is all centrifugal, like fragments of matter escaping from the Big Bang. What remains of the sense of community comes from categorizing oneself as 'one of those' whether this is gender, class, ethnicity, culture, religion, nation or even locale, school, job or astrological sign. We share common qualities or common properties with others who are like us but we do not have a sense of constructing our commonalities on the basis of giving and receiving in a shared reality. We understand our minds as private just as we understand our property as private (independently varying, individually containing more or less). A source of gifts external to us is rarely acknowledged and the construction of common ground is not even imagined even though we are doing it. In fact we are mostly constructing a reality of not-givers, indifferent to others' needs, on the basis of the commons of the un common.

Our needs to know are altered by the market. What we want to know about is modified, because anything that might make a profit

becomes relevant, a possible gift to us. The common ground of socially constructed reality is also altered because a need to know about everything comes from the market. What is new is given more value by advertisers and consumers. Moreover the change in productivity of new means of production with respect to previous ones allows the production of the same commodities with less cost to the capitalist. Knowledge is sellable. The products of this sellable knowledge applied, have transformed everything, our landscapes, weather, agriculture, workforce etc. New needs have been created in order to sell new products developed through the extension of knowledge. The saleability of knowledge takes it away from other needs. it satisfies the needs of the market, and thus limits the kinds of things we explore. We are used to needing to know about everything and thus ignore the specific needs to know that might inform our understanding of the world as a gift. If knowledge is a form of gratitude, market based knowledge is de natured because, like other market based interactions, it denies the gift and gratitude for the gift. Intellectual property rights, the seizure of the traditional knowledge commons, are the logical outcome of the encroachment of the market upon gift giving.

Masculation and exchange

Exchange derives from the definition and naming but it also has roots in masculation, the relegation of the male child to a non-nurturing category. Masculation is in its turn a process influenced by the definition and naming of the boy as male. Thus there are two main roots of exchange, one deriving from language directly and the other deriving from a widespread construction of gender, which is deeply influenced by linguistic processes.

As the programmatically non-nurturing 'signified' of the signifier 'male' the boy is expected to become adequate to his name (differently from other signifieds, for which we simply change the signifiers if they are not appropriate). This expectation becomes an agenda or life script, which includes his achieving similarity with the father as well as finally himself taking over the exemplar position in his own family or among other men, with the possibility and

privilege of becoming a categorizer, categorizing others as he has himself been categorized. In economic exchange this manhood agenda of competition and the attempt to become the 'one' is displaced onto the classification of commodities according to different quantitative values from less to more as expressed in money. Money is a material word/exemplar (and categorizer) that can be owned and can be practically infinitely increased, demonstrating the quantifiable 'superiority of its owner. The idea that more is better is instilled in children as incitement to grow 'up' and there is also a phallic aspect, having to do with the comparison between the boy's genitals and the father's.

The market is infused with the competitive values of masculation. Like the male identity, it is an area of life constructed in opposition to gift giving. Instead in matriarchal (Abendroth-Gottner 2004) groups outside patriarchy and the market, ego orientation, competition, greed (having more, being bigger) and domination can be less emphasized because they are not the 'masculine' characteristics upon which males' ability to be similar to a paternal exemplar and to each other, depends. Rather community can be continually constructed through gift giving, and 'maternal' values prevail.

Knowledge and gender

In a market based society, the importance of categorization, influenced by exchange as well as by binary gender socialization, re infects male children, and the importance of 'equality with the standard' coming from the market re emphasizes masculation and therefore categorization. The tail of the snake slides into its mouth, and the effect (the market) feeds its cause (masculation). However because of the importance of the principle of equality for the market and the fact that women have become efficient market actors, masculation is undergoing a crisis. The gender roles have now been somewhat altered because they have been shown in practice to be independent from biological differences. Success in the marketplace does not depend upon physiological masculinity. In the market, the

manhood agenda can be carried out equally well by men, by women, and even by corporate entities. This reality check has had the effect of abstracting the manhood agenda and displacing the values of masculation onto other aspects of the collective⁸¹—that is, onto the relations of classes with other classes, countries with other countries, corporations with each other and with their workers, markets and resources, cultures of dominance with each other and with cultures of giving, dominant races with each other and with dominated races, religions of dominance with each other etc. Individuals within these different classifications can relate in more or less masculated ways to each other⁸² while remaining classified collectively as ‘male’, i.e., superior and non nurturing—according to their national identity, for example. Thus, being a US citizen, while it is a purely geopolitical classification, can also provide the collective ‘superior’ identity that dominates others in war and business even when the individual concerned is a woman or a non macho male who does not dominate anyone. Paradoxically the fact that his group carries out the manhood agenda perhaps makes it less necessary for the individual male to do so at a personal level. What is important is that he be part of a class that behaves in a dominant, competitive, accumulative and aggressive way. His need for a masculated gender identity is satisfied by belonging to a class or national or perhaps corporate identity, which performs successfully according to the values of the manhood agenda. Conversely when the category is behaving subserviently, as when a class is exploited or a nation has been defeated or colonized (or even just attacked), the macho agenda may appear more necessary for individuals. Perhaps this is the basis of terrorism, whether carried out by individuals, or by states. In both cases hypermasculinity (see also Ducat 2004) is the culprit.

⁸¹ The desire for women to go back to the home is perhaps a reaction to the loss of this automatic, because physiologically identified, male superiority. In fact the displacement into other projections of superiority requires still more effort to carry out behaviors and agendas.

⁸² And they can participate as individuals in the many hierarchies available to them, in the military, the church, the law, education, government and business, to achieve their livelihoods and their masculine identities.

When women witness the power, authority, freedom and liveliness of the manhood agenda, it appears superior to the subservient role to which they have been previously allocated and they can now choose to take on the manhood values⁸³ or join organizations like the military in support of their own success and of their country's 'masculinity'. Suffice it to say that subservience is the complementary role to dominance and without the one the other would fail. Thus though women's taking up the manhood agenda, whether directly or as actors in the military, the market or other aspects of patriarchal Capitalism, demonstrates that those values are not biologically determined and may liberate some women to dominate, it does not create the social change necessary to liberate everyone from domination. Rather it perpetuates the complementary roles, displacing them onto other areas and institutionalizing them, and it promotes masculation by imitation, the surest form of flattery.

Reapplying the incarnated definition of exchange

In thinking about language we usually concentrate on the aspects of the definition and naming having to do with substitution and the assertion of equality, while we continue to do gift giving unconsciously, without recognizing that is what it is. Substitution and the assertion of equality are also aspects of quantification underlying the exchange process and they extend to many disciplines from formal logic to mathematics. The more we concentrate as a

⁸³ It is not useful to deny the differences in males and females when they are already adult, while at the same time constructing them as different when they are children. The institutionalized patriarchal structures also continue to create difference, violence and exploitation by repeating the patterns of the early socialization into gender. Promoting the equality of men and women according to the masculated model hides the root of the problem, which is the socialization of males into a category, which is the binary opposite of the mother. At the same time it discredits gift giving and focuses our hearts and minds on patriarchal market values. The solution to the problem is a return to gift giving for all and the socialization of both genders in that direction. As we do this we need to recognize the defects of masculation and the market and begin to peacefully dismantle the institutions that carry them.

society on the relations of substitution and equality and leave aside gift giving, the more they actually take the place of gift giving, that is, they displace gift giving as the principle of human relations. Thus for example, we do not see giving and receiving as creating a relation but we look for quantitative relations among things, assessing them according to their size or weight, as independently corresponding, proportional or varying. As far as relations among people are concerned we acknowledge primarily the categories they belong to and we focus on quantitatively constrained 'economic' relations based on the obligation to reciprocate, debt, deserving, justice and injustice, all of which aim at an equalization of independent entities, with punishments (exchanges) for non compliance ranging from loss of 'face' to loss of livelihood, to loss of life. The extension over time of debt and obligation appears as the most important kind of bond, as if people who freely gave to and received from each other were not related, and would not continue to give to and receive from each other without constraint. Thus paradoxically there appear to be no human relations that are undertaken freely without fear of punishment or self-interested hope of reward, while perhaps the only time one is 'free' is when s/he is alone—a situation that fits well with individual ego dominance. In this way a world view in which patriarchy, domination and submission, the denial and appropriation of the gifts of the many, violence, war, environmental devastation all appear to be the only possible shared 'reality', is continually validated.

Like patterns of gift giving aligned at different levels, from the material interpersonal, to the verbal, to the interverbal (syntax), to perceptual levels, which we spoke of above, self similar patterns of exchange also align at different levels and validate each other. The substitution of exchange for gift giving, which coincides with its own principle (of substitution), structures the exchange paradigm. Exchange is substituted for both linguistic gift giving and material gift giving. The principle of equivalence is denied by this substitution of exchange for gift giving at the level of paradigms however, because exchange is not seen as equivalent to anything it is substituting (since gift giving is invisible or discredited). Rather it seems to stand alone

as *the* standard human interaction. The market economy appears to be the superior or more developed economic mode, which rightly conquers so called 'primitive' less successful economies, which have not yet taken up the more 'evolved' form. The same overcoming continues to take place within the exchange paradigm at the individual level, as the exchange ways 'supercede' the care giving ways in each individual life. Women can achieve equality with men, if they give up gift giving, which has been discredited by patriarchy and take up the more evolved form of the market.

The values of patriarchy as expressed in the violence of military attack also 'supercede' the community-creating values present in linguistic interaction, as dialogue is replaced by war. The substitution of one way of interacting for the other is itself another expression of patriarchy, it being more 'male' to attack on the material level, to 'give them what's coming to them', what they 'deserve' than to resolve problems by dialogue and diplomacy. Substitution itself, invested with the motives of patriarchy, becomes over-taking, domination and finally even killing. The system based on exchange invested with patriarchal motivations, thus provides the ideological matrix for war. While trade may seem to be a more peaceful kind of interaction than war, it actually sets up the exchange-and-retaliation logic from which wars derive. The principle of substitution substitutes itself for gift-giving and one nation substitutes itself for another, dominating the other nation's territory and people and transforming their property into free gifts, which it claims and plunders for itself.

Colonial powers export the market as the acme of civilization, a gift to 'savages' many of whom were living in gift economies. It is not only the transposed 'gift' of violence and superior phallic technology but the denial of gift giving and its logic that allow the Patriarchal Capitalist societies to take over in this way. Creatures of exchange, colonialists simply carry out its logic because they are alienated from their gift based subjectivities, oppressors of the women they live with and practicing at most a morality also based on exchange. There is no moral appeal that can check them and indeed they are rewarded materially by the wealth they manage to take and

the exemplar position they manage to achieve for themselves and their country. For those engaged in war, compassion is considered weakness. Other orientation is contained within the squad or division as soldierly teamwork, camaraderie, loyalty and heroism, polarized against the violence and hatred given to the enemy. A conscience built upon the exchange paradigm does not fetter male violence but often even justifies it, as our tragic history of genocides attests.

My thesis, which is surprising in this context, is that altruism is the basic economic (and human) motivation. It is being altered towards exchange and both individual and collective self interest and war by masculation, however, to such an extent that it is no longer visible. Patriarchal capitalism is like a huge growth that covers up an originally healthy face. No mirror reveals its ugliness however because we consider it normal. We cannot imagine ourselves without it.

Gift giving when it is seen at all, appears to be part of the private sphere, and is considered an instinctual gender tendency, a duty or an individual preference rather than a part of 'economic reality'.⁸⁴ The definitional and naming side of language has evolved—or devolved—into law, accompanied by hierarchy. The principles based on the definition and naming are used to regulate the behavior of self-interest in the absence of a validation of gift based consciousness. As the original logic of a practice that underlies both economics and language, both material and linguistic communication, gift giving functions according to values of other orientation. Thus a morality, which is identified with other-orientation is not originally a separate area. It is an aspect of gift giving, which has to do with the transmission of value to the other, the prioritization of the satisfaction of needs, and the recognition of needs of all kinds not only basic needs but, for example, psychological needs such as the need to be respected, or the need for independence, which may at times take precedence over material needs.

⁸⁴ Yet authors like Richard Titmuss () have written about the 'economic feasibility' of altruism.

Because of the ideology of exchange and the denial of gift giving, morality splits off from gift giving and becomes an independent area, the privileged province of patriarchal philosophy, law and religion.

Now, what we know as morality tries to restore a 'balance' of other-orientation in an ego-oriented market-and-patriarchy-based system, and to regulate behavior according to exchange principles such as justice, equality and autonomy. The best it can do is to in this endeavor is to contain some of the most damaging aspects of the exchange based behavior. However it never achieves a transformation, as every victory is only temporary and the usual progression of events is one step forward and two steps back. Our present systems of morals cannot regulate our globalizing behavior. As corporations encroach there is nothing to stop them. Morality as we know it is just not enough. The only really moral thing to do is to shift the paradigm towards gift giving.

Answers to the problems created by Capitalist Patriarchy have continued to be proposed from within Capitalist Patriarchy in laws and systems of ethics, which are themselves based on market principles of definition/naming, and exchange. The way out is to look at the 'other' of definition and exchange, the flow of speech and the flow of gifts and to bring the gift giving, which is already present into focus. In fact if gift giving were recognized as the human logic and practiced consciously beyond exchange, we would bring material and verbal communication back into alignment individually and collectively, and morality would no longer be necessary to regulate behavior. The needs that we now see as having to do with justice, equality and autonomy would be satisfied in other ways by gift giving and its values.

PART FIVE



**Some
Applications**

Going beyond the rights discourse

Recently it has become common to appeal to human rights as the way to achieve a better world. However the rights discourse is based upon law, which is based upon patriarchal categorization. We have seen how categorization has been infected by over privileging some people because they are in the category 'male' rather than the category 'female' (or the category 'white' rather than those of other races etc). Rights are a variation upon this privileging by categorization. For example, citizen's rights are guarantees, which are supposed to be given to those who are in the category 'citizen'. The rationale for the rights discourse is not based on gift giving even though those championing rights intend to satisfy needs by solving problems and protecting the many from injustice. These are gift-giving intentions but framed as they are within the exchange paradigm they can never go far enough to reach their goals.

The values of Patriarchy that drive the system, continually recreate the violence that the law is called upon to regulate. Meanwhile the law itself derives from the same values and the same system and is functional to the system's continuation. This appeal to something other than violence is necessary for the system to function smoothly. Recently the situation has changed as, with globalization, the North increases its domination upon the South. The rule of law in the North does not impede its perpetration of lawless violence against the South. The logic seems to be that a parenthesis can be put around the lawful activity of countries and corporations of the North, and outside that parenthesis those entities can be lawless. The strongest of them can also be autonomously lawless. Indeed the growing body of international law is being used to frame their violent and exploitative behavior as lawful.⁸⁵ By

⁸⁵ See for example the laws being set by the international TRIPS agreements (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights).

imposing the premise that international law must regulate the internal activities of countries of the South, these countries have been made to accept the Northern patriarchal socio-economic parasite's plunder of their gifts. While the rule of just law would be better than the rule of plunder, the two are linked together because they both arise from the same paradigm.

What we need is a different rationale, a way of justifying, validating and creating kindness, not just a way of (occasionally) containing the systemic violence that continues to be created at all levels. This requires a long-term view because in the short term terrible injustices continue to be perpetrated and our remaining gift values require that we defend against those injustices, using whatever means we have at our disposition. Thus paradoxically it is once again our very practice of gift values within the exchange paradigm that keeps us from recognizing and validating the gift paradigm.

Perhaps the category 'human rights' seems to be broad enough to include gift giving. We might almost paradoxically say that as *homo donans* we have a human right to practice a gift economy.⁸⁶ At present however, legislation seems to be the only appeal for the injured.

As far as rights are concerned, the free uncategorized area (of gifts) is ignored and the battle is fought on the terrain of the legal system of the perpetrators of plunder. Women have often been undefined and ignored. Perhaps we can recognize the value of that external position. Unseen gifts can at least continue to provide sustenance for life unopposed if there is some access to the means of giving. The hazy background in which many of us stand cannot be understood by resorting to the definitions (and the commodification), which destroy it. Instead if we validate and embrace this background we must

⁸⁶ This might derive from freedom of choice, and we could say we have a right to practice a sort of maternal anarchy in which rights are unnecessary because the very patterns of behavior deriving from gift giving and receiving are community oriented as are the subjectivities developed by the participants. On the other hand the issue of freedom of choice serves the market in its concentration on the freedom to choose which products to buy.

leave aside our reliance on categorization and recognize that the gift processes that constitute it are continually creating our selves and our environment as we know it, in that we are all consciously or unconsciously receivers of its givens.

Equality and self-interest

Both exchange and gift giving are processes, which not only distribute goods, but generate human relations and identities. The kind of identity fostered by exchange is atomistic and *self-interested*, denying connection (and denying the gifts it receives). It has no 'essence' but a common lack of connection and it asserts exasperated individualism as a value. Such self interested individualism and lack of connection, as well as relations having to do only with contingent though very common circumstances such as women's oppression by men, appear to be the contrary of a defective and false female essence based on nurturing. The values of individualism and self-interest are not sufficient to form the core of a social movement, which can counteract and change patriarchy on a large scale however. Indeed they are patriarchy's and capitalism's own values.

In fact both essentialism itself and the critique of essentialism come from an exchange paradigm position. Academic and business feminism sometimes propose the same individualistic even atomistic values of self-interest (every man for himself, every group for itself) in opposition to essentialism that Capitalist patriarchy proposes in opposition to gift giving. This is perhaps the limit of liberation *through* the market, that most women who are thus 'liberated' cannot imagine existence *outside* the market. Moreover, the kinder alternative values of women are seen as individual differences or differences coming from different cultures. By seeing these differences as the superstructure of a different economic mode, however, biological essentialism is circumvented and the individualism coming from the market is not proposed as the alternative.

Success in the market and embracing its values are not a good preparation for finding women's specificity. They only encourage women to be 'equal' to men—according to the male standard, the

standard of the standard.⁸⁷ While this may reduce the oppression of many individual women, it does not change structural and institutional oppression. In fact these may evolve and intensify, displacing their parasitism into other areas as is now happening with globalization. The South is giving its gifts to the ‘superior’ North and most of those gifts are fed by the oppression of women.

Equality itself is a market-based criterion, deeply infected by the equation of value in exchange for money, which we establish as important through our incessant daily practices of selling and buying. Women, who cannot be put into the superior category through masculation itself can nevertheless be put into other ‘superior’ categories through having money, degrees and professional positions, or by being members of the ‘superior’ nations, races and religions etc.

The superiority of these categories is now being challenged and the specificity of the “non-superior” categories is being valued so that group identity and qualitative difference is valued. This is positive, like the value that is being given to women. Yet national or class or race self-interest is still masculated self-interest, consonant with market values. And the projection of gender self-interest, as we have been saying, is being acted out in the market.

Instead we need to achieve a point of view outside the exchange paradigm, where the specificity of women may be seen in the fact that they are not masculated. They are not required to give up the gift giving identities, which they originally construct by emulating their caregivers. The processes of giving and receiving form a kind of identity that is different from the identity constructed in opposition to them. The opposed identity has to do with abstraction from gift giving, similarity to the not-mother (the male exemplar) refusal of gift values and their replacement with masculated values of greater force, power-over and becoming the exemplar. In the market, these values are expressed in hierarchies of not-gift value: prices, with the result that the ones with the most money or the most valuable objects become the (exemplar) culture heroes. The gift giving-and-receiving

⁸⁷ And the same applies to races, classes and nations who are equal according to the standard of the dominant race, class or nation.

identity is multifaceted and relational, vital in its connection with others and is not constructed around competition to be the exemplar. Since patriarchal society is based on that competition, gift giving is not recognized as a viable life process. Often those who are doing it can see that it doesn't have anything to do with the competition for power and they may even discredit it for that reason. Then as we have been saying gift giving becomes directed towards the not-givers.

Even the call to define women's rights as human rights contradicts the necessary paradigm shift. Women are the clearest bearers of a paradigm whose logic is constitutive of the human and which goes beyond law and categorization to communication itself and the transitive interactions of gift giving. We are not human because we categorize ourselves as such but because we make ourselves human by the practice of the gift logic at many different levels. We should not be forced to justify gift giving by rights but should satisfy the general social need to recognize that the gift logic is the human logic. It is what works for the good of the individual and the good of all. The patriarchy-and-exchange logic does not. Without the recognition of generalized gift giving, categorization and categorizers are pernicious.

While the call for women's rights as human rights is useful in the present world situation, especially in defining oppression as such, it can be positive in the long term only if it serves as a step along the road to a gift economy and culture rather than an obstacle to it (as the good which blocks the way to the better). In this women's rights as human rights are similar to alternative currencies or barter economies which may also be important as steps towards gift giving but should not be thought of as final solutions. (Again, the rationale, which backs them up is not paradigmatically different from exchange, though those who promote them are trying to give the gifts of solutions to the problems).

A human right is a 'property' of members of the category 'human'. It depends upon our mechanisms of categorization influenced by the market and private property. Rather than describing ourselves in terms of rights, we should re evaluate needs of all kinds. Needs are important as prerequisites for the development of human

life. They are also important as the destinations of gifts, without which gifts would not be given. The idea of 'effective demand' mixes categorization with need-satisfaction, in that only those in the category having the 'property' of money have a right to the satisfaction of their needs. Identifying and describing needs at all levels and making them important in themselves, is part of a shift towards the gift paradigm. Paradoxically, in a context in which gift giving and needs are denigrated, a psychological need arises for respect, which is perhaps better satisfied by the rights discourse than by the gift or needs discourse. Re framing needs in terms of paradigms is necessary in order to shift to gift giving on the basis of the gift logic. While it is important to define situations of injustice so as to make them visible it is not definition and the paradigm of exchange that will satisfy the larger need to change the patriarchal system.

Unfortunately situations in which women (and men) are making great sacrifices to maintain their families through working in the exchange economy are framed only in terms of rights and not in terms of gift giving. While it is certainly true that workers need the protection of rights, only by looking beyond this framework can we see the gifts they are giving and understand the reasons for the scarcity that leverages their oppression. For example the immigrants who come from the South to countries of the North to work, and send back the money necessary for their families' livelihoods are sending home billions of dollars as a gift. In the North many of the immigrants work in menial jobs and particularly women work as nannies and housekeepers, doing for pay what would be free nurturing labor if they were doing it with their own children, or if their employers were doing it with theirs. The employment of women to do nurturing labor is a hybrid situation in which the gift is replaced by exchange for the *purpose* of gift giving, driven by the need for money for the survival of those at home. In fact in what is sometimes called 'the care chain', the immigrant women often have to hire someone in their home countries as a nanny for their own children.

The very alienation that takes place because of a lack of gift giving and a lack of community in a market based economy, causes people to separate to such an extent that they no longer wish to provide care

personally for their family members. Or, even if they might want to, circumstances become more important than their commitment. Because gift giving is not valued, they do not value what they are giving up, and they hire outside careworkers to take their place. A better solution would be to create and live in a mutually caring community, for example an extended family or a conscious community, where caring work could be shared and valued. Such communities still exist in indigenous cultures, especially in matriarchies.

However, with colonialism and the large scale flow of wealth out of the areas in which the indigenous societies are located, there is no longer the abundance there necessary for gift giving or in most cases even survival. Thus leaving the community, immigrating to the North, to fill the caring roles that are necessary there but not valued, disintegrates the caring community while providing care. The immigrants leave in order to provide the necessary means of giving at home. Exchange and the market appear to be a solution to the scarcity that exchange and the market have created. Instead the solution would be to step back from the market and honor gift giving and community in the North as well as in the South, providing abundance for all.

The shift from gift to exchange was important historically as part of the shift from Matriarchy to Patriarchy. However this shift keeps on happening, not only in wars of aggression and colonization but we might say, at the level of the commonplace every time we exchange instead of doing gift giving. We could always say “I’ll just give this to you” but we don’t do it because we are hindered by exchange paradigm thinking and by scarcity. (We need not only an intellectual understanding of this shift, but real—not market-based—self sufficiency as a stair-step for shifting back).

The shift from gift giving to exchange is a strategy for money making which consists in extending the area of commodification. This happened at the end of the age of Feudalism by transforming labor time into a commodity. Now at the beginning of the age of Globalization, we are seeing the transformation of many other kinds of free gifts into commodities: the privatization of traditional knowledge and husbandry practices, life form patenting, the

hybridization and privatization of seeds, the patenting of genetic material, and the enclosure and privatization of water. Large areas of the earth are being swapped to governments and corporations in exchange for debt relief, dispossessing indigenous people of the natural environments in which they have lived for millenia. (Isla 2004) Lacking the gift framework, it seems that such gift areas are being discovered or invented by human ingenuity, brought from nothing to something. Giving things a private (or state) owner and a price in money seems to be the only way we recognize them as existing.⁸⁸

With globalization/commodification a context is being created in which this shift into exchange is the most common and most profitable source of gifts given to the market. It is almost as if the farther the leap and the more extensive the need that used to be satisfied free, the greater the profit. The shift to commodification of the gift commons also has the effect of validating market exchange through self similarity in the wider context once again; and validating the values of patriarchy and masculation again, at the same time making it possible to channel so much from the many to the ones that the 'superiority' of the one over the many seems almost stratospheric. The motivation to succeed becomes a desire to be enormously more powerful than others, and therefore perhaps to achieve a 'permanent' masculation, a (probably illusory) security of male identity. This abundance paradoxically allows those at the top also to live in a world that appears 'free' in that money, which is almost infinitely available to them, can be used to buy anything with little effort, and they can practice gift giving in abundance with their own families and friends (though some of them are actually stingy). Thus they can potentially develop as all round 'good' people, 'cultured' and with a variety of interests and a bent for education. At the same time they deny the source of their abundant gifts.

What is more problematic is their practice of charity, gift giving to satisfy the needs of others in general, which have been created through channeling the wealth of the many towards those very 'ones'. This practice might function as a servo mechanism, diminishing

⁸⁸ See my chapter in *For-Giving \$ = IS*.

the economic distances, as it did in potlatch for example, but it easily becomes a self serving ego trip if it is done from within the exchange paradigm.

For the powerful in the belly of the beast, the view of the system and the needs it creates is limited. Moreover, the presence of many human beings with needs beyond their neighborhoods or their countries is hidden by and for the wealthy behind screens (or veils) of distance, cultural difference, ideology and defective gift-denying epistemology. These screens also place the 'blame' for poverty on individual defects, environmental hazards (like floods or droughts) or bad leaders in anti-capitalist systems, while the 'merit' of wealth is attributed to individual virtue, luck, good leaders and Capitalism itself. Both blame and reward are psychological pay-backs of course, deriving from the exchange paradigm. Actually, as we have been saying, it is the need of the system for a context of scarcity for the many that necessarily channels wealth into the hands of the few, and the personal qualities of those who succeed or fail are usually irrelevant to their success or failure. An aspect of masculination is the denial of emotion in boys and men. They are not supposed to demonstrate pain by crying or to be moved by the pain of others. The emotional response to needs is necessary for the practice of gift giving however. The denial of one's own and others' needs blocks the flow of gifts and decontextualizes the person in denial. Charity as practiced by wealthy masculated males is usually done from afar, without emotional involvement or knowledge of the needs or the people who have them. In a way it reclaims for the wealthy man as 'virtue', the nurturing stance which he had to give up as a boy, now no longer threatening because it is located within framework of masculinity (Herman 1999).

Charity, by providing local bandaids, maintains the system and prevents its transformation towards gift giving. The paradox of gift giving is that practicing it individually, without strategies for the longer-term goal of changing the Patriarchal Capitalist system, actually maintains the system. The gifts of women have long been channeled into the system in this way. Without an analysis that values gift giving we can never change the system that is based on

exploiting gifts. What remains of gift giving humanity in all of us now has to ‘contain’ the transformations of gifts into commodities intellectually and practically, while proposing itself as the viable alternative. Another world is immanent in everyone, everywhere, but in women especially.

Summing up

We have been considering three main logical processes:

1. gift giving,
2. exchange
3. processes coming from their co existence and relation between them, which include
 - a. the substitution of exchange for gift giving and
 - 1) categorizing the gift givers as uncategorized,
 - 2) categorizing the exchangers as categorizers,
 - b. gift giving and giving value to the exchange paradigm, to exchange to substitution, to the substitutes, and to the categorizers, which helps maintain them as such through time.
 - c. which is a variation on b.: the establishing of long term property relations.

Other variations:

- on 1. a. the apparent ‘gift’ of exchange—for example bringing the market to cultures, which did not previously have it. And
- b. the gift of reciprocal independence produced by exchange as it appears to those who are uncomfortably bonded.
- on 2., the exchange of gift givers—as the exchange of women, with marriage as ownership of the gift giver(s).

Both 1 and 2 are made of processes, which include different stages and moments and these sometimes coincide and interact. For example the process of exchange includes the moment of evaluation of the

item to be exchanged according to a standard or exemplar. Value is *given* to this exemplar instead of giving it to an exemplar of gift giving, much as value is given to the Patriarchal father rather than to the mother. The two processes mesh, in this case, to the advantage of the exchange process and the hegemony of patriarchy.

These logical moves can be applied again to themselves in self-similar ways and to each other, and they can be reused in many different ways to bring about the world-view we now hold.⁸⁹ The link between substitution in language and in substitution in exchange creates harmonics between them, fractal resonances, which validate both in an ad hoc way. The creation and recognition of fractal resonances might be seen as a fourth process at the level of the other three. However it is clear that without the ‘incarnation’ of the definition into exchange there would be no resonance of that sort on the economic level. The market validates categorization and patriarchy. Without the market, our values and ideas of categorization would be very different. On the other hand the self-similarity of gift processes in language, syntax, speech, and material communication would remain.

One very simple logical move that we usually do not make would be very helpful in validating the gift economy. That is, we should place a parenthesis around giver and receiver and then give value to the transaction within the parenthesis. When we have a gift transaction such as A gives x to B, value is transferred by implication to B and A often remains invisible. This simple slide of our attention away from the giver distorts our view of the whole transaction which, without the giver does not necessarily appear as a transaction at all or as a gift transaction, but may appear as the second half of an exchange, the pay-back to a deserver, or even something the receiver has created for h/erself. Very often women’s gifts have been given to men who proposed them to others as gifts of their own, which should be recognized as such, for example women’s (and other

⁸⁹ The recognition of similarities and differences taking place at the level of perception underlies all these processes but it is not a logical move in the same way as those mentioned. It is necessary while they are more contingent.

gift givers') ideas have been used by their professors, collaborators or husbands who forget where they heard them and think of them as their own. Thus we need to look at (A gives to B) all together and give value to both terms as well as to the transaction itself as a gift transaction. We should not look at it just as A gives to B because then B easily becomes the main focus. Not using the parentheses has been a big problem in the women's movement because many women have insisted on including men in their gatherings (A includes B) while men often do not include women. B is included but is not inclusive. (A includes (B who is not inclusive)). If we give value to (A includes B) we will have a logical reason not to include men: they follow a principle opposite to the one stated inside the parenthesis. We may decide to include them anyway of course but at least we should be conscious of the contradiction. Similarly if we give to those who do not give to others, we interrupt the circulation of gifts: (A gives to (B who does not give)). In order to affirm the gift paradigm and the circulation of gifts we need to give value to (A gives to B) and hope that B will give value to it also, passing the gift along.

Gift giving bridges private property and common property relations in that one can give from either stance. However gift giving has the potential of breaking down private property, and creating a circulation of gifts and sharing in abundance. In fact in such a community, the human relations created by gift giving can flower. For this reason the market opposes gift giving. It creates scarcity so that gift giving cannot become generalized, so that it can be done only occasionally and with the penalty that the giver has to renounce the satisfaction of at least some of h/er own needs. Nevertheless acts of kindness and caring, mothering, solidarity, philanthropy, volunteerism, spirituality, creating common ground culturally through arts and rituals, activism and truth-telling to satisfy needs for social change continue to take place and to some extent create community even in a system based on private property and the market. Relations coming from the system such as equality, balance (the equation of the scales), temperance, not doing gift practices to excess and not generalizing and systematizing them KEEP acts of

kindness and culture from changing anything. Moreover, using gift giving for patriarchal purposes of dominance and *divismo* discredits other givers by proposing them as examples of ego oriented giving.

Essentialism

All our thinking is influenced by the market but we can make a conscious effort to recognize this influence and offer alternatives. While theories, which are influenced by the market may be anti essentialist they insist upon a kind of diversity, which denies the gift process as the basis for commonality of women or of other groups for a political program. Instead the burden of proof must be put on the market and the exchange economy not on the gift economy, which should be taken as the norm, the basic *process* (not essence!) for all human beings. It is not a good solution to cast gift giving or gift givers into the atomistic, individualistic category moulds proposed and validated by exchange⁹⁰ and subsequently propose or deny common properties. Rather the gift *process* itself can be seen as producing diversity and multiple creative solutions, satisfying the infinitely many different kinds of needs that grow and develop according to previous individually and culturally specific satisfactions. Identifying the gift process mainly with nurturing women, restricting it to the care of families or relegating it to an aspect of morality while denying its fundamental and extensive character, has limited gift giving. It has driven the gift underground and concealed it as a principle that we can and should know, understand, act upon and be grateful for in all aspects of life. The identification of gift giving (mothering) with biological women who are nurturing small children has supported the alienation of men from that role through masculation, while the elimination of gift giving as an interpretative key has given us a world view and a view of humanity which is deeply distorted towards masculation and

⁹⁰The bourgeois subject, the ego centered individual, is a product of exchange relations and it arose historically in the Renaissance in Europe along with mercantile capitalism. (see Herman 1999)

validates our worst capacities. In this view gift giving remains, like women, uncategorized, the opposite of over-valued categorization.

