

Gift Giving and Trust

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between the concepts of gift giving and trust. Drawing on the work of ethnologist Marcel Mauss and philosopher Elizabeth Anderson, the paper argues for considering trust a gift. This means that trust is an immaterial good which is given, received, and requited according to the rules of gift exchange. An examination of the valuation of trust shows that trust does not have a use value, but a relational value jointly created by the parties involved in the exchange. Also, trust shows a number of properties which are usually ascribed to gifts. Discussing examples from ethnology and business, the paper explores the ethical and theoretical consequences of considering trust a gift.

On the Andaman Islands, in the Indian Ocean 780 miles from Calcutta, live four tribes of dark-skinned aborigines: the Great Andaman tribe, the Onge, the Jarawa and the Sentinelese. Until in 1858 British-Indian colonial settlements began, the islands had been completely undisturbed, and the Aborigines had lived as hunter-gatherers in tribal structures that used to be called primitive societies. The British-Indian settlers were able to subdue and establish more or less cooperative relations with the tribes of the Great Andamense and the Onge. The Jarawa and the Sentinelese, by contrast, were not subdued, but remained hostile towards the colonialists, from whom they tried to isolate themselves. While the Sentinelese have always lived on a small island in the South West of the Andaman archipelago which was, seemingly, never of any interest to anyone other than the Sentinelese themselves, the Jarawa lived on the main island. They withdrew to the western coast when the colonialists arrived. There they successfully defended a small strip of land against the punitive expeditions regularly undertaken by the British, usually in

revenge for Jarawa raids of nearby settlements.

With Indian independence in 1947, the policy of sending punitive expeditions was wisely abandoned, and replaced with attempts to befriend the Jarawa in order to end the ongoing conflicts between them and the settlers. „The Bush Police personnel played a major role in the efforts that were made after Independence to establish friendly relations with the Jarawa. Though their main function was to protect settlers from Jarawa raids, they would visit the Jarawa Area of Middle Andaman to drop gifts like coconuts, pieces of iron, strips of red cloth, etc., as tokens of friendship.“ (Sarkar 1990, 50-51) During such „gift-dropping operations“, as the Indian anthropologist and Andaman expert T.N. Pandit calls them (Pandit 1990, 11), a contact party consisting of policemen, anthropologists and sometimes also government officials would approach the Jarawa Area from the sea, waving and making friendly gestures. Initially the contact parties were regularly shot at with arrows. Then they would land at some spot on the beach out of arrow range and lay gifts on the sand. These operations were carried out many times, during several years. Eventually, „there was a major breakthrough in February 1974 when a few Jarawa made friendly gestures towards a contact party led by members of the Bush Police, who used to visit the area from time to time. A Jarawa man swam across and came on board the *dungi* [the boat] and collected the gifts.“ (Sarkar 1990, 53)

Since this extraordinary contact occurred, the relations between the Jarawa and the contact party have grown more and more friendly. The policy of dropping gifts has been continued, and whenever a contact party now visits the Jarawa Area, the Jarawa come to the beach without bows and arrows. Moreover, they somehow seem to have developed trust in their strange visitors. „They now trust the members of the contact party so much that they sometimes leave their children on the beach with us and go to the main boat to collect the gifts. In any society, if

parents leave their children with other persons it is taken to reflect either carelessness or total trust and faith. On our visits to the Jarawa Area, earlier we had observed that the Jarawa women were not very willing to hand over their babies to members of the contact party. In fact, women with infants would avoid coming to the boat. [...] But the situation has since changed. On a trip to Yadita Point on 3 February 1988, we came across only 27 Jarawa of whom 20 were children within the age group 2-10 years. While we stayed back ashore, all the adult males and females left the shore for our boat. Leaving their children with us was a clear gesture of faith and trust in us. The children were talking to us, touching us, which was also very heartening." (Sarkar 1990, 55)

