

## The Exemplar and the Gift by Genevieve Vaughan

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The basic market process of the exchange of equivalent values, *do ut des*, is used by our society as a metaphor or 'metaform' ( Danesi and Sebeok 2000: 38) for many different kinds of interactions including the 'exchange' of messages. I believe that the process of exchange functions according to a logic which is actually only one possible variation of the more fundamental logic of gift giving. This more fundamental logic is the basis of life before and beyond the market. Indeed, from a big picture perspective, the market is only a small portion of the recent behavior of some human groups on the planet Earth. It is important to question the logic of exchange and replace it with the logic of unilateral gift giving for the metaform and explanation of the transmission of signs and messages and it would be very important to replace exchange itself with a gift economy for the transmission of goods.

In my view what we often read as non- or pre-market 'exchange' is actually a succession of unilateral acts of gift giving/need satisfaction. Such a succession may be seen as turn-taking rather than exchange because the giving and receiving of gifts, and their function and creativity are not conditional upon return gifts. The characterization of transmissions of goods and services as gifts depends upon the ability of the receiver to use the item or service in question, much as the characterization of something as a sign depends upon the existence of an interpretant. Indeed any time relevant information is received, that relevance has to do with facilitating the life processes of the receiver in some way and it may be considered as a gift if we are using gift giving rather than exchange as our interpretative key.

The receiver is thus as important as the giver in the human gift interaction. All of us begin life as the recipients of unilateral gifts from our mothers or caregivers because babies are born dependent and are unable to exchange. Even in a market-based society someone has to give to the needs of children, and many or most women continue to be socialized accordingly. Exchange and the market create a context which is antithetical to gift giving and they strongly broadcast their logic into other areas. It is from the point of view of the market that we usually investigate all of the various aspects of our lives including signs. I propose that what I call the 'exchange paradigm' is a defective point of view and that we can construct a better perspective if we bring forward the existence and impor-

tance of gift giving. I also believe that we should transform our economy towards the gift giving of goods and services and away from the market. By using gift giving rather than exchange as the basic metaphor or 'metaform' for communication perhaps we can achieve an alternative view of semiosis, which can nurture a transformation of the economy peacefully, from an ideological level. At the same time we will need to look at exchange and the market as taking place on the basis of the contradiction, concealment and co-optation of gift giving. As we see the way the two fit together we can collectively and non-violently decrease and phase out the importance of one while increasing the importance of the other.

In order to describe gift giving let me begin by contrasting it with exchange. Gifts require the turning of the attention of the giver towards the receiver, the identification of a need and the creation or procurement of something which will fill it. The fulfillment of needs educates further needs and elicits and educates the giving of further gifts. Gift giving is other-oriented, satisfying the need of the other, while exchange, which requires an equivalent value in return, is ego-oriented, directed towards the satisfaction of the exchanger's own need. Exchange is predominantly quantitative; gift giving is predominantly qualitative. Exchange requires an equation between what is given and what is received, according to the self-interest of each of the exchangers. It is adversarial: each person tries to get more out of the transaction than the other. Gift giving is cooperative, creating relations of solidarity and community. It creates the subjectivities of givers and receivers in an ongoing way. Receivers become givers in their turn, giving to still others outside the *do ut des* relation. Exchange creates separation and seeming 'independence' on the basis of a deeper dependence on the market. Gift giving is transitive. Giving something to the other gives value to the other by implication. Exchange is intransitive, and gives value to the self by implication. Gift giving creates a multifaceted community; exchange creates an alteration of this community, a collection of isolated individuals. Exchange is a gift doubled back upon itself, canceling the relation-creating value given to the other by giftgiving.

Exchange objectifies, while qualitative gift giving subjectifies, that is it elicits and creates subjectivity not only in the receiver but in the giver. Because of its other-orientation gift giving creates a variety of relations, given the diversity of needs and the many possible means of satisfying them. Because of its ego-orientation, its use of equality and constrained reciprocity, exchange creates fewer relations, and the ones it does create are mainly relations among commodities having to do with their equality of value, while the relation among exchanging subjects remains one of indifference.

Exchange appears to have a logical structure while gift giving does not. This appearance derives from the necessary equation between two prod-

ucts or between a product and money according to an identity of value. We have built symbolic logic upon such equations but we have ignored the simpler though more creative and transformative logic of the gift. The transfer of a need satisfying good: 'A gives X to B' is already a structure in a logic of connection. Reciprocity is not required to establish a relation. Giving and receiving already constitute a relation among persons as well as a relation to the good that is given and received. Reciprocity, which if constrained becomes exchange, is just a complication of the more fundamental interaction of giving and receiving. There is also a basic syllogism of gift giving: If A gives to B and B gives to C then A gives to C.

Perhaps because of the requirement of equality in exchange we emphasize correspondence and self reflection in our understanding of the mind and language, rather than the satisfaction of need. I believe (see below) that the equation of value in exchange is actually a derivative of the definition or naming, played out at the material level. As such it is a use and a distortion of gift giving as it functions materially and as it functions in verbal signs. This is one reason why exchange so easily infects our thinking, our sense of the world we are in, and our ethics. For example, we isolate our umwelts from each other through the market rather than constructing them together through gift giving.

Gift giving is fundamental not only in mothering but also in many indigenous cultures. It would be important to use the perspective of the gift rather than that of the exchange paradigm to investigate indigenous economies so that the insistence on gifts as exchange would be less pronounced. Gifts may be given not only to satisfy needs but also purposefully to create the relations that satisfying needs does in fact create. Thus what is called 'symbolic gift exchange' by anthropologists can be seen not as an anticipation of market exchange but as a use of material gift giving for communication and the creation of community.

Debt or obligation to repay is not primary but takes place upon the basis of the creativity of the need-satisfying logic of the gift, whether the need which is to be satisfied is for a material gift or for a symbolic gift or both. When, as often happens in indigenous cultures, the debt is repaid with an increase, this can be seen as the assertion of the extra portion as a unilateral need satisfying gift, given by the previous receiver. In the case of exchange, the gift is doubled back on itself and made conditional, qualitative, constrained. Indeed we can look at the extra gift portion of the transaction as de natured by the exchange economy and transformed into interest. In the market, the relation-creating aspects of gift giving are hidden by the insistence upon the altered relation-creating aspects of exchange, which are the opposite of the relations created by the gift.