Recognition

The web formed of the intersections of the two logics at different levels makes it difficult to see how gender is connected with economics and how patriarchal capitalism has become the monolithic power mechanism that it is. Like the patriarchal father, the 'one' of the concept form, the capitalist system takes over and takes from its Other, and validates its similars, those in the category of which it is an exemplar (or the category made up of exemplars: dominant males, dominant economies, dominant paradigms) while denying the logic of the gift, re naming it, and creating a flow of gifts towards itself in a parasitic way. The move towards monocultures and monopolitics is altogether consistent with patriarchal capitalism. In order to understand the connections between gender and economics we must go beneath both to understand commodification not simply as a *sui generis* economic happen-stance nor a moral issue having to do with the excessive greed of some individuals (or corporations or countries) but as deriving from the process of masculation. In order to change the whole picture for the better, we have to understand how individuals (and corporations and countries) acquire the patterns that make them act in greedy and harmful ways and how these patterns connect and replicate themselves in different areas. We must also learn to read gift giving back into the description of the world, thus clarifying who is the parasite and who is the host. Usually the accusation of parasitism or 'dependence' is aimed at gift givers by exchangers, if the gift givers are not also operating successfully themselves in the market to provide the means of giving. Thus it appears that women are dependent on men, poor people on rich people, Southern countries on countries of the North, while actually the flow of free gifts is usually going in the opposite direction.

Commodification does not recognize gifts as gifts but as exchange values. It finds ways of privatizing and re naming previously free goods with money, as commodities to be bought and sold. By re-cognizing

the gifts as commodities it transforms them into commodities. Commodities are things that are seen as relevant to the distorted economic communication that is exchange. In other words the recognition is part of the transformation process. It foregrounds the items from a background of gifts, making them scarce by privatization, giving them a money-name and is completed in the substitution of an amount of money for the ex-gifts. The substitution provides both an assessment of their value in terms of all other commodities on the market and a transfer of ownership, a change of hands. In this, commodification is similar to masculation which names/recognizes the child as a boy while this naming becomes an aspect of his transformation, overtaking his previous free participation in the gift process. (He becomes a member of the category of namers and overtakers). Like re-cognition, commodification moves gifts from one level of attention to another. It moves the ex gift from unknown to (wrongly because only quantitatively) known, from unspoken to spoken of, from irrelevant to relevant. Commodification leaves aside other orientation and takes up the ego-oriented logic. It relinquishes a potential, relation-making transfer of value to another and embraces the layered logic of material definition/exchange in which substitutions of equivalents align the self interest of the exchangers.

In commodification, the original gift aspect of the good or service is paradoxically made irrelevant at the same time that it is materially given away. Even if after the exchange transformation the product may be put into a new gift process as a use value, what is given in exchange is only a material body, a potential though not actual use value, substituted by something material that is only a standardized 'communicative gift' without use value: money. Thus water in a river, which was previously clean and free, is made scarce by pollution and over use, and is then purified and bottled, and sold to people living on the river bank. When this water is used for cooking for example, it enters a gift process but its original free and abundant gift character as river water is completely lost. Commodification makes the gift irrelevant by relating the product to the money exemplar (a contradictory 'communicative gift' which is only used in exchange) in the market abstraction or 'selection process'. It sets

up the polarity in the product between gift and exchange value, while making the exchange aspect occupy the relevant pole and the gift aspect occupy the irrelevant pole. After the exchange when the commodity has become a use value again, we find that the original gift aspect has moved from irrelevant to non-existent and has disappeared. The use of the product in the satisfaction of needs may give the use value a new gift value but any gift value coming from the original source has disappeared.

Commodification also elicits products that are produced for exchange, with the destiny of never being gifts. They are produced only for the market, to achieve as large a monetary evaluation as possible.

In exchange it is as if an interpersonal cognitive process of recognition were taking place in slow motion so that first something is seen as potentially related to others. Then it is related to a price, a name in money, which others have 'recognized' with money as appropriate to it. Then that amount of money is actually given for it, and it actually becomes *for* some other *WITHOUT* our having given it—since it has been exchanged. The recognition is implemented, the potential relation to another as property is activated and achieved without creating a gift relation, or a relation of gratitude between the exchangers. Unfortunately, with exchange as with masculation, the achievement of the relation of something (as belonging)⁹¹ to another means a loss of a gift relation with its previous holder. In cognition and language this loss does not occur as things can be shared perceptually in their relation to others, without losing them and words are given and received without giving them up.

Using gift circles and circulations by which gifts of others come to the givers even if they give up their own, gift economies can be seen as directly embodying verbal gift giving, as well as mothering and other non verbal gift giving, without going through the detour

⁹¹ Regarding the father and the boy, belonging to another is the same as belonging to the category of the other. That is because the father is the concept sample of 'male' and 'human' and he is the owner of his properties and the head of the family so that here these three configurations conflate.

of exchange. On the other hand, the identification of gift giving with exchange, as in the anthropologists symbolic 'gift exchange' splits gift giving from an identification with women and robs it of its capacity as the logic of a paradigm for social change. Indeed, I believe that what is called symbolic 'gift exchange' provides a quasi-linguistic mode of material communication (ie. making of self and community) among the participants. The obligations of such interactions then are a kind of syntax (what can be given to whom and how it may be given) regulating this communication, derived from language.⁹² However, 'Pre Capitalist' societies sometimes follow other harmful and exploitative paths of their own. Masculation even without market exchange drives the manhood agendas of competition, dominance, manipulation and exploitation. These agendas are sometimes carried out *through* symbolic gift giving and the formation of privileged groups and hierarchies. The creation of elites and so called 'Big men' through gift exchanges and reputation shows that men in some pre-market societies also want to achieve the exemplar position.⁹³ However, I believe that the combination of masculation and the market and the complex reiteration of these patterns are the factors that create the overarching negative mechanisms of Western Patriarchal Capitalism.

'Recognition' and commodification happen with the gifts of nature and culture when territories are taken by force by colonialism and made to host the external colonial parasites. The 'discovery' of the 'New World' was the first step of recognition of the gift giving continents of the Americas, which were about to be transformed into property by the Europeans, privatized, commodified, and lost to the populations to whom they had been related in the gift mode. The similarity of colonization and commodification to heterosexual

⁹² While this would be an important direction to follow in order to understand the varieties of material (and verbal) communication, we are committed here to investigating issues that can lead more directly to satisfying the present compelling need for social change.

⁹³ Open source software on the internet, which is considered by its developers as a gift economy contains some of these patriarchal aspects as gifts are 'paid back' in reputation.

penetration has been remarked among others, by Vandana Shiva (Shiva1988) and it is embedded in the collective metaphor of the 'penetration of virgin territories'. The creative source of many gifts (including pleasure and progeny) is 'discovered' and through that discovery related to a male 'one', to the exclusion of other 'ones'. Virgin (unrecognized) lands are penetrated (recognized), their gifts related to property owners, their products and raw materials sold, even when they already were shared by a people, who are ignored, much as the virgin's relation to her own gift giving body is ignored when it is taken over, 'appropriated' by the male exemplar. The non patriarchal relation to one's own body or one's own land is not recognized by patriarchy. The rape and murder of women, the genocide of indigenous people and the plunder of their territories, are a result of Patriarchal Capitalist mechanisms and values.

This book is an attempt to recognize and restore non patriarchal relations and values, not to expose their bearers to new forms of exploitation, but to understand and dismantle the patriarchal mechanisms and change the values so that gift giving humanity, *homo donans* can flower. To do this we have to raise gift giving to a different logical level so that we can see it as a basic human process not just as the host of the patriarchal parasite.

The free land bases of indigenous peoples who held their territory in common or for whom property was not a guiding concept have been completely eroded by European privatization,ss which took place through gradual encroachment, or seizure by treaty or by direct force. This plunder of continents by the powerful and later the discovery and privatization of the earth's immense (though disguised) free gift of oil opened the way for the search for and commodification of other previously unrecognized gift areas now being taken over by globalizing corporations.

The addiction to profit is an addiction of exchangers to free gifts. Actually we all long for the free gift giving and receiving that was our birthright as *homo donans* and that we learned to love in our interactions with our mothers. In itself the longing for gifts is not negative. Rather, capturing free gifts and channeling them to private wellbeing in a world, which is suffering deprivation is what

makes profit addictive and harmful. It may seem that freezing or cornering many gifts as our own property can defend us from the scarcity that is being created by the system, yet as we do this cornering we create more scarcity for others, more needs for gifts, more suffering, more fear.⁹⁴ The longing for free gifts in a society of scarcity and fear is the psychological underpinning of greed. Isolated from each other as we are by market relations, and living in a situation of scarcity, we do not envision or work for total social change but only react in an exchange-based ‘every man for himself’ sort of way, becoming acquisitive and accumulating more in order to ‘take care of ourselves and our own’. Only a shift in the paradigm towards gift giving and away from exchange can provide security and happiness for all, and therefore security and happiness for the individual as well.

Circulation of gifts

Blood, like oil and water, is a fluid element, which circulates. Indeed blood is the quintessential bodily gift in that it is pumped by the heart to bring nutriment to the cells, then returns to have its own needs for oxygen satisfied by the lungs. The commodification of blood and blood products puts this gift into a second circulation outside the body from which profit can be extracted. Douglass Starr, the author of the recent book, *Blood*, noted the similarity between blood products and oil products and supplied the material for the PBS special ‘Red Gold’. ()

Goods must circulate in any economy—whether as gifts or as commodities. Money circulates. When money is performing its function as a means of exchange for commodities, it is useful to the society based on the market and thus it may be seen as having a social use value. Since money’s main function lies in its being given

⁹⁴ In fact the exchange mentality causes the wealthy to think that those whose gifts they are plundering may want revenge. This causes them to turn away from their victims in fear and to try to accumulate still more. Instead if they understand and embrace the gift mode they can try to create community with them and change the system together for the good of all.

away again and again, it has some vestigial gift aspects. However the use of money to create loans and compounding interest sucks off the gift potential remaining in money itself. In this case money is not used as a means of exchange but as a commodity, a means for the creation of debt. The circulation of goods and money, which should take gifts to needs, (like blood takes oxygen and nutrients to the cells), instead again becomes the source of gifts for the few, while the needs of the many go unmet. One might think that charity, gift giving with money, would restore the gift. Unfortunately, like greed, charity only looks for individual solutions to what are actually systemic problems. On the other hand giving money, time and energy to create systemic social change, especially if this is done with a shift towards the gift paradigm as a conscious goal, does make these gifts align with the general good, creating communication, community and an alternative model.⁹⁵

The reciprocally metaphorical character of each of the gift ‘elements’ (water “blue gold,” blood, “red gold,” oil “black gold,” and money, real gold) with respect to the others should alert us to a deep pattern to which they all conform. As they are ‘recognized’ and integrated into the market structure they all become examples of the creation of scarcity in a circulating medium. This is done through commodification, which directs the flow of gifts and value towards an external destination, like a stream of blood gushing out of the body into containers where it can be bought and sold.



Gifts are channeled towards a few who take them out of circulation, de nature them and use them to control the givers, other exchangers and each other. This parasitism is validated and seems natural because

⁹⁵ This is the reasoning I used in donating money for social change and creating the Foundation for a Compassionate Society (1987-1998). It also seemed to me that problem solving is a kind of gift giving, ie. giving the answer to the problem. This answer can be as practical as stopping nuclear proliferation or as theoretical as organizing a conference on alternative values, satisfying the need for new ways of thinking .In both cases the need being satisfied is a social, collective need.

of the ongoing patterns of parasitism of masculated males upon females as well as of other 'superior' upon 'inferior' categories. Scarcity is utilized for leverage and when it does not already exist, it is created. The sharing of seeds and knowledge by traditional farmers in india (documented by Vandana Shiva among others) was a circulation of gifts through time, which has recently been halted by corporations of the North. These corporations create and impose terminator seeds, genetically modified organisms and chemical fertilizers, privatizing and commodifying the gifts of the centuries, denying them to the generations of the future. Similarly life-form patenting seizes species that have been free for the use of all, making them unavailable to people in the areas to which they were indigenous, thus diverting the gifts of nature and husbandry towards Northern corporations. Each of the moments of commodification finds a way of cornering what was a free gift to all and transforming it into a gift to the patriarchal capitalists. Perhaps the most theoretically disturbing of all these transformations is the seizure of our genetic 'inheritance' (notice the gift word). Not only is the character of the genetic gift transformed and privatized but the products of the inherited gifts are altered, in that they are made to address the exigencies of the market, in order to create new channels for profit—which are often disguised as satisfying needs—'feeding the world' for example, with genetically modified monoculture crops while blotting out the diversity and gift value of traditional crops and the variety of needs they satisfied. (Shiva 1997)



By re reading human life on the planet in terms of gift giving and receiving we can identify a theme that establishes continuity between meaning in language and meaning in life. It is upon this continuity that we can build a culture and an economy of peace. The contrary way of reading human life is distorted by the polarized eyeglasses of patriarchy, exchange and the market, which are themselves peculiar variations upon the theme of gift giving. These variations cancel gift giving and make it almost inaccessible.

False ideas about gift giving and about the market itself come FROM the market. As we have seen above, there is no economic “common property” or “essence” among property owners except their relation of mutual exclusion and their ability to exchange using money, according to the quality of exchange value. This market-based situation of anti-community is presently taken as the human norm and the value is given to it that is denied to gift giving. Free gift work is considered inferior, as are those who do it. Since women do large amounts of free work in their roles as mothers and housewives, they are considered inferior.

Nurturing: a process or a common quality?

Seen as the identifying factor of a category, which is formed in opposition to men and the market, the ‘common quality’ of nurturing is a polar reflection of exchange value, which is the ‘common quality’ of commodities. The critique of essentialism rightly rejects this reflection but unfortunately replaces it with values coming from the market and masculation: membership in the patriarchal anti-community of mutually exclusive adversarial individuals (whose main ‘common property’ is that their property is not common). In this light, the commonality of women, who continue to act in caring (gift giving) ways and own little property, appears to be only the commonality of their victimization by freer and more powerful adversarial individuals, most of whom are males. Overcoming this oppression appears to consist in gaining access to the anti-community of masculated autonomous males.

All of this takes place because the market, like the masculine identity, is constructed in opposition to nurturing. In other words the market, like masculinity is a false ‘thesis’ to which nurturing then is posed as ‘antithesis’. It is like a conversation in which the opening gambit is not heard, and the reply is taken as the beginning. The restatement of the opening gambit then appears to be only a reply to the reply, the whole conversation takes place on a false premise, and all the subsequent arguments are vitiated. The result of this is that since the first ‘reply’ is a category: ‘male’ or

‘commodity’, we look at the reply to the reply also as a category with a common property, rather than a moment of a process of communication, which it actually is.⁹⁶ (See Goux 1973 on the penis abstracted from the body.)⁹⁷

Categorization—concept formation—is a process too and, when it is incarnated in the market, exchange value is its result. Masculation involves taking on the categorization process itself as one’s identity and it is parasitic because it creates a need for upward mobility as the members try to become the exemplar. Having more and being the strongest are characteristics of this top position but that strength and that abundance must come from somewhere. The gifts of women feed this masculine agenda and the interactions between women and men provide and confirm the patterns of parasitism, which propagate throughout society. Masculine value, exchange value and their mirror image, the ‘nurturing essence’ are social common qualities. They are not just abstracted or attributed mentally however but those processes of abstraction and attribution are actually incarnated on the reality plane.

My point here is first that we should not be looking at women’s commonality as the common property of a category, which is the result of an abstraction. We are dealing with apples and oranges, two different kinds of things: gift giving, which is a transitive communicative process, *not* a process or a product of a process of abstraction, and

⁹⁶ The linguistic concept of ‘markedness is useful here. A female ‘essence’ is abstracted in opposition to the masculine identity at the moment in which the male is being selected out of the area of the nurturing mother and falsely ‘unmarked’, made standard and superior. (nurturing is the common quality of what he, most importantly, is not).

⁹⁷ The ‘essence’ is arrived at through the use of the same concept form that the market uses, though it is a vision of women without the internal polarity between the phallus and their other qualities, because indeed they lack the phallus. In other words, gift giving appears to be what is ‘left over’ as a role for those who do not have the phallus. Instead if we can see it as a multifaceted creative principle, logic, and value-conferring practice, which has been the host of the parasite of exchange, we can liberate it from its appearance as the reflection of the concept form’s common quality or the market’s abstraction of exchange value.

exchange for money, which is an incarnated abstraction process. Having become used to the predominance of this process of abstraction according to the quantity of the common quality of exchange value, in our daily lives, we project the mirror image of that quality onto women and their free care giving work, saying that nurturing is their biological destiny and the essence of their category and it is consequently their duty to do free nurturing work in the domestic sphere. Women actually do a lot of free work, which seems to confirm the judgment. The categorization of women in this way and the appearance of the common quality of the category is due to the overuse of categorization and abstraction coming from the incarnated abstraction process of exchange. In fact if we must use categorization we would say that women practicing gift giving belong to the category 'human' and masculated men are a subcategory of people who, by not practicing it, deny their own humanity. Since the process of gift giving produces a great variety of subjectivities according to the varieties of the contexts, the needs, and the receivers, the category of the gift giving human is constituted not according to a common quality but according to a deep common practice. Males have a common biological property (their genitals) by which they are categorized as males and assigned to a category that presumably does not practice the human gift giving process. Gift giving is so basic to the human, however, that in order to construct a category in opposition to it, the only contents available are variations upon the gift giving process itself, and upon the process of the construction of categories. Thus the 'non giving' male category is based on categorization and the attempt to become the exemplar, what we have been calling the 'manhood agenda'. In order to carry out this agenda males use substitutes for gift giving such as violent hitting, and variations on gift giving such as exchange, as instrumental sub processes.

Exchange is only a deeply altered gift process, where the gift is turned back upon itself. This altered process becomes more complex when there is exchange for the general equivalent, money, because this kind of exchange incarnates the abstraction process (the categorization or concept forming process). In the incarnated abstraction process, the one to many exemplar has been materialized

and as the general equivalent, it is used to abstract the common quality of the exchange value that is 'in' commodities, and quantify it. Without the material abstraction of exchange value we would certainly not be projecting its (upside down) reflection onto gift giving and gift givers. In fact we would recognize gift giving as the normal process for all and exchange would be non-existent or rare because it would be unnecessary. The process of abstraction would only be used for thinking, not incarnated on the material plane, in masculine identity and in the market. In fact masculine identity would be based on the human gift giving process directly, like female identity, and differences, if they were needed, would be constructed differently.

By looking at gift giving as a pan-human process which is *not* the process of abstraction, we avoid the appeal to or creation of essences when thinking about human beings. Rather we see that humans create themselves and each other through the use of gift processes, at different levels and in different social and environmental contexts. They can create themselves as similar to each other or as different, depending on what they are doing. In satisfying each others' needs they become similarly givers and receivers of a great variety of gifts and in using similar means for the satisfaction of their needs, they create a cultural similarity by which they identify themselves as members of the same community—the same giving-and-receiving circles. Those who belong to a linguistic community are doing precisely this already.

People who are in material giving and receiving circles can align their material with their linguistic subjectivity. They do not need to derive their identities from membership in a category but can create them materially and linguistically together with others in an ongoing way. We do this to some extent already but we do not know we are doing it. At the same time we are all doing a lot of exchange and manipulation, so we are internally divided and conflicted.

There is a psychological advantage for those doing gift giving. The members of a category derive their identity from their membership in the category, implying common qualities, which they may have to manifest in order to prove that they have them (as courage is a quality which is necessary to demonstrate as a proof of masculinity). On the

other hand, gift givers and receivers construct their subjectivities in an ongoing way beyond categorization. Proving it is only necessary if one is trying to be classified as a member of a category. By showing that (most) women, poor people and workers are engaging in the gift giving process we are revealing their agency, the positive side of the 'host' of the negative systemic parasite.

The abstraction process of the market can be seen as a gigantic *selection process* of products having the common quality of exchange value using money as the exemplar. The products or resources that are selected *out*, discarded by this process are free gifts and services.⁹⁸ These are relegated to an invisible or unrecognized area outside exchange but many of them are then turned towards the incarnated selection process itself and made to support it, giving it value by implication, and flowing into (and mixing with) exchange value. Thus in capitalism there is a kind of *de facto* essentialization, a kind of 'processing' of the gift that abstracts it (or extracts it) from its particular concrete transactions and channels it 'upwards' towards capitalists as profit. The value of housework passes invisibly and noiselessly through the surplus value created by the worker into the profit of the capitalist (even when the housewife is herself the worker).

Similarly the gifts of nature and of past and future generations flow into profit unrecognized. These are made up of the gifts of traditional knowledge, which has been handed down and of all the collective care giving of the past, which have preserved the environment and the (physical and spiritual) community up to the present as well as the gifts of the people of the future who will not ever have access to the natural and cultural abundance that is now being used up and flowing to corporations and their investors and stockholders. They also include the gifts the poorer nations are giving to the richer ones due to level of life. The population collectively uses fewer of the gifts of its environmental and cultural context and thus passes on more of them into the profit of the investors from the North. The goods that

⁹⁸ Some free gifts and services are given in order to attract buyers, as happens in sales and advertising gimmicks. The seller thus plays the role of a 'giving' subject who establishes a relation with the 'receiver' through the 'gift'.

are consumed are cheaper to produce than those in the rich countries and of poorer quality. Access to natural and cultural gifts and resources is limited; even expectations of a good life are limited. By restricting the production and consumption available for local use, and by channeling money, products, work and resources out of the country, gifts for the local population are made scarce and the gifts of cheap goods (ie. goods of which a high percentage is a gift to the buyer) resources and labor are made to flow towards the corporations and countries of the North. This process of exploitation 'refines' gifts making them invisible, 'purified' of their local relevance, and 'vital', essential to the functioning of the capitalist machine.

If we look at all the elements that go into profit: the surplus value of present and past labor, the value of gift labor such as housework and other free labor that flows into exchange value and surplus value, the gifts of free and cheap raw materials, the gifts leveraged from the public by high prices, gifts leveraged by inflation, and deflation, gifts given as interest on loans, gifts coming from differences in level of life in the country of origin and in the country of sale, gifts taken by appropriating species and knowledge through patenting, gifts of savings garnered by desecrating the gifts of the environment etc., we realize that profit is a gift made up of many gifts. Any income above the costs of production and capital is free to the capitalist, who also may contribute free work, but whose 'risk' is only that s/he will not be able to leverage these gifts through h/er exchange activities. The common quality of profit is that it is a free gift to the capitalist. That is indeed its essence.⁹⁹

Thus the gift of profit is the actual essential aspect of production for needs *and* for exchange that flows from the unpaid work of the many into the hands of the few in an economy based on exchange and patriarchy. This gift essence is the ownable (common un-common)

⁹⁹ Unions and worker's movements throughout the world have succeeded in regulating work conditions and pay scales to some extent. However, much labor now has been taken out of the workplace and is done in the home without any guarantees and with irregular pay. This is what Maria Mies calls the 'housewifization' of work. If we look at it in gift terms we can see how more gifts are made to flow into profit by reducing the expenses for the capitalist. Because

property of successful capitalists. It is passed on to others not as a gift however but as an exchange, when it is invested as capital in order to extract the gift essence again from other labor. Far from being the common property of women only, the nurturing essence is the internal essence of profit, the invisible motivator of the whole economy. The ideology of the right sees the nurturing essence specifically in women because it is denying its existence in profit.

In Patriarchal Capitalism, masculation seems to have acquired a life of its own, detaching itself from biological gender, incarnating in corporate entities, governments and institutions, privileging non nurturing categories over other categories, whose members are supposed to nurture them overtly and covertly. In this view, racism and classism seem to be justified by masculated categorization, and capitalism itself is a race towards the top, an attempt to achieve superior categorization, being nurtured by many, acquiring and privately owning the (supposedly 'deserved') disguised gifts of profit. The successful capitalist thus becomes the 'one', the exemplar of the masculated human, emulated by all but unsuccessfully, except by the very few.

The 'nurturing essence' that seems to have been denied to the identity of the male child becomes the property of the adult capitalist who then 'nurtures' industry and the stock market with h/er investments, giving or refusing to give as s/he sees fit. Even at the level of salaried labor, men who were not allowed to identify with their mothers as children, become even more powerful than s/he as adults because they 'make' money, which they can then control. They are 'independent' and can give or withhold their money, making their wives dependent (like children) on their decisions. They have achieved a kind of integration of mothering and masculation. (Basically they change or roll back their gender economically).

the house has substituted the factory, the actual care of the house flows directly into profit as a gift rather than going first to the children and adults and then through their work into profit as surplus value. Isolation in the home away from other workers, and irregular and low wages continue to leverage more surplus value as a gift and create a greater dependency of the worker on the capitalist. This precarious situation disempowers the worker and de facto essentializes work, as it makes more and more of it into a gift, which nurtures the capitalist.

What is done early in life and validated by the social institutions that have grown up around it is hard to eliminate or even to address. There is a great deal of childish illogic and psychological baggage involved which still exists in the society at large and appears 'natural'. The category 'male' is the category that gives up gift giving and is therefore (illogically) privileged and receives gifts, which appear to the individual as 'his due'. (Perhaps just because he has given up the nurturing identity, exiled from the garden of Eden). Thus the category 'male' is a cognate or corollary of the market, since the market, which is also a *repudiation* of gift giving, functions according to a theme of 'deserving' by having a valuable identity (for the commodity and for the capitalist as for the male) but where it is also possible to improve one's identity and have more. Both masculation and the market function according to changes of category, from gift to not gift, from relation to the giver and receiver to relation to the 'one' exemplar, and from being property of or belonging, to one to being property of or belonging to another. The fragmentation of society that comes from the adversarial relations of the market is not bridged by the gift giving contained in profit but rather by those gifts that continue to be given in language, in families and in solidarity among individuals. On the other hand this bridge is also constructed in a distorted way by the many gifts, which are used to force or leverage still other gifts, increasing the masculated identity of the capitalist (of either sex). What we call power is the ability to leverage these gifts. The patterns of leveraging gifts and giving "upwards" organize subjects into hierarchies of ones and manies.¹⁰⁰

At the same time the ideology of the market also invents "objective explanations" that accord with the values of masculation and exchange, while creating an ungiving "real world" environment of scarcity and self-interest in which those masculated values are necessary for survival. In this context of scarcity, nurturing is taken as the basis of the female, not-male identity. It is used like charity,

¹⁰⁰ Since these one-to-many hierarchies riddle society it is difficult if not impossible for the manies to districate themselves from their relationships, becoming a multitude, as Negri and Hardt (2000) suggest. The whole incarnated concept forming process needs to be understood and dismantled.

to offset the harshness of the system though at the same time it is restricted to an area of servitude and vulnerability. (The female is seen as *not* not-giving. This double negative diminishes the positive and primary character of gift giving.)

By hypostatizing nurturing, seeing it as a quality rather than a process, and attributing it to women as their identifying common quality, we relegate women to a self sacrificial role of preferentially nurturing males, patriarchy and the market, while denying the gift giving that is the logic of life itself. This denial also extends to the gift character of profit and the agency of workers.

Essential Services

The homonymy of ‘essentialism’ and ‘essential’ services is also a clue to what is going on. In the language of activists ‘essential services’ are those like water and electricity that are necessary for the life processes of the community. Services like these must be to a large extent gifts especially when the capitalist economy is taking the life energy of the givers. Water, electricity, and fuel constitute ‘means of giving’ that are necessary for gift givers to satisfy needs. Without them the gifts of life are very difficult to provide. Because corporations are privatizing and commodifying these services gift sources are made necessary in a ‘new’ way—for mere survival.

Energy from another source becomes imperative when the parasite is taking all the human energy of the gift givers. The plunder of the gift energy of the many creates a need for even cheaper energy sources by which the extenuated gift givers themselves can be supplied with at least some of the means of giving while at the same time allowing the capitalists to have more. Such a source is oil, and the cheap products it can provide now flood the developing world, taking the place of traditional life-giving gifts of nature and human labor, and marketed as commodities, channeling money to the North. The individualized giving of goods to needs that has been the human practice from the beginning of the species, at least from the beginning of language, is being replaced with the giving of standardized plastic and other oil-based imported products, marketed in

the media and paid for with the money of paupers (people from whom large gifts of free labor have already been extracted).

It is not just the natural environment that oil is endangering but the gift giving human environment. It might be thought that, with a large enough supply of free energy, there would be so much abundance that exploitation would be unnecessary because the parasite's needs would be satisfied. However this seems not to be the case. Already so much abundance now accrues that it has to be wasted in order not to change the parasitic system. (In fact with abundance, exchange becomes unnecessary, decidedly unessential). Rather what seems more likely is that the system will cause and/or allow more and more deaths of poor people in the South and in the North as they become less necessary for its profit. No doubt the emotions and attitudes of masculation, racism, classism and nationalism feed the selection process of the market and the market mentality, determining in what directions the system will 'develop'.

Perhaps even the struggle for 'equality' of women with men in the North stimulates a greater need for access to states of superiority and exemplarity in men who continue to be masculated and thus continue to have a created need to be not nurturing and 'superior' to their mothers even when their biological sexual difference no longer automatically provides this classification. They need more than ever now to prove themselves as superior 'haves' and/or to create inferior categories of 'have-nots'. If we continue to socialize half of gift giving human society as not-givers (who then need to receive more) and then we say that the other half is *equal* to them, so they are not-givers as well, gifts must come from somewhere else.

Colonialism and imperialism supply the external gifts that allow the superiority of the 'haves' in the colonialist countries but the discovery and use of oil energy has somewhat altered the need for colonial workers, so that corporations are now assimilating some of them at a very low cost in maquila factories or in even cheaper home labor, using the others as markets while at the same time the gift-commons of all are being commodified and thus made unavailable to them. Unchecked, these developments will probably eventually have

as their perhaps even desired consequence, the extenuation and death of the moneyless population.

The system as a whole, parasite and hosts, has created an artificial need for external sources of energy (which also makes a large number of the hosts unnecessary, dispensable). If the system were not parasitic, with parasitism happening at many different levels and in many ways, and with enormous amounts of gifts and energy being extruded into a black hole of waste, there would be no need for such external energy sources. Natural and cultural free sources together with human endeavor and invention would provide for the needs of all. Subsistence in abundance, where new gifts and new needs would be based on the satisfaction of previous needs, would drive production rather than profit. This is what a gift economy would look like. The healing of human relations that such an economy would provide would allow for the re evolution of the human being along the giving-and-receiving creative lines that are h/er birthright. We can do this. It is not impossible. The earth, our mothers, and language itself, our means of communication, show us how.

Uniting the camps

We need to create a social movement that is wide enough to dismantle and replace patriarchy. An analysis of Patriarchal Capitalism and globalization without the notion of gift giving, the criticism of patriarchy and of the market itself, cannot bring us to the deep changes we need to make. The usual left analysis risks re-proposing patriarchal solutions because it does not provide an alternative structural logic. The gift paradigm and the criticism of Patriarchal Capitalism do provide an alternative logic and a rationale that can unite the movements, while giving leadership to women and to women's values. To this end we must validate women's commonality as opposed to the manhood agenda without being essentialist or succumbing to accusations of essentialism. Without the idea of a common thread that unites women it is difficult to create a movement that can change patriarchy. The self-replicating concept form is too strong, its disqualification of gift giving too de-

structive. Functioning as a parasite on the gifts of women, men, children and the earth, it needs *not* to acknowledge giving in order to maintain its grip. We must not blame the host of this parasite but understand the process and change it. Women can unite and can accept the gift/service of men, to affirm the gift paradigm as more viable than the paradigms of patriarchy. This will lead us towards the creation of a society which uses a gift logic, which, while it is now in patriarchy practiced directly mostly by women, is open to be the basis for men's behavior as well. By connecting mothering to the fundamental and widespread pan-human process of gift giving, we open the way not only to the emergence and leadership of women according to 'women's values' but to the possibility that these values may become the values of all.