Summarizing the longstanding and eventually successful efforts of the Indian government to overcome the Jarawa's hostility, one of the responsible anthropologists writes: "The policy of offering gifts has contributed significantly over the last ten years to the success of the efforts to establish friendly relations with the Jarawa." (Sarkar 1990: 53) In fact, the gift-dropping missions have been so successful with the Jarawa that they have become the model for ongoing efforts to befriend the Sentinelese, who, despite some progress, even today are still hostile to strangers. A number of questions can be asked with respect to these events. Why has the gift-dropping policy been so successful? Why could the contact party expect to befriend the Jarawa with the help of gifts? And what is, precisely, the relation between the Jarawas' trust and the gifts left on the beach? Did the contact party buy the Jarawas' trust with the help of the gifts? Was trust the result of gift giving, as some authors would suggest? Or are we to assume that the Jarawa are very trustful, as others would say? In this paper I follow these questions, and I make a couple of suggestions how they may be answered. As the title indicates, I concentrate on the relation between gift giving and trust.

The logic of gift giving or gift exchange has been a topic of large number of anthropological, philosophical and sociological writings ever since French anthropologist Marcel Mauss published his famous *Essai sur le don* in 1923/24 (Mauss 1967). Mauss models his general theory of the gift on the potlatch, an archaic form of gift exchange which was originally observed in Indian tribes in

North America. On the basis of the anthropological material at his disposal, Mauss considers the potlatch „a human phenomenon widely distributed in space and over time.“ (Godelier 1999, 56) He identifies three obligations to which the participants of a gift exchange are subject. (Mauss 1967, 37-41) First, the obligation to give, which includes the obligation to invite friends, to share what one has gained, to recognize services from others, superior or inferior, by means of gifts, and to redistribute everything one has been given. Second, the obligation to receive, which implies that one must not refuse a gift, because this would show fear of engaging in the exchange and especially of having to repay, since third, there exists the obligation to repay, which Mauss calls „the essence of the potlatch.“ (Mauss 1967, 40) The recipient of the gift must return a worthy equivalent and more than that. If any of the three obligations is failed, „etiquette is violated and rank is lost.“ (Mauss 1967, 38) But the sanction for failing the third obligation is especially harsh. If a gift is not repayed, face is lost forever, and the loss of social rank can even go as far as denying the recipient's status as a free man. (Mauss 1967, 41) It is important to note, however, that the counter-gift with which the recipient repays for the original gift is still supposed to be voluntary. Otherwise it would not be a gift. The obligation to repay must therefore be understood as an indirect obligation prescribed by tradition or etiquette rather than a direct contractual obligation. Reciprocation is usually delayed to emphasize this.

Leaving aside many other aspects, I want to focus on two aspects of gift giving. First, gift giving is, as philosopher Elizabeth Anderson points out, expressive of a close and friendly relation between donor and recipient, which it affirms and continues (Anderson 1990, Anderson 1993). If, for example, someone offers to sell me a book, I can usually buy it or refuse to buy it without any further consequences for my relationship with this person. If, by contrast, the person offers the book as a gift, I cannot refuse to accept it without endangering the whole relationship. If I accept the book as a gift, I also silently affirm that there is a relationship between us which is close and personal enough for the gift to be appropriate. While the act of buying and selling is usually neutral and does not affect the relationship, the act of giving and receiving confirms or, in case

of a refusal, denies the existence of the relationship itself. The anthropologists dealing with the Jarawa seemingly were aware of this when they left gifts on the beach as tokens of friendship, as they phrased it. The gifts were intended to be expressive of the contact party's close and friendly relation to the Jarawa. Once the Jarawa would accept engaging in a gift exchange with the members of the contact party, they would, in doing so, also affirm a close relationship with them. From a theoretical standpoint, the anthropologists were therefore right in considering a gift exchange the appropriate means to befriend the Jarawa.

