

From:
Marcel Mauss
THE GIFT:
Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies
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I have never found a man so generous and hospitable that he would not receive a present, nor one so liberal with his money that he would dislike a reward if he could get one.

Friends should rejoice each others' hearts with gifts of weapons and raiment, that is clear from one's own experience. That friendship lasts longest—if there is a chance of its being a success—in which friends both give and receive gifts.

A man ought to be a friend to his friend and repay gift with gift. People should meet smiles with smiles and lies with treachery.

Know—if you have a friend in whom you have sure confidence and wish to make use of him, you ought to exchange ideas and gifts with him and go to see him often.

If you have another in whom you have no confidence and yet will make use of him, you ought to address him with fair words but crafty heart and repay treachery with lies.

Further, with regard to him in whom you have no confidence and of whose motives you are suspicious, you ought to smile upon him and dissemble your feelings. Gifts ought to be repaid in like coin.

Generous and bold men have the best time in life and never foster troubles. But the coward is apprehensive of everything and a miser is always groaning over his gifts.

Better there should be no prayer than excessive offering; a gift always looks for recompense. Better there should be no sacrifice than an excessive slaughter.

Havamal, vv. 39, 41-2, 44-6, 48 and 145, from the translation by D. E. Martin Clarke in *The Havamal, with Selections from other Poems in the Edda*, Cambridge, 1923.

INTRODUCTORY

GIFTS AND RETURN GIFTS

THE foregoing lines from the *Edda* outline our subject matter.¹ In Scandinavian and many other civilizations contracts are fulfilled and exchanges of goods are made by means of gifts. In theory such gifts are voluntary but in fact they are given and repaid under obligation.

This work is part of a wider study. For some years our attention has been drawn to the realm of contract and the system of economic prestations between the component sections or sub-groups of 'primitive' and what we might call

'archaic' societies. On this subject there is a great mass of complex data. For, in these 'early' societies, social phenomena are not discrete; each phenomenon contains all the threads of which the social fabric is composed. In these *total* social phenomena, as we propose to call them, all kinds of institutions find simultaneous expression: religious, legal, moral, and economic. In addition, the phenomena have their aesthetic aspect and they reveal morphological types.

We intend in this book to isolate one important set of phenomena: namely, prestations which are in theory voluntary, disinterested and spontaneous, but are in fact obligatory and interested. The form usually taken is that of the gift generously offered; but the accompanying behaviour is formal pretence and social deception, while the transaction itself is based on obligation and economic self-interest. We shall note the various principles behind this necessary form of exchange (which is nothing less than the division of labour itself), but we shall confine our detailed study to the enquiry: *In primitive or archaic types of society what is the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid? What force is there in the thing given which compels the recipient to make a return?* We hope, by presenting enough data, to be able to answer this question precisely, and also to indicate the direction in which answers to cognate questions might be sought. We shall also pose new problems. Of these, some concern the morality of the contract: for instance, the manner in which today the law of things remains bound up with the law of persons; and some refer to the forms and ideas which have always been present in exchange and which even now are to be seen in the idea of individual interest.

Thus we have a double aim. We seek a set of more or less archaeological conclusions on the nature of human transactions in the societies which surround us and those which immediately preceded ours, and whose exchange institutions differ from our own. We describe their forms of contract and exchange. It has been suggested that these societies lack the economic market, but this is not true; for the market is a human phenomenon which we believe to be familiar to every known society. Markets are found before the development of merchants, and before their most important innovation, currency as we know it. They functioned before they took the modern forms (Semitic, Hellenic, Hellenistic, and Roman) of contract and sale and capital. We shall take note of the moral and economic features of these institutions.

We contend that the same morality and economy are at work, albeit less noticeably, in our own societies, and we believe that in them we have discovered one of the bases of social life; and thus we may draw conclusions of a moral nature about some of the problems confronting us in our present economic crisis. These pages of social history, theoretical sociology, political economy and morality do no more than lead us to old problems which are constantly turning up under new guises.²

THE METHOD FOLLOWED

Our method is one of careful comparison. We confine the study to certain chosen areas, Polynesia, Melanesia, and North West America, and to certain well-known codes. Again, since we are concerned with words and their meanings, we choose only areas where we have access to the minds of the societies through documentation and philological research. This further limits our field of comparison. Each particular study has a bearing on the systems we set out to describe and is presented in its logical place. In this way we avoid that method of haphazard comparison in which institutions lose their local colour and documents their value.