As we have been proposing, all humans engage in the gift giving and receiving process but those who have been masculated construct an identity in opposition to it. Masculation has extended itself, investing many institutions especially in areas controlled by white Western masculated males. Those who have not been masculated include (almost) all women as well as many men in indigenous and non-dominant cultures. In alliance with women we can also find those who while masculated, are not in dominant positions: poor men, and men in ethnicities and other groups who have been denied access to or have refused (for example, men in some religious groups) the masculated categories, or who individually refuse to practice male dominance. In opposition to a paradigm shift we can find women who strongly embrace their subservience and 'host' position, and women who have assimilated into masculated institutions to such an extent that they have given up the gift values. However there are many people, especially women, with a foot in both camps, and there are men who, though masculated, understand the defects of the system and work to change it (usually without giving up the more subtle aspects of patriarchy, male dominance and the ideology of the market, however).

While it may appear to us that we use categorization in all our thinking and therefore in gift giving as well, I believe we can say that the gift process uses categorization/selection but is itself a pro-

cess of a different kind. The process has regular elements: giver, gift, receiver, mode of giving, which certainly require the recognition of needs and the gifts which are appropriate to them; however the gift process does not resolve itself in cognition but goes beyond it. Indeed as we said above we can look at perception as reception of experiential data (and non verbal display, whether conscious or unconscious, can be seen as the giving of experiential data). The emphasis in gift giving is not on categorization but on transmission, and on the Other as an internally and externally integrated being, and as receiver and as agent.

Exchange value is abstracted in opposition to free goods and services by the selection process of the market, as commodities are placed in relation to the money exemplar. Both of these 'essences': exchange value and the gift (as essences) are social, not natural, qualities coming from the processes in which the people and their products are engaged. As Marx (1869) says about value, it is not a physical property of the object (and as hard as you look you will not find any value substance in a diamond).¹⁰¹

Abstracting the common quality of exchange value and quantifying it are necessary for the large-scale selection process that is the market but they are much less important for gift giving, a process which involves identifying a need and filling it appropriately. (That does not mean that the process is somehow 'un conceptual' or 'non mental' but that abstracting a common quality is really not very important for gift giving—just perhaps unconsciously, for recognition of a need or the object of a need). Whatever the cognitive processes are that are necessary for us to identify the gifts that will satisfy the needs, and whether or not such identification requires any abstraction of common qualities at a conscious or an uncon-

¹⁰¹ What I am saying is: 1. All humans are gift giving so women are also gift giving. 2. Males are socially falsely identified as not-givers, not female, while women are socially falsely identified as not not-givers, not-males. Concentrating gift giving in women only is socially falsely done in opposition to the male human exemplar. It is this concentration that is a social not a natural product, like exchange value. Thus you will find gift 'substance' in women but we have been socially blinded to seeing it in men and *nel blu dipinto di grigio*.

scious level, this moment is only a minor aspect of the gift process. The gift process includes identifying and attributing relevance to the receiver, identifying the need, identifying something as a potential gift by singling it out from a background, attributing relevance to it as a potential gift, perhaps some modification of the gift (for example procuring, cleaning, and preparing, all of which can be further analyzed into a variety of more particular gift processes—i.e., ‘giving’ the carrots, tomatoes and onions to the soup), transferring the gift to the receiver in such a way that s/he can receive it, and the reception and use of the gift by the receiver. The many elements of this process are present as it takes place at different levels: perceptual, cognitive-linguistic, emotional, material-manipulative, interpersonal, in the experience of the giver and in the experience of the receiver. (Moreover as we have been saying, a sort of epiphenomenon is produced, which is the relationship or bond between the interactors) We may indeed abstract from the elements of this process but since it is a process not a set of similar items, the abstraction does not properly give us an essence, but a logic, the logic of the gift.

Extending the gift

A nurturing human has to first be nurtured as a child and then has to learn a large number of displaced nurturing, gift giving practices such as: language, all kinds of sign behavior, productive work and maintenance of material and immaterial things in the environment, satisfying their ‘needs’, giving care to other people in many different ways, giving loyalty and love to persons and to groups as well as often unfortunately learning the ways of giving to patriarchy such as giving-way, giving obedience to commands, and giving in denial of giving, before she becomes an adult nurturer to h/er children. Being human requires the capacity to recognize and satisfy needs at many different levels and in many different ways unilaterally, and/or with varying responses and consequences, alone or together with others. These numerous ways of giving and receiving create a wider context into which each individual is born. Even if s/

he happens to be particularly selfish, the context provides innumerable examples of transposed functional gift giving, which must be learned and put into practice in order for anyone to be fully human. Nevertheless s/he can also practice gift giving while she believes she is practicing a just exchange, for example when s/he is receiving a supposedly just salary for h/er work.

It is possible that the gift giving of *homo donans* originally derived from the capacity of our ancient ancestors to nurture, but the question of its origin is less important than recognizing that at present gift giving is widely extended throughout human life and behavior. Women, to whom child care is socially assigned as a life role, have to do intense unilateral gift giving when they are involved in mothering or their children will not survive. That is, if they become mothers, there is a period in their lives when they must, as *homo donans*, undertake the specific kind of gift giving that is nurturing children. Perhaps this functions as a sort of ‘refresher course’ on the gift processes women learned as girls from their own mothers (and as an intensification and distillation of the transposed gift processes in society). Perhaps this period of nurturing is easier if they have not been overtaken by the practice and values of the market.¹⁰²

Even those women who do not become mothers have usually been socialized towards that role and more importantly, they have not been masculated—that is they have not gone through the psychological process that makes males reject the maternal identity. Thus women who are not mothers do engage in gift giving of many other kinds as do women who are in periods of their lives when mothering is not required. On the other hand any woman can reject the maternal gift process in favor of the market and its values or she can embrace both the market and mothering. Even women who for whatever reason identify with males or as males often remain nurturing in areas, which are not directly maternal. ‘Butch’ lesbians can be good mothers, whether or not they biologically give birth. Indeed some men do mothering as well, individually contra-

¹⁰² Child care workers are indeed paid, but from the child’s point of view their nurturing is free.

dicting the values of masculation. Whatever their variations upon the gender themes may be, people engage in all kinds of non-maternal as well as maternal nurturing. Moreover everyone must necessarily engage in many material, mental and linguistic gift processes, which, though unrecognized, are constitutive of the human.

Usually it is only when a woman has become an adult that she becomes a mother and nurturer of her own children (though young girls often help in child care) That is, she has to have learned to perform most of the transposed gift interactions that society provides, before she becomes a mother who performs the concentrated and continuous gift giving of child care. Each child that is born comes newly into this intense nurturing gift activity, which is itself a nodal point within a much wider texture of gift practices. Men do not usually go through this 'refresher course'. At the same time, while practicing transposed gift giving in material, mental and linguistic processes men have usually also learned to engage in many anti gift practices upon which their gender identity is based, embellished with negative and perverted gift-derivatives like hitting, killing (giving death), and war (collectively giving death to a collective 'other').

Without mothering, the human species would not exist because children would not survive. However, gift giving is a major human principle, wider than mothering and nurturing, and it is a process which continues to function for adults as well as children. We are the most maternal of species because we have projected mothering into so many other areas of life. Whether or not some particular individual is a mother s/ he is a gift giver in the wider sense. Even Patriarchal Capitalist men (and women) operating comfortably in the market like fish in the sea, practice gift giving in many ways while denying and discrediting it as part of their gender and their economic identities. Male and female exchangers continue to communicate linguistically, for example while they are engaging in market practices. They perform services for each other ranging from the smile of welcome, the pleasantry, to the 'power lunch' to the bar man's sympathetic ear. From this point of view women's commonality comes from their more intense and conscious involvement in the gift process at many levels, an involvement, which men reject as part of their masculated identity.

It is not that women are 'better' but that anyone, male or female, who does not reject the human gift process is better.

Love is really the disposition to maintain a giving and receiving relationship with another person (or even animal or location or spirit or idea or community), whatever the needs that arise may be, and the trust that the person, thing, location, spirit or idea or community will also know and satisfy our needs. Gratitude for their gifts is part of love as well as forgiveness when they fail to give or receive, or collaborate. Human love is the ability to participate in a gift circle with another person(s) without exchange and manipulation, even if there are only two people involved. The giving and receiving of love is done particularly intensely at the sexual level, satisfying each other's needs for pleasure. The needs to which the lovers give their attention also include the need for respect and may even include the need not to be in relationship, which the true lover also satisfies. Love is a noncommercial attitude and I believe it may be just the framing of it as exchange that makes people now question whether it 'exists' at all. The challenge of loving in the time of Patriarchal Capitalism and globalization is that we do have to create a gift economy with our loved ones while all around us there is a context of market-based madness. Our needs become skewed, our gifts inappropriate and we do not know what is the matter. There is also spiritual love, love of God or Goddess(es), love of nature, which also consists of loving the nature and the spirit in others, as well as placing oneself in a giving and receiving attitude. The desire for variety, creativity and meaning in connection can actually be satisfied by gift giving and receiving, while it is satisfied only apparently by the market, and at the expense of compassion and connection.

The Gift of Oil

Where labor was once the main source of value I believe we should realize that there are now other energies, which have to some extent replaced it: coal, electric, and oil energy. Society has created the technological 'ecological niches', which can use these energies to create products and services previously unimaginable. Oil is the most

important of these for several reasons. In paying for its products and services, consumers are not paying for the labor contained in the oil as they would with mined coal for example. Indeed, once oil is discovered, very little labor goes into its production. The oil flows out of the ground by means of a pump operated by minimal amounts of electricity with very little human labor involved. It is therefore almost pure gift energy, requiring only transportation and some refinement to ready it for consumption. Oil is a gift, with which the earth could provide abundance for all if it were distributed free—and if it were possible to use it in an environmentally appropriate way. The economic/technological niches that have been created for oil allow it to enormously potentiate human capacities.¹⁰³ Taking as an example only its use as fuel for automobiles we can see that the speed and mobility, which characterize our society are enormously greater than that which could be provided by human labor alone. (Compare the speed and stamina of a rickshaw puller to that of a Ferrari automobile for example).

The price of gasoline does not cover the gift value of the oil. In fact the price is arbitrarily set by market forces and the corporate and governmental owners of the free gift-energy sources, who play with supply and demand. Because the oil costs so little to produce, the amount paid by the consumers is actually a gift they give to the corporations, extracted from the consumers' salaries, displacing other human-made nurturing goods they might otherwise buy. Thus oil companies reap profits coming from the rest of the nurturing economy (lets re name GNP the 'Gross Nurturing Product'), and those who create new uses for the oil, for example the many forms of plastics, are also skimming off gifts from consumers' salaries.

We have created a situation in which we are de facto essentializing human nurturing energy by practicing gift giving towards exchange.

¹⁰³ Inventions driven by profit seeking are probably different from inventions driven by need satisfaction alone. Thus the kinds of human capacities that have been empowered by oil- fast travel for example- are different from the capacities that might have been developed in a gift based society, using the free gift of oil energy. Moreover attention to needs would have allowed the earlier recognition of ecological damage and altered or stopped oil production.

Redirecting nurturing energy away from human needs and towards masculated ego value and ego oriented exchange value actually creates a situation in which gift giving can itself be substituted by¹⁰⁴ non human gift energy, for example, the oil energy used in machines. This energy servant of 'Man' is aptly called by the French 'essence' in its existence as gasoline. Through the use of this 'essence' in transportation new circulations not of gifts but of traffic on land, sea and air take place.

The masculation of men and the resulting femization, essentialization, and plunder of the gifts of women excavate the channels in the society through which other gifts flow towards the few and away from the many. The flow of the 'essence' into the machine is an analogy with the flow of gifts towards the common mechanisms of the male identity and of the market.

The pumps that take the place of the heart

Machines are analogous both to the masculated identity and the market processes that function according to the appropriation of gift energy. The substitution of verbal for non-verbal gifts is benign and useful in language. However, when it is transposed into the masculated identity or the market or machines, it is invested with long-term values and consequences it does not usually have in simple linguistic acts. When substitution and the change of levels it creates are transposed into machines, they are used to produce goods for others without giving, or to transport goods from place to place in an imitation of gift transitivity. Moreover the transposition of giving which is *hitting* combines with substitution to create violent means of domination, whether this is expressed in wife battering, war, economic and military invasion or the piston repeatedly being driven into the vacuum chamber.

Gift giving is a very creative process and cannot be eliminated. When it is hindered at one level it transposes itself onto another.

¹⁰⁴ Gift labor can also be substituted by or mixed with monetized labor or socially forced labor like slavery.

Thus the analogs of gift giving in our society include the automobiles that are driven from town to town where their contents are deposited, or where their drivers perform some useful personal or commercial action before returning home.¹⁰⁵ The motors of the automobiles focus and circulate energy, which is transmitted to the wheels to move the vehicle. The vehicles are for transportation of goods, services and people from one location to another. All of these levels involve transposed substitution and gift processes. What we need to do is use our machines to create circulations of gifts to needs, not the false and inflated circulations of products and people who are driving and driven by the attempt to surreptitiously capture and bind more gifts.¹⁰⁶

The essence that is oil energy is also reflected in the essence we call 'power', a complex taken as a concept, hypostatized, the compendium of acts of domination or parasitism, the upward movement of gifts, which we do not recognize as such. Since we do not recognize gift giving we do not see that power is not a thing, a property, an entity that can be owned. Rather it is given as obedience by the many to the one who is exercising it and enforcing it.

Since so many uses have been found for its energy, oil is indeed the 'common essence' of many products and processes of production and, like women's labor or like the surplus labor contained in abstract labor and exchange value, it produces—gives—more gifts (profit) than it costs to reproduce or maintain. In the motor, that obedience of the many to the one is transferred on to non-human

¹⁰⁵ To me our busy highways look very much like the sperm race to the egg as all the cars travel along them at their various speeds.

¹⁰⁶ It is interesting that movement of a person from one place to another follows the metaphor of the gift which is transferred from hand to hand. In this case it is the person who is the gift, moving in a trajectory towards a new location which will 'receive' h/er. However we can travel not only to be a gift but to make profit, a gift that is 'made' in order to receive more. On the other hand immigrants are now sending billions of dollars of gift remittances to their home countries. In a more permanent time frame, Levi Strauss's 'exchange of women' shows women given between patrilineal kin groups as meta gifts, the gift of the givers, the gift-sources.

pieces of machinery, which are moved by the essence to carry out various pre-established mechanical processes.

Those businessmen, prospectors who fail to discover oil, like those who lose in the stock market, are simply unlucky, like women and other have-nots, born without the phallus or the money necessary to potentially become the prototype. Even if they have the 'derrick' they do not have, cannot access, the essence. They do not have the power, the ability to make the gifts flow upward towards them from the earth in the form of black gold. This risk of failure to make a profit has been typically compensated in the US however by large tax discounts for those who search for oil, and tax discounts are also given for losses due to the depletion of this non renewable resource.

The gifts that are given to oil companies come from the many who earn their money in the market by selling their labor and giving their gifts of surplus labor. These gifts of profit to the oil producers have become part of the 'cost of reproduction' of the workers who have to buy gas for their cars or heat their houses with oil based fuel. Needs satisfied by oil products have displaced needs satisfied without them, from the need for transportation satisfied by the horse and buggy to the need for heating satisfied by the wood burning stove. By manipulation, brainwashing and price fixing, the oil companies can set a price that has nothing to do with costs of production. As we have been saying, once discovered, oil costs almost nothing to produce. The free gift of fuel given by the earth that oil should be, is transformed into the gift of profit given to the oil companies by the general public in the money they take from their salaries to pay for a good that is virtually free to its producers with only some value added through refinement and transportation. The appeal to the risk of the prospector as justification for the high price is irrelevant. Risk is due to privatization. If the state paid for the prospecting and owned the oil, there would be no risk.

This transfer of gifts from the population to oil companies (producers and refiners) takes place particularly in the first world as opposed to the third world (even when the oil comes from the South, it is most profitably sold in the North), among those who for example own means of transportation and can afford to give gifts of profit

from their salaries to the oil companies. Meanwhile the labor of the third world people, commodified by Northern companies has become as cheap to the corporations—as much a gift—as oil. The transfer of gifts from South to North produces the gift margin in the North to pay for the oil, this gift of the earth, which if taken at all, should have been free. This commodification of a gift of the earth, oil, 'black gold', is like the privatization and commodification of water, 'blue gold' which should also be free, or the commodification of blood, 'red gold', or the patenting of plant species, formerly a common heritage, 'green gold' or of the until recently unexplored genetic inheritance of all, 'gene gold'. Each of these gifts was once a free gift commons, 'virgin' to commerce. These transformations of gifts into commodities follow the path laid down by oil and by the extraction of the gift 'essence' of profit from labor. The presence of oil as a relatively low cost energy source provides the precedent for the re distribution into the exchange economy, of other sources of heretofore undiscovered gifts.

The pump functions by creating a vacuum in a chamber. Similarly, a need is created for the oil energy—gift energy—that is greater than other needs. Nature does not 'abhor' a vacuum after all. This turn of phrase is a translation of 'filling a lack' into negative, patriarchal, probably oedipal 'abhorrence'. In this vein, the family is the chamber where the woman's gifts are channeled by scarcity-vacuum to the needs of the husband and children. She cannot receive from outside it or give to anyone outside it. There is also a vacuum created by scarcity outside, which pulls their work to the capitalist and with it the gifts of housework, then part of it back again in money to the family. Then more scarcity is created in the context by war or antagonism between countries.

The pump could be seen as an imitation of this psycho-economic mechanism and vice versa. The creation of scarcity—of a low pressure space, sucks the oil up to the surface in an oil well or to the chamber of an engine. That low pressure or vacuum is created artificially. Similarly the artificial cornering and waste of a society's wealth creates a context of scarcity of money and jobs and sometimes goods—in each locale, which sucks the gifts of workers and consumers into the bank accounts of the capitalist.

Moreover the new needs based on oil and the general need for the gift of profit also create an economic suction which pulls the oil towards the market without concern for the side effects of pollution and waste, which occur from the use of this pump. By creating scarcity of clean earth, water or air, new zones for leveraging gifts are created, so that those gifts too can be pulled into the market and sold, re named the capitalist's 'just profit', which s/he 'deserves' by performing the 'service' of purification of the earth, water and air. There seems to be no recourse to protect what is free from the capitalist pump. (See NAFTA Chapter 11) Penalty of law now applies to those who *oppose* the profit of the multinationals. Ross Perot was right. There is a giant sucking sound, but its US creating the vacuum and aspirating and swallowing the gifts.

By affirming the gift paradigm and restoring it to view everywhere we can discredit capitalism for the capitalists, the manhood agenda for men, and the acceptance of the victimization of gift giving for women, workers, poor people, everyone. Moreover we can discredit these roles not only for their protagonists but for everyone else, so that people in general will not approve them for others or for themselves. *If it is gift giving that makes us human, the oppressor role cannot itself be satisfying* . That is why it has had to be validated in many other ways to ensure that people continue to practice it. The constructions of patriarchy serve this purpose including the construction of the male identity and the market based 'reality' that accompanies it in the 'West'. The victim role is not satisfying either but it continues because of the parasitism of the oppressor upon it (and because of use of force and disguise as well as systemic mechanisms). The same constructions of reality that validate oppression and parasitism validate the victimization of the gift giving 'hosts'.

A better world is immanent. All we have to do is liberate our selves from masculation and exchange and allow our gift giving humanity to come to the fore, mediating them with the gifts of language. Then we can embrace a world of abundant material gifts and distribute goods to needs without exchange. One day the market will be seen as an obsolete practice, as harmful and incomprehensible as bloodletting appears to us now.

PART SIX



Transpositions

Weighing the scales

In 1974-76 I spent some time in my hometown Corpus Christi, Texas, with my children. There I had some free time, which I used for working on the ideas that I eventually published in 1980 and 1981. I have included those essays as the final chapters of this book. Here I am adding two short pieces I wrote at that time on equivalence and on weighing and scales. They also contain many comments, which I made over the years, as I never gave up thinking about these issues. In fact the scales are very similar to the equation of value.

Equivalence

When the word is seen as the equivalent of the (general) equivalent, that is, of the exemplar, its common quality with the exemplar is mainly relational. It has the capacity to stand in the same position as the exemplar, with the same or similar effects regarding the things that are relative to it. Although in the beginning of concept development it may appear to children that things are the same because they have the same name, later they see that things have the same name because they are the same. In Vigotsky's surname complex, the relation between one and many is like that of a parent to children and therefore not reciprocal (the children are not parents of the parents or parents of one another). On the other hand, in the fully developed concept, the word occupies the equivalent position and substitutes for things as having a relation of equality (or at least similarity) ¹⁰⁷ with each other, and this relation is recip-

¹⁰⁷ When the concept is transferred into the quantitative mode as it is with money, similarity is transformed into equality. Looking back at language from

rocal (this having been achieved by turning the equation around).

In fact, it is a characteristic of equality that, as a relation, it can be equal to any other relation of equality. The equality that is established between equal relations is equal to them. Since the things that are related to a word have equal relations between them, each of these relations can be seen as equal to the relation the word has with them. It is the equivalent of the equivalent (of the exemplar) and that relation is equal to all the other relations of equality involved. This cluster of equal relations forms a sort of hologram.

Moreover, every instance of a given word as a combination of phonemes is in a relation of equality with every other instance of that same word, to the point that they are taken as “the same thing.” Since the relations of equality of items gathered together in a concept are equal to each other, they institute a new series of equal items on another level. The items on this level being equal, we can say that the relation is equal to the items that form it, so that the relation can be seen as adding an item to the series of which it is formed. In fact, sets of equal relations could be identified, which run all the way from the equivalence of physically similar objects to the equivalence of the equal relations to each other, with this as equal to the other relations, forming a new item to add to the set. Every time a new relation of equivalence is formed in some way, it adds a new item, which can itself be equated to all the others. Though different with regard to their content—for example, the first group would be made up of physical objects, the next of relations, and the next of relations of relations—each item or series would be equal to the others. This repetition of structure creates a kind of self similarity or mirroring. In fact, only in one or two phases do physically similar objects appear, but their relations are repeated many times, as happens in facing mirrors. (There is also the possibility of seeing the equation itself as exemplar and exemplar of exemplars, see below). Interestingly, the proliferation of reflections of equal relations also seems to be materialized in such social instruments as scales and coins.

the viewpoint of the market we can see relations of similarity in the reflected light of these relations of equality.

On my way back to Italy from the United States in 1975, I stopped over in Washington and went to the Smithsonian Museum. At the gift shop there I bought a reproduction of a little weight for measuring gold from the Gold Coast, Ashanti area of Africa. Looking at it carefully I was amazed to find that it expressed a number of the ideas I had been thinking about. I wrote a short piece about it, which I have continued to think about and elaborate on until now.

The Peacock Weight

This is a little weight for measuring gold (dust). It is a bird—a peacock it said on the box—that is mirroring itself in its tail, so it is self-reflecting in something that is part of itself, its tail. We can surmise that, as a weight, it was to be put on a scale. A scale can be thought of as a material equation, with its two plates that must balance. The equation between the bird's head and its reflected image in its tail would repeat the equation between the gold on the one side of the scale and the bird on the other. The bird reflecting itself in its tail (head = tail) is not only the equivalent of the gold, but the equivalent of the equation of the scale. The gold as general equivalent is the standard of the value of commodities and thus occupies the side of the equation with regard to them which the bird's head occupies with regard to its tail and which the bird as a weight occupies with regard to the gold. There is also an equation between any particular value, which is to enter into an equation of exchange, and the gold, as well as an equation between any particular instance of gold in the right quantity and the bird. The equivalence of gold with other instances of itself (along with its aesthetic qualities) can be seen in the self reflection of the bird and in the fact that it is a peacock, a beautiful and vain, self-reflecting bird. This self reflection in the tail also accords well with the Marxian analysis of commodities in which gold as money has the same substance of value that commodities have, which goes to show perhaps that the artisan who made this figurine understood some of the same things about money that Marx did. The peacock reflecting itself in its tail can be seen as an image of gold as having the same substance of value as commodities.

Looking at the bird on the scales as a precursor of coins, we can see how the coin really took the place of the equation of the scales. The equation between the bird and the gold is compressed and turned inside out in the coin as it is related to other coins. It is one and they are many, yet they are all “made of” the same thing. That is, they are all the ‘general equivalent’. On the one side of a coin you usually have a head and on the other some figure, sometimes a winged figure. In English you even call the two sides of the coin ‘heads’ and ‘tails’. On the one side of the coin you have the ‘head’, which is not looking at the ‘tail’ and on the other side the ‘tail’, which is not reflecting the ‘head’. The element of self-reflection is lost or hidden because the scale is turned inside out: its self-reflection is turned outwards. The ‘heads’ side is one of many ‘heads’ sides of coins of that denomination, and looks like them, and the same for the tails side. Together they are many aspects of the ‘one’, which is money.¹⁰⁸ We could look at this little figurine as an explanation, a material discourse on coins. The peacock is like a little phoenix that rises out of its ashes in the coin to tell us what coins are.¹⁰⁹

Coins exist in series, each equal to the others of the same denomination. The self-reflection of the bird now takes place between the coins, in their equivalence with each other within the series. Each coin is identical to the others of the same denomination and has the same social function in that it will buy the same quantity of value. It can be substituted in the exchange of private property, for any object containing a given quantity of value (socially necessary labor time in Marx’s terms). As gold or other money material, the coin is the general equivalent of all other commodities. Both the gold and the commodities contain value and this is why the former

¹⁰⁸ Both the head and the tail turn outward but as such they are indifferent to other instances of coins because they are only important quantitatively. As such they reflect the relations between the people who use them, who are indifferent to each others’ needs except as quantities of effective demand.

¹⁰⁹ As many instances of the ‘one’ identity, coins are thus similar to the masculated identity, the many men who are ‘ones’. Males are ones in relation to women and children as the many, while coins are ones in relation to commodities as many. Then coins like men are arranged in hierarchies.

reflects the latter in the exchange. As a coin of a particular denomination, gold is exchangeable for or substitutable for members of a class of commodities which is the class having that given quantity of value. We can say 'substitutable for' if we remember that exchange is a double substitution, and look at it one sidedly, from the point of view of one of the exchangers—that is substitution is only half of the act of exchange .

The coin is general for several reasons 1. the exchange of private property is an important human social practice, which becomes generalized and needs to be mediated generally, for many different individuals, with regard to many different things 2. different classes of commodities exist depending on the quantity of value they contain. 3, Different instances of coins of the same denomination exist. 4. The same coin can be used again and again. 5. There are other denominations of coins, themselves existing in series with regard to which any one series of coins (and thus any instance of a coin) is distinguished from the others by opposition.

We may imagine that the peacock was one of a number of larger and smaller birds for weighing different amounts of gold (which would correspond later to larger and smaller coins) In other words, it was probably also distinguished by opposition from other similar weights, which were put on the scale together in order to weigh different amounts of gold. However, this can be seen as a development of the equation of the one bird to itself, to the scale, and to the gold, which was potentially related to goods or services for which it could be repeatedly exchanged.(The same situation exists for gold and for coins in that both are combinable to make sums which express different amounts of value.) Each aggregate responds to the necessities of the moment—that is, it is particular, while a given weight or one denomination of coins, is constant and general, the situation from which one begins.

Now we can apply this to language. Money has characteristics of the word because of the contradictory, anti-social, social practice of the exchange of private property, which it serves to mediate. It takes the place of many kinds of things and expresses their value as qualitatively the same (not-gifts) and only quantitatively different,

just as gold itself is qualitatively the same and quantitatively different. (Quantity is after all only one kind of quality among all the others.) Language on the other hand, is both qualitatively the same (as vocal language) *and* qualitatively different as different phonemic and phonetic combinations.

The identity of a word with itself in one instance of that word would not be evident if there were not already a social practice in which that word was used. That is, unless other instances of the same word existed for others already, and in fact, a word must be learned from others who are using it. In much the same way, the peacock would not be a weight for gold in any particular instance unless the practice of weighing gold (with all that this implies) already existed. That is, unless other weights already existed for other things generally and unless it were possible to use this bird again and again to weigh various particular instances of gold having that quantity. There would be no need for the bird to reflect itself, thus becoming the equation of the equation of the equation, in which it also participates as an equivalent, unless there were a social reason for it to do so, a social use or need for it. This is a need coming from the market.

Early words like ‘Mama’ and ‘Papa’, which are made of repeated phonemes demonstrate self-identity phonetically.¹¹⁰ Like coins words are self-identical but also exist in relation to other instances of themselves. They are like the peacock in that in any particular equation with something for which they stand, they are self identical, and imply an equation with other instances of themselves (if you remember a word, you have found a present word equivalent to past—or future—instances of it, even if you don’t consciously perform the remembering) The self-identity and other-identity of words reflects the equation between the word and the non verbal item, which involves, like gold and commodities, the equation of a member of a class as an exemplar of the class, and the other members of that class.

According to Marx, gold is a member of the class of things that have value because they are produced by abstract labor, and as gold (money) substitutes for them, it measures and expresses them as

¹¹⁰ See Roman Jakobson (1978) for the discussion of these early words.

values. It is a member of that class, which has been excluded from that class by virtue of this particular social use, which it undergoes. He says that a polarity is set up between gold and other commodities like that between the Pope and Catholics.(1962:41) A case can be made that the same polarity exists between any object (or mental image of an object) as an exemplar of a class, and the other members of a class, which are equal to each other and thus are eventually also reciprocally substitutable, at least in regard to those qualities by which they are equal, and substitutable by the exemplar.

Gold used as money is different from the words of language because it is a 'word', which contains the quantitative *langue* within it. Words proper are (among other things) related (Saussure 1931) 1) to the things (cultural items) for which they stand, 2) to other instances of the same word, 3) to other words by opposition. What the word (taken by itself) does is to take the place of the exemplar with regard to the other members of the class, instituting the polarity between itself and these members, and making the exemplar unnecessary. When one doesn't know what a word means, an example, or a mental image, is useful. This is because there is another practice to which both things and the words that stand for them are relevant. That is, communication, the formation of similar social subjects with regard to abstract, but nevertheless common social property.

In any use of the word (name) with regard to something, which is a use of it alone (decontextualized like the scale, assessing something in terms of a standard)—not in a combination of words—its self identity is much like that of the peacock and has a similar function. This depends also on the fact of the existence of other instances of the same word in which it is reflected. The self reflection of the word is actually reflection among people. That is like coins, the word exists for others (and other words exist for others) and therefore for the individual. As with coins, not only the words but the classes of things they represent are important to others, as elements, foci, of social practice, and therefore they are important to each of us as someone who is always becoming socialized.

The word taken by itself is the substitute for the exemplar of the class, having taken over the polarity of general equivalent with

regard to the other members of that class.¹¹¹ This polarity is set up between the word and the members of that class, and both the word and other instances of itself, and any member of that class and other instances of itself have a relation of identity or similarity).¹¹²

Vygotsky says that the word is a guide to the formation of concepts, being already used by children in communication before they develop conceptual polarization. This idea implies that the concept already exists socially since there are many classes of things that are similar to each other and have been recognized as such by others because of their relevance to the practice of many people. Words institute a polarity with and among the members of a category so as to transmit, facilitate and make possible the complication and growth of human practice. According to Vygotsky's experiments, children do not understand abstract equality but other kinds of relations: family relations or chain relations between the things for which words stand (though it seems they always recognize the importance of some kind of equivalence or similarity). Vygotsky found that the simplification of the understanding of the concept according to a consistent exemplar and common quality or group of qualities is a comparatively late achievement. Its development is very similar to Marx's description of the development of money as the general equivalent. One can perhaps be used to fill in the other.¹¹³

¹¹¹ A word in any particular instance of its use in *parole* does not have the character of general equivalent with regard other instances of the same word. Rather it is a member of the class of that word, one of many instances. It can be taken out of the flow and looked at singly, whereupon it is considered in its polarity. As soon as it is taken out of the flow it loses the character of one among many it had in the flow. Vice versa as soon as it is taken out of the flow it gains the character of one to many, which it loses when it used in combination with other words(though it still maintains a polarity with the many it represents). However the word taken as exemplar of the class made up of instances of that word, still maintains the polarity with the words 'in use', it is not only the equivalent of the word taken out of context in the exemplar position ie. other uses of itself as exemplar but also of instances of that word 'in the flow'.

¹¹² We saw this above where we were applying the form of the general equivalent to Vygotsky's experiment in the development of concepts.

¹¹³ Jean-Josef Goux (1990) has done some important work comparing the

Even at an early stage children learn that similarity is relevant to communication, that is, to their relations with others. (This similarity regards similarity between verbal objects, which they themselves can make, similarity between their verbal objects and those others make, as well as similarity between the verbal objects others make at other times) At the same time they seem to recognize the relevance of the similarity among things with regard to language though from the beginning they form 'complexes' of things according to different similarities of these things to each other, rather than according to constant common qualities.

Beginning with the recognition of the social importance of similarity, which is stimulated by language, and continuing with the construction of the linguistically producing subject as similar to others, an abstract relation of similarity is set up among the things to which a word applies. The child knows that they are equivalent but s/he doesn't know why. This may be seen as an abstract nominalistic relation, which the child later fills in by virtue of h/er experience and socially determined practice regarding things. S/he thinks that things are equal because they have the same name. In a wide sense s/he is right because the name serves to mediate the transmission of social programs of behavior regarding a kind of thing and this helps to maintain the fact of their similarity to each other at a certain level of relevance to humans.¹¹⁴ Later s/he learns things have the same name because they are similar and s/he can abstract their common qualities.