Mauss (1923), Malinowsky (1922), Lewis Hyde (1979), and more recently Alan Caille and Jacques Godbout (1992), bring forward the relation-creat-

ing aspects of gift 'exchange' as they call it. Feminism allows us to look at mothering as a conscious and intentional practice. In indigenous societies as in market societies, the mothering practice is necessary for the survival of infants and young children. It cannot be done through an exchange of equivalent values with the child. Rather the mother cares for the child by unilaterally giving h/er the gifts and services that satisfy h/er material and psychological needs. I believe that mothering is an important model for gift giving generally, and that gift giving creates relations of mutuality and community at all levels. Gift giving can be characterized as material communication, non-sign communication, the communication which makes human bodies and much of the material and psychological substrata of human minds. Though it is accompanied by signs, the communicative process actually occurs here directly by giving and receiving material gifts and services. In mothering, this communicative process is rooted externally to the receiver and prior to h/er. The giver's production or procurement of a consumeable object and its input to the child who receives it creatively, is necessary for h/er survival and growth. By 'non-sign' I mean that this transfer of goods has a privileged place logically and psychologically prior to signs proper at least as far as the receiver is concerned. In fact, even perceptions, like goods and services may appear to be 'givens', whether or not they actually have a giver, since indeed they are received. By projecting the mother-child gift giving interaction onto the world around us we locate ourselves in a maternal universe in which first non signs and then signs are gifts at various levels in various complexities. By destroying the projection of gift giving processes and substituting it with the projection of abstract conceptual processes based on exchange and the equation of value we locate ourselves in a neutral or even a hostile universe. We split mentation from nurturing and being nurtured, detaching signs from their ground and making them enigmatic. In this way we ignore gift giving and promote attitudes of neutrality which allow dominance and misogyny in society at large - thus making the social universe indeed more hostile and less nurturing.

The satisfaction of the need of the other, and the reception of the need-satisfying gift of the other, are the basic relation-creating moments of communication on a material level. These moments constitute a logical pattern which is repeated at other levels of communication - including the levels of signs and language. Although it may well be true that signs permeate the universe we humans are those perceivers and makers of signs who live many years at the beginning of our lives as mothered children. That is why we have the ability to receive signs as gifts and use them in establishing human relations by giving them to and receiving them from each other. We can also project gift relations onto each other, onto things and onto verbal and non verbal signs. The relations between non verbal things and words as well as the relations among words can be understood in terms of giving and receiving need-satisfying gifts and services. The logical patterns of material gift giving and their implications are trans-

ferred onto the verbal plane as syntax. The re-creation of gift giving at the verbal level provides connectivity. Words are re-presentational, substitute gifts which in turn give to and receive from each other. They are accompanied by logical connectives and grammatical devices, which are verbal gifts given to other verbal gifts, allowing them to be given to human receivers in various ways, in order to satisfy communicative needs arising from the ongoing experience of the communicators, who are constructing (nurturing, developing) their own and each others' subjectivities in relation to the world. Because humans have such long period of infancy in which mothering is necessary they have developed elaborate gift giving capacities. The extension of this to the level of linguistic signs could account for the species specificity of language.

Even when exchange and the market are the dominant mode of production and distribution of material goods, family units may be considered pockets of a gift economy. In order to grapple with the causes of the grave economic situation in which Patriarchal Capitalism has thrust us we need to criticize it not only from within its own world view, but we must find another standpoint. I believe that we can draw upon these pockets of gift giving to find this standpoint and create a common ground where we can embrace and validate the alternative. We can also find the links between this ground and communication understood as gift giving. Another possible world is already available both in women's gift giving practice and in the practice of communication by means of signs, linguistic signs especially. We can look at women's gift giving practice as the basis of an alternative economic way, which already exists as a hidden economic structure, the superstructure of which has been invisible and is only waiting to be recognized.

By understanding communication as gift giving we can restore the rest of the body and mind of the mother to the mother tongue. Then by contrast we can understand where hegemonic patriarchal exchange originates and trace the sources of its power. In turn this will provide justification for restoring the logic of the gift in economics.

### Market semiosis

Though all humans have to be mothered, the point of view we usually now espouse does not come from mothering but from exchange and the market. Rather than simply accepting the mind-altering economic process of exchange as something natural, we should investigate its social origins. I submit that market exchange comes from the transposition of linguistic process of representation onto the material plane, of *illiquid stet pro alliquod*, a sort of incarnation of the naming process. In the market, a quantity of material money has to actually take the place of the commodity (1) in the hands of the seller as the commodity is transferred to the hands of the buyer, according to the exchange value as expressed in the

price or 'money name' (Marx 1962:84 ) of the abstract labor in the commodity. A social-material artifact takes the place of a product-in-exchange for someone in the respect and capacity of its value. We are so used to this process that it seems natural and we do not question it, yet the repeated daily (re)enactment of what can be seen as a moment of the linguistic sign process, at a material level would clearly have the capacity to influence a mind based on sign processes. Moreover this process influences and undercuts our investigations, making them serve and attribute value to the market. It is not just Capitalism but the market itself that is an economic structure capable of determining ideological superstructures. It does this by the emphasis it places on the linguistic process of naming by repeating it over and over at the level of material goods. At the same time it influences us to leave out gift giving from the market, from the behaviors which are socially validated and recognized and from the explanation of language. In place of gift giving we are given hierarchical categorization achieved by the process of representation and evaluation - by money. The metaform for communication which is produced in a market based society is influenced by the logic of exchange rather than that of gift giving. The metaform of exchange functions to replace and conceal the importance of gift giving, much as exchange itself does.

### Private property and gift giving

The reason why we need to exchange goods for money in a market economy is that we own private property which we do not give freely to one another to satisfy needs. Among other things we do not give freely because we fear lack. In fact in a society where gift giving is not the predominant mode of distribution, an individual can easily give away everything and remain with nothing, simply because the others are not practising gift giving as well. Scarcity serves the exchange paradigm by making gift giving difficult and even in some cases life-threatening. In fact Patriarchal Capitalism functions to create the scarcity necessary for the hegemony of the exchange paradigm by channeling the wealth into the hands of the few, and by wasting it on non nurturing expenses such as armaments (\$18 billion are spent every week on armaments world wide while that would be enough to feed everyone on earth for a year)(2) by destroying lives, livelihoods and infrastructures in wars, and by creating economic bubble-bursts such as the recent stock market crashes. The market needs scarcity because in abundance, no one would need or want to exchange in order to live, but all could provide for themselves and others without subjecting themselves to control by the market.