The second point is that in addition to being expressive of a close relationship, gift giving is also agonistic. As Mauss's discussion of the sanctions associated with the obligations to give, to receive and to repay has shown, gift exchanges are closely linked to the social rank of the persons involved. While a violation of the obligations of gift giving lowers the social rank of a person, the proper fulfilment of these obligations increases her prestige, with the greatness of the gift determining the donor's social rank. A gift exchange can therefore be understood as a silent competition. With the help of the gift, the donor shows how well-off she is and how much she can afford to give away. The donor's competitor, the recipient, is humbled by the gift and in receiving it must acknowledge the donor's wealth. The humiliation of the recipient is, then, the origin of the counter-gift, which is intended to secure her social rank endangered by the gift. The interpretation of the exchange as a competition contributes to our understanding of what happened between the contact party and the Jarawa. The anthropologists assumed - rightly, it turned out - that the Jarawa were likely to respond in some way or other to the gifts. If the custom of gift exchange, or some equivalent, was known to them,¹ and if they were unwilling to lose their face in a competition with the strangers, then the agonistic quality of the gifts would probably make them provide counter-gifts and engage in a closer relation with the contact party.

Each gift left on the beach was thus a token of friendship and also a deep challenge to the Jarawa, who were gently forced into a closer relationship with the contact party. What, then, was the Jarawas' counter-gift? Although the Jarawa

did, in response to the contact party's gifts, engage in a friendly relationship, there seemingly was no counter-gift. Or was there? As the anthropologist describes it, the Jarawa on several occasions left their children with the contact party when they went to the boat to collect the gifts. Can these children be considered the counter-gift? Did the Jarawa leave them in exchange for the gifts? Hardly. After collecting the gifts, the Jarawa picked up their children again (which would contradict the rules of gift giving), and again left the contact party without a counter-gift. But as the anthropologist emphasizes in the description quoted before, what was important in the act of leaving the children with the contact party weren't the children themselves but the adult Jarawas' trust in the members of the party. I therefore suggest to consider trust in the contact party the Jarawas' counter-gift.

Although this suggestion may seem trivial after what has been said, its consequences may be far-reaching. But before exploring the consequences, we have to ask: Is it possible to understand trust as a gift in the strict sense of the word, i.e. as a good which is subject to the rules of gift exchange? Without further explanation Elizabeth Anderson does include trust among a number of goods which she thinks must be considered gifts because this is the only appropriate way of looking at them. She draws a fundamental distinction between two different classes of goods which are subject to different „modes of valuation" (Anderson 1990, 181; Anderson 1993, 8-11). Goods whose value for oneself is independent of their value for another person have a use value and receive proper treatment when they are traded in the market. Goods whose value for oneself is dependent on their value for another person belong in the personal sphere and cannot properly be traded in the market. They can only be exchanged under the rules of gift giving, whereby their value is realized as „a shared value in the relationship itself" (Anderson 1993, 151). „Among these goods are trust, loyalty, conviviality, sympathy, affection, admiration, companionship, and devotion. None of these goods can be bought (or extracted by threats), although people often deceive themselves in the attempt, mistaking flattery for admiration and subservience for devotion." (Anderson 1990, 186)

Does trust then belong to the second class of goods, as Anderson suggests? For this to be the

case its value for oneself must be dependent on its value for the other. What does this mean? Anderson suggests that it means the value of the good is dependent on another person also enjoying it (Anderson 1993, 144). As the example of the Jarawa shows, this is not plausible with regard to trust. The value of the trust given to the contact party did obviously not depend on the Jarawa's enjoyment of their own trust in the contact party. On the contrary, by leaving their children with the contact party the Jarawa took a great risk. It seems to lie in the nature of trust that its donor takes a risk rather than deriving any direct value from the trust she gives, let alone enjoying it. The value of trust is, it seems, dependent on the value of that the loss of which is risked by the donor. In this case the Jarawa risked losing their children, and since these children were, in the eyes of the contact party, of great value for the Jarawa, their trust was perceived as being of great value as well, and the whole incident was pronounced an important occasion. Slightly modifying Anderson's definition, we can therefore say that trust belongs to the second class of goods because its value for oneself is dependent on its value for the other in the sense that it is dependent on the value of what is risked by the other. The value of trust is created by a donor who takes a risk, and by a recipient who judges what taking this risk means to the donor. It is for this reason that the valuation of trust is dependent on the relation to the other. Anderson's term shared value thus turns out to be misleading in the case of trust, and for this case I suggest replacing it with the term relational value.