If the similarity of things to each other is not generally relevant, no individual word exists for them in the lexicon (excluding things

general equivalent to various social and psychological patterns. He doesn't refer to Vigotsky but goes deeply into the development of the general equivalent. Among many other things, he discusses the convergence of the 'head' and the law and compares the sign or symbol (from the Greek word symbolon) to a token broken in two by means of which two travellers can recognize each other. Here the issue of the self identity of the coin or word is expressed in the two pieces rather than the two sides of the many coins or the self reflection of the peacock.

¹¹⁴ That is, their gift character.

which have been relevant in the past, so that the existence of a word in their regard is a sort of carry-over) and they are not seen at that level as a class. However, for a particular purpose, any kind of thing can be seen as a member of a class, by relating it to a sentence or phrase. For example the class of all horses standing in streams is referred to by a phrase in English but by a word in some Amerindian language (Schaff 1964). The class of all short and thick objects is one of Vigotsky's experimental classes. His experiment is in fact based on relating to words a group of things, which in Russian would normally have been related to phrases.

Communicative relations among persons, socially determined behavior with regard to things, their production, transmission and use, all aid language in the formation of speaking social subjects. All of this indicates a direction, which might be taken in considering language as a device for its own acquisition.



Perspective and the ego (1 and I)

Language itself has a great deal of power as a model; it is informed by and provides patterns of interpersonal behavior, which are transposed from and can be shifted to different levels. If we restore the dimension of gift giving to the idea of communication, we can see that a culturally determined legacy of material and linguistic gifts, gives us both the 'forms' and the 'contents' we use to construct ourselves as human. That is, the giving-and-receiving that takes place in material nurturing is transferred to the giving-and-receiving of verbal gifts. This interaction and change of planes, is repeated not only in syntax, but also in nonverbal signs and symbolic material gift giving of all kinds.

Thus we would like to suggest that gift giving at the level of syntax and words, in alignment with material gift giving, *teach themselves* to the child who is learning about material giving-and-receiving at the same time. Later, as s/he matures, the alignment of

the definition and naming with their derivative, the alienating anti-gift mechanism of exchange, brings the individual into the exchange paradigm as a market actor, 'economic man', in a context, which discredits gift giving and validates patriarchal values.

Scales and other measuring devices, including coins, employ and embody aspects of the concept-forming process: comparing relative items to equivalents, members of a category, for example the category of 'things having weight', to exemplars, for example standardized pieces of iron. The scale is not only a material equation and an embodiment of part of the process, it is also used as the exemplar for that kind of process. Moreover, the weigher is h/erself represented in the scale, in the symmetry of h/er two hands and two eyes, which deliberate in the weighing of two items or two points of view. S/he h/erself functions also as the exemplar and the standard of the mechanism as well as the standard of the standard, the one who decides whether the scale is in balance.

The peacock is like the weigher in that it introduces the element of self-reflection and thus provides a sort of missing link between evaluating and money, weighing and scales. It is appropriate also because it is used for evaluating gold, which is the general equivalent. Therefore at least momentarily it is the standard of the standard and thus also corresponds with the weigher, bringing forward the aspect of h/er self-referentiality.

The relation between the head and the tail feathers of the peacock, as well as between the beak and the eyes of the tail, is similar to the one-to-many relation between gold and commodities. The peacock weight stands on one side of the scale, gold on the other. The self reflecting peacock is an image of the self reflecting (masculated) 'one' ego required and promoted by exchange and thus probably also of the ego of the person who is doing the weighing. A sense of the self as unified in the midst of the variety of experience is probably a healthy self-construction. However, the ego orientation and emphasis on the general equivalent promoted by patriarchy and the market, lock us into continuing narcissistic self-evaluation. And as we said, the scale repeats the form of the

equation between gold and commodities¹¹⁵ (and the form of the self reflecting peacock) once again confirming the importance of the moment of comparison of something with a standard, a particular relative item with a general equivalent.

The scale repeats the form of the equation itself but with an extra social 'weight' or emphasis given to the standard. Whether it is a lead weight or the peacock, it is the one standard opposed to the many items to be weighed. The curious aspect of the peacock weight on the scale is that what it is weighing, the gold, is also the standard and it is a much more general equivalent than the peacock (which is even only used to weigh gold dust and not other things). Moreover, although this tiny figurine is stylized, the fact that it is a peacock reminds us that a peacock's head (with its balanced two eyes and beak) is the one as opposed to the many feathers with 'eyes'. The peacock is both the standard of the standard because it is used for weighing gold, and the representation of the standard—one to many (head to tail) and the representation of the equation—reflection, which is the scale. As such it is also like the human weigher, with similar functions.

The ego and the psychology of property

The market ego-form is the self-interested ego—a giver-in-order-to-receive or a 'deserving' receiver who has previously given-to-receive. The self that cares for others is different from the ego that uses others as means or reflects itself in other egos or that gives to receive an equivalent (though they can co exist within the same person). The 'exchange ego' comes from practicing the logic of exchange, which involves definition, evaluation, categorization, the self that cares for others comes from the practice of

¹¹⁵ Balance of two eyes brings perspective—also cross over right brain left brain—both in both eyes, another repetition of the scale since left brain is standard, the sequential, naming processor? Its a question or exploration of perspective (See Goux). The focal point is like the beak, balance relates one eye to the other, creating depth perspective?

gift logic and gift processes. There is also a self that cares for the ego needs of the other—usually the mother or the wife of a masculated male.

In language proper the subject of the sentence and the subject of the speaking (the subject of the *enonce*' and of the *enonciation* (cfr Benveniste) are both givers. As we have been saying, the subject gives the predicate to the object, and the speaker gives the words, the sentence, the discourse, to the listener. On the other hand the definition, which follows the pattern of exchange does not have a subject that gives to an object, rather there is a mechanism of substitution and change of levels by which the speaker, the definer gives the 'new' word to the listener/learner. Descriptions using the copula are similarly lacking in a giving subject. It may be that the ungiving human subject of exchange takes up the pattern of sentences using the copula in which properties seem to be added to the subject by apposition and contiguity, justified by the definition of that word (carried out through substitution). So by saying "A cat is a 4 legged animal with a long tail etc." and substituting 'cat' for '4 legged animal with a long tail etc.' we create a pattern by which, when we say: "the cat is black, likes to play, a good hunter etc." we are attributing or recognizing its 'properties' in analogy with the human being who on the market has taken the place of others (as h/his money has taken the place of others property) and those properties now belong to h/im. So the speaker can either be aligned with the pattern of the gift giving subject of the declarative sentence or with the property 'owning' subject of the descriptive sentence using the copula, or with the overtaking word, the *definiendum* in a definition.

Self-definitions such as "I am a man," say that I have those properties. The peacock, like Descartes, says "I think (I reflect) therefore I have the property of being...and thinking (reflecting)." Such self-definition is assertion of the human being as owner, the gift-canceling exchange ego (and the assertion of this exchange ego as standard), "I am I." So the peacock reflects not only the general equivalent and the scale but also this exchange ego structure and the form of the statement of identity or self-definition. These reflections

of the peacock weight let us see that the form of the general equivalent, money, also contains the form of the statement of identity or self-definition. That is, the general equivalent is the form of the self-reflecting owning-and-exchanging ego!! It says 'I am I' serially in many different experiences in time. While gift subjectivities take the form of the declarative sentence. As general equivalent these egos do not recognize gift giving. They leave it aside as irrelevant to the concept and to the forming of concepts, that is, to thinking. Turned upon themselves, narcissistic like the peacock, they are not in a giving but in an equating relation and stance and need to be admired, and so given to, as the scale is given to, as the equation, the identity statement, the exchange economy. Gift giving is outside and unrecognized. It has no meta level mainly because meta levels are descriptive, made in the form of identity statements, and these have been understood in terms of self reflection.

Even when a person is indicating something in an ostensive definition for the benefit of the listener, the speaker may not be recognized as a giver. Rather there is a sense of the generality and acceptability of language so that the name seems to be already there. The speaker is not giving us that word, but just 'passing it on', which is a discounted interaction belonging to gift circulation. The lack of recognition of the gift character of speech and of language and our participation in the market (where we do not recognize the source of the products we buy), keep us from recognizing the speaker as giver. Rather than seeming to be what it is, a relation between persons, language seems to be a relation between things—words and what they represent, and between words, what they represent and the brain (which remains a thing).

The market, using the patterns of the definition on the material plane, has emphasized the substitution aspects of language as if they were the givens (the gifts) and it has located them among the givens of nature, the data. These are givens, without a giver and without giving, so infused by paradox that we do not look beyond them. So, substitution, identity, equivalence, the common quality, which are elements of the process of abstraction just seem to be something we are equipped to recognize, part of our software: The un-giving ego,

taken as exemplar, corresponds with these abstraction processes and constructions of identity and it is also taken as a given. It also corresponds with language seen from the meta level of grammar from which gift giving has been removed. All of these identity constructions seem clear and acceptable to us, while gift giving is opaque.

The self reflecting ego becomes the standard for selves. In mascultation, the boy reflects the self-reflecting, owning ego of the father and himself self-reflects. He is in the category of those who are selected as superior, and recognizes himself as potentially 'one' of those 'ones'. The boy, like the peacock has an identity—beyond the gift. This kind of ego is generalized to everyone by Western philosophy and psychology, but we are often exhorted to go beyond it to embrace the 'other.' The attempt to impose ethics upon an unruly ego-oriented population would not be necessary, or at least would be very different if we were not creating the self reflecting, narcissistic owning ego in the image of money and the prototype of the concept, embedded in the context of exchange and the market.

The owner of property, like the exemplar in one of Vygotsky's complexes functions as one with regard to many different kinds of things.¹¹⁶ Private property requires a different approach from other categories because it creates sets of items that are internally diverse and cannot be conceptualized in the same way as other sets. The set, 'property of x', is a many-to-one configuration like the 'family name' complex (and like the patriarchal family). The owner has the position of exemplar but the items are diverse and are all related to the 'one' in different ways. The main common quality of the properties is the quality of belonging to that owner but there is also a common mutually exclusive relation with all those whose property this is not, a relation similar to that among words in Saussure's *langue*.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ I described this in *For-Giving* Ch. 13

¹¹⁷ Note on Ponzio. Though Saussure may have taken the idea of *langue* from the stable state of market equilibrium of the School of Lausanne, I believe pri-

As the owner not only of a variety of private property, but of money, the owner-exemplar becomes more abstract. Because money is the abstract and general exemplar of value, using it actually *performs* an abstraction. Money pulls its owner up to a more abstract level where s/he functions as the equivalent of the equivalent and the two processes, of owning and being the standard (and evaluator) are equated. Thus the one who has more is also evaluated as more and evaluates h/erself in that way. This instates another self-referential ego process, which makes the ego appear more important in view of the quantity of money and property it owns, and in comparison to others who have less or no money or property. Moreover property 'gives to' its owner selectively, in that it does not give to anyone else. The process of self reflection of the owning ego also informs the supposed 'superiority' of North over South as inhabited by people, corporations, countries and regions, which have more property and more money.

The peacock looks at himself reflected his beautiful tail, proud of his 'properties' (which female peacocks don't have) and the 'eyes' of his properties 'look back' at him ¹¹⁸ He also looks beyond his tail to the other plate of the scale where the gold, the general equivalent is located and even beyond that to everything that is related to the general equivalent, to the world of commodities, to everything money can buy. Like the peacock evaluating the gold, the proprietor evaluates his/her money, and looks through it at the world as h/er potential property. ¹¹⁹ Thus as an owning-and-exchange ego s/he sees the world as a very diverse set of items with h/erself as potential 'complex'

vate property functions according to relations of mutual exclusion first developed in language. In the relation of words to each other. Nel blu dipinto di blu..

¹¹⁸ Perhaps Lacan's "mirror stage" is relevant here. (Would the mother see her child in the light of her own self-reflecting potentially owning ego? But of course, as a woman, she is not likely to be the owner of much money or much property)

¹¹⁹ There is certainly a phallic and Don Giovanni aspect of all this. Jean-Josef Goux (1973) talks about the phallus as the general equivalent of body parts, which unifies the body concept.

exemplar, and occupying that position s/he is equivalent also of the money exemplar.

Having money places a person in a privileged category, (like having male genitals) but s/he has to step down from h/er abstraction to the 'complex' level and give up some of the money in order to actually obtain those possessions. That is, s/he functions on a less abstract level as the owner of a variety of concrete need satisfying things. While as a property owner s/he remains mutually exclusive with all other proprietors, as an owner of money, s/he independently possesses a common property with all proprietors of money and can be put in the same class with them, with further sorting depending upon quantity. The owners of money can look at the world as their potential property, not as belonging to others only. However they can only actually possess some of that property. Money is the general equivalent of everything on the market and a person who owns a lot of money can relate almost any kind of thing to h/erself as owner.

Our cultural heroes are now configured in the one-to-many pattern. They are sports heroes, movie and music stars with their fans, presidents and other political figures with their followings, CEO's with the members of their companies, television anchor-persons with their viewers. Some of them 'make' a lot of money (receive a lot of free gifts of profit), so that they are exemplars and equivalents of the general equivalent in several different ways: as 'stars', as owners of money, and as owners of property. They thus achieve the ideal of masculation, the exemplar position, in a realm somewhere beyond gender as such. Entertainment idol Michael Jackson is a good example of this. His unisex image emphasizes the 'beyond gender' aspect of this exemplarity; he is certainly unique and one-to-many regarding his fans; he has made a very large amount of money, and has owned all kinds of property including immense luxury items. On the personal level pedophilia may also be seen as an attempt to impose a one to many relation sexually on children who are themselves just undergoing the process of masculation.

The (artificial) mandate of masculation, to become the exemplar, must be a daunting and difficult one to young children who are at the same time giving up the gift giving way of their mothers.

Though society provides a number of paths to exemplarity for children to follow, they are not always accessible to the boys who need them the most. Exasperated young men may therefore act out the exemplar position negatively as has happened in the school shootings where teenage boys kill their classmates, presumably to show their superiority. In fact the ability to kill others with a (phallic) gun puts the killer in a 'one' position with regard to the many to whom, in an overwhelming apotheosis of hitting, he 'gives death'.

Form and Matter

Weighing can be seen as a physical metaphor for equating; in the scale, the balanced plane expresses the common quality, which in that case is quantity.¹²⁰ The scale then validates the form of the equation through repetition and representation. Each equation is equal to the others though quantitatively different. That is, balance is the representation¹²¹ of the fact that in the selection process, the common quality has been found and quantification has also been applied to it. A specific weight is one common quantity of a common quality.

The scale requires an onlooker, an evaluator or recognizer of the balance and the mechanism, a weigher. Since we can actually sense a similarity of weights in our two hands, and must maintain our bodies in equilibrium, scales seem to be clearly derived from the human body. In fact they are a sort of externalization or representation of our kinetic sense of our selves. Thus the evaluator or weigher is a look-alike of the scale itself with her spine as the fulcrum. A qualitative equation is set up between the weigher and the scale. As an evaluator, the weigher is also similar to the stan-

¹²⁰ Balance itself becomes the standard of human relations. The metaphor of balance that is now used in discussions of politics and the environment surely comes from the scale, which incarnates the equation of economic value or—of weight value. I believe we should beware of this metaphor as bringing with it exchange paradigm thinking.

¹²¹ It would seem that the scale has to be made that way with two plates and a fulcrum—but then new technology shows it doesn't.

dard and there is thus still another equation like that between money and its owner, making h/er the standard of the standard. Moreover the fulcrum of the scale is analogous to a person's internal center and to decision making on one side or another of an issue. In this the fulcrum is also similar to the standard or to a number on the standard as the point from which to evaluate more and less. The weigher is more active than the scale, as s/he is actually placing things on the plates, and satisfying a need to know how much they weigh (a need largely coming from the exchange economy). The patriarchal father as owner, decision maker and exemplar of the human is then also analogous to the standard of weight, the fulcrum *and* the weigher, and he can be internalized as such. On the other hand, we can say that the scale itself, together with its process, is an exemplar—a standard—for other kinds of decision making according to a standard.

The standard is a sort of transfer of the fulcrum onto one side of the equation, the equivalent, which is divided quantitatively. Whatever is equal to it has the common quality and quantity, and is in balance with it, which proves it. The onlooker, the weigher has a backbone, a fulcrum, the baricenter of a mostly symmetrical body, from which the scale itself was derived, and s/he also decides.

Physical analogies must be ancient, re suggesting themselves to people again and again. However the scale is not only derived from physical body balance but feeds back as an image of the balancing body, receiving confirmation and confirming the viewer. It also feeds back by its similarity to the one-to-many selection process (with the possibility of making the many repeatedly equal to the one by adding to or subtracting from either side.)

With regard to the scale we can also look at the weigher as a 'third person', a tracker of the gifts of others. S/he can tell if the two plates have both received the same 'gift'-quantity. As trackers of others' gifts we weighers are all equal to each other, and have that common quality ourselves. That is, we have in common that we are gift trackers, and in common with the scale mechanism that we are evaluators like it and occupied with the common quality (weight), like it is.

In the market, the individual who is deciding what to buy weighs the present item physically, and weighs it against money and against other items. Other people in the market, those of the past as well as those who will buy and sell after the present transaction, the seller who will receive the money from the present seller, the buyer who will ‘make money’ by becoming a seller in turn next time, are weighers who also are influenced by and influence the present. Everyone estimates the transactions of everyone else, hoping to receive more for less. These human evaluators, taking themselves as standards (man is the measure of all things), track the exchanges, in order to derive benefit. Thus they confirm the standard character of money as the general equivalent and vice versa it confirms them as its equivalent weighers and deciders. They also confirm other standards of weights and measures, the processes of weighing, measuring and evaluating, and quantification itself, as the basis of a kind of knowledge that is quite different from qualitative knowledge based on gratitude and gift giving.

This exploration of the social meaning of the scale is only one example of how our thinking is influenced by the market. There are many variations, extensions and intensifications of these patterns. We are collectively caught in the moment of the concept forming or selection process in which something is compared to a standard to decide what category it is in. The market, where we buy and sell on a daily basis, creates a situation in which we make choices depending on the evaluation of goods in money. Like the money and like the standard of weight of the scales, we are, with our needs and desires, the ‘standards’ for our own choices—after which we believe that it is the capacity for choice that is the most important aspect of our humanity and our ability to categorize that is the most important aspect of our minds.¹²²

I believe that our being the standard distorts our perspective on categories, making the exemplar ‘transparent’ to us (because indeed, it is incarnated again in us). Categories seem to be ready-made of

¹²² Thus also the marginalist explanation of economics as choosing or weighing what to give up.

members by nature or by fiat, not constructed. We are so deeply immersed in the use of money as the exemplar that we don't recognize it as such. We have arrogated its capacities to ourselves by making ourselves in its image¹²³ and it therefore seems to be just a social tool for a necessary human process. In its character of standard of value, money seems to stand outside the category of commodities because, as Marx says, it has been "excluded" by the bipolarity between the one and the many. People use money as an instrument and seem to control it. In the kind of judgment that is the sorting of value (exchange value) money seems to be just something in our universe that has that function. It seems to have no connection with commodities except that we use it that way. Moreover since in this incarnated concept process, we are actually using the exemplar to *buy* members of sets according to the quantity of their common quality of exchange value, we do not recognize it as an exemplar nor do we recognize the sets as having an exemplar. They are seen as types, or are identified (like humans) according to a list of their 'properties'. We also don't recognize our own agency in this process or our own self-constructed exemplarity.

As regards language, we ignore the importance of the exemplar for categorization. In learning language everybody has had h/er own exemplars in the equivalent position as substituted by the word-gifts, which are the names of things of that kind. Usually whatever identification of an object or mental image a person uses to construct h/er one-to-many concepts, this exemplar becomes once more part of the group it came from, since the word functions as substitute exemplar. Thus the exemplar position seems unimportant for the construction of categories. This is an illusion, however. Even though we do not recognize its role in categorization, we have externalized the exemplar and incarnated it in economics, politics, religion—every aspect of our culture. We have also inappropriately internalized it again in the construction of our property relations,

¹²³ in fact in the same way that the scale is an externalization of our kinetic sense and decision making process, money is an externalization of our concept forming process, especially as it takes the place of gift giving (and as the father takes the place of the mother as exemplar for the category 'human'.)

our egos and in the agenda of the male gender. Striving to achieve it individually is our collective disease.

We are way out of balance in the direction of the scale and the standard. Evaluation is overemphasized, and we tend towards it instead of tending others. We weigh alternatives, becoming ourselves the 'fulcrums' of 'scales', considering the importance of one thing or another and calculating results and consequences. The ability to choose appears to be the central aspect of freedom, making us take the position of the judge, the fulcrum, the standard much of the time. Categorization, quantification and decision-making seem to be characteristics or even prerogatives of those humans who have achieved the exemplar position. Although women are excluded by their gender from the category of those who strive to be the exemplar, as owners of property and money they are admitted and can join the race to the top.

The emphasis on choice and the religious emphasis on 'free will' in the over developed countries makes our consumerism seem part of our 'human nature'. We can choose to buy something that will put us in a superior category. At the same time advertising and propaganda companies are doing everything possible to weight the choices in their direction and, while it is becoming more and more difficult to choose to reject the system, more and more 'choices' among consumer products are being provided for those who have the money to pay for them. We are even made to believe that if we have the property of same kind of tennis shoes worn by an exemplar sports hero, we can be part of his category.

In the big picture, a social leverage point is created by scarcity. Taking the wealth away from the contexts in which most of the population lives, makes difficult the satisfaction of everyone's own needs as well as the needs of others and makes people have to balance the one against the others. The consequences of not working for money only become dire when there is no other access to need-satisfying goods in the community or environment. The point at which one will give up h/er independence is lower and lower as wealth is drained from the economy and alternatives are reduced. The presence of children towards whom the other-orientation of

workers is directed, weighs the balance in the direction of the capitalist. The workers' gift giving orientation or responsibility (the needs of their families) is used against them, and they are forced into situations in which they have to calculate the importance of every need against every other, as expressed in marginal utility. This situation is viewed as natural and inevitable and is justified by those who judge 'have-nots' as inferior to 'haves' (with all the phallic overtones these expressions imply).

Standards and definitions

Masculation makes the male the standard for humans, and a similar social choice makes lead the standard for weight (though there are less options to choose from for a standard of human genders than for a standard of weight). This identification of a social standard as such does not weigh anything materially, but it maintains the one-to-many polarity and thus the scale itself, which needs a constant articulated standard of evaluation. That is, it satisfies a social need for the evaluative quantification of products coming from the exchange of private property as well as from other social processes—such as measuring in cooking, construction, medicine, etc.—all of which can be done outside of the issue of private property, focusing on particular needs arising from human collaborative situations. The 'weight' of being a standard is a special quality like value—like a twist in the quality of value, a kind of permanent emphasis. That emphasis comes from the fact that as a social general equivalent, it is not just self identical but derives its main identity from its relation to the many others.

The determination of weight¹²⁴ according to the standard is like the definition and naming. It is our process of responding to the need to know—what is it? regarding a quantity of this qualitative dimension. In the definition, the *definiens* and the *definiendum* must

¹²⁴ Height, length, depth, volume have less correspondence with the definition than does weight as measured with the scale. Perhaps they are more like translation, or just constant and variable.

be considered equal to each other, so that one can take the place of the other for further communication. In the scale, the items on the two plates must be equal as to weight so that the plates will balance. The vestige of substitution remains in the fact that the thing being weighed and the standard can be substituted for each other on one or the other plate of the scales without changing the balance. The scales also reflect or foreshadow the equation of value, where money is substituted for (takes the place of) the commodity in exchange, thus showing that they have the same common quality and quantity of exchange value. The level balance of the scale, permitting reciprocal substitutability is analogous to the common quality of nonverbal gifts also permitting reciprocal substitutability, and in turn substituted by the *definiens* and by the *definiendum* in the definition. In the equation of value the substitutability—and the actual substitution—of money for the commodity expresses the same quantity of the quality, which is value in exchange.¹²⁵ Quantification satisfies the need to know ‘what is it?’ in terms of counting by representing amounts in an ordered series of numbers.

Needs to know coming from the market are satisfied regarding weight by using the mechanism of scales and standard weights.¹²⁶ Other needs for quantification have brought various other kinds of measurements and standards. The satisfaction of these needs is one specialized aspect of what we call ‘knowing’ and it can be considered a particular kind of gift coming from quantitative definition and measurement even if the practices which made the measurement necessary were/are often exploitative and based on exchange.

The need for quantification, especially, arises from exchange, which itself comes in part from lack of trust and the attitude of the stranger (Godbout 1992). As shown in widespread ancient traditions of hospitality towards strangers, gift giving creates community, but where no community is expected or desired, exchange

¹²⁵ Quantities, especially quantities of value, might be considered as analogous to emphasis, in what we could call ‘phatic material communication’.

¹²⁶ New needs develop along with new practices. For example, paying tributes and taxes required quantification, which was developed to satisfy that need, even if the practice of tributes was exploitative.

prevails. Vice versa exchange produces a distancing of those who might otherwise be in a gift giving community. (To its credit on the other hand, trade sometimes establishes 'balanced' relations beyond those of force, plunder and war).¹²⁷

The kind of knowledge brought about through quantification and exchange is different from the qualitative knowledge brought about through gift giving, communication and language and even perception itself. Quantitative knowledge is not knowledge for which we are grateful to the source, because the source appears to be just the scale, the standard or the calculation, which actually don't give a gift. They only 'correspond to reality' and the weigher—who may be ourselves—is just performing a mechanical process (in a kind of anticipation of the operator of technology). Thus they fit with the owning-and-exchange ego and the denial of the gift in Patriarchal Capitalism. The calculation of that material emphasis which is quantity is emphasized much more than the immense variety of human needs and the activities that satisfy them.

The relation of one plate to the other of the scale might look like a gift transaction, because just by being put there the lead seems to 'give' a specific quantity to the thing weighed, attributing to it an intrinsic quality: weight, and a quantity of that quality for us.¹²⁸ In fact the weigher is just using the equation of the scale to discover what is already there, a certain amount of weight. S/he is in the tracker role discerning who got what gifts rather than in the role of direct giver or receiver. The balance of the scale attributes a quantity, which is already there.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ War is also conducted according to market metaphors. The arms race between the US and the Soviet Union was conducted on the principle of arriving at a balance without having the actual 'exchange'.

¹²⁸ In this way the father standard attributes the quality of 'intrinsic' maleness to the boy. The lead is not a one to many giver of all kinds of things (as chief in potlatch may have been), but its gifts are limited in scope to the needs of a one to many knower, evaluator or definer.

¹²⁹ This is one more example of my philosophy, which I call "nel blu dipinto di blu." (In the blue, painted blue). We recognize something because we are that way ourselves. We emphasize weight because weight is a kind of emphasis. Women recognize gift giving as possible because they are already doing it.

The scales combine the definition with the concept formation process where an exemplar is chosen and other items are compared to it. The quality weight is singled out, abstracted from other qualities and then a material, lead, is assigned or identified as the exemplar and standard for that quality. This measurement is a process of attribution and discovery. Similarly men are the standard and exemplar for the human but men also have the aspect of ‘counter’ as the ‘one who counts’, with the *double entendre* of ‘counting’, which puts counters in a privileged category. Counters are able to register and describe in numbers the kind of phatic material communication that is quantity.¹³⁰

The coin has as many self-similar relations as the peacock weight. Exchange itself is embodied in the two-sided coin in opposition to the gift. The gift/not-gift binary relation and the binary relation mine/not-mine are echoed in the heads/tails relation as the coin passes from hand to hand. The coin, like the whole peacock-scale-and-gold, used for knowledge of quantity of exchange value, is in binary opposition to the gift. The equality *among* coins is balanced by the binary either/or character of the two sides of every individual coin. The equality between the coin and the commodity is dependant also upon the equality between one coin and the many others of that denomination, as well as upon the existence in the culture of many other coins of other denominations and of the whole area of exchange in binary opposition to gift giving.¹³¹

Tracking and counting money

We are in thrall to the objects, which we have used in the construction of our subjectivity and sociality and which have thus

¹³⁰ The erection might be considered phatic material communication and it is important for one’s ability to count as male.

¹³¹ Then the coin is tossed and turns over and over, as what is internalized is externalized again, or what is external is internalized again—and the dimension of chance is added, like the chance that makes one male or female, rich or poor. It’s a gamble. The coin thrower is the knower satisfying a need to know (binary) yes or no, right or wrong, gift or exchange. But if exchange comes up, there are two parts again: mine or yours, money or commodity etc. Is tossing the coin a meta use of the coin or just an alternative use?

become the incarnations of those parts of ourselves, which they have helped to form. Coins r us, and so r scales, mirrors, even the houses where we do our gift giving and where we change levels from more public to more private when we go upstairs. Then we say 'God the artisan' makes all these artifacts that influence us.

The bi-polarity of the coin embodies the identity that excludes gift giving—which is already always potentially the other pole TO the bipolarity itself. There are many bi-polarities. The one and the many are represented in the coin, the family and public sphere, the individual and the group, the king and the state. All of these and others, like the general and the army, the CEO and the corporation, are bipolar representations of patriarchy, modeled on the concept form and its function in masculation. Mutually exclusive bi-polar property: either mine or yours, excludes a previous gift property and identity: ours. Outside the bipolar area of either/or, gift giving still exists.

Fortunately, there is also a linguistically constructed gift identity of the psychological subject. Although what we say may be based on ego-oriented exchange, lies, and attempts at domination, the internal functioning of language is based on satisfying the other's communicative need. In this light our subjectivity always derives from our agency as givers/speakers, and our ability to receive/understand because words as verbal gifts and syntax as giving among words satisfy communicative needs at a basic level and thus produce a basic human gift giving subjectivity that remains in spite of later distortions. In fact the owning-and-exchanger ego is constructed both on the basis of and in contrast to its own basic gift giving subjectivity.

At another level, communication can be used for negative purposes, which the subject then incorporates as part of h/erself. We can satisfy others' needs in order to dominate them thus becoming dominators as *givers* of commands, manipulators, underminers or destroyers of others. We do this by giving to them linguistically, and our subjectivity develops along those lines, perhaps in concert with the corporeal transposed 'gift' of hitting. However, we would not understand each other at all if the words and sentences we use did not satisfy general communicative needs of the community and specific

communicative needs of the individuals in question. If we command someone “Kiss my foot,” those words have to satisfy the communicative needs regarding those gifts, services and parts of the world, that are kissing and my foot, even if the reason we are satisfying those needs is that we want to dominate and humiliate the listener. S/he will understand because h/er communicative needs are satisfied, even if she does not obey.

Those who are doing life-enhancing gift giving in their daily lives align their practical activity with this positive basic linguistic subjectivity, thus creating a more life-enhancing gift-directed self at many levels, than those who are self reflecting, exchanging, and dominating both linguistically and materially. Because females are expected to be mothers, they are not put in a non-mothering (masculated) category from the beginning as are males. They can therefore do gift giving without losing ‘face’, aligning their practical and their linguistic subjectivities. These are factors based on language and on social roles and practice, not on biology, and they can be used to account for differences in male and female subjectivities, public and private roles, market and domestic spheres in Patriarchal Capitalism.

Tracking the gifts of others, as we saw above when talking about syntax, and ‘who gives what to whom’ is a third process or role, which is neither gift giving nor exchange but regards them both. That is, the ability to track gifts and services could be said to extend not only to our view of the world around us and to words, but we can also turn it towards the contradictory gift process that is exchange. The question ‘who gave what to whom?’ can be transformed into ‘who gave how much and in return for what?’ This question interests all the market actors, as they will all be buying and selling the same or related things on the basis of the prices others are paying for them in other exchanges.

When someone buys from someone else in order to sell (“M-C-M” that is, money-commodity-money instead of “C-M-C” that is, commodity-money-commodity) there is another for whom that transaction is important, the future buyer, and in any case the money of the present buyer is the result of a previous sale. Thus those not

engaged in present transactions nevertheless have a role regarding them, which is pertinent to their own involvement in similar transactions at other times. In the market everyone is in this position regarding everyone else. The use of money as the common standard of price allows the tracking of transactions to be done in the same way by all. Just as the use of words and syntax help us construct a common reality, and track gifts the same way, the use of money helps us track exchanges and construct the common reality of the market.

Money is the standard of value and evaluator and is thus in a position which is similar to the human evaluator. There is also a similarity between the function of the weigher with regard to the scale and the standard of weight, and the function of a judge, the two sides of the argument and the body of the law. In other words, with regard to a present transaction of selling/buying, other buyers and sellers, like the weigher and the judge are all 'trackers' or observers in a third position. However the standard itself is also an (incarnated or transposed) 'tracker', a sort of common 'third' even when it is part of the transaction like money is, or like the lead weight on the scale.