At present a great deal of gift giving is directed towards the market. For example women's free labor in the home would add some 40% on to the GNP in the US if it were calculated monetarily, more in some other countries. Free housework is a gift women are giving to the market - and specifically to the capitalist who would otherwise have to cover it in her sal-

ary or in that of her husband. Moreover, surplus labor as that part of the labor of the worker that is not covered by h/er salary is also a gift to the capitalist given by the worker. The gift of the wife's free housework also passes through her work and her husband's work into surplus value.

Private property and not-giving make exchange and the market necessary. In a self confirming dialectic, the market becomes parasitic upon the hidden gift giving that continues to exist, depleting the gifts and recreating the scarcity which makes private property necessary. In order to change this situation we have to take a meta level perspective and shift the paradigm towards gift giving so as to create and validate gift-based thinking and gift-based communities where abundant goods and services can circulate freely towards needs, replenished by the gift giving of all.

It is not just exchange for money but exchange itself which already creates the problems connected with the denial of gift giving. Money aggravates the problems and adds a number of elements that are not contained in exchange alone. However, exchange occasions the need for money as a communicative need in the twisted contradictory material communication among not-givers by means of not-gifts that is the market.

In a sense this need for a means of exchange is a communicative need arising from exchange, similar to the communicative need in language arising in regard to any interpersonal process. In order to satisfy this communicative need, a material 'word' is 'given' again and again regarding the contradictory process of the sharing of not-sharing, giving in order not to give. Exchange without money, or barter, still contradicts gift giving by making the satisfaction of others' needs conditional upon their satisfaction of one's own. Although it is somewhat less abstract and complex than exchange for money, barter is not the solution to the problems of the market because it creates similar personal relations. Gift giving is the solution. (3)

Perhaps we believe that the motivations which drive the globalizing market, as they drove colonialism and imperialism, derive from some defect in human nature. 'We' are greedy, aggressive and bellicose, longing to accumulate more and dominate over others. This is a generalized view of the species in terms of the motivations of male dominance. Anyone who doesn't act according to these motivations is read as losing, even if they simply do not believe in competing (which implies they are not infected with the same disease). On the other hand we can look for social reasons behind the behavior we think of as greedy and aggressive. We need to find the reasons if we are going to be able to change a system that is causing the suffering of the vast majority of people on the planet. If we do not find the societal reasons, we will be caught in the same problems over and over because male dominance can only be stopped by more male dominance, wars by more wars. (4)

## The exemplar

Many years ago when I was studying the parallels between language and economics with Ferruccio Rossi-Landi (1968), I was struck by the similarities between concept development as explored by Lev Vygotsky(1962) and the development of money as the General Equivalent as described by Marx in the first book of Capital. (see Vaughan 1980,1981)Both the successful development of the concept and the development of money depended on the ability of the subjects to keep one chosen item constant as the term of comparison. The 'sample' or exemplar in Vygotsky's experiment, and money in Marx's explanation, had to remain stable while people were comparing other items to them. There had to be what Marx called a 'polarity' (1962:41) between the one and the many in such a way that once chosen, the 'one' remained constant while many items were compared to it and were either accepted or rejected. If the exemplar did not maintain its position, Vygotsky (1962: 62,64) showed, other relations such as the 'chain complex' or the 'family name complex' were proposed as the unifying factors. The generality of the exemplar did not develop and the concept or the money form did not develop unless this polar relation existed. That is, in Vygotsky's experiment for example, the exemplar was not stable if, as in the 'chain complex' one item was seen by subjects to be similar to a square exemplar because it was yellow and then a third item was grouped with the second because it, like the second was round though red, and so forth. The 'family name complex' involved each item's being found similar to the exemplar in some aspect, though not all the aspects were the same. This development was similar to Marx's description of stages in the development of money as the General Equivalent. (1962:18-43)

At around that time and as I was becoming a feminist, I also read Jean Josef Goux's (1973, 1990:9-63) extension of the General Equivalent form to cover many other social structures ranging from the family where the father is General Equivalent to monarchy - where the king functions as General Equivalent with regard to his subjects, to linguistic signs as the General Equivalent of non linguistic signs and to the Phallus as General Equivalent of sexual objects. Each of these structures has a one-to-many configuration in which Marx's 'polar' relation exists between the one and the many. Such a polar relation can be characterized as a binary relation of an unusual kind since its opposed elements are apparently quantitative as one-to-many but have important qualitative effects. The process is not static but dynamic because relation of each particular element of the many to the one actually constructs the generality of the one. For example, for Marx, as each item of the many - each commodity - is compared to money, the 'one', money becomes general, the general equivalent, while each commodity is particular in relation to it. Marx compares this polarity to the relation between all Catholics and the Pope( 1962:41).



He believes we select one out of all the possible products - gold- to serve as the 'general equivalent'. While all other commodities are located on the relative side of the equation, gold is located on the equivalent side. Money is used as the form of the value of commodities and as it takes their place in exchange it is able to express their value relative to each other. Similarly in Vygotsky's experiment, one item is selected out of the many possible members of a conceptual category to use as an exemplar. Comparing a variety of items to the exemplar we construct a category, including some and excluding others as category members. Their relation to each other as similar develops through their relation to the exemplar as their polar equivalent. At the same time a polarity develops between their relevant and irrelevant characteristics. In the formation of categories, as in the market, each item is in a relative position with regard to one item which always occupies the equivalent position. In the market, the repeated equation and transaction of exchange allows all the particular commodities to express their value relative to each other, as quantities of the same standard, money.

I began to wonder how something as 'mental' as concept development could be so similar to something as 'material' as the exchange of money for commodities. In Vygotsky's experiment language was used to 'guide' the subjects towards concept formation. Each item had a name written on it, and those which were not part of the category had a name which was different from that of the exemplar of the category. Language thus helped to sort out the items which did not belong. Money on the other hand has both the character of the exemplar and of the word, since it is used to take the place of commodities, standing for them and naming them as values, according to its internal quantificatory classification. There is no language of monies which stands with money proper as its context to limit its semantic domain. The General Equivalent stands alone; there are no other 'exemplar-words' at the same level which would allow values other than exchange value to be expressed.