It is important to note that, according to these considerations, the relational value of trust is independent of its being useful to the recipient. As the example of the Jarawa shows, trust is not given in order to be of use to the recipient, and its value is obviously not one of use. And yet it is possible for the recipient to attempt to use the trust given in one way or other. The contact party can, for example, attempt to use the Jarawas' trust in order to improve the situation of the settlers. It is clear that this, as any attempt at using someone else's trust, constitutes a change in the mode of valuation. Anderson considers such a change in the mode of valuation mode unethical (Anderson 1990, 202), and it seems that she is right. We all would probably agree that using

someone else's trust for one's own purposes is an immoral behavior. So we must conclude that it would be unethical to use the Jarawas' trust to improve the situation of the settlers. To the extent to which the objects on the sand were intended, right from the start, to improve the situation of the settlers, the contact party was on ethically doubtful grounds anyway. To this extent, the Jarawas' trust was the original gift of the exchange.

Despite its being unethical, however, using other people's trust seems to have become a common practise in our lives, and especially in our firms and organizations. Arlie Hochschild has shown that in order to improve their performance, airline companies strongly encourage their flight attendants to trust their superiors and to even consider them their substitute parents (Hochschild 1983, 89-101). In case of poor performance or disobedience, however, these companies do not hesitate to dismiss their flight attendants. If trust is a gift, then the airline company enters a gift exchange when accepting the flight attendants' trust. According to Anderson, the company is then not allowed to change the mode of valuation (Anderson 1990, 189-190). But to value the employees' trust on the basis of its contribution to an improved performance constitutes a change in the mode of valuation. The company fails to realize the relational value of trust. It does not help that, perhaps indirectly, the employees benefit from an improved performance of the whole company, and that it is in their own interest that their trust is used. Admittedly, it is possible that the employees benefit from an improved performance, but they benefit from it only in terms of use, which is irrelevant to the valuation governing their gift exchange with the employer. So however useful an improved performance may be, this does not alter the fact that the aim of improving performance is extrinsic to the exchange, and that any reference to it marks a change in the mode of valuation.

For the moment I would like to leave the ethical discussion and point out two other important aspects of changing the mode of valuation. First, one should not be surprised to find that, while changing the mode of valuation may create a use value of trust, it must lead to the destruction of its relational value. The attempt to use the other's trust is very unlikely to go unnoticed by the other, who will feel abused and betrayed. Upon noticing the change, the other must consi-

der the relation destroyed and stop giving trust. This is very easy to imagine in the example of the Jarawa, who would be very likely to end their friendly relationship with the contact party as soon as they would sense that their trust was being practiced upon.

Second, one should be aware that gift exchanges are subject to rules and norms of their own, and that by entering a gift exchange one is -willingly or unwillingly²- subjected to these rules. As we have seen, one of the essential rules of gift exchange is the obligation to repay, which is enforced by a set of social sanctions like loss of face and social rank. Like any gift, trust is thus protected, we might say, by the obligation not only to gratefully receive and honor it, but also to repay for it. Trying to use someone's trust must then be considered a failure to repay for a gift, and it is likely to be sanctioned with the loss of face and social rank. This is quite plausible. The airline company that values the flight attendants' trust on the basis of its contribution to an improved performance fails to realize the relational value of trust and, therefore, fails to repay for it, which is evident in the cold-blooded dismissal of the flight attendants in case of poor performance. If such practice becomes widely known, the employer can indeed be said to lose face and to acquire a bad reputation. Bad reputation is likely to lead to social sanctions like disrespect or contempt, and in the long run it may even result in disadvantages in the markets, especially in the labor market. Who would like to work for an employer who is known to practise on her employees' trust? We therefore can conclude that from a use perspective, nothing can be won, but a lot can be lost in a gift exchange.