The use of the standard for evaluation involves the substitution of the role of the third, the observer, for the role of giver and/or receiver. That is really exchange! In barter each estimates the value of the other's product with regard to her own, and what the other might want. Exchange for money takes the place of gift giving but also of barter. That is, it takes the place of the ad hoc agreement (commonality) between two, to give in order to receive.

Masculation also uses the tracker role to displace the model of the giver and receiver. That is, both mother and father as observers are in agreement that the boy has received the 'gift' of the penis and therefore also the verbal substitute gift of the gender term, which puts him in the category 'male'.¹³² From the beginning his identity is influenced by this issue of who has received what, and he in turn can become an evaluator, and as an adult, an authority. Value becomes a

¹³² For the father in the psychological third position, jealous of mother and child see Kenneth Wright (1991).

property of the privileged category, and the members of that category are also privileged categorizers who can dominate other categories and categorizations.

Thus another aspect of the distinction between exchange and gift giving is that evaluation itself takes the place of gift giving when one requires an equal return 'gift' in a *do ut des* fashion. When the interaction becomes ego oriented instead of other oriented it requires the quantitative evaluation of the goods and vice versa. Exchange is a change of roles, giving precedence to the evaluator over the giver. Because of masculation the stance of the evaluator coincides with membership in the category that has been evaluated as superior (the male, who has received 'more'). The members of that category are also involved in a struggle to *become* the exemplar, as part of their gender role, and they therefore track and evaluate properties which belong to the exemplar and each other, believing that having more of these will masculate them again.

The peacock looking at its tail on the one side of the scales, and the gold in relation to commodities on the other side are in a relation of specularity not only with themselves, each other and commodities but with the person who is weighing them as an evaluator. When that person is a male there is a continuity of standards: the person who is weighing the items, the male standard with respect to women and other men, the gold with respect to commodities, and the head of the peacock with respect to its tail, admiring and admired by the feather eyes. However even when a woman is the weigher, she is practicing the role of evaluator (using the standard mechanism and the common standard). The aspect of masculation is made invisible since women can do evaluation as well as men. The scale is also an externalized mechanism of naming and categorization (which are so important in masculation). Its very external status puts it beyond gender, making it appear neuter and neutral while at the same time, it surreptitiously broadcasts the importance of masculation as quantitative (and thus not primarily gift giving) evaluation according to a standard. Thus women can weigh as well as men even if they are not themselves the 'standard categorizers'. Similarly they can use

money without being self similar with it, and they can count even if, in another sense, they don't count.¹³³

In exchange, the 'I' as third, observer-standard-evaluator takes over from the gift giving 'I', as self-interest takes over from other interest. The ego is made the privileged receiver, and one attempts to identify gifts and direct more of them towards oneself. In this situation, the market in which the person participates seems to be the giver so s/he bonds with the market, giving value to it in a new gift 'circle' only with h/erself. H/er ego interest is in competition with others' ego interest. The observer position in the market promotes not only knowledge but envy of what others have, and rage at not 'having' enough. What observers 'give' is an evaluation (by giving the concrete token of that evaluation, money—a piece of the exemplar). Evaluation is substituted for gift giving and the evaluator for the giver. Thus *homo donans* degenerates into *homo sapiens—economicus*. The ego that is constructed in this fashion serves the market as a motivated actor, always ready to expand and get more so as to count more, to evaluate h/erself and be evaluated as better than other competitors and finally to achieve the position of the exemplar.

The self-interested 'observer' role really functions only in relative abundance because those who are living in poverty often are forced to revert to a 'female' gift position, in which their effort is all for others', their families', survival. Taking up macho attitudes at home sometimes restores to the men the masculated identity that is structurally taken away by their poverty.

North-South masculation

The construction of masculation continues to exist and is re proposed again and again, alongside the clear proof that it is false and unnecessary. The more this proof dawns in consciousness the more the mandates of masculation are transposed into collective arenas and /or imposed by the use of force. The accumulation of wealth and

¹³³ In fact, paradoxically, the more women weigh the less we count.

power in the countries of the North provides a collective 'superior' masculated identity while femizing and impoverishing the countries of the South.¹³⁴

This is happening at the same time that participation in the market has legitimated not-giving also for women so that men and women are becoming more 'equal' according to the male not-giving standard. Thus in the North everyone, male or female, rich or poor, can 'enjoy' a masculated position as part of the 'superior' category. Meanwhile those in the South have to defend their individual masculine superiority against the Northern collective male and our US president (the 'top' male of the 'top' country) has to be the individual exemplar of masculated masculinity. Bush's preemptive and punitive aggression can be seen as a sort of replay of Clinton's sexual adventures, but on a collective level.

Perhaps unable to assert his one-to-manyness sexually, Bush is doing it through collective military aggression (that development of hitting which takes the place of gift giving for boy children). Terrorism is the assertion through armed aggression of the individuals' masculated exemplarity in competition with the collective 'exemplar' country or group. Bush's military aggression is a way of asserting his individual masculated exemplarity by imposing the collective force of his country's masculated institutions on individual terrorists, and along with them, their countries, their regions, and the entire collective context from which they come. Add to this the logic of exchange, reprisal and escalation, and we realize how the wars in which the devastating world is presently engaged are the expression of the psy-

¹³⁴The displacement of roles onto the collective has had other, more positive results. Many people from the South immigrate to the North in order to work so as to maintain their families at home, establishing a flow of gifts without which the Southern economies would not survive. These gifts unfortunately are also used pay the interest on the debts the rulers of the countries have contracted with the Northern entities like World Bank and IMF. Thus Northern countries appear to 'practice gift giving' towards countries in the South (who they are otherwise exploiting) because of the remittances coming from the work and sacrifice of millions of immigrants. See Maria Jimenez contribution in *A Radically Different Worldview is Possible*. Peggy Antrobus has discussed this issue in meetings of the gift paradigm group.(personal communication).

chological and economic underpinnings of Patriarchal Capitalism. If we do not understand what we are doing we cannot stop doing it. The analysis of the exchange economy and masculation, and the alternative proposal of the gift economy and its unmasculated values are of utmost importance in this time of crisis.

Coins R US

The coin reduces the three dimensional scale to two dimensions. On one side is the seer, on the other side is the seen, the government building, or the ones who see the seer. The head of state has emitted (given) these coins, yet seen in profile on the coin, he is neither giving nor receiving, just observing, evaluating—and evaluated, valued by those who give him power, who themselves are represented by a god or mythical figure, now a public building (a construction of reality).¹³⁵

A person uses a coin by permission of the ruler or the state. S/he is one of the many who are observing the leader, giving power and oneness to him. He is even more observed than he is observer. He lets himself be seen. Either the head or the tail; but this binary choice doesn't really matter, both are part of the coin. Like gold and commodities, both have 'economic' value. Gift giving is elsewhere.

One is the other side of many. I as one am also one *among* many. There is a unity of the many self-interested points of view, internally to each one person, in h/er 'will' which upholds h/er continued practice of exchanging, and owning, not giving. That unity or even identity is expressed in the one face upon the coins of one denomination. The other side of coins has a much greater variety of images, images of the many. The primary collective choice is between exchange and gift giving, and between exchanging and not exchanging, between using the coin and not using it. Using the coin we are in the ego oriented rather than the other oriented frame of reference. Other oriented charity with money is common of course but once the money is received as a gift, it will be used again for exchange.

¹³⁵ The round coin is like the iris of the eye, bourn out now in use of iridography at ATM machines. The pupil expands and contracts, evaluating?

The unity of ego oriented exchange points of view is the guiding principle of *homo sapiens-economicus*. There is also a unity of other oriented points of view, though the logic of other-orientation makes most of their objects different from each other. That unity precedes the ego-oriented unity. In exchange we let the self-reflecting ego (and self reflecting ruler) be the standard, as self-reflecting money is the standard. The role of the 'head' of this ego is that of the observer, the third, the tracker of gifts, of who got what, and who gave what to whom.

Inner Eye point of view

Exchange changes the status of property from gift to commodity and it also changes the status or role of the subject from giver/receiver to exchanger and from giver/receiver to tracker/observer. As a 'third', a person is not practicing the kind of attention by which a need of another is related to her own possible gift-giving initiative. Rather it is seen with detachment.

There is a nurturing 'I' however, with an attitude of subjectivity that not only gives in response to the requests of others but is able to provide the kind of other oriented attention required to guess the needs of others who cannot or do not ask for what they need (no effective demand). This kind of other orientation is also necessary for language, as we have been describing it. That is, we speak in the language of the other, communicating about what we know or divine that they do not know already, and that they therefore have a (communicative) need to know. The 'exchange ego' is a subjectivity appropriate to the market, which observes and calculates what others need in order to get what it needs. The nurturing subjectivity is disbelieved and discredited by the exchange ego, which tries to direct as many gifts as possible towards itself in the form of profit. The consciousness of giving to the other is replaced by a consciousness of the general equivalent in its relation to the many ie, money in relation to commodities, in an evaluation that ignores the gift giving that is its opposite, the other side of the coin.

Corresponding to the two kinds or moments of subjectivity let us surmise that there are two gazes, which we may call the 'gift gaze'

and the 'exchange gaze'. We can look at others and ourselves also noticing what others need and what we have to give, or on the other hand, what others have, what they have gotten from others and what we might get from them. The exchange gaze is a gaze of counting, categorization and dominance while the gift gaze attributes value to the other by identifying needs in order to satisfy them, listening and non-judgmental creative receptivity. The gazes are asymmetrical and recognizable but I believe we usually deny and do not name their specificity.

Kenneth Wright (1991) talks about the gaze between mother and child and the creation of an interpersonal space between the two. I believe we can consider the mother's gaze a gift gaze in the sense that s/he looks at the child to see and understand h/er needs with the intent to try to satisfy them, and s/he also judges from the child's reactions whether the needs have in fact been satisfied. That is s/he creatively receives from the child the sign-gifts, which allow her to make that judgment and give to the child appropriately. This gaze is different from the exchange gaze in which each looks at the other manipulatively to see what s/he can get, or to dominate by means of the other's needs rather than simply to satisfy them. Mothers who are burdened by scarcity and the care of many children may not have the time to nurture their children long and thus they may need to manipulate them by rewards and punishments. Many women do begin to manipulate their children early on and the children learn to receive the exchange gaze as well as the gift gaze. Eventually they themselves learn to manipulate and to investigate others using that gaze as well. The exchange gaze is not a gaze of gratitude or a gaze for which to be grateful (Frye, (Kailo 2006). The kind of recognition that takes place with the exchange gaze fits with the exchange paradigm and looks at nature and humans as easily manipulated, mechanical, without gifts or need for gratitude and bonding. Since gift giving is not recognized as a social paradigm and logic, the gift gaze seems to be a merely private way of looking at the world, and the exchange gaze replaces it.

The exchange ego has to be set off both from other internal experiences and distinguished from the egos of others. For a masculated

male this ego is excluded from its own female or gift giving experiences because it is attempting to make the person 'superior', to give him this 'male' identity, follow the rules for creating himself, his experiences, making himself not a sissy, not a girl etc. So he has to be an observer and evaluator of his own and others' behavior to this end. Following this 'command': 'Relate this thing to that word'. "Relate this masculine part of your experience, of yourself, not the sissy feminine part, to the gender term, and basis of your identity and ego and your name." So when a male, undergoing masculation, looks at himself to say who he is, he sees (counts) the macho aspects, which he expresses as I AM and which he is validated for. If he expresses feminine or gift giving (human) aspects he is put down by his peers (other similar I AMS.) This exchange ego can be somewhat disconnected from gender and seen as neuter. Then it can be constructed in a male or female person, who strives to be in the superior category through Patriarchal Capitalist means and so at least when performing in that exchanger role does not count h/er gift giving tendencies as part of h/er identity. Most women still maintain a gift subjectivity however, since they have not been masculated and men may do so as well in spite of masculation.

Each in the exchange ego mode finds h/erself reflected in the ego oriented exchange gaze of the other. The nurturing gaze, unguarded, looks at the world in greeting, "How are you?" (what are your needs?) it asks. "Who are you?" as opposed to "what are you?" It is also a gaze of reception, of readiness to be nurtured. The nurturing gaze needs to defend itself from the exchange gaze of the other but perhaps in order to do so, it must become an exchange gaze itself. The perspective of the ego is the inner eye of the self-interested one, a single focal point of the self and on the self.

The US dollar is adorned with a picture of the 'great seal', the image of a pyramid with an all-seeing eye above it. We could look at the eye as an icon of ourselves with our mon-ocular ego-oriented point of view, looking at it. Because our own eye is in the place at the top of the pyramid of our perspective we attribute our co-respondent ego orientation to the 'other' on the dollar: George Washington, the father of our country, exemplar and representative of

the authority of the state. We give life and value to the dollar just as we attribute life and value to those others whose gazes we meet. Our 'faith' in our money is an attribution of value to it, like the attribution of life, our inference of others' being there behind the gaze. In the same way that we attribute authority to the king or president, we attribute value and exemplarity to our money. We also attribute to others the ability to be 'one' (as property owner, seller, male, member of a country, etc.) and together with them we give quantitative value to our paper money.¹³⁶

George Washington's gaze says 'treat me as 'one', not as a gift gazer, with an other-oriented gaze, but as an authority to be given to, a receiver of the gift gaze (your gaze of obedience, your value-infering gaze) which he 'deserves', as a one related to the many. It says "attribute authority to me: I count." "I have the authority of the standard." We use the dollar to exchange. We do not barter—or give. Here again is the authority of the masculated father as the exemplar of the human, making the child emulate him, taking him away from gift giving, and here is the father of his country as the market standard taking the country into the exchange mode. Like a soul-stealing photograph, (here not the camera but the photograph, the picture itself steals our souls) our money reflects us and transports us into the realm of exchange. The one who really counts however, is not the one in the money, the president, the king or head of state but... the one outside, ourselves, each one looking at the dollar, counting how much 'I' have, over and over again. That looped thread pulls us back into the distorted social fabric every time, validating it.

The viewer enlivens the text, the object, like movies powered by a hand crank, or a hurdy gurdy. The very 'look' of money makes us give it value because it is like our ego structure (and like the ego of ownership). As we give value to ourselves in self-interested exchange

¹³⁶ In fact we are actually giving a gift to our money as well, because inflation devalues it, yet we give for it the same amount we did before. So actually our attribution of identity to our paper money leaves the fact of inflation in suspension and the gift surreptitiously slips away from us to our government and banks.

we give value to the money, which mediates the exchanges for us, not just practically but because, though we and the money are of different 'dimensions', there is a similarity in structure, a shared iconicity. Then it seems that the more money, the more 'I' self. The ego is just as much a social invention as money is and it uses its reflections in money to construct itself, readying itself for the process of exchange.

There is a change in level from sign to signer, number counted to counter. We are outside the dollar bill (or coin) looking at it, each of us is one and counts (it as one). The king or president counts most at one level through his power over each one. He is 'internalized' by the people he has power over in the hierarchy. He commands and so is the top, the 'one above' in each, their 'head'. This internalization is expressed at another level by the image of his head reproduced many times. The ruler corresponds to the ego of each of the many people who use his money. 'He', as incarnated, as repeated in their 'one' egos, looks at his 'one' picture. So he is one counter who counts, as is each one of them. They are also many ones, as represented in the 'tails' side of the coin and the reverse side of the dollar.¹³⁷ In this way the one-many concept relation expressed in government comes together with the one-many concept relation expressed in money: in these icons of heads of government 'ones' that one-many property owners and ego-oriented exchangers pass from hand to hand, giving them to 'one' another instead of gifts (and they are all icons, substitutes for the act of substitution of the not-giver for the giver, the father for the mother, the one for the many.)

¹³⁷ This is like God pointing and Adam pointing back in Michelangelo's fresco (see For-Giving p.264). Or rather this is Adam (ourselves) pointing and God (George Washington) pointing back because the president is a more general equivalent than ourselves. Now styles have changed and many countries put national heroes instead of rulers on their money, in a more self-conscious iconography. The idea of 'multitude' as Negri and Hardt () see it lacks a vision of the proliferation of the one-to-many relation at all levels of society. The multitude cannot leave its relation to the 'one' if the families in which it is organized have one to many structures or if the egos of the people of whom it is composed are created in a one-to-many form or if money continues to occupy its practice and its imaginary or if it continues to be dominated by one-to-many deities.

It is as if by bringing the ego of the counter forward, s/he is enlisted in giving value (and faith) to money through unconsciously letting it reflect his/her ego structure/perspective in the moment. There is a kind of play of elicitation of perspective and a projection of the relation of ownership. The evaluator—the ego—and the money are the same. They (can) count. In the same way a mother looks at her baby and seeing it is alive, present, recognizes it as already intrinsically human, exchangers are called upon to *attribute* ‘intrinsic’ value to their money, and they do.

Visual perspective began to be represented in art along with the rise of capitalism (Goux 199?). That is, with exchange and the market as the main economic relations among persons, the point of view of each person as separate and individual was emphasized and began to be represented. That is, what I am calling the exchange ego had a moment of emergence in the Renaissance to the extent that it could be represented, causing a literal “shift in perspective.” Looking at the all-seeing eye above the pyramid on the dollar, we could think of it as the representation of this perspective of the individual, with each one as a self-interested one, with a more or less triangular spread of the field of vision, like the pyramid. This is the perspective with which we look at money and vice versa, money ‘looks’ at us. From this point of view the esoteric all-seeing eye at the top point of the pyramid is the projection of our inner eye, the eye/I that we give value to at the top of our pyramid of values in an ego oriented society. The pyramid would just be an incarnation of human PERSPECTIVE where the eye/I dominates everything—all it surveys. This is the gaze of the ‘one’ owner who will be exchanging with others, using the ‘one’ exemplar money to get what s/he wants and add to h/er properties. We attribute life to the exchange ego construction, the proprietary ego (who is a legal entity) and we do not attribute anything to our gift giving selves.

Marx believed that exchange brought individuation, and that without it humans would have a kind of “herd consciousness like the animals.” I am not suggesting that we go back to a depthless, two-dimensional perspective, nor that we live without individuation. Denying gift giving while we are doing it and while it continues to sustain us however, places us in a situation in which some

individuate at the expense of many others who give to them. The herd conscious does not cease to exist but re forms at another level, depleted, litigious and antithetical as the ego-oriented herd.

The point of view of the other is taken in exchange only because it is as ego oriented as our own. Each of us is also the spectator from the third person position, and our points of view are the same. Does the three dimensional depth we have gained in Capitalism conceal the gifts we are not seeing as well as the way we see, the similarity and the consequences of our egotism? And does our artificial structural similarity render both invisible and 'natural' our need to categorize ourselves in terms of an exemplar or standard, movie star, president, or even deity? Models who are hired as standards of physical beauty are successfully used to sell shampoo perhaps because it is in our exchange mode that we are most alike and most sensitive to our own possible deviance from the standard for our gender, age, race, class and physical appearance.

Commodity production in series as well as television and cinema presuppose viewers and users who are alike and therefore can be massified. Our collective self-construction as similarly separate through mutual exclusion is a particular vulnerability of market-based society. We want to be standardized so we can 'know who we are'. But this self-knowledge is just the kind of knowledge that prepares us to be subjects and objects of exchange, sorting us into quantifiable members of categories as if we were commodities.

In our perspective as 'thirds' we categorize ourselves in terms of all the standards to which we are related as our equivalents. We find ourselves similar though inferior to the president in our aspect as citizens, similar though inferior to the tv anchor person in our capacity for knowledge of current events, similar though inferior to the movie star in physical appearance and mannerisms, similar though inferior to the model with the beautiful hair. Fortunately we can do something about this last inferiority, making ourselves more similar to her by buying the shampoo. The kind of self-knowledge we construct using categorization according to exemplars in this way is not satisfying. The self-and-other knowledge constructed through gift giving and receiving is a much better basis for life.

Gift-giving takes place on a different plane from the knowing, which we practice as preparation for the market activity, and as immersed in the market as we are, we usually do not *know* we are giving. Market knowing is knowing things as categories in their value relative to each other for people in general where value is not given to need satisfaction or to people with needs who do not have money. Value is just exchange value or use value, not gift value. However this is not something we know because we cannot or do not weigh it or evaluate it.

May the scales drop from our eyes!

In gift giving, the similarity of social subjects is constructed as they satisfy one another's material and communicative needs. As givers of verbal and nonverbal gifts, and of specific material, psychological and spiritual gifts to satisfy specific needs, we are similarly other-oriented. Our similarity consists of giving and receiving material gifts and services, but also of reasoning, problem solving, work, creativity, activism, art and verbal gift giving, what we say and talk about, providing each others' common ground. All this is property only secondarily if at all. It is creativity, ingenuity and sharing. Our own and others' sociality is also a common ground from which we draw gifts of self-confidence, identity and enjoyment. The knowledge of others and of the world around us that comes from satisfying needs is much more specific and variegated than the knowledge that comes from categorization. It is hands-on practical, not just abstract knowledge, though there are gifts of abstract knowledge as well.

Self observation, being a 'third' towards oneself, using the tracker stance towards one's own situation, is necessary for both the masculine identity and exchange. The scale is the same mechanism as the father's (and society's) general judgment of the boy as male, having that quality in common with the father.¹³⁸ In that judgment, the father finds the boy similar to himself. His role is that of the

¹³⁸ As we have been saying the father also has the characteristic of being or seeming to be the authority, the one who decides. This characteristic is perhaps

standard, the decider, and evaluator and others will accept his judgment. He has the standard himself, the phallus that ‘engendered’ the boy. Value is attributed to it, (even though both father and son might really rather be females.)¹³⁹ When the boy grows up and finally has a son of his own, he actually accedes to the position of male exemplar in his family: as father, he now has one item that is similar, ‘relative’ to him as equivalent. Thus the child as aspirant exemplar is in a particularly paradoxical position, since the father was not really himself an exemplar of the category ‘male’ until he had at least one child, especially a son. If the father is not doing hands-on care of the child, the kind of knowledge they have of each other is abstract and categorial, and fits with market ego constructions.

The fear that the boy might be the child of another man is also informed by this possibility, that the other man would be the real exemplar in his place (as if this were a biological and not a social position). The boy satisfies father’s social desire for a son—to carry on his name, i.e. , to grow up to be an exemplar related to that name (word-gift) as its substitute exemplar.

In the scale, the yardstick, other physical gauges and measures such as the speedometer, or the thermometer and in exchange for money, the moment of comparison with the exemplar is externalized, in order to categorize various qualities of things quantitatively. Regarding the boy, quantification tells us ‘how male is he?’ (The measurer is measured.) Value is equated with size, perhaps because of the difference between adults and children. Perhaps also for males, quantity is relevant as regards the size of the penis, which increases as the boy gets older, and as he becomes more socialized into the manhood script. The questions are: ‘How much can he count? How much of a male exemplar can he be?’ That is, also ‘how valuable, valorous, is he?’¹⁴⁰ The

represented by the different quantity names or marks made upon the standard, such as weight names written on the different quantities of lead.

¹³⁹ See the chapter on “Castration Envy” in *For-Giving*.

¹⁴⁰ Striving to be the exemplar informs the idea sociobiologists have of evolution, as the selfish gene tries to perpetuate itself at the expense of others. Finding this masculine agenda in the scientists who invented the theories should make us at least question its validity in the theories themselves.

mechanism of evaluation is also internalized again and he becomes a 'third' towards himself, tracking how much he has received relative to others. Although he emulates his father, he is in a competition to be 'more' than he is and thus to take over his exemplar position.

The scale is the mechanism of the common-uncommon ground of exchange and quantification. It extrinsicates the part of the sorting process in which an individual item is compared to a standard to discover to which category it belongs, its properties and its name. In the scale we are looking at that quality which is quantity of the quality weight. In the market we are looking at the quality, which is quantity of exchange value. We attribute value to this process externally and internally. We categorize rather than reciprocally construct and we look for our own common quality and quantity, disregarding processes other than categorization, by which we would nurture and construct each other and our common ground ad hoc.

On the other hand, the balance of weights on the scale is also constructed like a common ground. The weigher creates that similarity by putting more or less on one side, giving to the plates or taking from them. S/he is the giver, but also the observer checking to see if the two sides have received the same, then making them the same so they can have the same quantitative name.¹⁴¹ When the scale is extended metaphorically to judgments or points of view as in a 'balanced point of view', we also use the term 'objectivity' as though through balance we could get back to the givenness and commonality of a perceptual object as our common ground.¹⁴² Perhaps because those we call "objective" are presumably satisfying a non-immediate need such as that of quantification, they leave aside emotions and require that their operations be repeatable in an identical way. In this way they create a mechanism, which contains important aspects of the logic of patriarchy concealed within it:

¹⁴¹ Weighing can thus be seen as a representation of naming, and an abstraction from communication. When we look at these transpositions of linguistic and communicative processes, such as weighing, exchange and evaluation in money, language and communication proper become less mysterious.

¹⁴² As opposed to a common ground, an individualistic separate inside point of view takes over in mental illness.

comparison with a socially chosen standard, independence and a privileging of standardization and repeatability, as opposed to the satisfaction of needs, which always varies somewhat from case to case. The 'objective' common ground thus validates patriarchy.

Science and technology develop on the basis of objective weights and measures under the stimulus of the non-immediate needs of the market, the long term needs for profit that drive the 'improvement' in the development of means of production. New general needs are recognized or created, such as needs for armaments, but their use is displaced beyond the area of objectivity in which the market itself also appears to participate. Thus the objective common ground, which is also considered a value in the Law, in journalism and in sports, serves as a cover for patriarchy, a benign mask which allows the development of bio pathic products and corporations, oppressive legal, police and prison systems, commercial and political propaganda, while cooperative sports teams vie on level playing fields, acting out the competition to be the 'one' which validates and expresses the main melodramatic theme of the unacknowledged passion play of our society. Finally, the appeal to objectivity and balance is usually also an excuse for apolitical and other disengaged attitudes and even for 'balancing' the truth with a lie.

On the other hand the idea that 'everyone has h/er own point of view' comes from the ego oriented exchange perspective we have just been looking at. It denies and denigrates those gifts of the perceptual commons, which lead to collaboration and community. In this binary choice between individualism and objectivity, the gift economy is left aside and although it continues to function, it is not considered as an interpretative key for subjectivity or objectivity, and many needs are simply ignored.

Weighing weighing

It is also possible to weigh a scale, a self-referential operation asking 'what is the value of weighing?' that is like asking 'what is the market worth?' (or what is the value of quantification? what is masculinity worth, what is its 'valor?'). We usually don't get far enough outside of

the universe of discourse based on weight or exchange value or masculinity to question those qualities or values or the mechanisms for finding them, as instead we are trying to do in this book (and that is what the peacock also does as the standard for weighing gold). The weigher is not usually weighing the scale but has accepted it as the external standard, the norm-al mechanism. Similarly we accept the equation of value, and the pricing and exchange of commodities for money, as the standard and normal process for estimating the value of a product as well as for relating to others and for procuring what we need. We do not look outside this universe of discourse—towards gift giving. Indeed the scale itself, masculation, and abstract concept formation, are standards of methods of weighing or deciding and influence us towards the kind of knowledge they provide. They are norms that impose and validate the norm of normativity.

The comparison of weights on the scale first comes about not visually but kinetically, with a visual result and a final visual confirmation in the balance. The kinetic sense brings in our feelings of what is more important as well as simply quantity of weight. We give importance to a felt common ground or level plane. Intensification and feeling tone are ways of counting or giving value to something. The way we kinetically sense the difference in the plates of the scale, or in things we are holding in our two hands, is a clue to our ability to add to or subtract from them to make them the same (that is, give to or give from what is in each hand).

However, in the scale as in the market, there is a division between the counted and the uncounted, the quantitative and the qualitative as there is as well in other binary oppositions such as domestic/public, inside/outside. The common quantitative standard discounts our subjective sense of the quantity of weight or exchange value, in favor of judgment by comparison with the standard, the exemplar accepted by all.

Our lives are a synthesis of sense experiences of all kinds. When we abstract from qualities, leaving aside all but one, weight for example, we already create an odd internal concentration. When we leave aside all but the quality of exchange value, we are treating a social quality as if it were sense-based, creating a false emphasis.

Beyond this false emphasis, our feelings and emotions can provide an internal map to needs of all kinds. We react emotionally to the needs of others, becoming motivated to satisfy them through feeling empathy.

We can't count what is not visible, though we may be able to feel it. So by not counting what we don't see, we are separating emotions from quantification. We are taking all the emotions out of the exchange mode and stuffing them all in the gift mode—which also doesn't 'count' and is unquantified, not displayed. The point now is to make the gift economy visible *and* to feel its importance intensely, so that it will count, not primarily quantitatively of course, but qualitatively, causing a shift of paradigm.

We can construct the gift perspective together with others through material and verbal communication, in spite of the regime of exchange in which we are living. We can create a meta-level, which will make what has been previously invisible into our common topic, a common ground upon which to construct a vision of the future. This is a relatively easy and accessible first step towards creating radical and lasting social change.

PART SEVEN



First Essays

I want to make the following two essays available to readers because in these I developed the ideas that everything else I have written and done has been based on. Soon after their publication, in 1983, I went back to the US from Italy and began to try to ‘communicate materially’, that is to do gift giving with what I had, which was money. This was necessary because no one in that environment knew what I was talking about regarding gift giving nor did they show any interest in finding out. There were however great needs for social change and I reasoned that funding projects that addressed those needs was the way I should practice gift giving in this historical moment. After doing the funding for several years as an individual, in 1987 I also started a feminist private operating foundation, the Foundation for a Compassionate Society. This was an innovative multicultural group of some 25 women doing feminist projects for social change. In about 1988 I started trying to write about the gift economy again, presenting a few short articles at conferences and in feminist magazines. During those years I worked on my book, *For-Giving a Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, which was published in 1997. In 1998 I closed the foundation, having spent most of the money I inherited. Only two or three of the projects still continue today and I have had to reduce my funding greatly. Now my gift giving is mainly concentrated on promoting the gift paradigm as an important step in achieving social change, that is, primarily on writing and speaking about it.

I wrote the following essays in the 1970’s and they are the basis of the rest of the thinking found in this book. I wrote them before I became a feminist and they had references to ‘mankind’ in them and used the inclusive masculine pronoun, which I have now expurgated, but which may appear somewhat awkward. I beg the reader’s pardon for this doctoring.

Communication and exchange

Semiotica 1980

I

*T*he recent current of thought, which compares communicative exchange and economic exchange, and finds the structures of the latter reflected in the former, has shown itself to be a fertile one in the works of anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers. Lévi Strauss, Lacan, Godelier, Rossi-Landi, Goux, and others have contributed to this current, for the most part deriving their interpretations of economic exchange from Marx, and their interpretations of communicative exchange from contemporary linguistics. From a Marxist point of view, a basic problem arises in the identification of the structures of economic exchange in communicative exchange. If, as Marx and Engels wrote in the *German Ideology*, "Language is as old as consciousness" (p. 42), and if the structure of exchange is to be found in language, then the structure of exchange is also "as old as consciousness." Marx warned repeatedly against regarding the categories of commodity production and exchange, and their all pervading principle, "the value form of the labour product as the one and only form of social production, fixed for all time by nature's immutable laws" (*Capital*, p. 55). Viewing such categories as inherent in human nature aids the status quo by making them seem inevitable. If we want to maintain a characterization of language or communication as similar to economic communication, or even say that they are in some ways 'the same thing', while at the same time denying that exchange is a behavior constitutive of the human in the same sense that language is, we may approach the problem by trying to individuate some economic relations which are not those of exchange.

It would seem that to determine linguistic structures in the light of commodity production and exchange, or capitalistic production, would be historically unwarranted, since language existed from the beginning, and the present mode of production is a very late development. Some striking similarities between the two have, however, been found. Linguistic value has been compared to economic

value (Saussure); kinship systems, linguistic communication, and economic exchange have been compared (Lévi-Strauss); language has been found to have the aspects of work, capital, and money (Rossi-Landi). If these similarities are not merely imagined, they are perhaps an indication of some basic area of correspondence between the linguistic and the economic activity of men. In order to find this area without resorting to exchange, we will look at the premises of history and development of language, as described in the chapter on Feuerbach of the *German Ideology*, and at an abstraction of the “content of exchange, which lies altogether outside its economic character” as described in the *Grundrisse* (pp. 242-43). The fact that both passages are abstractions—describing, in the first case “aspects of social activity . . . which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today” (p. 41), and in the second “the simplest economic relations, which, conceived by themselves, are pure abstractions” (*Grundrisse* p. 248) and the ideal of the bourgeoisie — does not prevent us from looking at them to find a common character as regards communication. In the first place, language, if it can be regarded as some sort of ‘economic system’, is still, in many respects, an abstract and an ideal one. Secondly, due to the division of labor between head and hand, it would not be surprising if the laborers of the head saw economic relations in the reflected light of their main instrument, language.