I began to wonder if the various General Equivalent forms Goux had identified, such as the King, the Father, the Phallus were not, like the General Equivalent itself, exemplars deriving from the process of concept formation but used in different ways, invested with different powers. Such a situation could not 'just happen' I thought, but it must be due to something. At the time I was becoming a feminist and learning about Patriarchy. I could see that these one-to-many structures were all Patriarchal.

I began to see the exchange of commodities for money as a very large scale- gigantic - collective sorting process, using the money-word-exemplar. In this process items are chosen or discarded according to whether or not they, like money, have value, and then they are sorted again according to the specific quantity of exchange value they have, as expressed in money. Gifts are discarded, as are products which may be too cheap

(that is, which are mostly free) which are destroyed in order to keep prices high. On the other hand they may be privatized and absorbed into the market by commodification as is now happening with the previously free gifts of water and traditional fertile seeds.

The use of a sorting process to manage the exchange of goods may seem unremarkable but it is actually a key lying before us that can be used in a number of investigations. The selection of an exemplar and its use in forming concepts through sorting out the irrelevant items, can be seen as the archetypal structure of many seemingly disconnected processes. In many of these, dominance by the exemplar and the devaluing, concealment and cooptation of gift giving function in our society to create inter-relating systems of oppression.

## Masculation

When children are small, the nurturing mother is the main model or exemplar for their concept of the human. They creatively receive her unilateral gifts and give some communicative gifts of their own, imitating her. (Chodorow 1978) When boys find that they belong to a gender category which is the opposite of that of the nurturing mother, and that they have another gender name, they have to give her up as exemplar and give up also her gift giving ways as the content for their identity. For young children particularly there is little else in life other than the gift giving and receiving they are doing with their mothers. What is more, as I have been saying, gift giving permeates our lives and language though we have been taught not to see it. In other words, gift giving is a necessary part of all life but boy children are being taught it is not their role. What is most evident about patriarchal fathers, the male models that are usually given to the child in place of the model of the mother, is their ability to command, perhaps to punish, their distance and independence, even their ability to be the exemplar of the category 'male' and extend it to the category 'human'. The generality of the one-to-many exemplars of concepts is probably not evident to children and may be interpreted simply as power. The misconceptions which underlie the male identity are passed down from generation to generation. Women learn to privilege the male way more than their own way with the result that they give to those in the not-giving category more than they give to those in their own gift giving category. With their many gifts they paradoxically privilege not-giving.

The shift from one category to the other is itself a violence done to the boy child against which he has no appeal, and surely he must be nostalgic to remain in the gift giving category with his mother. The shift of exemplar, where the male exemplar takes the place of the female, is invested with power which contrasts with the complete lack of defense the child actually has towards this transfer of categories. That is, it appears that he cannot refuse his gender assignment. He has been sorted out. (5) The boy

child is dominated by the gender category split and the imposition of the male model as mediated by language. In fact the gender term 'male' as binarily opposed to 'female' may appear to have been the power which separated the boy from the gift giving mother exemplar and therefore changed the expectations for his practical life as well. Thus the word 'male' itself is powerful. In order to fulfill its prophecy, a 'manhood agenda' (Gillmore 1990) is created socially. Instead of trying to be like the mother the boy child must dominate her. Instead of nurturing others he must cause others to nurture him. Instead of creating community and intimacy he must become a lonely hunter. In place of gift giving, in order not to appear feminine, the boy is given the option of hitting - an action which touches the other person as gift giving often does, and creates an interpersonal relation, though not of mutuality but of domination. Hitting then becomes the 'male' mode which is transposed into violence of all kinds, from sexual abuse, to verbal abuse, to economic exploitation, tyranny and war. The manhood agenda thus makes the boy appear to the mother as her 'other', different from herself, perhaps even a tiny stranger to whom she must give even more in order to bring him through gift giving into the community. (Hyde 1979) The girl, who remains in the category which has the mother as exemplar finds that her model privileges the other category, and therefore that she must do so likewise. Like the commodity entering the market the boy child gives up his participation in gift giving and takes up a new identity as part of a privileged category. He has a qualitatively different value from his mother and a quantitative value which depends on how much of a 'man' he can be.

Children are victims of this 'sorting task' which is performed in their regard involving gender and involving also the concept of the human. The reason for this odd use of the exemplar is that boys are placed in a category that is the opposite of their mothers at a time when they are totally dependent upon her gifts and she is the only model of the human they have intimately known. A false and unnecessary gender categorization takes them away from their original nurturing identity and creates a new artificial non nurturing identity in its place.

The father or other significant male is taken as the exemplar of the human, and the boy becomes a little potential exemplar. His relation of similarity to the father is privileged over his relation to the nurturing mother, whose exemplarity is eclipsed. Giving to not-giving creates an inferiority for women and gift giving and a superiority for men, privileging not-giving and sorting, the cognates of which are judgement and naming, functional in the very categorization that appears to have divided the genders in the first place. Sorting, categorization, judgement and naming appear to be a capacity of the dominant male exemplar and it appears that the boy child must be like the father, 'be a man', competing to capture the position of exemplar himself.

Social structures involving the exemplar - to- many form proliferate. Political, religious, military and economic hierarchies demonstrate its hold upon society. The exemplar himself - the man at the top - is invested with the ability to dominate the others in his 'category'. He gives commands and makes decisions. He 'sorts', and those who are sorted give gifts and power to him. The same interactions take place in regard to 'ones' in exemplar positions all the way up and down the levels of the hierarchies. The values of the manhood agenda are very similar to the values of profit (accumulation of gifts), competition, independence and self priveleging which drive the market.

## Projections

The reason it is so hard to solve our social problems - and I write with the threat of war of G.W. Bush against Saddam Hussein, a competition between two important exemplars of the concept 'man', looming over the world - is that because of the original division of gender repeated in every life, logical problems of categorization have become embedded in our gender identities, projected into psychological, family and social structures. These are received as 'givens', then recategorized and fed back into the structure of categorization as already embedded in gender. These structures confirm each other and appear to be 'human nature' in which perhaps women are only partly human because they compete less to be the exemplar of the human and have an irrational tendency to care. Patriarchy is validated at all levels.