So we can say that trust is treated properly only if it is treated as a gift, according to the rules of gift exchange. As a gift, trust can be said to acquire a number of qualities which have been identified as „symbolic properties“ of the gift: being luxurious, being altruistic, being appropriate, being desired, being a surprise and implying a sacrifice (Belk 1996). Going through such a list of properties of gifts and discussing these properties on the basis of our understanding of trust can contribute to our understanding of trust. Having our definition of the valuation of trust in mind, we can say that trust is altruistic because its donor takes a risk rather than creating a value for herself. Also, it is easy to derive from our defi-

nition that the gift of trust is luxurious, because the recipient does not create its value by using it. At the same time, a contemplation of the luxurious and the altruistic character of gifts in general may help us understand more easily that considerations of utility are foreign to the gift of trust.

Our understanding of the gift of trust is based, however, on our definition of its valuation rather than a list of its properties. Therefore, going through a list like the one cited above would probably lead to a revision of the list itself. Especially the properties of being appropriate to the recipient and being desired by the recipient do not seem essential properties of trust, neither according to our definition of its valuation nor according to our example. As the Jarawa teach us, it is possible to trust without knowing what the other desires or considers appropriate. And as the objects on the sand show, it is possible to give gifts without knowing what the other desires or considers appropriate. Being desired and being appropriate are not, we would suggest, essential properties of gifts, and can be dropped from the list. That trust does not have these two properties does therefore not show that trust is not a gift.

Instead of discussing all the properties in detail, I will therefore concentrate on two of them, namely being a sacrifice and being a surprise. Not only are they conceptually linked to our definition of trust; they also allow a discussion of some further aspects of our topic which are important. The first property is that of being a sacrifice. Since trust is an immaterial gift, the sacrifice is difficult to see. As we have already noted, however, the donor takes a risk in giving trust. In which sense does taking a risk imply a sacrifice? In our example, the Jarawa took a risk in leaving their children with the contact party. Of course the Jarawa did not sacrifice their children to the contact party, but they can be said to have sacrificed the safety of their children when they left them with the contact party. Putting this abstractly, we can say that the sacrifice implied in the risk of trusting consists in an intentional loss of safety. The donor of trust makes herself, or that which she values, vulnerable to the recipient.

With respect to this property, I would like to emphasize two points. One point is that if we understand the risk taken in trusting in terms of

an intentional loss or sacrifice, we may be able generalize what we have said about the valuation of trust. Until now we have restricted our modification of Anderson's definition of the valuation of goods of the second class to the special case of trust. Thus we have said nothing about Anderson's general assumption about the shared value of goods of the second class. But perhaps we should replace the term shared value with the term relational value not only in the case of trust, but in the case of gifts in general. It may be more plausible to consider an intentional loss the basis of the valuation of gifts rather than shared enjoyment. When, for example, a book is given to me by another person, certainly the value of the book as a gift is somehow dependent on its value for the other person, but is it dependent on this person's enjoyment of the book? It is difficult to see how the donor can enjoy a book she has lost. Is it not, on the contrary, more plausible to say that the value of the book is dependent on what the donor has lost? Its value for the recipient would then be proportional to the the greatness of the donor's intentional loss which the recipient recognizes. Would we not say that if I understand that the book is highly valuable (in whatever sense) for the donor, it is also highly valuable for me when given to me as a gift, while if it is of little value for the donor, it doesn't make a great gift either. The value for oneself of a gift could thus be said to be dependent on its value for the other, but instead of being created by a shared enjoyment, it would be created through the donor's sacrifice and the recipient's recognition of the greatness of the sacrifice.