The reason for discussing these two passages together is that they each give an indication of human relations logically preceding the relation of contract. If it is true, as some of those who resist the interpretation of language in economic terms have maintained, that there is no private property in language, we must avoid taking contract as a starting point, since it implies private property. (1)

In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels make a wide use of the term *Verkehr* ‘intercourse, traffic, association, commerce’, in both a material and a “spiritual” sense. It is a category which, while it may include exchange, is wider than exchange. It seems to encompass combined activity as collaboration and very generally the reciprocal satisfaction of needs. The human “mode of life” in which people “produce their means of subsistence,” their mode of production, “only

makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse of individuals with one another. The form of the intercourse is again determined by production” (p. 32) (2)

Four basic moments or conditions for history are described by Marx and Engels: the production of the means of life; the “production of new needs”; the reproduction of life and its corresponding social relation, the family; and finally, the appearance of a natural and social relationship, the “materialistic connection of men with one another, which is determined by their needs and their mode of production” (pp. 3941). At this point we come to the famous passage on consciousness and language.

From the start the “spirit” is afflicted with the curse of being “burdened” with matter, which here makes its appearance in the form of agitated layers of air, sounds, in short, of language. Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men and for that reason alone it really exists for me personally as well: language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into “relations” with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation. Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all. (pp. 41-42)

In *Grundrisse*, abstracting from the act of exchange, in order to explain it as it were, piece by piece, in the ideal fashion in which it is viewed by bourgeois economists or by socialists like Proudhon, Marx provides an account of the extra-economic content of exchange:

The content of the exchange, which lies altogether outside its economic character, far from endangering the social equality of individuals rather makes their natural difference into the basis of their social equality.... Regarded from the standpoint of the natural difference between them, individual A exists as the owner of a use value for B, and B as owner of a use value for A. In this respect,

their natural difference again puts them reciprocally into the relation of equality. In this respect, however, they are not indifferent to one another; so that individual B, as objectified in the commodity, is a need of individual A, and vice versa; so that they stand not only in an equal, but also in a social relation to one another. This is not all. The fact that the need on the part of one can be satisfied by the product of the other, and vice versa, and that the one is capable of producing the object of the need of the other, and that each confronts the other as owner of the object of the other's need, this proves that each of them reaches beyond his own particular need etc., as a human being, and that they relate to one another as human beings; that their common species-being is acknowledged by all. It does not happen elsewhere that elephants produce for tigers, or animals for other animals." (pp, 242-43)

In both cases we have a comparison of men (sic.) with animals on the basis of relations which men have but which animals do not have. In the first passage, language "arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men." In satisfying such a need, it produces or mediates relations. (And there is a deleted phrase in the text: "My relation to my surroundings is my consciousness" (*German Ideology* p. 42) which, though it did not satisfy its authors, at least shows the direction in which their thought was proceeding.) In the passage from the *Grundrisse* a social relation is instituted between the two men by their providing the object of the other's need, by the fact that each "reaches beyond his own particular need." Their relation to each other as human beings is this satisfaction of the other's need.

We may now ask if this relation always requires reciprocity. There is a significant echo in this passage of a description by Marx in the *Manuscripts* of what would happen if men "produced really as men."

But let us suppose instead that we have produced really as men: each of us, in his production, would have doubly affirmed himself and the other. I would have: 1) objectified in my production my individuality with its particularities and thus I would have enjoyed as much of an individual expression of life during the activity as, in looking at the object, [I would have enjoyed] of the individual joy of

knowing my personality to be an objectual, socially evident power, above any eminent doubt; 2) in your enjoyment or in your use of my product I would have immediately enjoyed both the consciousness of having satisfied in my work a human need, and of having objectified the human being, for having procured its object corresponding to the need of another human being; 3) I would have enjoyed having been for you the intermediary between you and the species, of being therefore known and felt by you yourself as completion of your own being and as a necessary part of yourself, and therefore of knowing myself confirmed both in your thought and in your love; 4) I would have enjoyed having produced immediately in the manifestation of my individual life the manifestation of your life, and therefore in my individual activity I would have immediately realized and sanctioned my real being, my human being, my collective being. (“Excerpts from James Mill,” p. 26)

Here, as in the *Grundrisse*, we find that it is the production for the satisfaction of another’s need that confirms the “species being” of the individuals involved. One important difference between the two passages is that in the one, the production for another’s need can stand alone (“each of us, in his production, would have doubly affirmed himself and the other”), while it is necessarily reciprocal in the other. This would thus allow us to consider the satisfaction of one’s need by the production of another as the more fundamental human relation, and exchange, or satisfaction of the need contingent upon reciprocity, as a complication, a doubling, of this relation.

Taken by itself, the satisfaction of the need of another may seem simple and, so to say, uninformative. However, if we locate it in a social context, (3) in which new needs have been produced, we can already see that the satisfaction of anyone’s socially determined need requires both a knowledge of that need in its specificity, and participation in the mode of production corresponding to that need, as well as access to the processes, means, and materials of production. Moreover, the use of the product by the receiver is also determined by h/er appurtenance to the specific mode of production, when h/er need has been specified by previous consumption. The producer, if s/he is to perform a completed act, is dependent on the capacity of

the other to use the product, which has been given to h/er. (4) We can thus see that the production by one person, for the satisfaction of another's socially determined need, would not only confirm h/er as a species being in contrast to the animals who do not "produce ... for other animals," but would also confirm h/er as a species being belonging to a particular mode of production.

It is particularly interesting that one person's satisfaction of another's socially determined need would have these results independently of a consequent reciprocity. If the need is determined and specific, there would be no way of satisfying it except at the level of development of means and processes of production in which the individual consumer and producer participate. In order for the relation to be established as a human relation, it would not be necessary that the individual receiver 'pay back' the individual who has produced for h/er. On the other hand, however, it is necessary that both belong to the same mode of production. For the education and specification of their needs some others belonging to that mode of production must have produced for them in the past. And, since one learns to produce by producing, and one's first product may not be a complete one, the producer must have already produced the object in the past, either for h/erself or for others. The human infant, due to h/er helpless condition, is incapable either of independence or of production for others. S/he is dependent on the satisfaction of h/er needs by others, and these needs become specified to the objects or products by which they are satisfied. At the beginning s/he is incapable of reciprocity, and so is necessarily the receiver in a one-sided relation of the satisfaction of h/er needs by others. H/er life depends on the capacity of others to produce for h/er without reciprocity on h/er part. Later, as s/he gains independence, s/he learns to consume actively, to produce for h/erself and for others, within the mode of production in which h/er needs have become specific. If h/er relation to others remained similar to the one-sided relation by which h/er early needs were satisfied, at least in some zones of h/er later life, it would not require a necessary reciprocity either. This is not to deny that reciprocity occurs often in all zones of life and is the overriding norm in some. Isolated as a basic social relation, however, the satisfaction of another's

need does not have as its prerequisite an immediate or consequent reciprocity between the individuals involved in the relation at the moment. (5)

In addition to these considerations, we must add that the relation between persons established in this way is not 'pure', not only between them. It is also a relation to the object by which the need is satisfied. This is the same material object for both persons, although for the one it has the character of being a product, which s/he does not use, and for the other the object of h/er need, which s/he has not produced. The producer sees it also as an object of a specific need, though not at the moment of h/er own need. The receiver sees it as being produced by, or at least as coming from, the other, and thus as related to the other as its provenience. For both, the object is a specifically social object, due to their previous acquaintance with similar objects and to their immediate social behavior with regard to it at the moment. Such a relation can be seen as one of mutual inclusion with regard to and by means of the object.

While, as we said above, reciprocity is not necessary in this relation between persons, there is a sense in which it carries with it its own reciprocal. For the relation of the producer to the receiver is at the same time a relation of the receiver to the producer. In so far as h/er need is satisfied by the other, the receiver is dependent on the producer for that satisfaction, and this can be said to be a personal relation when s/he recognizes the other as the source of the production. This s/he can do especially when s/he can h/erself produce for others, since the relation is the same as h/er own to others at other times. When both individuals have the two aspects of producer and consumer, we can see that this internal opposition becomes externalized by one's satisfaction of another's socially determined need. For the producer, the other takes the place of h/erself as consumer of h/er product; for the consumer the other takes the place of h/erself as producer of the product. (If the consumer cannot recognize the source of the satisfaction of h/er need, the relation to the other becomes similar to h/er relation of dependence on others in general for the satisfaction of h/er needs.)

II

Let us now return to language as discussed in the German Ideology, considering it as an instrument for the satisfaction of needs. "Language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse (*Verkehr*) with other men." In the first place we may say that whatever is socially or objectively a necessity appears on an individual level as a need when the necessity touches the individual in some way. (6)

Interchange (*Verkehr*) with others is a general necessity for all, but it is not a specific need for all with regard to everything at the same time. Rather, because individual needs can be satisfied and therefore 'disappear' as immediate needs for a time; because needs are different at different times in a person's life due to h/er physical make-up and growth; because needs vary with changes in the environment; and with regard to social position and division of labor, one does not need interchange with other people all the time, and the kinds of interchange one does need vary with the needs and the objects. If one's individual needs have been satisfied in the past by means of interchange, and thus have begun to require it and its products, we may say that any individual need may arise also as a need for interchange with other people, and that this has a specific character with regard to the kind of need which is satisfied by it. (This occurs when interchange with other people is seen as a means to the satisfaction of individual needs.) However, it is not necessarily limited as a means to the satisfaction of one's own individual need, but involves also the needs of individuals other than oneself, for otherwise there would be no interchange at all. Also, if an objective or social necessity for interchange can be recognized as a need individually, we can say that if something occurs which affects the community, or which objectively requires interchange-as, for example, when moving something heavy requires collaboration, and thus interaction is the means for obtaining some result-this can be seen as a need for interchange which is not in a sense anyone's individual need, but is rather a requisite of the task being performed. We can call such a need an 'objective' need (the social necessity is this kind of objective need generally).

If language arises from the individual need (whether our own or that of others, whether material or instrumental) and the social or objective necessity for interchange with other people, it can be seen as a means to facilitating this interchange.

The question is: how does this means work? how is interchange facilitated? If interchange with other people is taken as a means to the satisfaction of the group of needs existing in a society, then language can be taken as a means to a means, an instrumental need.

We said above that the satisfaction of another's socially determined need institutes a relation between the producer and the receiver. There seems to be no reason why the same should not hold for the satisfaction of an instrumental need as it does for direct material need. The production of an instrument by one for another, who then uses it, would establish the same sort of relation as production for direct consumption by the other. If one gives another an axe with which to cut down trees with which to make a house, the need for the axe is even more fully socially determined than the need for something which is consumed directly. If the satisfaction of another's socially determined need by the production of a socially determined product establishes a human species relation between people with regard to and by means of something, it can be used also for that purpose. That is, one can satisfy another's need, not only in view of that need, but also in order to form a species relation with h/er, a common relation with h/er to the object of h/er need. (7) This takes place on a material level. In language, the material objects, which are produced by the speaker, are sounds, "agitated layers of air." The needs which they satisfy are on the one hand needs for interchange with other people and, on the other, needs for relations which will facilitate this interchange and thus for the means for establishing the relations. Certainly the needs which language satisfies are in a sense ideal needs, so that the relations established in their satisfaction would not have the all-round importance that material production 'as men' to satisfy material needs had in Marx's description of it. Narrowed down to its abstract and ideal character, however, the linguistic satisfaction of another's socially determined need for a means to facilitating interchange

would still have the capacity of establishing a species relation between persons, if only an ideal one.

While it is possible to establish human relations when satisfying another's socially determined material need (following this line of reasoning), it must also be said that there are many kinds of human interaction which preclude the immediate consumption of the object by another. Language allows us to establish a human relation to each other in regard to the object by satisfying a specific communicative need, which arises from the object as an object of potential human interchange. While the object may be something in regard to which human relations may later be established directly—for instance, cooked food, which is prepared for another to satisfy h/er socially determined need for it—it may also be something in regard to which no direct consumption can take place: a heavy rock which must be moved by the collaboration of many (the satisfaction of an 'objective need'), or something which no direct human activity can alter, for example, the sun (with regard to which, however, a great deal of ritual interaction takes place among so called "primitive" peoples). Language supplies a verbal object which satisfies a socially determined need for a means to interchange, thus instituting human relations in regard to the verbal object. In a sense, the verbal object substitutes the nonverbal object as something with regard to which human relations are established, something, that is, produced by the one and used by the other. However, the need, which arises with regard to the material object is not usually direct need for the consumption of the object, but a need for interchange with other people in which the object is to be an element. If species relations with other people, formed by language, facilitate the interchange with regard to the material object, then the verbal object is no longer simply a substitute, but is itself a means. That is: if it is seen as contributing to the interchange, and the interchange is seen as contributing to the modification of the object, the verbal object and the relations established by its production and use have had an instrumental value, or use value, with regard to the final product or result. As Marx says, with regard to the bee and the architect, that the latter constructs his palaces in his head before he constructs

them materially (*Capital*, p. 170), we can say the same regarding many of the various kinds of human interchange or praxis, as human products. They are relations between people, and between people and the environment, which are constructed ideally as human relations by means of language before they are put into effect. The fact that linguistic mediation of human relations has entered into all the details of the social world, and into most of the kinds of human interchange, has allowed also the formation of new kinds of interchange which are primarily linguistic. While these can continue to be considered as praxis, we will try here to keep to the level of direct material praxis or interchange as mediated by language, in order to maintain the basic distinctions.

III

*I*n any society there are many kinds of interchange, or interaction, which can take place with regard to almost any kind of object present in the social and physical environment. In this regard the kind of object would appear as a constant, while the kinds of interaction or interchange (also depending on what other kinds of objects were involved in the interchange) would appear as variables. The need for interchange with other people as a way of dealing with the object becomes a need which is specific with regard to the object. A means to instituting relations and facilitating this interchange thus arises to satisfy a need, which is specific with regard to the object. Such a need would arise socially insofar as the object in question is dealt with repeatedly by different persons in many different socially determined ways (when these require interchange with regard to the object). It also would arise individually whenever one's own dealings with the object require interchange with others. Socially a linguistic means has been devised (by others, from the individual's point of view) for the satisfaction of this general and repeated social need. It is available to the individual for the satisfaction of the individual socially determined need.

At this point we would like to introduce 'communicative need' as a terminological simplification and alternative. Communicative

need arises from the need for interchange with other people with regard to some part of the environment, both on a social and an individual level, and it is at the same time the need for a means to this interchange. It thus has two constant aspects: the first that it is always a need regarding other people, and interchange with them; the second that it is, as a specific, socially determined communicative need, a need which regards a specific object or kind of object. Between these two constant poles lie the variables of the different kinds of actions and interactions, which may be performed with regard to the object, complicated by all the different kinds of objects which these actions and interactions may include as their elements. In fact, it is the weight, so to speak, of these variables—the number and differentiation of the kinds of behavior which can take place with regard to any given object—which determines the constancy, the repetition, of the need for interchange with other people in its regard. More simply, it is the differentiation of the behavior with regard to the object that determines the need for communication in its regard as a constant and repeated social common need, and thus a need for the production of a specific means to its satisfaction with regard to that object, or kind of object. Social differentiation of behavior concerning the object provides a group of variables with regard to which the object becomes a constant. Since interchange with other men is necessary, both for the differentiation of the behavior (development of new types of use, production, interaction) and for the execution of different kinds of combined behavior, the need which regards the object, and at the same time other people, becomes a need which is also constant, a need for the means for establishing relations which will facilitate the interchange. With regard to this need and means, the different kinds of actions and interactions are variables. If we consider language as a kind of behavior we can see that, of all the different kinds of behavior that are possible with regard to any thing, there is always one kind which is possible, linguistic behavior. There is one thing we can do to almost anything, and that is communicate about it, establish relations with other people in its regard. A particular kind of linguistic behavior can thus be seen as constant with regard to the group of

non-linguistic behaviors, which can take place with any non-linguistic thing.

Thus communicative need—as a bi-polar need, arising on the one hand from the necessity of acting and interacting in socially determined ways with regard to an object (or kind of object), and on the other hand from the need for an instrument for facilitating this interaction—would provide one link between the object of the action and the means to the facilitation of the interchange with regard to that specific object. This means we may identify in the word.

When a communicative need arises for us, it arises as a need for a relation with another person in regard to something (which is at the same time the need for some socially determined interchange with h/er). We can see this as a need of the other person for a relation to us and to the thing. We know that, as a member of our linguistic community, h/er communicative needs have been educated to the same linguistic means of satisfying them that our own have been. We are conscious of h/er need for a relation with us before s/he is, since this is first our need for a relation with h/er. We satisfy h/er need by personally supplying h/er with a group of social linguistic products (which in turn have various relations to each other within the sentence) by which h/er communicative needs have become specified in the past, and to which they have become specific. These allow h/er to identify the object or situation, which was the cause of our communicative need, as that with regard to which some kind of interchange is to take place. (This may also be further discourse.) What has happened is that a relation has been established between the speaker and hearer on the basis of the production and use of the linguistic product; a relation of the hearer to the thing, which was the source of the present communicative need of the speaker has been established, which insofar as it is mediated by the same verbal product may be said to be the same relation. The speaker's communicative need has been satisfied, since it was a need for the relation of the other to the thing in question. Thus, h/er own relation to the thing is duplicated by a relation of the other to the thing, a relation, which s/he, the speaker, has helped to form. S/he has made h/er own relation to the thing as a relation, which has an equivalent at the moment in the relation of

another. (For both speaker and listener the relation is already for others in several ways, especially since for the speaker it is a need for the relation of the other to the thing, and for the listener it is already the speaker's relation.)

IV

*T*he reader may at the moment be perplexed by our insistence on the satisfaction of the need of the other, for despite the fact that we do satisfy the communicative needs of others in giving them information which they do not have, or in teaching language to children, there are many cases in which it seems to be one's own communicative need which s/he is satisfying. There are two possible lines of reply. If language does, in fact, establish a relation between people with regard to something, such a relation, by definition, necessarily involves more than one person. One cannot have such a relation unless the other also has it. Thus one's own need for the relation to another is necessarily h/er need for the other to have such a relation. S/he must be able to see that the other could establish such a relation, if s/he were given the means to it. Thus the lack of the other's relation to the object at the moment is seen as the other's lack of a means to establishing the relation, an instrumental need, as we said above. We can express this also by saying that the speaker sees that the object has some socially determined relevance or importance to the listener, which the speaker recognizes in view of some further interchange with h/er, but the listener at the moment does not. This is possible with regard to any part of the socio-physical environment, including the part which is 'internal' to the speaker, and the listener can be seen by the speaker as having an instrumental (communicative) need in its regard.

Secondly, if linguistic investigation has been to some extent modeled on exchange—because of the similarity of the exchange relation and the communicative relation in that both are concerned with the satisfaction of needs—we must beware of the distortions of our point of view which derive from the fact that we live in a society in which the exchange relation predominates. It is easy for us to

make the mistake of projecting upon language the type of human relations which exchange comports. For exchange, reciprocity is essential, and the producer enters in to it only in order to receive the product of the other. Modeling the communicative relation on this forces us to look too much at the linguistic producer and to say that s/he is only satisfying h/er own need, just as the material producer only produces in order to satisfy h/er own need in exchange. In fact, in exchange the needs that are satisfied are exclusive of each other, as are the products that satisfy them. In linguistic production, on the other hand, there is 'alienation' of the product without its loss, for it is made in order to establish a reciprocal relation. The listener may of course become a speaker in h/er turn, but though this enriches the relation which has been established, by determining it in different ways, it is not a prerequisite for the functioning of the linguistic process, since the reciprocal of the relation already exists in the use by the other of the linguistic product. The listener's reply may in fact be seen as one way of confirming to the speaker that the reciprocal of the relation is in fact in effect. The listener shows that s/he recognizes the other as the source of the satisfaction of h/er communicative need by repeating the process, becoming h/erself a producer. S/he thus satisfies the ex-speaker's need for a relation to the product s/he (the ex-speaker) has just produced, a need to know that the relation has indeed been established. In order to satisfy this need the listener only has to show h/erself as a producer, thus even the hint of a product will be enough, even an inarticulate vocalization may often suffice as a reply. (8)

V

*T*he constitution of parallel relations through linguistic production for others can now be seen in contrast to the relations of contract, and the exchange relation as described by Marx in the *Grundrisse* (continuing under the rubric of the "simplest economic relations, which, conceived by themselves, are pure abstraction," p. 248):

Each divests himself of his property voluntarily. But this is not all: individual A serves the need of individual B by means of the commodity a only in so far as and because individual B serves the need of individual A by means of the commodity b, and vice versa. Each serves the other in order to serve himself; each makes use of the other, reciprocally, as his means. Now both things are contained in the consciousness of the two individuals: (1) that each arrives at his end only in so far as he serves the other as means; (2) that each becomes means for the other (being for another) [Sein fur andres] only as end in himself (being for self) [Sein fur sich]: (3) that the reciprocity in which each is at the same time means and end, and attain his end only in so far as he becomes a means, and becomes a means only in so far as he posits himself as end, that each thus posits himself as being for another, in so far as he is being for self, and the other as being for him, in so far as he is being for himself—that this reciprocity is a necessary fact, presupposed as a natural precondition of exchange, but that, as such, it is irrelevant to each of the two subjects in exchange, and that this reciprocity interests him only in so far as it satisfies his interest to the exclusion of, without reference to, that of the other. That is, the common interest which appears as the motive of the act as a whole is recognized as a fact by both sides; but, as such, it is not the motive, but rather proceeds, as it were, behind the back of these self-reflected particular interests, behind the back of one individual's interest in opposition to the other. (pp. 243-44)

Taking the satisfaction of the socially determined need of another as the basic action which establishes a human species relation, we can see how, in exchange, the constraint of reciprocity and the satisfaction of the need of the other by the individual only in order to satisfy h/er own need, and thus the treatment of the other only as means, contorts the original relation but does not entirely obliterate it. In fact, the most contradictory thing which the exchangers do, as described in this passage, is to use the action by which they can demonstrate themselves to be species beings, and form a human relation, only as a means to their individual (as opposed to species) being. The neatly aligned chain of relations of

self-interest, which reflect each other in exchange, is longer than the chain of relations which are formed through linguistic communication, for the latter stops with a simple, common relation to the object. However, the common relations which are formed in linguistic communication can vary qualitatively with the communicative needs which are satisfied and the objects (linguistic products) by which they are satisfied. In exchange, “the self seeking interest ... brings nothing of a higher order to realization” (p. 241). The “general interest is precisely the generality of self seeking interests” and there is an “all-sided equality of its subjects.” The individual exchange and reflection of relations takes place on the basis of the quantity of a single quality. The single quality which is found in all commodities, and with regard to which the exchangers form their reciprocal self interested equal relations, is abstract labor. They form their specific relations to each other in regard to the quantity of this quality, which is contained in the products they exchange.

There is an interesting correspondence between a part of this passage from the *Grundrisse* and the one quoted above from the *German Ideology*. Here “each becomes means for the other (being for another) [*Sein für andres*] only as an end in himself (being for self) [*Sein für sich*],” while in the *German Ideology*, “language is practical consciousness that exists also for other men [*für andere Menschen*] and for that reason alone it really exists personally for me as well.” The dialectical movement here seems to begin with others, and only afterwards does it begin to be also for the subject. In the passage from *Grundrisse*, “being for another” is a parenthetical explanation of one’s becoming “means for the other.” However, due to the necessary reciprocity of the exchange, the process starts from the interest of the individual alone, and by using the “being for another” as means, returns to the individual. That is, the contradiction lies in the fact that a process which begins with others (being for others) is used as a means so to say embedded in, a process which begins with and returns to the self of the isolated individual.

With regard to language, there are several ways in which(1) the dialectical process begins with others and then arrives at the individual. First, language is the product of previous generations and is

thus available to the individual in all its determinations. Second, language is something we acquire from others, and our communicative needs are at the beginning satisfied and thus educated by others as similar to their own. Third, Vygotsky (1956, 1960) has shown in his discussion of the interiorization of speech (formation of linguistic thought), that language, which has first been for others, directed to others, becomes a monologue (for oneself) and then internalized (altogether for oneself as a tool to thought). Lastly, our speech satisfies the communicative needs of others and therefore our own as well. Altogether, this can be regarded as a process of socialization in which the individual becomes adequate to a pre-existing group. This group is both linguistically (thus ideally) and materially constituted, and continues to exist on the basis of the satisfaction of the needs of others by its members. The satisfaction of one's needs by others prepares one to satisfy in turn the needs of others at a given level of development of production. This process does not stop with the maturity of the individual; s/he rather continues to form relations with others, and they with him, by satisfying each others' needs, both materially and linguistically. If we can say that the satisfaction of another's need is the confirmation of h/er species being and our own, both in the material and in the linguistic zone—and, we may add, the more complex the system of socially determined needs becomes, the surer this confirmation becomes—we can also see how exchange, which uses the satisfaction of another's need only as a means for the satisfaction of the isolated individual's need, takes a step backwards from the species relation, or relation of socialization. It allows the formation of a "new species," so to speak, (9) of isolated individuals whose main common social relation is the relation of mutual exclusion. Due to the division of labor and the diversification of needs, the members of this 'species' are dependent on each other for the satisfaction of their socially determined needs, but the only way they can mutually include each other (satisfy the other's need) is by at the same time reasserting their mutual exclusion. And this they can do only by exchanging equal items.

Thus, if we compare language to commodity production and exchange as seen from a Marxist point of view' we can see language

as a sort of ideal interchange by which humans continue to socialize themselves, satisfying each other's communicative needs, constituting themselves as species beings in an ideal way. Common human relations to each other in regard to things are made possible by language. On the other hand, in their material interchange humans have not entirely followed the path of language; rather, they use their species relation only in order to constitute and maintain themselves as isolated individuals, building a "new species" on top of the other one, in which the only common relation that exists among its members is that of mutual exclusion in a situation of complete mutual dependence. Our "material intercourse," the "language of real life," is thus reduced to a qualitative minimum and is self-contradictory, while our linguistic interchange serves to maintain us as ideally a species, mediating, among others, also our non-species material relations, so to speak, from without.

Both linguistic material products and non-linguistic material products may be used to form species relations through the satisfaction of the needs of others. The two kinds of production can be distinguished under capitalism by the fact that non-linguistic material products are used to form a particular kind of non- or anti-species relation. On the other hand, they can also be distinguished with regard to the kinds of needs they satisfy. Language satisfies a communicative need, while non-linguistic material production satisfies a material need. In satisfying communicative need, language permits the formation of human relations to something before these relations are formed in the use of the material thing itself. Despite the enormous restrictions of their relations to each other, the new material 'species' continue to reciprocally satisfy a large system of socially determined needs. As possessors of private property, the exchangers are mutually exclusive. The one act, which they perform in common, is exchange. The generalization of this situation and the requirement that the exchange be an equal one (so as not to detract from the substance of either dominant subject of the exchange) makes it necessary that their relations to each other in regard to this act, and thus to the object of the act, be prepared in advance. Thus exchange itself can be seen as containing communicative need.

VI

*I*n the situation of commodity production and exchange, the communicative need re-presents itself, in a general way, as the need for interchange with other men regarding all the products which are produced by other men, and which satisfy the socially determined material needs of the individual. The individual must establish a relation with others in order to permit this interchange. We must remember that here we are talking about the “new species” of mutually exclusive “independent” individuals, whose communication is material communication. Granted the differences between the “ideal” species, which is mediated by language, and the “real” species of exchangers, we can see that, since in fact they are two developments of the form of life of human beings, the latter satisfies its communicative needs in a way, which is similar to the former.

The reciprocal independence of the individuals is the other side of their complete mutual dependence (*Grundrisse*, pp. 156-58). Each is independent as a producer, who produces something, which s/he does not h/erself use. As with linguistic communication, this product is destined for use by others, and one’s production for others is the means for establishing a relation with others which will allow interchange with them for himself. H/er own product is h/er only communicative instrument. Since, in exchange, the movement of the dialectic begins with the individual, we may say that the communicative need s/he is trying to satisfy is h/er own communicative need (h/er need for a means to exchange with others). It is a material need; but, since s/he is dependent on others for its satisfaction, s/he has to be able to establish a relation with them which will cause them to satisfy it. Thus it is a material need for which an instrument of communication, for establishing the relation is necessary, a material need which is also a communicative need. The individual thus produces for the other in order to establish a relation, which will cause or permit the other to produce for him. Here, as in the linguistic dialectic, the product receives its determination in the kind of use the other makes of it, and thus begins to exist for the individual as well. The other, in exchange, in fact, is under the

constriction of reciprocity, and h/er receipt of the first individual's product is for h/er the necessary alienation of h/er own. Each uses the satisfaction of the other's need as a means to cause the other to alienate h/er own product.

We said above that, if the satisfaction of another's socially determined need establishes species relations between human beings, it can also be used for that purpose. Since the character of communicative need in exchange arises with the generalization of exchange, it is much more clearly seen when this is mediated by money, for here the 'species' of exchangers is more clearly evolved. Here in fact, the commodity is seen as having two aspects, that of use value and that of value. As use value, it satisfies a socially determined need. As value, it is a product of abstract human labor and is expressed in, and replaced by, another commodity, money, the general equivalent. In its character as product of human labor, and in its exchangeability, the commodity is qualitatively similar to all other commodities, though they differ quantitatively. It is our hypothesis that value and exchange value may be seen as those aspects of production for others by which a species relation is established. In other words, they are the aspects of the commodity taken as a material communicative instrument. The mutually exclusive situation of exchange causes the splitting of the use-value and the exchange-value, for when the establishment of the species relation is used only for the maintenance of the isolated individual, what the individual receives from the other is only a different form of h/er original product, only something which satisfies a material need. (When a product has been exchanged, it drops out of circulation and is no longer a commodity but only a use-value.) The producer uses h/er ability to establish species being by means of h/er product, to transform h/er own product into a use-value, and, in fact, that is all s/he gets. The product is a commodity only when it is also exchange-value, and it is exchange-value only when it is "for others," and it is for others when it is in circulation, when it is not for the individual. It is thus in the zone of the use of being for others as a means that we must look for the communicative character of the commodity. What is the process involved?

We saw above that the dialectical process of language starts with others and then arrives at the individual. If commodity exchange has a communicative aspect, we would expect there to be in it a similar dialectical process. Marx discusses the expression of value in the first book of *Capital*: “x commodity A = y commodity B,” and says that “the whole mystery of the form of value lies hidden in this elementary form” (p. 18). The expression of value has a relative and an equivalent pole, which are “polar opposites.” The relative commodity expresses its value in the equivalent commodity through this relation. Both commodities are products of abstract labor; in our terms, both are produced “for others”; however, in the expression of value the equivalent “figures only as a definite quantity of some article” (p. 27) and as such is the expression of the value of the relative commodity.

The equation of value is, so to say, seen from the point of view of the producer, who wants to find out how much h/er product is worth. Thus s/he sees h/er product in relation to that of another, who will potentially exchange it with h/er. At this point, what is the point of view of the other? In what way does the product of the first producer exist for h/er? It exists for h/er only in the form of h/er own product (which s/he may give up in exchange for it). (“... your object is for you only the sensible hull, the hidden form [Gestalt] of my object; for its production means, wants to express the acquisition of my product” (“Excerpts from James Mill”:25).) If we then ask, what is the producer’s product for the other, the answer is, the product of the other. From the producer’s point of view, then, what h/er product is for the other, is what it really is also for h/erself. In other words, the producer’s product receives its determination as a particular kind (and quantity) of communicative instrument, in its present or actual existence for others as their own product, before the exchange takes place.

A commodity, taken by itself, has both use-value and value; however, it does not, on its own, have exchange-value. The latter only exists in its relation to something else. “A commodity is exchange-value only if it is expressed in another, i.e., as a relation” (*Grundrisse*, p. 205). In a situation of private property and mutual exclusion, the

commodity receives its determination first as something in the hands (or pockets) of others, in its relation to what is still their property. It is for its producer also what it is for the others, because on the one hand it cannot become something they do not have (a use-value which they do not produce), and on the other it cannot be exchanged for more than they will give up for it, and s/he will not exchange it for less. Moreover, since the producer is a commodity producer, the commodity does not exist for h/erself as a use-value, and thus it has no determined character for h/er except as a potential exchange-value, which is determined by others, by what is in their hands. It thus becomes really an exchange-value for him as well (it really begins to exist for him) when it expresses its value in something else which is someone else's property.

The exchangers, as a mutually dependent and mutually exclusive 'species', must prove themselves to be members of the 'species' in order to perform their one common act, that of exchange. (The fact that this act unites them behind their backs as producers in common of the same thing, that is, parts of the totality of social production, is important to our argument but must be left till later.) They provide this proof by producing for others. The need of another must really be satisfied (at least the use-value must become another's property) in order for a product to become a commodity, because a product which is not bought falls out of circulation completely, and has no existence, neither as use-value nor as exchange-value, even though its producer originally made it for others.