The projection of the problem of categorization and gender into the market is helpful in that it displays the misplaced elements in a depersonalized arena which is visible to all. In the market as in our childhood experience, once again a one-to-many relation among an exemplar and items in a privileged category is evident. In the market, money is the exemplar of value. The 'sorting process' takes place, and some goods are allowed into the magic circle of exchange value, while others remain excluded, part of the gift giving background. Exchange for money is a way of naming the commodity as a value, not by giving to it but by giving something for it. Money functions as this "name", (similar perhaps to the word 'male') while the quantity of money that is given for the product, tells us how male the product is estimated to be.

Money is also something one has, and possession of large amounts of it gives one the power to be the exemplar. (There is also phallic symbolism connected with this.) The market's displacement of the problem allows women also to achieve the position of exemplar at least in some hierarchies by acheiving prominence and/or having money, a fact which demonstrates that being the exemplar is not a biological prerogative of males. The displacement of the problem into the market also allows people of both genders to compete for the exemplar position without having to

dominate other people directly by hitting or even killing them.

Private property is also a kind of exemplar-to-many relation of the kind Vigotsky called a 'family name complex', not based on similarity but on 'functional relations' much as different members of a family are related in different ways to the head. The owner is the exemplar in this case and each property is related to h/er in a different way but all have in common that they are related to h/er as their owner. Property also involves a mutually exclusive relation regarding other property owners and their property. Private ownership allows each masculated male (6) to exercise his exemplarity with regard at least to his possessions if he cannot achieve that privileged position with regard to other men and within the category 'male' or 'human'. This has unfortunately even been extended to ownership of people both as chattel in 'ownership' of the wife and children, and as ownership of actual human slaves. In all of these cases the owner is presumably entitled to receive gifts and services from his 'property' in a privileged and exclusive way.

The hypothesis that the market is a projection of problems of categorization into the arena of material communication has many advantages. First, it gives us a way of investigating categories and sign processes, exemplars and words in an extra-mental medium. Second, it gives us a way of looking at the formation of the male gender as similar to commodification, an artificial social category created in opposition to gift giving and based on categorization itself. Third, if we recognize how the market succeeds in broadcasting its values towards us by feeding back into our exchange and gender based thinking about gift giving and exchange, we can correct for its influences even in disciplines that seem far removed from it. Fourth, with this in mind we can perhaps understand that we need to look critically at the importance we attribute to categorization and instead give value to gift giving. Fifth, this hypothesis gives a standpoint from which to question the reality and rightness of a market which is now determining life and death on the planet. Sixth, by understanding what is happening perhaps we can address and heal the problem both at an individual and at a societal level.

### Market categories

The market itself is a process in which products are produced in order to be categorized as exchange values that is, not-gifts, and then de categorized when they are bought and become use values. Gifts and gift value which is transferred to the other through care by implication, remain outside this process. (Vaughan 1997:189) Gift giving is ontogenetically prior to categorization, as it is both ontogenetically and phylogenetically prior to the market, and continues to exist alongside it. In the market, gifts are co opted and captured as profit but profit is seen as money 'made', coming from participation in the market process itself 'produced'

by capital (Kennedy 1995: 18). With attention focussed on the categorization of exchange value the gift giving that is happening everywhere is ignored as the binary opposite of exchange. It can therefore be coopted and covered by a different name, 'profit'. Part of what is continually happening is rendered invisible. The other part, the market, is rendered over-visible due to the use of the processes of categorization in its functional identity, so the picture becomes very difficult to interpret.

Too much importance is placed on everyone as categorizers and sorters rather than as givers and receivers. The distance between ourselves and others, the lack of access to goods that is created by the market and private property, as well as the use of money to classify both monetary and non monetary values, leads to an over emphasis on categorization. The focus on knowing by means of categories also leaves knowing by giving and receiving unknown, creating an epistemological blind spot.

Patriarchal exemplars who are also categorizers and sorters and their categories are validated by this kind of epistemology. A moral blind spot is also created whereby whole populations 'choose' to support wars of domination against those they categorize as enemies while discounting the possibility of creating community through gift giving with people outside their own category. If one cannot succeed in becoming an exemplar, it seems at least s/he can be a member of the exemplar nation, class, race, or religion. This membership appears to give licence to dominate, just as being a member of the male gender does in Patriarchy.

At the individual level people striving to be exemplars in opposition to gift giving wonder about the meaning of life which, like the meaning of language, actually has much more to do with gift giving than it does with categorization. Believing according to the manhood agenda that meaning in life has to do with achieving the exemplar position, they attack and dominate others, sometimes even shooting their classmates or co workers in violent attempts to get to the top, to be the one to whom the many are compared. Since the same agenda is being played out at other levels, for example in international relations, where one country makes war on the others, bombing, and killing the many in order to achieve the exemplar position, it appears to the individual that this is a valid way of achieving prominence. Instead meaning in life, like meaning in language, has to do with the creation of the self and others by gift giving, communicating and forming community.

## Language

The level of perception itself involves recognition and therefore a connection and comparison with things that have been previously encountered. Animals and even micro organisms recognize things of the same kind. Human language enhances and elaborates upon this ability.(Danesi

& Sebeok 2000:20) Words as phonetic combinations are actually also exemplars. We can recognize instances of the same word, and every time we speak a word, we know that many other people have used and will be using that word in other moments and instances. The word, spoken, heard, written or read in the present has a polarity and exemplarity regarding all the other instances of that word. This exemplarity coincides with the exemplarity of the imagined, remembered or perceived non verbal item which is the exemplar, regarding all the other non verbal items in the category. The word and the non verbal exemplar have the polar position in common though the polar relation of the word regards other instances of 'itself' and the polar relation of the non verbal item regards the other members of its category. I believe that human language provides the enhancement of our ability to recognize by adding a level of verbal experiences which we can recognize and even imitate. The verbal and non verbal levels, words and things, intersect and are united by equating items at the two levels with each other in their exemplarity. The capacity of words to stand for things derives from our use of one kind of exemplar (a verbal exemplar) to take the place of the other (the non verbal exemplar) while maintaining the polar relation of the items to it and a consequent relation of similarity with each other. The class is identified by the use of the non verbal exemplar which is no longer necessary when its place has been taken by the word. The word, because of its own polar position regarding other instances of itself, can take the place of the exemplar of the kind, so that the members of the kind remain related to each other as similar because they are related to that word as their substitute exemplar, their name. If we forget what the word means we can recall or ask others to describe for us an appropriate non verbal exemplar for that class.