The other point is that it may be possible to take, from a gift-giving perspective, a fresh look at the responsibility we attribute to recipients of trust. If the sacrifice implied in trust makes the donor vulnerable to the recipient, we would probably say that this makes the recipient responsible for what happens to the donor. The recipient is certainly not responsible for what generally happens to the donor, but for what happens to the donor with respect to the vulnerability created in trusting. In this sense, we would probably say that the Jarawas' trust somehow made the members of the contact party responsible for the Jarawa not losing their children. Now responsibility can be understood in two ways here. We can say that there exists a general rule or duty to protect people whose vulnerability and need

for protection one has recognized. By recognizing other peoples' vulnerability, one becomes responsible for their not being hurt or harmed.³ We can also say that there exists a general rule to repay for what one has received. By receiving the gift of trust, one becomes obliged to repay for what the donor has sacrificed. One way of repaying, we could then say, is averting harm from donor, and the term responsibility indicates that this counter-gift is obligatory when the donor is in the danger of losing what she has risked in trusting. In case of danger, the obligatory counter-gift for trust would be preventing the donor from losing what she has risked, with the value of this counter-gift being dependent on what is sacrificed in providing it. Responsibility could thus be analyzed as the obligation to repay for the gift of trust by averting harm from the donor with regard to that whose safety she has sacrificed in trusting. In this context, it may not be futile to recall that the idea of sacrifice has its origin in religious life. Originally, to sacrifice is to enter the realm of the sacred and to communicate with the gods. Maybe we should, for this reason, not be surprised to find the act of sacrifice surrounded by strong norms and sanctions.

The second property is that of being a surprise. Obviously the term gift is not used for anything which can be fully predicted, calculated on, or explained by the recipient or a third party. The recipient may be surprised at what is given, or at when it is given, or at the the fact that anything is given at all, but some aspect of the gift must be surprising. If we accept this, then the gift of trust also must have the property of being a surprise, which means that trust cannot be fully predicted, calculated on, or explained by the trusted person or a third party. How is this connected to our definition of the valuation of trust? We said that the value of trust is dependent on that whose loss is risked by the donor. As the verb to risk indicates, someone who trusts accepts an avoidable possibility of loss. Being exposed to an unavoidable danger of losing something does not equal risking it. It is exposing oneself to the avoidable danger of losing something that equals risking it. The valuation of trust is therefore directly dependent on the fact that the donor unnecessarily, and in this sense surprisingly, makes herself vulnerable to the recipient. That the Jarawa left their children with the contact party was considered important precisely because the Jarawa could

have kept their children away from the contact party. We would not, by contrast, speak of trust if the Jarawa had left their children under threats from the contact party. In that case we would say that the Jarawa were powerless against the contact party, but we would not say that they trusted the contact party. It seems that the term trust is not used for anything that cannot be ascribed to the free will of the donor.

As philosopher Jacques Derrida has pointed out, however, the gift must be a surprise in an even deeper sense (Derrida 1997). Analysing the gift from the perspective of the donor, he claims that the knowledge of what one gives, or intends to give, nulls the gift. Any recognition of the gift one gives equals giving back to oneself symbolically the value of what one thinks one has given (Derrida 1997, 130). Upon recognizing what one gives, one begins to congratulate oneself, approve of oneself, praise oneself and thus to repay oneself, which contradicts the altruistic character of the gift. The only way to give without having the gift annulled by immediate repayment, Derrida claims, is to participate in an exchange without knowing it, without recognizing if and what one gives. In this sense, even the donor would be surprised by the gift.