In a sense, however, the exchangers are not members of the same 'species', since their production for others is really only production for themselves. They are only members of the 'species' transitorily, in the zone of the operation of the means and its process. Each time the individual produces for others, s/he proves that s/he is a member of the 'species' and thus prepares a relation of exchange with them. Each time s/he receives a product in exchange for h/er own, however, s/he proves that h/er production (for others) was really only production for h/erself, and thus shows that s/he is not a member of the species. Though, more precisely, if species H(human) satisfies each others' needs, and a non-human species does not, the species

E(xchangers) must be said to be H and not H, E (H and not H), since though they do it as means, they do it. Once again, if the satisfaction of another's need proves that one is a species being, it can also be used for that purpose. Thus other interaction which is not directly need satisfaction is possible with the object. Here we find that it is used for that purpose as a means in order not to be used for that purpose. One establishes h/erself as a species being in order not to be a species being, but to continue as the "exclusive and dominant (determinant) subject" (*Grundrisse*, p. 244). This can also be expressed by saying that there is no identification of the needs of the individuals involved beyond the need to permit other interaction with regard to the object. When we enter the zone of the working of the means, the needs begin to coincide, since all need a means to the satisfaction of their own needs. They need their own products as this means. They momentarily need the need of others for their products, which is the only thing that will allow them to become means. And this takes the form of a need for the characterization of their products as exchangeable in the eyes of others (and of the products of others as exchangeable). It is on the basis of this shared need for the existence of one's own product (for others) as means, that exchange-value splits off from use-value. When in exchange the product really becomes for another, satisfying h/er need, and thus for h/er only the realized transformation of h/er own product into something useful for h/er, it becomes at the same time what it really is also for the first producer—an exchange-value, a means for inducing the satisfaction of h/er need by others. When money has entered the picture, and the moments of selling and buying have become distinguished, this appears more clearly. The 'aspect' of the product, that it may be used for proving the species being of the producer, and thus as a means for establishing relations with others and mediating interchange (exchange) with them, acquires a form of its own. It is divided from the aspect of the product that it satisfies a material need (as such only the transformation of the previous product of the one who buys it). In simple exchange by means of money, the producer, A, produces for another, B, who buys h/er product, giving to A the aspect "for others"

of A's product, in its equivalent in money. The original producer, A, then gives this aspect "for others" of h/er product to another, C, in exchange for a use-value for h/erself. At this point, the same sum of money becomes the aspect "for others" of the product s/he has bought, that is, for the present producer (seller's) C's product, and so on. In *Grundrisse*, Marx remarks that "The individual can employ money only by divesting himself of it, by positing it as being for others, in its social function" (p. 228). If money is "being for others" it must satisfy a need of others. How can this need be characterized? It is the need for a means for establishing species relations with others in order to permit the interchange or interaction of exchange, and in the situation of commodity exchange, all have this need. The buyer, when s/he gives money to the seller, satisfies this need. This allows the seller to keep the aspect "for others" of h/er product while giving up its aspect "only for h/erself" to another. The buyer is now related to the product which s/he had given up before as seller as contradictorily, pure "being for others" which is "only for h/erself."

VII

*T*he institution of money permits a mutually exclusive property relation with regard to something, which is only for others. The need for money may be characterized as communicative need, a need for (a means to) establishing species relations. But it must be remembered that, in exchange, the establishing of species relations is only a means to establishing non-species relations, or material interchange of private property. (The linguistic dialectic applied to money is that for others it is again for others, and therefore for ourselves as well, it is for others.) The common relation is the relation of mutual exclusion.

When the buyer gives up money to the seller, satisfying h/er communicative need, s/he causes the seller to have an actual relation to h/er product, which was before only a potential relation. The seller produced h/er product "for others" but it had to actually become for another, in order to be proven to have this aspect. Moreover, it had

to be proven to have this aspect in order to have it actually, in the form of money. The seller, after the sale, becomes directly related to h/er product as “being for others” in the form of its money equivalent. H/er relation to h/er product as having this particular social quality has changed from a potential to an actual relation. On the other hand, s/he is also related to h/er product as potentially only for h/erself. When s/he gives up the money to another, becoming a buyer, and satisfying the other’s communicative need, h/er previous potential relation to h/er own product as only for h/erself becomes an actual relation in regard to the new use-value which s/he has bought. Thus, in exchange each causes the other to have an actual relation to h/er product, which before was only a potential relation. From the point of view of each one taken singly, there is a succession of relations to the product, which is identical to that of the other. However, taken together, the moments in which these relations occur are different, and in fact each has a relation to the product which is the opposite of that of the other. At the moment in which the buyer gives up h/er money (h/er own product’s being for others) and thus allows the seller’s relation to h/er product to become purely social (a relation to a purely social object), s/he changes h/er own relation to h/er product into a purely private one. Or, insofar as the seller is considered as active, s/he changes the buyer’s relation to h/er (the buyer’s) own product from a purely social one into a purely private one, by giving h/er a use-value.

Considering both participants in the exchange as communicatively active, we can say that each changes the other’s relation to h/er (the other’s) product, in order to change h/er own relation to h/er own product. We saw above that the same thing happened in language. By satisfying the other’s communicative need with a verbal social object, we changed h/er relation to the material object with regard to which the communicative need arose.

VIII

Up to now we have been looking at production and exchange as communicative processes, and we have seen the

exchangers in their reciprocal independence. Marx tells us, however (as we mentioned above), that this reciprocal independence is only the other side of their complete reciprocal dependence. In this regard, no one in commodity production can produce for h/erself, so that each is totally dependent on others for the satisfaction of all of h/er socially determined needs. Thus, the material interchange which takes place here is a particular kind of interchange. Others must satisfy all of the individual's material needs, since s/he h/erself is helpless and unable to satisfy them. The independent producer makes h/er product only as being for others (a means of access to the labor of others), and this is a communicative device or instrument; we can see that s/he is "free" and independent only in h/er communicative capacity. As a consumer s/he is completely dependent materially, and thus s/he is in a situation similar to that of the new-born child, who is capable only of crying (communicating) and whose needs must all be satisfied by others. On the other hand, s/he is also like a king, whose needs are all satisfied by others and who only produces communicatively. This centering upon the individual reflects the social relations present in the situation of private property, where the individual is related to h/er property as h/er own only socially—only because all others are related in a parallel way to their property as their own, and to h/er property as not their own, while s/he is related to their property as not h/er own. The relation of an individual to h/er own property involves a relation of others in general to h/er, as well as h/er relation to the property of any individual, as a member of 'others in general', equal to h/erself as having the same relation to others in general and to h/er own property as h/er own. Any individual appears to another as a member of others in general, with regard to the property relation. Money as a communicative instrument is particularly useful in that it permits communication with others in general, of which particular individuals become merely the momentary representatives.

Under this aspect, the individual does not produce for any other individual, nor does s/he consume the product of any other individual. Rather, s/he produces for others in general and consumes the products of others in general. Viewed on this abstract level, the

individuals have a common relation to each other with regard to a thing, in that each produces what the other also produces, and in that both consume the same thing, a portion of abstract labor, of the totality of production for others in that society. Money, in its character as general equivalent, discloses the relation between the individuals' own "private labor and the collective labor of society" (Capital, p. 49). Insofar as money expresses a general relation between the individual and others, and therefore a relation between h/er and another particular individual (who has the same relation to others in general that s/he has), it expresses a social relation. As the mediator of an exchange between isolated individuals, confronting each other directly, it serves as a communicative device, allowing them to continue as mutually exclusive, non-species beings. Despite the intention of the self interested individuals involved in the exchange, and within the zone of the operation of the means (production for others as a means for the satisfaction of one's own need) which has become extended in commodity production to cover all the economic relations, we find that they are actually satisfying each other's needs, insofar as these are needs for portions of the totality of social production. Thus they are "species beings" as producers and consumers of the same thing, the total social product. As a species, however, they are very limited, and their labor is, so to say, undivided, since all produce and consume the same thing. The only differences within the 'thing' that they produce are quantitative. Thus in order for there to be a momentary and particular species relation between two individuals, the quantitative measurement of their portions of the total social product is necessary, in order to prove that they are really producing and consuming the same thing. Money, as quantitatively divisible being for others, provides this measure.

IX

When money was seen as the exchange-value of the commodity, it was a communicative device which, replacing the commodity, gave it an independent existence as something for others. This

allowed a series of changes in the relations of the producer (seller) and the consumer (buyer) to their own products. Though neither was directly related to the other's product as the product of that particular other, s/he was related to h/er as a representative of others in general—one producer of the totality of social production. The transfer of money satisfied the communicative need of the seller for h/er own product as being for others, and was a means for transforming it into its opposite, a use-value for h/er alone. In money as measure, on the other hand, the commodity becomes related not only qualitatively but also quantitatively to the rest of the total social product. This is done on the basis of a system of oppositions similar to that of the system of values in Saussure's conception of *langue*. That is, each sum of money, or price, has its particular positive character in opposition to all the other sums or prices which it is not. (See also Jakobson on phonetic value, 1962.) In this light, money can be seen as a sort of quantitative *langue*, containing also the articulation of larger into smaller elements which make them up. This *langue* is organized in a quantitative progression, giving a more stable relative 'position' to its elements than those of the *langue* proper. Moreover, it also gives the possibility of explaining the positive content of the price of any particular article, by analyzing it into the prices of its aspects, means of production, material, labor—something which the system of linguistic oppositions does not provide. This aspect of money is more directly and evidently linguistic than its aspect as qualitative equivalent. It makes use of a system of numbers which, after all, is itself a derivative of language. Marx himself notes the linguistic character of prices, calling them ideal money or the "money names" of the value contained in commodities. Money as qualitative equivalent confirms and expresses the commodity as for others, and as part of the total social product. As quantitative equivalent it expresses the commodity as a particular quantity of something for others, a particular quantitative part of the total product. As qualitative equivalent it permits the exchangers to establish equal qualitative species relations with one another, and as quantitative equivalent it permits the exchangers to establish particular quantitative relations with one another. These quantitative relations are particular in view

of all the other quantitative relations which they are not. By satisfying the communicative need with regard to money (sums of money), which is a material object itself satisfying material communicative need, price gives an ideal expression to the value of commodities, preparing the way for its real expression in money, in the material communicative act.

If we look at language as a means for establishing social relations between humans with regard to things, before individual relations are established with regard to these things, we can see that commodity production and exchange by means of money does much the same thing, and does it in a similar way. The specific differences in the two kinds of communication may be found in the different kinds of interchange which they serve to facilitate. The interchange which economic exchange mediates is in itself contradictory, since it requires some sort of mutual inclusion on the grounds of the mutual exclusion of private property. Its dialectic can be represented as follows: private property (for others and therefore not for me); communication (for others and therefore for me); private property (for me and therefore not for others). The dialectic of communication can be seen thus as inserted within the dialectic of private property, creating its own zone in the production and exchange of products for others, which has expanded and become generalized to such an extent that the originally “dominant (determinant) subjects” are in fact dominated and determined by it. (10) The material interchange which takes place is interchange between the individual and all others, as mediated by communicative relations established between h/er and a succession of particular others. Moreover, the communication that takes place in exchange is communication with regard to a single social object which is abstract labor, and its totality as contained in the total social product. The ‘species’ of exchangers communicates and becomes a community only with regard to one thing. It thus has a single communicative need and a single word for expressing and establishing relations in regard to this thing. This material word is money. Thus any comparison between language and commodity exchange must bear in mind the particular human situation of commodity exchange.

As a word, money is, so to say, in a continuous nascent state, for the species who speak it have only one kind of interchange to mediate—requiring its alienation. It is therefore a word which cannot be learned. Due to the singularity of the interchange, and to the fact that only one thing, abstract labor, is relevant to it, no sentences including qualitatively different elements can be formed with this word.

Our purpose in viewing commodity production and exchange in terms of communication has been to find in the former a basis for a non-separatistic conception of language. The alienated “language of real life” can be used as a point of comparison for language proper. To return to our original question, whether it is possible to generalize commodity production and exchange to language, we would say that the question should be put the other way around. The communicative forms which first developed in language are used in commodity production and exchange. The main instrument of the work of the head has been extended to the work of the hand. The continual bridging and reconstruction of the mutually exclusive relations of private property by the exchange of commodities is itself ‘alienated language’. Bearing in mind the reasons for its aberration, we may say that an investigation of language in this light should begin from the variety and the specific character of the interchanges which language is called upon to facilitate. We may then see how language is just as much a social product as is “the specification of a useful object as a value” (*Capital*, 1, p. 47).

From the point of view of semiotics, the consideration of money as a ‘word’ may provide a useful point of encounter between what is usually seen as a non-verbal system of communication—economic exchange—and language proper. It could allow us so to say, as in chemical analysis, to put a word into a test tube containing a different human social environment from the one in which it usually exists, thereby gaining a demonstration of some of its hidden properties. While this is not the place to go into the results of such an experiment, at least one suggestion may be given. For Marx money, as the excluded commodity, is not a conventional or arbitrary sign (except in the case of paper money, where due to the rapidity of circulation

“Its functional existence absorbs, so to say, its material existence,” (1962, p. 110). Rather, money arises of necessity when the need for it develops with the generalization of commodity exchange. Its functions change with the historical situation and mode of production, from the means of simple mercantile exchange to full-fledged capital. Moreover, it has a ‘natural’ physical form in gold or silver: “Nothing but a substance whose every specimen has identical and uniform qualities can serve as an adequate phenomenal form of value, or as the embodiment of abstract and therefore uniform human labour” (ibid., 65). Marx also takes great pains to show that abstract labor is contained both in the commodity and in money, and it is by reason of this that the latter expresses the value of the former as well as by the polarity between general equivalent and particular commodities. If we take money as the *signans* and the commodity as the *signatum*, we can see that abstract labor might be viewed as an “inner, iconic tie” between the two. According to Jakobson (1973: 18), “les liens internes, iconiques, du signifiant avec son signifié et, en particulier, les liens étroits entre les concepts grammaticaux et leur expression phonologique jettent un doute sur la croyance traditionnelle en ‘la nature arbitraire du signe linguistique’ telle qu’elle est affirmée dans le Cours.” Alfred SohnRethel, whose fascinating work attempts to derive philosophical and scientific categories from money and exchange in the Marxist analysis of commodities, says that “for all epochs and societies the basic logical pattern of the socially necessary mode of knowledge is the same as the form pattern of the social nexus” (1965:122). If, as we have tried to show in this paper, the ‘social nexus’ of commodity exchange includes and is in some senses a derivative of the nexus first developed in communication by means of language, we may attempt to find some “basic logical patterns” which are common to both.

We can also suggest that, as a type, money ‘means’ other commodities by the fact of its being their general equivalent, and it is this not only because it is the excluded commodity (a stable or polarized sample of a class), but also because its tokens ‘refer’ to particular commodities by directly and physically substituting for them over and over again in exchange, and it is from this that its generality derives.

The semiotic utility of an investigation of this type depends upon the differences between language and exchange as much as upon their similarities; whether or not the non-arbitrariness of money depends upon its social and physical character as a ‘real abstraction’ mediating commodities, is not a semiotically irrelevant question. Either way it is answered may be informative in a comparison of money to other means of communication, using Marx’s dialectical analysis of exchange as a guide.

Endnotes

1. In his discussion of contracts in the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel calls the gift a merely formal contract. This sort of gift exists within the framework of private property (p. 59).

2. In order to avoid the term ‘intercourse’, which is the Moscow edition’s English translation of *Verkehr*, the over-use of which would give our paper pornographic overtones, we have opted to use ‘social interchange’ as an unfortunately rather pallid alternative. ‘Commerce’ would have been better but it presently implies exchange. ‘Interaction’ smacks of the modern current in American psychology. Thus we will be using ‘social interchange’ or ‘interchange with other men’ except in the direct quotes from the Moscow edition of the German Ideology, where ‘intercourse with other men’ is the translation of *Verkehr*.

3. See Hegel’s discussion of the system of needs in the *Philosophy of Right* (pp. 1 26-1 28).

4. The reciprocal determination of production and consumption is described in the “Introduction of ’57”: “Consumption produces production in a double way, (1) because a product becomes a real product only by being consumed ... (2) because consumption creates the need for new production ... production produces consumption 1) by creating the material for it; 2) by determining the manner of consumption; and 3) by creating the products, initially posited by it as objects, in the form of a need felt by the consumer” (pp.91-92 in the English translation of the *Grundrisse*).

5. Marcel Mauss, in his “Essay on the Gift” concentrates his attention on the obligation of reciprocity. Taking reciprocity as a primary social relation obscures the fact that the simple satisfaction of another’s socially determined need is already a social relation. Much the same thing might perhaps be said with regard to the work of Lévi-Strauss.

6. We will not be dealing with consciousness here, but with language, since the relations between language and consciousness are complex and lie outside our scope, except as directly regarding the definition of language as “practical consciousness.”

7. The Hegelian conception of the “cunning of reason” which uses natural

processes for its own benefit in the formation of the instrument and in work could also apply here. L. S. Vygotsky makes much the same point with regard to the activity of mediation in the use of signs which consists in the “influence which man exercises on behavior through signs, and that is, the stimuli, making them act in a way which conforms to their psychological nature”(*Storia dello Sviluppo delle funzioni psichiche*: 137).

8. We are leaving to another place a discussion of the non-verbal sign systems which also have a large part in communication since in many cases their character as social and individual products is less clear than that of verbal objects.

9. We are justified in using this turn of phrase as an expository device because if we see humanity as a species which makes itself in the continuous process of its own production and socio-material interchange, the institution of a single kind of all-inclusive interchange based on the one common social relation of mutual exclusion, severely restricts the process and thus the character of the species which is determined by it. The exchangers are, as it were, a “species” which makes itself in order to un-make itself

10. Here we have only discussed two of the aspects Marx sees in money—Means of Circulation and Measure of Value. For the others, Means of Accumulation, Means of Payment and World Money (as well as general equivalent) there is a great deal to be said. Money as general equivalent in fact, in our terms, seems to parallel the function of the word in concept formation — however this must be left to another place. It also lies outside the scope of this paper to discuss the implications of salaried labor, surplus value and capital in terms of communication.

Saussure and Vygotsky Via Marx

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I

*I*f de Saussure was right to compare linguistic with economic value, the interpretation of economic value itself becomes of first importance for a theory of language. The influence of the marginalist school of Lausanne on de Saussure was noted by Piaget some years ago (1968, p. 77) and has been more fully explored recently in an article by Augusto Ponzio (1977).

This author suggests that the distinction diachrony/synchrony and that of *langue*/*parole* are directly comparable to similar distinctions made by the marginalists in the economic field. Most interesting perhaps is the parallel drawn by Ponzio between the *langue* as a system of values in a momentary state of equilibrium and the market seen in its static aspect by Pareto as a system of mutually dependent relations. In the present paper we will attempt to find out what kinds of consequences a Marxist theory of economic value would have for Saussure's theory of linguistic value.

For Saussure value in the *langue* appears as the position of items within a system of similar but qualitatively distinguishable units. As such language "looks like" a market in which money functions as the expression of the exchange value of commodities, and also as a system of both qualitatively and quantitatively distinguishable units. What is presented in Saussure's system is a vast array of qualitatively different values having varying reciprocal effects as to their position in regard to each other and to the totality.

For Marx, the conglomerate of qualitatively different use values has one common quality, which allows its measurement by money, itself containing this quality: abstract labor value. The relation between money and commodities permits the comparison of different quantities as expressed in the qualitatively similar but quantitatively distinguishable units of the money material. The position of the

commodities, their relation to one another as mediated by money, is basically determined by the socially necessary labor time spent upon them within the branch of production to which they belong, and this in turn is determined by the degree of development of the means of production as well as by the average productivity of labor, within one branch with respect to the others in the totality of social production. Changes in these produce changes in the reciprocal position of the exchange values of commodities as expressed in money.

The system of linguistic value as conceived by Saussure and Marx's conception of economic value are asymmetrical. For Marx, we have one kind of value, quantitatively divided, whereas for Saussure we have a large number of qualitatively diverse values. For Marx, value is motivated; for Saussure and the marginalists, it is not. In order to get at the root of their divergence, let us begin by looking at Saussure's idea of exchange and then see what Marx would say about it. In the famous passage from the Course, Saussure tells us that:

... even outside language all values are apparently governed by the same paradoxical principle. They are always composed:

1) of a dissimilar thing that can be exchanged for the thing of which the value is to be determined; and

2) of similar things that can be compared with the thing of which the value is to be determined.

Both factors are necessary for the existence of a value.

To determine what a five-franc piece is worth one must therefore know: 1) that it can be exchanged for a fixed quantity of a different thing, e.g., bread; and 2) that it can be compared with a similar value of the same system, e.g., a one-franc piece, or with coins of another system (a dollar, etc.) In the same way a word can be exchanged for something dissimilar, an idea; besides, it can be compared with something of the same nature, another word. Its value is therefore not fixed so long as one simply states that it can be "exchanged" for a

given concept, i.e., that it has this or that signification: one must also compare it with similar values, with other words that stand in opposition to it. Its content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside it. Being part of a system, it is endowed not only with a signification but also and especially with a value, and this is something quite different. (p. 115)

Now let us see what Marxist theory has to object to Saussure's description of exchange, beginning from the first Saussurian statement. Marx finds in the first book of *Capital* (p. 19-20) that dissimilar things can be equated and "quantitatively compared" only when they are "expressed in terms of the same unit." They must be "things of the same kind," although this is a hidden likeness; their value is a purely "social unit, namely, human labor" (p. 17).

Thus in Marx's terms, since money and commodities have something in common, Saussure's comparison of exchange with words and ideas would not function unless words and ideas too had something in common. As to the second point, that similar things can be compared with the thing of which the value is to be determined, analogously to coins of the same system, let us see what Marx says about money. Calling it the "material in which the values of commodities express themselves socially," Marx says that

nothing but a substance whose every specimen has identical and uniform qualities can serve as an adequate phenomenal form of value or as the embodiment of abstract and therefore uniform human labour. On the other hand, since the difference between magnitudes of value is purely quantitative, the commodity which is to function as money must be susceptible of purely quantitative differentiations, this meaning that it must be freely divisible at will, and yet capable of being reassembled out of the parts into which it has been divided. (p. 65)

Here, the qualitative identity of gold with itself is emphasized. Had Saussure followed this indication he might have first compared, as similar to similar, coins of the same denomination and different instances of the same word. This would have strained his analogy, however, as he would have had to make the instances of the same

word correspond to various instances of the five franc piece, where he would have found that five francs were in one instance exchangeable for bread, and in another for sugar, thus corresponding to very different “ideas.” In this case Saussure’s second consideration would undermine his first.

In order to find out what the five-franc piece is worth, Saussure looks for some one thing for which it can be exchanged. He sees the general equivalent, money being exchanged for the relative commodity. Marx, instead, says that if we wanted to find out the value of money, we would need a price list of all commodities (p. 71). The “general equivalent has no relative form of value which it shares with other commodities; its value expresses itself relatively in the endless series of other commodities” (p. 42). Thus, by asking himself what the value of a five-franc piece was, Saussure got off on the wrong foot at the beginning. From Marx’s viewpoint the question could only have been answered by a list of all the commodities which could have been bought at the time by any five-franc piece. By not taking this path Saussure missed the character of generality which money has, and thus, correspondingly the general character of the word. And he made things worse by responding to the question with “a given quantity” of a single commodity, thus leaving aside the whole economic problem of why such a quantity was “given” and consequently the important epistemological problem of why a concept is “given.”

Marx’s treatment of money is dialectical and deals explicitly with the question of the relation between the general and the particular. Although this question would seem to be especially pertinent in any characterization of language, and the more so in one which is formed under the auspices of a comparison between money and words, Saussure does not touch upon it. Marx discusses what he calls the “polar” character of the equation of commodities and money. Here, the general equivalent has acquired “the character of being directly exchangeable for all other commodities ... because and insofar as other commodities have not acquired that character ... (p. 41). While we express the relative value of a commodity in the general equivalent, we cannot express the value of the general

equivalent in a single commodity, because the general equivalent has, in fact, the social characteristic of being general and of being the equivalent, the directly exchangeable commodity. If a word is comparable to money and thus is a general equivalent for something, or some class of things, then the same polarity could apply. The word is general while everything relative to it (what the word stands for) is to some degree particular. Consequently if one turns the equation around as Saussure seems to do, making the word relative and the “idea” equivalent, one may either lose the character of generality of the word, or improperly augment the generality of the “idea.” Thus one must always bear in mind uses of other instances of the same word, that is, the word must maintain its generality—even in such borderline cases as in ostensive definition. In fact, words are used to express ideas, not ideas to express words: just as money is used to express the value of commodities, not viceversa. ‘Horse’ for example can be used to refer to a particular horse only by virtue of its capacity to refer to other horses in other instances of itself as well as to the same horse in different moments.

V. N. Volosinov makes a telling comparison between the “abstract objectivist” way of studying language and the interpretation of dead or foreign languages. “The first philologists and the first linguists were always and everywhere priests. History does not know of a nation whose sacred scripture or whose oral tradition was not in a certain measure a foreign language, incomprehensible to the profane. Deciphering the mystery of the sacred words was the task the priest-philologists had to do” (p. 142). Volosinov distinguishes between recognition of normatively identical units and comprehension, and says that even in the learning of a foreign language “a form should be assimilated not in its relation to the abstract system of a language, that is, as a form identical to itself, but in the concrete structure of the expression, that is, as a mutable and malleable sign” (p. 273).

Thus, it is perhaps the practice of extracting the word from the context of its use and seeing it in “its relation to the abstract system of a language” which gives it the similarity to the general equivalent with regard to the things for which it stands. The signifier can be detached from its various signifieds and be treated by itself as a

physical object in coordination with other physical objects (other signifiers) or substituted by a signifier from the same or from another language while the things for which it stands remain unaltered. This takes place also in the study of language and within any single language in the definition.

In *Grundrisse*, Marx says: “To compare money with language is ... erroneous. Language does not transform ideas, so that the peculiarity of ideas is dissolved and their social character runs alongside them as a separate entity, like prices alongside commodities. Ideas do not exist separately from language. Ideas which have first to be translated out of their mother tongue in order to circulate, in order to become exchangeable, offer a somewhat better analogy; but the analogy then lies not in the language, but in the foreignness of language” (p. 163).

Commenting this passage, Jean-Joseph Goux says that “the linguistic sign is always-already in the posture of translation” (p. 198), and goes on to say that “the distinction between ‘intra-lingual’ translation and ‘inter-lingual’ translation is not pertinent” (*ibid.*). We would disagree with Goux that the linguistic sign is always-already in such a posture, and would see this appearance as occasional and a consequence of some uses of language and the study of language. “Linguistics studies a living language as if it were a dead language, and the mother tongue as if it were a foreign language” (Volosinov, p. 274). We can, in this regard, re-formulate Goux’s second statement by saying that the similarity between intra-lingual and inter-lingual translation is pertinent, locating an especially sensitive zone within language, that of the definition, of taking a word out of context.

Priests, as interpreters and depositories of the foreign language of the gods within the community, were the first “mental” as opposed to “manual” laborers in the division of labor. Without going into the differences between the word of the gods and the language of the community, we can say that, when priests isolated words from their contexts, trying to divine or interpret their meanings to others, they were doing something similar to what is still being done at present, by linguists, in dictionaries, and even in the definition itself. We can see this activity as a harbinger, in linguistic communication, of what

Sohn-Rethel calls “the exchange abstraction” in economic communication (1970).

We have tried to show in another place how money can be seen as the only “word” (bearing in mind that it is a material word with a social function) people have in the situation of the exchange of private property, which is itself a kind of alienated communication, existing on the background of linguistic communication proper. The communities along whose borderline the new attitude of translation arises could thus be seen as those of the “community” of exchangers and the community of speakers.

Sohn-Rethel has described the effect of the “exchange abstraction” on natural science, seeing the quantification of nature as a result of the reflection in people’s consciousness of what they do in their economic life, turning use values into static entities on the market, separating them from their “social nexus.” At the risk of over-simplification, one might apply the same sort of criteria to social sciences such as economics and linguistics. The static state of the market and the static state of the *langue* are both ideal constructions made to allow the investigation of the laws of “mutual dependence” among economic or linguistic phenomena. It is interesting that the marginalist economist Walras uses the conception of numerary. “This is a good used as a counting unit. It is not however money in the ordinary sense of the word, since Walras assumes the numerary simply as a counting unit and assumes that there is no demand for it except for that which is relative to its non monetary qualities” (Roll, p. 399). One can see how Walras reduces money to the level of other commodities in order to have a homogeneous system. Saussure does much the same thing, though in the opposite direction. With his distinction between *langue* and *parole*, he raises the whole of *langue* to the level of a single word taken out of context. The synchrony-diachrony distinction subtracts the historical context, the *langue-parole* subtracts the context of speakers, dividing the social from the individual. In Sohn-Rethel’s manner one might say that Saussure considers *langue* as similar to a market where all commodities wait statically for their change of status from commodities to use values, from the property of those

for whom they have no use value (and whose only importance to them lies in their capacity to be exchanged) to the property of those for whom they have use value. We have seen, however, above that words taken out of context already have the character of general equivalent. Money, in fact, in its “normative identity,” is the material correspondent of the exchange abstraction.

What happens, then, is that Saussure’s distinctions put *langue* as a whole not in the position of commodities on the market, but in the position of money. “Money,” Marx says, “is the alienated ability of mankind” (*Manuscripts*, p. 168). This is perhaps why Goux is led to describe language as a whole as the general equivalent of other signs (1973). The whole *langue* has taken on the “posture” of translation.

Marx tells us in *Capital* that

Money fulfills two entirely distinct functions, as the measure of value, and as the standard of price. It is the measure of value, because it is the social incarnation of human labor; it is the standard of price insofar as it exists in the form of a fixed weight of metal. As the measure of value, it serves to transform the values of the manifold commodities into prices, into imaginary quantities of gold; as the standard of prices, it measures these quantities of gold. (p. 74)

Prices are possible because gold is a qualitatively homogeneous material, internally divisible into reciprocally comparable units. These units are measured quantitatively with regard to weight, and are organized in a quantitative progression, since what they serve to measure is quantities of labor value. Bearing in mind the differences in the kinds of materiality which may be ascribed to money and to language, the differences in their functions—the one mediates the exchange of private property while the other mediates the extension of ideal common “property” in communication, we can nonetheless compare the *langue* to money. In this vein the *langue* can be seen as a system of qualitatively similar units (composed of a given group of phonemes for each language), which differ, again qualitatively.

Money, on the other hand, is a system of qualitatively similar units, which differ not qualitatively again but quantitatively. According to Marx, money measures one kind of value, abstract labor

value. Language, to continue the comparison, measures not a single kind of value but a very large range of qualitatively different values. Here we come upon a crucial point in our comparison. For Saussure and the marginalists the value of money is not motivated. In the same way, linguistic values are not motivated. For Marx the value of money is motivated in that it is the expression of abstract labor (which it also contains) existing in another commodity. Therefore if a theory of language based on Marx's analysis of the commodity and money is to be consistent, it must also see linguistic values as motivated, at least upon the occasions in which language or some of its elements function as general equivalents. This is not the place to go into the question in depth but we may suggest that words and the cultural elements they express have a relevance to the community and to communication, which may be seen as a value underlying both the *langue* as a whole and words when they are in the position of translation or definition. Relevance to the community and to communication would thus be a value category broad enough to comprehend both linguistic and economic value. The aspect of language corresponding to quantification of value in economics can be seen simply as the achievement of semioticization. That is, a cultural element becomes relevant enough to be related to a word which is itself a value among other values.

Having taken this step we can reverse our comparison again and look at money as a language of only one word, always in the position of translation in a community in which, because of the exchange of private property, there is a single relevant cultural element, abstract labor. This cultural element, due to its singularity, is relevant in different quantities rather than different qualities. There is nothing within the community that has the importance, or the same kind of importance as labor value and money. Thus there is nothing with which money stands to form a system of values at the same level (although of course it stands together with other monies outside national boundaries). As such it is like a word which is, so to say, inflated to contain within itself an oppositional structure similar to *langue*. The system and array of qualitative values which language presents are compressed into a quantitative system in money, using

quantitative determinations, numbers, which function like the words in Saussure's *langue*, on the principle of the mutual exclusion of units.

One price is what it is in so far as it is not other prices, just as one word is what it is in opposition to other words. Marx calls prices the "money name of the value embodied" in a commodity. He conceives of prices as proper names, and says: "I know nothing about a man simply because I know that he is called James" (*Capital*, p. 77). Like proper names, prices are distinguished from each other insofar as one of them is none of the others. However, just as we can say that 6 is not 5 in a different way than that in which 100 or 25 are not 5, so we can say that some prices are closer to each other, so we can say that a price of 5 is closer to a price of 6, and is more likely to become 6 than 100. Moreover, a price of 25 is related to a price of 5 because it indicates a quantity 5 times as large, etc. In the same way, in *langue* there are different ways in which "related" words are not a particular word. Saussure gives us an example of an associative series of *enseignement- enseigner, enseignons, etc.; apprentissage, éducation, etc.; changement, armement, etc.; élément, justement, etc.* All of these can be viewed of course as associated, but they can also be seen as differences in the ways in which they are not *enseignement*. Saussure locates such associative chains in the brain saying that "the associative relation unites terms *in absentia* in a potential mnemonic series" (*Course*, p. 123).