By considering the language, as a collection of words in a relation of mutual exclusion with each other, we can see that the name guides categorization towards unification and homogeneity with what is already understood as the membership of a category. This would be the case both in the creation of mutual exclusion among categories as derived from mutual exclusion among words, and following upon the use of words to correct mistakes as when a child says 'dog' regarding a cat, and someone supplies the correct (mutually exclusive) word. Both factors guide h/er towards correct categorization. (We saw this mechanism above at work in the categorization of gender.) The category-correcting function of the word in this sense depends to a large extent upon the co presence of other words and its relation to them. The one-to-many polar relation is complemented by the one-among-many relation of the word with all the other mutually exclusive words in the language.

There is another function that takes place at both verbal and non verbal levels and that is the communicative function of gift giving. We have been saying that gift giving on the material level creates the human community

and the communicators - by satisfying the needs of those who creatively receive the gifts and stimulating new needs on the basis of the old. Indeed it creates human communitary selves and determines their specificity by the kinds of need- satisfactions that are given to them and which they creatively receive.(See Marx on production and consumption 1973:90-94) Food, clothing, shelter, even the temperature and humidity of the air of our childhoods have a special significance to us because they are the first ways our needs were satisfied. Our bodies have been made of these gifts, our tastes developed, and our minds nurtured. The leanings we have, special sensitivities and responses are all points of arrival on a journey which begins with the ways our needs are satisfied in childhood. As receivers and givers of material gifts we are the synthesis of what has come before. We have also been nurtured by the gifts of language which, after a period of early incomprehension, begin to mediate everything we do and know (give, receive and have). Words are not only substitute exemplars but substitute gifts by means of which we create ourselves as similar givers and receivers.

If giving and receiving material goods and services creates human communitary relations and many faceted subjectivities, giving and receiving verbal gifts and services can also create human communitary relations and subjectivities. Needs arise for those relations in excess of or beyond the material needs themselves and/or even when the material gifts are inaccessible. We can call these needs for relations 'communicative needs'. They are needs that arise for relations among people regarding all the variety of their external and internal contexts. Communicative needs can be satisfied by giving and receiving verbal gifts of words, sentences and discourses. In the long term, repeated communicative needs regarding something in the natural or cultural, external or internal environment occasion the social coining of words while in the short term more fleeting and evanescent needs occasion the production of sentences using socially pre coined words.

### Iconicity of gift relations

As a substitute exemplar, a word maintains the relation of things of a kind to each other, just as would an exemplar of that kind.(7)This substitute exemplar, the word, is also suffused with a gift capacity in that it can be given by people to one another to create communitary bonds, relations among similars to some part or aspect of the world taken as a gift or service. It is because words have both these functions, as substitute exemplars and as substitute gifts, that language so creatively enhances our relations to the world and each other, our perceptions and our ability to think and act consciously and collaboratively. The relation-forming gift quality of the non verbal items of which we speak is transmitted to other people by giving them substitute-exemplar- word-gifts, combined through gift based syntax. Indeed it is the reiteration of gifts at different levels



that allows us to transmit (give) messages and information.

These two important aspects give us a two pronged approach to signification. In fact, I believe that gift giving functions to create relations between non verbal items and words and relations among people and that it is also re applied at a verbal level to create the relations among words, as syntax. The similarity between words and non verbal things lies in the fact that, like words, things are potential gifts, directed towards others, and there is an iconicity deriving from that at two levels. There is a second iconicity deriving from the use of both words and non verbal things as exemplars. By giving words as substitute exemplars to others we can elicit others' attention to their own non verbal exemplars and the items related to them as members of a kind. We give exemplars, but we do not understand it because we have eclipsed the exemplar of gift giving.

Both of these 'prongs' of our investigation of language depend to a large extent upon the interpretation human beings make of the world. If our attitude towards the world and language is not open to gift giving we may not grasp this aspect and the iconicity will be lost on us. Nevertheless if we do not lose our heritage as mothered children, as homo donans, (not just homo sapiens) we will continue to give and receive perceptually, communicatively and materially even when we do not recognize that we are doing it. In part our negative attitude towards gift giving will likely be due to the over valuing of the exemplars of Patriarchy and the market which, as we have been saying are built upon the canceling and co optation of gift giving. If gift giving is not visible, the functioning of the exemplar may seem mechanical or instinctual, part of the hardwiring of our brains. The model of the model, the exemplar of the exemplar, takes over, blotting out the gift. The legacy of the mother is attributed to brain physiology. The manhood agenda and the male exemplar become the standard for both men and women, after which they are also extended as the standard for the behavior of states and corporations which enact the manhood script's non giving, competitive, adversarial and accumulative attempt to become the one at the top, the exemplar, which dominates the many. (Then all this is justified by the appeal to the behavior of male dominant animals, rather than considering our humanity as a product of the evolution of mothering.)

In both cases, of the exemplar and the gift, the iconicity between levels depends on 'attributions' that humans collectively and individually make. (In a sense these attributions are also recognitions, in that we attribute to something a quality that may be already there). First we have to attribute relevance to various aspects of our environment, as having a potential need satisfying gift character for others. This allows us to use words as substitute gifts to satisfy others' communicative needs regarding those aspects. We satisfy the listener's need for a relation with us regarding something by giving h/er the social substitute word-gift-exemplar used by

our linguistic community in its regard. (8) This communicative need-satisfying gift creates a relation between the giver and the receiver to the non-verbal item or event. It also creates a relation of the giver to the non-verbal item as something that has a parallel in the relation the other now has to it. Thus although it is the communicative need of the other that we satisfy, we automatically establish a relation also for ourselves.