On the basis of these reflections, Derrida criticizes Mauss's approach for being too empirical and claims that Mauss's *Essai sur le don* speaks of everything but the gift (Derrida 1997, 138). But even if we do not follow Derrida in this, the fact that trust cannot be fully explained or predicted by the recipient or a third party suffices to make it a difficult topic for the empirical sciences. Of course one can analyze the conditions under which people say they would trust, but as Risto Harisalo and Ensio Miettinen have pointed out, "there is no strict causal connection" (Harisalo / Miettinen 1997, 13) between the fulfillment of these conditions and trust itself. With respect to the Jarawa example we could even say that none of the usual conditions for giving trust was fulfilled, because it was an encounter of complete strangers who had nothing in common, except their knowledge of some peculiar objects on the sand. And yet it was possible, and actually happened, that the Jarawa trusted the contact party. Thus, the Jarawa's trust seems to escape reasoning and may even be taken as sign of something irrational in human relations. But for a student of gift exchanges, it is no more difficult to account

for it than for some birthday present. The study of gift exchanges, we can infer, is not an undertaking of empirical science alone, but rather calls for an interdisciplinary approach. The reason for this is it deals with unnecessary acts, with surprises, and it is an open question whether, and in what sense, there can be a science of the surprise.

Summing up my main argument in favour of a treatment of trust as a gift, I state that trust matches a reasonably modified version of Anderson's definition of goods with a relational value. In addition, trust shows a number of properties that are usually ascribed to gifts. It is altruistic and luxurious; it implies a sacrifice, with the value of trust being dependent of the greatness of the sacrifice; and it has the character of a surprise. I therefore follow Anderson's hint and suggest to consider trust a gift, which means that trust is an (immaterial) good with a relational value which is exchanged under the rules of gift giving.

To say that trust is a gift is to contradict those (very few) views that have been developed on the relation between gift giving and trust so far. These views can be said to rest on two basic ideas. One is that gift exchanges, as Barbara Misztal writes, "implicitly produce trust" (Misztal 1996, 17). During a gift exchange, this means, without knowing donor and recipient work to establish or increase trust in each other. Trust is here the by-product of gift giving. The other idea is put forward by Mauss himself, who assumes that trust is a precondition of gift giving. He writes: "In these primitive societies, there is no middle path. There is either trust or mistrust. One lays down one's arms, renounces magic and gives everything away, from casual hospitality to one's own daughter or one's property." (Mauss 1967, 79) Mauss here seems to assume that trust must somehow pre-exist in a society in order to enable its members to enter a gift exchange.

In both cases, that is as a product as well as a precondition of gift giving, trust is understood as an expectation. It is assumed that the person who trusts expects that the other person will act in a certain way.⁴ A gift exchange is then supposed to either result from, or to result in, this expectation. And yet, from a gift-giving perspective we would maintain that a gift must be given in order to be a gift. It is dependent on an act or a certain behavior. If trust is a gift it cannot, for

this reason, be an expectation. We would certainly concede that the recipient probably assumes that the donor expects him to act in a certain way. In this sense, the contact party probably assumed that the Jarawa expected them to treat their children well. But as students of a gift exchange, we would hesitate to make this assumption our own. The contact party made this assumption, but should we? Studying the gift exchange between the contact party and the Jarawa, it seems that we are not entitled to say that the Jarawa expected the contact party to treat their children well. In fact, nobody knows what they expected. We are entitled, however, to say that they acted as if they knew that the contact party would treat their children well, and I suggest that we reserve the term trust for this kind of behavior. To trust is not to expect a certain result, but to act as if one knew of a certain result. If we define trust this way, and refrain from speculating about what the donor of trust expects, then we may be able to analyze what it is that invites the recipient (and us) to speculate. However, in order to make sense of Mauss's claim that one cannot enter a gift exchange without having trust in the other (which nevertheless seems very plausible) I suggest contemplating a theoretical solution which would make trust in the other's cooperation during an exchange the first gift given in the exchange.⁵

NOTES

¹ This was quite likely since systems of gift exchange had been reported to exist in the other Andaman tribes (Radcliffe-Brown 1922). Mauss's chapter on the Andamans is based on Radcliffe-Brown's work.

² An example of lack of awareness of these rules may be Beltrami (1996), who seems to confuse *bakshish* and *potlatch*.

³ An argument of this kind is found in Hosmer (1995).

⁴ See for example Misztal's definition of trust (1996, 9-10).

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