Such relations are similar to those of prices as "imaginary gold" when money is functioning as "standard of price."

Since the *langue* is the compendium of words taken out of context, general equivalents in the position of translation as we said above, and since, on the other hand, as we tried to show elsewhere, money can be seen as a single word, we can turn this around and say that in *langue* it is as if each word were a different kind of money. One kind of money would thus be identifiable insofar as it was not all the others, and it would be difficult to find similarities other than merely physical ones. In this case one kind of money would be seen as "related" to another because both were long and thin, while the differences between the two would seem more important for fixing the relative position of one of them than the differences between it and round,

square or spherical money. If one ignored the theory of labor value, one could try to determine their positive character by looking for some commodity for which they could be exchanged as well as for the other kinds of money with which they could be exchanged or into which they could be “translated.” If one abstracted from history, from the practice of exchange, and from commodities, like Saussure one would be left with a merely differential system.

For Saussure “in language there are only differences without positive terms” but this “is true only if the signified and the signifier are considered separately; when we consider the sign in its totality, we have something that is positive in its own class” (Course, p. 120). As a system of differences, *langue* is like such a collection of different kinds of money, separated from commodities and labor. All the money has value, because it is also created by human labor, and has the specific use value of serving socially to express the values of commodities.

What Saussure is looking for is the value or price of money in terms of other money. When he turns to consider thought he says that without “language, thought is a vague, uncharted whole” (p. 112) and “initially the concept is nothing, it is only a value determined by its relations with other similar values” (p. 117). The comparison that can be made here is one between labor value, disembodied from its products, and commodities seen as reciprocally related without a fixed unit in which to measure them.

Saussure’s operation consists in turning the equation of the general equivalent around, as we said above, giving the “idea” more generality than is warranted by making it equivalent, and then saying that it depends for its existence as a value on the value of the word. The fact is that neither the word nor the idea is general unless the operation of taking it out of context is performed. And the idea does not become general unless it is taken as the equivalent of the word. No doubt the constant possibility of this priestly activity influences the use of language, standing beside the flow of speech like a guardian angel.

In the same way that the oppositional system of prices would not exist without money as measure of values so the system of opposition of physical words to one another would not exist without the totality

of signifieds which justify it. And just as when one considers price as an abstract system, one is brought to see its ground in physical quantities of money as the standard of price—and one may thus be brought to ignore the first step of money as measure of value—so in considering words as a system, one looks at their physical qualities and may be brought to set aside the reasons for their existence.

Marx's analysis of commodities and money shows the means of economic communication, money, as having a "meaning" in abstract labor. So also the *langue* of Saussure taken as a whole can be seen as having a meaning, expressing a common quality, that of relevance to the community. At the same time each word may be seen as expressing the value of some cultural element containing the quality of relevance. The fact that a cultural element is related to a word as its name, that is, its semiotization, is not arbitrary but depends on the general importance or relevance of the cultural element. It is only the specific phonetic pattern to which the cultural element becomes related which is arbitrary and functions on the principle of mutual opposition.

II

*A*n experiment by Lev Vygotsky on the development of concepts (1962) gives us the possibility to view Saussure's distinctions between *langue* and *parole* and between signifier and signified from another perspective. The experiment may be seen as using a *langue* of four mutually exclusive signifiers (nonsense words which are all names) taken out of verbal context. The signifiers are separated from their signifieds insofar as these are unknown to the subjects of the experiment. Using the signifiers as a guide to the relevant and nonrelevant characteristics of a number of blocks the subjects have the task of grouping the blocks according to concepts pre-determined by the experimenters. After the task has been completed the subjects are asked to use the words they have just learned to describe objects other than those in the experiment, that is they are asked to operate with them as they do in their usual use of language.

Here, then, there is a dynamic relation between the signifiers and the signified as well as between *langue* and *parole*. Moreover, in the course of the experiment, one can see how the mutual exclusion of the signifiers in the *langue* aids in “cutting out” the signifieds, though we must add that this metaphor of cutting out applies more readily in the experiment to the blocks as referents having or not having certain characteristics, than it does to the concepts themselves, which Vigotsky sees as something which is developed, new mental organization. Also in contrast to Saussure, the concepts in this experiment pre-exist to the *langue* in that there is a proper way of grouping the blocks, which have themselves been made by the experimenters with characteristics, which are similar but not immediately obvious. Thus while it is true that for each individual subject, the signifier is separated from the signified, it is also true that the signified already exists as the goal defined by the experimenters.

Vygotsky’s experiment is a modification of Ach’s experiments in concept development and was worked out by L. S. Sakharov. Vygotsky calls it the “method of double stimulation” in that it includes both objects and signs. In order to make the rest of our discussion clear, we will quote in full the description of the experiment added by Vygotsky’s editor from *Conceptual Thinking in Schizophrenia* by E. Hanfmann and J. Kasamin (1942), since Vygotsky himself did not supply such a description.

“The material used in the concept formation tests consists of 22 wooden blocks varying in color, shape, height, and size. There are 5 different colors, 6 different shapes, 2 heights (the tall blocks and the flat blocks), and 2 sizes of the horizontal surface (large and small). On the underside of each figure, which is not seen by the subject, is written one of the four nonsense words: ‘lag’, ‘bik’, ‘mur’, ‘cev’. Regardless of color or shape, ‘lag’ is written on all tall large figures, ‘bik’ on all flat large figures, ‘mur’ on the tall small ones, and ‘cev’ on the flat small ones. At the beginning of the experiment all blocks, well mixed as to color, size and shape, are scattered on a table in front of the subject... The examiner turns up one of the blocks (the “sample”), shows and reads its name to the subject, and asks him to pick out all the blocks which he thinks might belong to the same

kind. After the subject has done so . . . the examiner turns up one of the “wrongly” selected blocks, shows that this is a block of a different kind, and encourages the subject to continue trying. After each new attempt another of the wrongly placed blocks is turned up. As the number of the turned blocks increases, the subject by degrees obtains a basis for discovering to which characteristic of the blocks the nonsense words refer. As soon as he makes this discovery the . . . words. . . come to stand for definite kinds of objects (e.g., ‘lag’ for large tall blocks, ‘bik’ for large flat ones), and new concepts for which the language provides no names are thus built up. The subject is then able to complete the task of separating the four kinds of blocks indicated by the nonsense words. Thus the use of concepts has a definite functional value for the performance required by the test. Whether the subject actually uses conceptual thinking in trying to solve the problem... can be inferred from the nature of the groups he builds and from his procedure in building them. Nearly every step in his reasoning is reflected in his manipulations of the blocks. The first attack on the problem; the handling of the sample; the response to correction; the finding of the solution—all these stages of the experiment provide data that can serve as indicators of the subjects level of thinking.”

Vygotsky describes various stages in the grouping of the objects, culminating in the stage of grouping according to the concept. He says that “when the process of the formation of concepts is seen in all its complexity, it appears as a movement of thought within the pyramid of concepts, constantly alternating between two directions, from the particular to the general, and from the general to the particular.” (p. 80) We saw above, in the first part of this article that for Marx, money is the “excluded commodity,” having the same quality (abstract labor value) which other commodities have and capable of expressing this by its direct exchangeability for them. There is a polarity between the excluded commodity and all the others, between the equivalent and the relative side of the equation. The “character of being generally and directly exchangeable is, so to say, a polar one, and is as inseparable from its polar opposite, the character of not being directly exchangeable, as the positive pole of a magnet is from the

negative” (Capital, p. 41). We believe that Vigotsky’s experiment shows us stages in the development of a similar polar relation between the sample object and the objects, which are to be related to it, together with a relation between the word and all the objects belonging to a conceptual group or class.

Actually, two processes of polarization are necessary for the formation of the concept, that between the sample as equivalent and the other objects as relative, and that between the relevant and the non relevant characteristics of the sample as well as of the other objects. The latter is aided by the mutual exclusion among the names of the objects, since some are discarded, their characteristics being seen as non-relevant by virtue of their having different names. Money, at least within the boundaries of a single country, does not exist within a *langue* of other monies. It stands alone, expressing in exchange a single, all-important common quality, labor value. In the act of exchange, however, people do exclude objects not having this quality, as well as those not having use value (the labor time spent on these would not have been socially necessary). The polarity between the general equivalent and the relative commodities thus also implies a polarity between these and all objects not having the common quality. In exchange we may find the factors of equivalence and substitutability; these are double, in fact exchange may be described as a double substitution in the sense that at least two persons are involved and in the sense that the exchange takes place for each at least twice, once in selling and once in buying. It is the mutually exclusive relation of private property, which imposes this doubling. Marx tells us, however, that it was in response to a common need that people performed the common action of excluding one commodity by which to measure their various private commodities (Capital, p. 61). Thus, both in the linguistic and in the economic context, one can see the factors of exchange as equivalence and substitution, if viewed from a broad enough perspective.

In Vygotsky’s experiment, the first stage on the way towards the formation of the concept is that of “unorganized congeries” or “heaps.” “The heap, consisting of disparate objects grouped together without any basis reveals a diffuse, undirected extension of the meaning of

the sign (artificial word) to inherently unrelated objects linked by chance in the child's perception" (p. 59). The child operates on the basis of subjective connections among the objects rather than objective ones. The first level of this stage is that of simple trial and error. Here the child discards the objects which are shown to him to have a different name, but this does not indicate to him anything having to do with the relevance or non relevance or the characteristics of that kind of object for the class he is constructing. Of the next two levels, one is formed with regard to the "organization of the child's visual field" and the other of "elements taken from different groups or heaps that have already been formed by the child. . . ." (p. 60-61). At this earliest "congerie" stage it seems that there is no polarity between the sample and the other objects, nor is there one between kinds of characteristics. One might call it simple nominalism if it is the case that the heaps of objects, which are constructed by the child, are related by h/er to the word as their name. This would seem to be borne out by the fact of h/er discarding objects having a different name. One might say here that h/er reasoning is of the type that objects are the same because they have the same name.

The second stage in concept development is that of the associative or surname complex. Here a polarity has already developed between the sample and the other objects but this does not imply a polarity between the relevant and non-relevant characteristics. Moreover, while the sample becomes repeatedly the equivalent of the other objects, this is not carried through into a relation of reciprocal equivalence among the objects themselves, except perhaps, a nominal relation similar to that above. At this stage "factual bonds" are seen among the objects. "In building an associative complex, the child may add one block to the nuclear object because it is of the same color, another because it is similar to the nucleus in shape or in size, or in any other attribute that happens to strike him. Any bond between the nucleus and another object suffices to make the child include that object in the group and to designate it by the common "family name" (p. 62). Interestingly enough, this complex is very similar to the "associative series" of Saussure cited above, where "enseignement" would function as the sample object and the

various other members of the series as relative objects. It is not clear whether Saussure is looking at the associated words as whole signs, that is, including their signifieds. He does seem to shift levels when he sees words as associated by similarity of prefix or suffix and then includes also those having similar signifieds without any similarity of the signifier. Though one might try to make a case here for the signifieds having a common quality (considering the signifieds connected with the prefixes and suffixes or the roots as similar) there does not seem to be any reason to try to arrive at such an abstract level. In the first place, “enseignement” is really only partially substitutable for the various different words which are associated with it; it is not their name. In the second place Vygotsky finds thinking by means of complexes very widespread, not only among children but also among adults, and he gives examples of this also with regard to language, especially in the derivation of words. Nevertheless, linguists and philosophers do stand in front of language in much the same way as the subjects of such an experiment as Vygotsky’s stand in front of the blocks of different colors, forms and sizes. This happens both in regard to words and to ideas. Wittgenstein for instance took a step backwards from the formation of concepts at any cost. The relation, which he describes as “family relation” and that of fibres in a thread can be seen as similar to those in the complexes found in Vygotsky’s experiment, especially in the “chain complex” described below.

The next complex mentioned by Vygotsky, the collection, is an alternative to the concept, in that though one aspect of the sample is taken as most important, and thus there is a polarity between the relevant and non relevant aspects of the sample, no relation of equivalence or substitutability is established between the sample and the other objects. They do not become relative to it as an equivalent with regard to the same aspect, and thus do not become related to each other as equals. Still, the grouping here has its own kind of coherence. The child forms a collection of objects which contrast and complement each other with regard to the attribute he has chosen such as a collection of blocks of different colors. This is however sometimes mixed with the associative complex, the child choosing

more than one aspect of the sample as that with regard to which he forms his collection. Vygotsky calls this kind of complex that of “functional grouping” as in such sets as cup, saucer and spoon. He says “We might say that the collection complex is a grouping of objects on the basis of their participation in the same practical operation of their functional cooperation” (p. 63 Vygotsky’s italics). This too reminds us of Wittgenstein: “Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screwdriver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws.—The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities).” (*Philosophical Investigations*, n. 11)

In the following complex, the “chain” complex, the sample object remains particular rather than general as substitutable and equivalent for the other objects, in that it is itself substituted as a sample. “For instance, if the experimental sample is a yellow triangle, the child might pick out a few triangular blocks until his attention is caught by, let us say, the blue color of a block he has just added; he switches to selecting blue blocks of any shape—angular, circular, semicircular. This in turn is sufficient to change the criterion again; oblivious of color, the child begins to choose rounded blocks... The original sample has no central significance. Each link, once included in a chain complex, is as important as the first and may become the magnet for a series of other objects” (Vygotsky p.64). The organization of the material, which results from this kind of operation is comparable to the kind of organization Wittgenstein sees in different sorts of games. Not finding anything common to them all, but only similarities among individual kinds of games which have other similarities to other kinds of games, Wittgenstein says “I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than ‘family resemblances’; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way. —And I shall say: ‘games’ form a family.” (*Philosophical Investigations*, n. 67)

These comparisons do not mean to suggest that Wittgenstein was influenced by Vygotsky. Rather what Vygotsky saw in his experiments and applied to language itself in the derivation of words, Wittgenstein

saw in the relations among “sub-concepts.” Wittgenstein raises the status of the complex as an explanatory device, and thus lowers that of the concept, which no longer stands alone as the only proper standard of linguistic organization. Here we can see a process somewhat similar to those we saw above regarding Walras, who reduced the status of money the general equivalent to that of numerary, similar to all other commodities, and Saussure who raised all words to the level of a word taken singly as a general equivalent. Wittgenstein now places the concept in a context of complexes, robbing it of its position of privilege in the investigation of language.

Differently from Wittgenstein, Vygotsky maintains the traditional hierarchy considering complexes more primitive forms of thought than concepts. The abstract relations which are seen in the formation of concepts contrast with the concrete relations among objects which are the basis of the complex. In complexes it is as if the word in its “guiding function” were followed only partially whereas in the concept this function is fully realized. So far we have seen the heap complex where the word functions as a guide neither with regard to the polarity of the sample nor with regard to the attributes. Second, the associative complex where a polarity is established between the sample and the other objects, (by virtue of the fact that it is the only object which has a name in evidence) but no polarity is set up among its attributes—each of these being seen successively as equivalent for those of the various other objects. Though Vygotsky does not say so explicitly, we may presume that this happens in spite of the fact that some of the wrongly chosen blocks are shown to have a different name. In this case we would say that while the guiding function of the word as a name is in operation, the guiding function of the words in the “langue” as mutually exclusive is not. We then saw an alternative to the concept, the “collection” complex also described as functional grouping. Here one might hypothesize that the name of the object is taken as a higher order word, having to do with the attribute itself, such as “color” for a collection of colors. The sample would thus be seen as only one of a group having color. This may change, however, and the subject go back to the sample in order to choose another attribute with regard to which to form another collection, so that the polarity between the

sample and the other objects is not entirely lost. In the chain complex, the sample itself was substituted, each new object becoming a new sample, as if the name had been transferred to each one successively. One might say that a new, particular polarity was established each time. The attribute is common only to two, or a few blocks.

The next complex described by Vygotsky is the “diffuse” complex, which is “marked by the fluidity of the very attribute that unites its single elements” (p. 65). Here, as in the congerie stage, the relation appears to be purely nominal. Vygotsky gives much importance to the complex which follows, which he calls the “pseudo-concept.” Here although the child picks out one attribute of the sample object, selects only other objects having that attribute “in reality the child is guided by the concrete, visible likeness and has formed only an associative complex limited to a certain kind of perceptual bond” (p. 66). An example of the pseudo concept is given by the editor, in which the turning over of a block having the supposed common characteristic but a different name does not indicate to the subject that the characteristic is the wrong one. Again it is the mutual exclusion of words, which is not functioning. Or, one might say that only the word written on the sample block has functioned to install a polarity, and blocks which are turned over and shown to have other names are not themselves considered as samples with regard to still other blocks with other characteristics. There is, so to say, a lack of a linguistic plenum. Only one signifier is seen together with its signified and this is not itself fully developed. There has not been sufficient abstraction.

We would like to suggest that the higher level of abstraction can be viewed as being reached by a reversal of the general polar equation. The sample object with its name has become general through the repeated comparison of the other objects to the sample. The sample has acquired the character of general equivalence, and is also substitutable for each relative object in turn, with regard to some quality. The relation of each relative object to the equivalent implies a relation among the relative objects themselves. The abstraction of this relation may be achieved by turning the equation around, thus changing its character, as Marx says. Now there is only one relative object, and various equivalent objects, seen as repeatedly equivalent to it.

But the relative object has a characteristic which it did not have before the operation began. This characteristic is its generality, which is shared by the word, its name (which has been applied to the other objects when they were seen as relative). The sample is thus something, which is both general and particular. In its relation to the objects it finds its equivalents not only in regard to its physical quality, but also in regard to its generality and particularity. The mutual relation of the objects to each other which had been developed by the relation of each to the same equivalent now develops, as equivalents themselves for the sample, into a relation of identity under the common quality. When this has been done, the concept has been abstracted, and any of the objects can be seen as “containing” the common quality. At this point the sample object may be seen as related to the word as its name because it contains the common quality, and in this being no different from any other object containing that quality. It is no longer necessary as a sample. The word itself is sufficient to maintain the relations among the objects. It substitutes the sample as that with regard to which all are related, since it is the name of each of the objects. In its generality it is the correspondent of the common quality, which has been abstracted from them. Moreover, like the sample, it is also particular, though for different reasons. The sample is particular from sense perception, while the word maintains its particularity in spite of the existence of various instances of the same word, by virtue of the relation of mutual exclusion with other words. If the word is not seen as “normatively identical” and as standing in such a relation of mutual exclusion, it cannot be seen as the equivalent of an abstracted common quality or concept (This is in fact what both Volosinov and Wittgenstein insisted upon, one with regard to words in context, and their ideological “themes,” the other with regard to the varied uses of language). In Vygostky’s experiment, which may be considered as a “language game” of denomination we do have the conditions for the formation of concepts. Especially interesting here is the role of the sample in its evolution from particular to general, while remaining a single object, as well as its final disappearance into the class or series of all the objects having the common quality when this has been abstracted. When the sample is no longer

necessary, the word takes over its function as general equivalent for the objects having the common quality, since each of these objects is now related to the word as its name, that is, its equivalent and substitute in the realm of human communication. Thus we have come full circle from the nominalist relation of the “heap” congeries where things were seen as the same because they had the same name. This relation now, so to say, contains the relation that things have the same name because they are the same. In other words the nominal relation expresses a factual relation of the objects to each other. This is done by the substitutability of the word for each of the objects of the class, just as, for Marx, it is the direct exchangeability of money for commodities which is so to say the mechanism of the expression of their value. Money can itself be seen as like the word in that it is the equivalent and substitute for commodities in that specific sector of the realm of human communication, which is economic exchange.

The word takes over the function of the sample object after the common quality has been abstracted through the latter's use. The word has all along been a “guide” to this process, as Vygotsky says, beginning with the fact that the sample is identified as a sample by virtue of its being the only object with its name in evidence. When the concept has been developed the word takes the place of the sample as general equivalent. One might see “mental images” related to words as phantom samples which are useful when one is unsure of what a word means, that is, when one asks: for what things having a relation to each other as things having a common quality or qualities, is this word the equivalent and substitute? When the concept has been developed any of the objects having that quality can be taken as a representative or example of that class, and if necessary can be used as a sample, instituting the polarity by which it becomes general. The mental image, being the image of one of these objects, can take on this function.

Here we can draw a parallel with gold and paper money. Gold can be seen as the sample object, containing the common quality of labor value, and equivalent and substitute for commodities in this regard. Moreover in its normatively identical units it presents the language of different quantities. However, when money functions “as a

sign of itself” (for instance as the circulating medium) it can be “replaced with a simple sign” (Capital p. 110), thus paper money. When gold is taken out of circulation altogether and becomes a country’s gold reserve, stashed away in such a place as Fort Knox, it is similar to the sample object stored in the memory but no longer necessary as a means of communication. Ideally either could be called upon, or actually put into the act of exchange or communication as the general equivalent. In practice this is not done also because paper money, like words, suffices to maintain the polarity, permitting the abstraction of the common quality of the relative objects, which in this case are commodities. Like gold, paper money is ordered according to the quantitative *langue*, thus making quantitative measurement possible. We can now see paper money as similar to the word, the equivalent and substitute for the general equivalent within that specific zone of communication, which is exchange. As normatively identical units both paper money and words can be seen themselves as general equivalents, which by their substitutability—for money, exchangeability—and equivalence repeatedly for particular things or commodities, maintain and give expression to a relation among these things or commodities. On the other hand, paper money may be exchanged for commodities and words may be used as the communicative substitutes for things or groups of things in a nominalistic way, without abstracting any common qualities. Vygotsky found that concepts developed only in adolescence, but that practically children were able to use language much earlier in a way which correspond to adults’ use. Similarly, money is used without referring to the common quality of abstract labor. When one moves into the stage of concepts and abstraction, one is entering the zone of “priestly” activity or of translation, as Volosinov would say. On the other hand, Marx says that in equating the “values of their exchanged products” people “equate the different kinds of labour expended in production, treating them as homogeneous human labour. They do not know they are doing this, but they do it” (Capital, p. 47).

In much the same way the use of the word as a guideline may show that we are actually following words along the lines of socially developed concepts while not knowing we are doing so.

In our comparison between language and money, two paths are open to us, which are not purely those of analogy, though they require it. First, we might take advantage of the position of translation in which money and *langue* are found, intentionally take on the priestly function, and try to translate the one into the other (an ideal alchemy which unfortunately does not have any effect upon the bank account). Second, considering *langue* as a collection of communicative phenomena (alienated from their signifieds, from *parole*, and from diachrony) and money as the communicative means in the alienated zone of communication which is exchange, we could try along the lines of Vygotsky's experiment to develop a concept under which both money and *langue* would fall, using money as the sample object with regard to those other objects which are the words in the *langue*. This would have two advantages. The first is that although money, like words in the *langue*, is separated from its signified, only coming into contact with it in the act of exchange in which it expresses the value of another commodity, when it is seen as the excluded commodity, as gold, it contains the common quality, abstract labor within it. On the other hand, as a sample object for the *langue*, money has the advantage of being already general. If it were not it could not be an equivalent for words, which, in this position, out of the context of *parole*, are also general. Thus we will have to consider the relations between money and commodities, and between signifiers and signifieds, and at least some of what they have in common will be found in these relations, since it is by virtue of these that money and words become general. The two possibilities of translation and of the use of Vygotsky's experimental procedure in another context, to some extent coincide. For the latter common qualities must be found but these can be seen especially in structures of relations. For the translation a common "idea" would be necessary, and we will leave this till later.

In order to see if words and money have structures in common, we must look to see if words and things have anything in common in correspondence to something money and commodities have in common. Here we can hazard that, when we take a word out of context and investigate its concept, the relation between this word and its referents reflects or repeats a relation, which may exist between these

referents and one of their number, which may be excluded as equivalent in the process of the development of the concept. The relation, which it already had to its referents nominalistically is now, so to say, doubled, through its substitution for a possible sample object, by which their relation to each other is brought forward. When the common quality has been abstracted the word maintains the relation of the referents to each other. Thus we can say that though words do not have anything formal in common with things in the early stages of the ontogenesis of language, they can come to have something at a certain period and in a certain use of language, when a relation among the referents is developed which is similar to that already existing between the word and the referents on a nominalistic basis, that is, when the stages of complexes have been overcome. The word would thus stand as the equivalent of the equivalent, and the referents have a relation of equivalence to each other, first, by virtue of their having the same name, and later by their relation to an equivalent by which their common quality was abstracted. Such a series of equivalent relations each of which may then be seen as equivalent to the other may remind one of Plato's "Third Man" paradox. On the other hand it might be seen as "reflection" in the sense of the German *Widerspiegelung*, since the relations of equivalence repeatedly mirror each other, having a "real" content only at one stage.

Marx sees the development of money as a resolution of the contradiction between private and social within the mutually exclusive situation of private property. In this situation "for every owner of a commodity, every commodity owned by another person counts as a particular equivalent for his own commodity and ... therefore, his own commodity counts as a general equivalent of all other commodities. " Such a private process is inadequate to the function of general equivalent socially, in which commodities "can be equated as values and have the magnitude of their values compared." Since value is a social quality, it requires a social means of expression. The owner of a "private general equivalent" is thus so to say at the nominalistic stage. There is, in fact, no common quality, which can be abstracted until commodities acquire a relation to each other and to a general equivalent on a social plane. "In this quandary, our owners

of commodities think after the manner of Faust: 'In the beginning was the deed'—action comes first. They have therefore acted before they have thought ... But the only way a particular commodity can become a general equivalent is by a social act. The social act performed by all other commodities therefore sets apart a particular commodity in which they all express their values. Thereby the bodily form of this commodity becomes the form of the socially recognized general equivalent" (*Capital*, p. 61). Interestingly enough, the "deed" of which Faust speaks (in opposition to St. John's "Word") is here the kind of deed which we have seen as underlying the formation of concepts, the "creation of a sample object."

Money, not just paper money, but money as the excluded commodity has many of the characteristics of a word. One must always remember of course that it is material in a different sense than is language, as is the labor which produces both money and commodities. However, in its mediation between the private and the social, it functions, as we just saw, as the social equivalent of private equivalents. In much the same way the word functions as the equivalent not only for the referents but also for the "samples" with which they are in a polar relation for various individuals. Marx tells us that "Language is practical consciousness as it exists for others and therefore really for me as well" (*German Ideology*). As we have tried to show elsewhere (Vaughan 1980) money is the aspect "for others" of commodities, and functions as the single word, expressing a single relevant quality, labor value, in the mutually exclusive situation of private property. Words, on the other hand, may be seen as the aspect "for others" of their referents, of the sample, of the relation between them, or of the relation among the referents that is the common quality, this depending on the stage of development of these relations for the individual. The type and context of the reception of words, their actual being for others, modifies what they also for the sender and it may be that this is the process whereby the adult's and the child's use of words coincide as well as one of the reasons why words function as the "guidelines" to concept formation. As the excluded commodity, money has both the characteristic of the word (it is as it were, a one word language

containing within itself the “*langue*” of prices) and those of the sample object. With paper money, as we saw above, the linguistic, or as Marx says, symbolic, aspect, becomes separated from the object which actually contains the common quality.

Money serves for the identification and expression of the commodity as a value, and this is functional to and directed towards the process of exchange. Words, taken out of context, in investigation of their concepts in definitions and in inter—or intra—lingual translation, serve for the identification and expression of their referents as having common qualities, and this is directed towards communication of various types. (This communication might be described as linguistic exchange, since the air of objectivity coming with the conceptual definition lends itself particularly to ideological use.) It is the moment in language, which is similar to the “exchange abstraction” of Sohn-Rethel in economics. The fact is, that aligning money and words for “translation” would give us the possibility of putting money, which heretofore stood alone into a context of words, a *langue*, while it gives to words the possibility of comparison with money as a sample object, something which was lacking before. This possibility is due to the double character of money as a material word in that it functions both as a sample and as a word. We can say that such reciprocal positioning is the first step in confronting money and language as an intralingual translation, or definition. On the other hand, money is also a foreign language which expresses by a qualitatively single word a single common quality of everything on the market. As such, it is foreign to any verbal language, which in its qualitative variety even when considered as *langue*, expresses a multitude of common qualities, relation, ideas.

Strangely enough, we know what the material word means in the foreign language of money, but not what language itself means in our own, verbal language.

Thus, if we want at least to indicate the direction a “translation” would take, we must begin with the signified of the foreign language and try to conduct it to something which we may not have noticed in our own. Marx discovers labor value by beginning with commodities, not with money. This gives us a clue as to where to

start looking for some quality, which may be similar for language. That is we should begin with things, relations, ideas, rather than with words. Volosinov again comes to our aid: "Every stage in the development of a society has its own special and restricted circle of items which alone have access to that society's attention and which can be endowed with evaluative accentuation by that attention. Only items within that circle will achieve sign formation and become objects in semiotic communication." In order for this to come about, any such item "...must be associated with the vital socioeconomic prerequisites of the particular group's existence; it must somehow, even if only obliquely, make contact with the bases of the group's material life" (V.N. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 21-22).

One may call such items socially relevant items. It is because they are relevant to, or have a value in, the life process of the community, that they are also relevant to communication. In turn, the means of communication have value in communication and both communication and its means can be seen as items, which are directed towards the life process of a community. When they reach a certain level of importance they also "achieve sign formation." Above, we described economic exchange as a section or zone of human communication.

We can thus look at the items for which money is exchanged, commodities, as socially relevant items, which have value in that kind of communication which is exchange. The means for that communication is money, which in its exchangeability for them expresses their common quality. The fact is that abstract labor is labor directed towards exchange. It follows the linguistic dialectic as labor "as it exists for others and therefore really for me as well." In order to become "for others" it must pass through the act of alienated, material communication, commodity exchange. Thus abstract labor is labor which is relevant to communication, the means of communication, and the life process of the community. Money, when it is the excluded commodity, also contains labor, and is thus relevant in the same way to communication. The substitution of paper money for the excluded commodity gives us a clue as to the abstract motivation of the sign,

which remains. Now, though paper money no longer itself contains labor, it is still relevant to the communicative act of exchange. Abstract labor is relevant to this act. Thus, what the two have in common is relevance to a particular kind of communicative act, and this, in turn, has a value for certain of the life processes of the community.

As with money and commodities, we can say that the communicative means, the word, its referents, and whatever common quality or idea may have developed from their relation, have in common the quality of relevance to communication. Moreover, the acts of communication in which they are evident are themselves directed towards the same life processes where these referents, ideas, etc. have, by their importance, gained access to the society's attention. We suggest that the relation of the items in the "circle" to words causes the "value" of those words, as does the use of the words in communicative acts relevant to the community's life. No quantitative differences pertain to such values, their only transformation being their expression in a word. On the other hand, commodities are also items striving to prove themselves relevant, that is, to achieve sign formation, in a relation with money in which this quality of relevance is expressed, relatively to all other commodities.

In exchange, in fact, we see happening so to say in slow motion and on a material plane what happens effortlessly as a social process with language. Here values are not quantitatively divided, although it may happen that an item becomes related to a word more than once, since it has been relevant to communication and to the community's life in more than one way. This is the case for instance for Saussure's 'sheep' and 'mutton' example. These divide the field covered by '*mouton*' in French because sheep were relevant to the English peasant and to the French aristocracy in England in different ways. That an item is related to a word at all shows that it has a value in communication, just as the relation of a commodity to a sum of money shows that it has a value in exchange.

By viewing economic exchange as an alienated zone of communication proper, finding in language a corresponding zone in the isolation of words for the investigation of their concepts,

translation and definition, and especially such philological creations as Saussure's *langue*, we have hoped to find a moment in the two languages, that of money and that of words, where the communicators are "saying the same thing." What they are talking about might be called 'value' but by including economic value in the wider notion of relevance to communication, we can see a signified, which is the same for both "languages." The parallel functions predominately with regard to words which express items, which are themselves relevant. In addition to this we have seen that by using money as the "sample object" with regard to language, as samples were used in Vygotsky's experiment regarding objects, a common structure can be seen between words and money as general equivalents.

We may now return to the questions we posed with regard to Saussure at the beginning of this article. In his comparison of money and language Saussure did, after all, begin with seeing words as comparable to money, and ideas to commodities. What was lacking to bring it into focus from the point of view of the Marxist analysis of commodities and money, was a conception of some thing that becomes general through a repeated relation to the particular, as well as a consequent relation of particulars to each other which can itself acquire generality. This was shown in Vygotsky's experiment, where what Saussure would call the "signified" undergoes a number of changes, only at the last stage becoming an "idea" for which a word can be "exchanged." Thus Saussure's analogy between economic exchange and language, when seen in the light of Marx's analysis of commodities and money, indicates a view of language, which contradicts some of Saussure's basic tenets.

Notes

1) Speaking of coins, a particular case of money, Sohn-Rethel says: "A coin is therefore something that corresponds to the postulates of the exchange abstraction, an abstract thing, an abstract form made sensible" (1965 p. 120).