We also have to attribute a gift character at another level to words so that they can satisfy each other's needs, modifying each other in syntax. 'Red' modifies 'apple' because an [apple] can have the property [red], that is, it can be the recipient of that property on the reality plane. The substitute gift, the noun 'apple' can receive the adjective 'red' as a gift. The two words combine because one is given to the other for the moment and together they stand as a substitute gift for the relevant potential non-verbal gift, [red apple] satisfying someone's communicative need in its regard whether or not the [red apple] itself is actually given and received.

In each language some kinds of verbal gifts can receive (can have needs for) specific kinds of verbal gifts and not others. In English, nouns can receive adjectives but not adverbs. They can receive singular or plural endings. They can also receive definite and indefinite articles depending on the kinds of gift they are substituting for at the moment, and positive or negative, or otherwise specifying suffixes and prefixes. The very structure of noun-verb-complement is iconic to the interaction of giver - gift or service- receiver. In active sentences the giver is in focus: 'The girl hit the ball'. In passive sentences the focus is on the receiver: 'The ball was hit by the girl'. Prepositions and conjunctions allow the gifts of phrases and clauses to be given to other phrases and clauses. All of the inputs into a sentence tree can be seen as just that: inputs, gifts.

Gift giving happens at many levels. It begins with maternal material giving and receiving by the child, and is extended to many kinds of material gift transactions. It continues with perceptual giving and receiving. Then it goes on with the giving of non-verbal and verbal signs, continuing with gift giving among verbal signs. Each sentence is a complete, simple or complex gift which creates relations among speaker and listener or writer and reader regarding the innumerable aspects of the external and internal environment. This gift at the verbal level allows relations among items at the non-verbal level to be brought forward, showing them to be potentially need-satisfying gifts as well. A common ground or topic is thus created to which each of the interlocutors can give and from which each can receive. In the process of dialogue each of the interlocutors becomes a giver and a receiver in turn. Speakers and listeners create their subjectivities as givers and receivers through linguistic praxis, even when they are not giving or receiving anything on the material plane.

It is not just that humans need to communicate in order to collaborate.

That is, communication is not just something added on to pre-formed humans. We need to communicate in order to be and become human, from infancy on. That is, we need to communicate - co-muni-cate: give gifts together.

### Iconicity of the exemplar-to-many relation

The relational iconicity of gift giving holds the different parts and levels of communication together. There is also an iconicity of the exemplar at different levels. We can take anything as an exemplar unless we already have an exemplar for it, in which case it would be an item of a kind. If words in their exemplarity substitute for non verbal items taken as exemplars, we can relate the non verbal items of a kind directly to the word, rather than having to think of the non verbal exemplar itself. The word functions as substitute exemplar in its stead. Once we have constructed our categories, any item of a kind can be used as an exemplar of the kind, as long as it is placed in a polar equivalent position regarding the others. Moreover any instance of the of the substitute exemplar word 'cat' can stand for a kind or one of its members. The word-gifts that are given to it, which modify it, for example, 'all cats' or 'the black cat' can expand or reduce the scope of the polarity that is taken into consideration at the moment. In fact the 'general equivalent' is constructed by repeated comparisons of each of the items of a kind to the exemplar. Any individual cat can be related to the word 'cat' and 'cat(s)' can also stand as the general equivalent, the substitute exemplar for all cats. We solve the cognitive problem (Rey 200:257) that we do not all have the same perceived, imagined or remembered exemplar of something by sharing - giving and receiving - the word as substitute exemplar.

The polarity of the general equivalent which is extraordinary on the macroscopic scale of money as described by Marx, is commonplace in the use of language. We live in a world in which we can talk about anything, and if for some reason we are unable to speak, we can think of the words which are the substitute exemplars for anything. We do not need to use words singly in their general equivalent aspect very often, however, because as adult communicators we already know which items are related to each other as members of kinds through their relation to a specific word as their substitute exemplar. Whenever we need to do so however, in naming and definition, we can isolate or focus on single word-gifts, so their generality does emerge. Similarly, when we look at language as a whole, as in Saussure's *langue*, we are looking at a collection of general equivalent verbal exemplars together with a number of logical connectives and grammatical devices, ie. tools which facilitate the giving of word-gifts to other word-gifts and the modulation of the ways different word-gifts are given together and separately. Combining word-gifts (substitute exemplars) by giving them to each other, we are able to maintain the polarity, thus creating a verbal plane as opposed to a material or experiential plane. The

giving and receiving of word gifts is much easier and faster than the giving and receiving of material gifts, and it creates interindividual communitary relations just as giving and receiving on the material plane does.

The event [the black cat jumped on my lap] could be taken in some languages as an exemplar to which other similar events could be related. In English it is not, but elements of the event can be related to exemplars with regard to which they are items of a kind, and these exemplars have been substituted by the word-gifts 'black', 'cat', 'jumped', 'lap' etc. with the appropriate gift facilitating tools, a definite article, a preposition, and a possessive pronoun, a tense ending. The various elements of the sentence fit together as gifts forming a momentary verbal substitute exemplar, a composite word-gift to which we relate the event as a possible item of a kind which is made up of items of kinds which are already related to their own verbal exemplars 'black', 'cat', 'jump' etc. .[Black] is a property of the cat because the cat has it. Mother Earth, the Universe, parental circumstance, the genetic code, have given her that color. The fact that she has been given this gift/property is implied by giving the word 'black' to the word 'cat' in the phrase. The fact that she is in another sense my property, something I have received and in this case whose needs I satisfy, is communicated by giving the possessive pronoun 'my' to the words 'black cat'.

For the purposes of categorization we can also perform the operation of bringing forward the common qualities of cats by turning the equation around and using an individual or an idealized cat exemplar, or the word substitute- exemplar as the only relative item while the list of all cats is the equivalent position. This is similar to Marx's "extended relative form of value" (Marx 1962: 34) In this case the generality of the exemplar is reflected in the commonality of the properties of cats, as they are abstracted from the particular differences. We usually do not need to do this unless we are performing some kind of philosophical investigation, however.

In naming, the word's exemplarity with regard to other instances of the same word is iconic to the exemplarity of the non verbal exemplar, something which is pointed out, or its remembered or imagined image, in its relation to other instances of that kind of thing. (The exemplar-to-many relation is iconically figured also in the pointing finger with respect to all the other fingers of the hand, which are drawn back, and the singularity of the item in question with regard to the background and to other possible instances of that kind of thing (Vaughan 1997:261-267). However the very iconicity of the conceptual exemplar-to-many relation with socially established patterns of hegemony, categorization and control, turns this aspect of communication against itself, creating situations of dominance and submission, of mutually supportive hierarchies to which the many vertically give, and thus of the parasitism of the few exemplars

upon the gifts of the many who compose the 'hosts'. Though the individual lives of both women and men are actually permeated with gift giving and receiving in many ways, the social structures of patriarchy and the market almost automatically take over, and they are now globalizing their hegemony to the point of endangering humanity and life on earth. It is no wonder then if in this alienated situation, the functioning of the sign, especially the linguistic sign, appears to be natural and part of our biological heredity rather than an offshoot and elaboration of an ongoing and necessary social practise of functional altruism (gift giving).

### Shifting levels

The gift character of the verbal exemplar and the gift character of the non verbal exemplar make up a double gift, a gift on two levels. In fact I believe the use of the exemplar and the name in categorization (9) has mainly to do with getting to the level of language, where gift giving can be practiced again even in situations where material gifts are not available at the moment. This is why exchange, which is also a double gift, is so similar to language, especially to definition and naming. By shifting to the verbal level to do gift giving regarding the relevant aspects of the world around us, we open the prospect of enormous new possibilities, connections and relations among us. The shift into exchange where we substitute money for commodities according to their exchange value is a move towards a more monolithic area. This is an area in which the shift itself dominates, facilitated by a single 'holophrastic' money-word. Both money and commodities are not-gifts, determined in opposition to gift giving, and they are similar to each other in this, just as words and non verbal things are similar because they are gifts or potential gifts.

Not-giving, substitution, taking-the-place-of, are the main (dis)connecting activities in the market. What might be visualized as a 'vertical' substitution between planes in naming, where we allow a word-gift -exemplar to take the place of a non verbal-gift-exemplar, becomes a 'horizontal' same-plane substitution in exchange when the material money exemplar takes the place of the material commodity. The need for money is a meta linguistic, meta communicative need for a means of communication that like a word-gift, can be given again. Thus the similarity between naming or definition and exchange for money. This 'word gift' can never be learned however, because the listener does not have the means of production to re produce it and any ways/he is only giving it in order to receive an equivalent value and so not give it.

Substitution of a commodity by the material exemplar of exchange value does not allow a new level of gift giving ( in language the new level depends on the co presence of a langue of other substitutes) Rather by installing itself as the mode of distribution, exchange creates a still wider context of substitution, in which the market takes the place of the mode

of gift giving as a whole, creating a structure which is iconic to each individual moment of 'taking the place of' that happens in every exchange. Given this situation it is not surprising that the logic and values of the market broadcast themselves into all of the recesses of our minds, influencing our thinking about thinking which after all is couched in and investigates sign processes of the very kind which are 'incarnated' in the market.

Given all of these considerations I believe we can conclude that many of the either/or situations which we are producing in our daily lives (either mine or not mine, either male or female, either money or commodity, either bought or sold, either gift or exchange) are not true reflections of the way our minds work but reflections of the deep early split caused by the division of female from male and of giving from not-giving, the identification of the exemplar or prototype for the category 'human' with not-giving, and the identification of the male role with becoming the exemplar. This tangle of problems is acted out in the market and fed back into our identities and our thinking about thinking so that private property becomes the metaform for categories, and exchange the metaform for communication. By questioning these metaforms and the problems that produce the 'reality' behind them and by beginning to value gift giving instead, we can open the ideological superstructure towards social change and come to a better understanding of language and mind. Since women are those who have not been masculated at an early age and are still usually expected to do mothering, it is perhaps easier for them to identify and consciously embrace the logic of gift giving, leading the liberation of everyone from the grip of the exchange paradigm and the dominance of the exemplar.

## Footnotes

(1) There has recently been a further abstraction, a disincarnation of money in credit cards and internet banking. However it is important to understand money as it has existed for the last millennium before we take on its newest developments. In fact it passed through a previous disincarnation from gold into paper money. See Marx (1962:109)

(2) These and other startling estimates of the huge waste that is caused by taking money out of the nurturing economy by arms spending can be found in [www.osearth.com](http://www.osearth.com).

(3)  
The situation of the market and private property has changed in the last years as more signs have become commodities, from verbal and non verbal signs used in advertising to copyrights and patenting of the genetic code. Even the seeds which once were free to the groups who re produced

them, pure water, and clean air, the breath of life and language are becoming polluted and scarce so commodifiable. This is a structural change which makes even more necessary the re framing and re claiming of signs as gifts, but also the reclaiming and honoring of all the freely given aspects of life including all the myriad species of plants and animals.

(4) I call this 'male dominance' even if practiced by women. The corresponding system of motivations and values which drives many individuals and corporations is 'Patriarchal Capitalism'.

(5) Homosexuality may be a case to the contrary though many male homosexuals still follow the manhood agenda in areas other than sexuality. Although some female homosexuals follow the manhood agenda in sexuality, many continue to maintain gift values.

(6) Women receive one-tenth of the world's income and own less than one-hundredth of its property. [www.osearth.com](http://www.osearth.com), Global Primer: Women

(7) A single phonetic combination can serve as the substitute exemplar which maintains the relation of members of different categories to each other in polysemy, and its exemplarity can also be extended metaphorically to related kinds.)

(8) It is important to realize that here we are giving the listener/reader something s/he already has, in that s/he herself recognizes and could potentially produce the same words we are giving her. Living as we do in a market society based on scarcity we do not immediately grasp the nature of giving in abundance. In language because we have all been given the means of giving and means of production of words, we have an abundance of linguistic gifts. When we are given something we already have or can produce ourselves, we know that this gift was given for a reason other than the filling of a lack. Rather it is given to create the relations that regard the gift over and above the material need. Perhaps this is what those who talk about communication being in excess, or beyond need, not 'utilitarian', are referring to.

(9) The definition and naming are services the speaker performs for the listener/reader, satisfying her meta linguistic need for a verbal exemplar that can be given again as a verbal gift in place of the relevant non verbal exemplar. This service does fill a lack while the use of a word fills a communicative need with a word-gift the listener/reader already 'has'. Sentences formed with the copula unite the exemplar and the gift function (Vaughan 1997:139-153)

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