PRESTATION, GIFT AND POTLATCH

This work is part of the wider research carried out by M. Davy and myself upon archaic forms of contract, so we may start by summarizing what we have found so far.³ It appears that there has never existed, either in the past or in modern primitive societies, anything like a 'natural' economy.⁴ By a strange chance the type of that economy was taken to be the one described by Captain Cook when he wrote on exchange and barter among the Polynesians.⁵ In our study here of these same Polynesians we shall see how far removed they are from a state of nature in these matters.

In the systems of the past we do not find simple exchange of goods, wealth and produce through markets established among individuals. For it is groups, and not individuals, which carry on exchange, make contracts, and are bound by obligations;⁶ the persons represented in the contracts are moral persons—clans, tribes, and families; the groups, or the chiefs as intermediaries for the groups, confront and oppose each other.⁷ Further, what they exchange is not exclusively goods and wealth, real and personal property, and things of economic value. They exchange rather courtesies, entertainments, ritual, military assistance, women, children, dances, and feasts; and fairs in which the market is but one element and the circulation of wealth but one part of a wide and enduring contract. Finally, although the prestations and counter-prestations take place under a voluntary guise they are in essence strictly obligatory, and their sanction is private or open warfare. We propose to call this the system of *total prestations*. Such institutions seem to us to be best represented in the alliance of pairs of phratries in Australian and North American tribes, where ritual, marriages, succession to wealth, community of right and interest, military and religious rank and even games⁸ all form part of one system and presuppose the collaboration of

the two moieties of the tribe. The Tlingit and Haida of North-West America give a good expression of the nature of these practices when they say that they 'show respect to each other'.⁹

But with the Tlingit and Haida, and in the whole of that region, total prestations appear in a form which, although quite typical, is yet evolved and relatively rare. We propose, following American authors, to call it the *potlatch*. This Chinook word has passed into the current language of Whites and Indians from Vancouver to Alaska. Potlatch meant originally 'to nourish' or 'to consume'.¹⁰ The Tlingit and Haida inhabit the islands, the coast, and the land between the coast and the Rockies; they are very rich, and pass their winters in continuous festival, in banquets, fairs and markets which at the same time are solemn tribal gatherings. The tribes place themselves hierarchically in their fraternities and secret societies. On these occasions are practised marriages, initiations, shamanistic seances, and the cults of the great gods, totems, and group or individual ancestors. These are all accompanied by ritual and by prestations by whose means political rank within sub-groups, tribes, tribal confederations and nations is settled.¹¹

But the remarkable thing about these tribes is the spirit of rivalry and antagonism which dominates all their activities. A man is not afraid to challenge an opposing chief or nobleman. Nor does one stop at the purely sumptuous destruction of accumulated wealth in order to eclipse a rival chief (who may be a close relative).¹² We are here confronted with total prestation in the sense that the whole clan, through the intermediacy of its chiefs, makes contracts involving all its members and everything it possesses.¹³ But the agonistic character of the prestation is pronounced. Essentially usurious and extravagant, it is above all a struggle among nobles to determine their position in the hierarchy to the ultimate benefit, if they are successful, of their own clans. This agonistic type of total prestation we propose to call the 'potlatch'.

So far in our study Davy and I had found few examples of this institution outside North-West America,¹⁴ Melanesia, and Papua.¹⁵ Everywhere else—in Africa, Polynesia, and Malaya, in South America and the rest of North America—the basis of exchange seemed to us to be a simpler type of total prestation. However, further research brings to light a number of forms intermediate between exchanges marked by exaggerated rivalry like those of the American north-west and Melanesia, and others more moderate where the contracting parties rival each other with gifts: for instance, the French compete with each other in their ceremonial gifts, parties, weddings, and invitations, and feel bound, as the Germans say, to *revanchieren* themselves.¹⁶ We find some of these intermediate forms in the Indo-European world, notably in Thrace.¹⁷

Many ideas and principles are to be noted in systems of this type. The most important of these spiritual mechanisms is clearly the one which obliges us to make a return gift for a gift received. The moral and religious reasons for this

constraint are nowhere more obvious than in Polynesia; and in approaching the Polynesian data in the following chapter we shall see clearly the power which enforces the repayment of a gift and the fulfilment of contracts of this kind.

CHAPTER I

GIFTS AND THE OBLIGATION TO RETURN GIFTS

I. TOTAL PRESTATION MASCULINE AND FEMININE PROPERTY (SAMOA)

IN our earlier researches on the distribution of the system of contractual gifts, we had found no real potlatch in Polynesia. The Polynesian societies whose institutions came nearest to it appeared to have nothing beyond a system of total prestations, that is to say of permanent contracts between clans in which their men, women and children, their ritual, etc., were put on a communal basis. The facts that we had studied, including the remarkable Samoan custom of the exchange of decorated mats between chiefs on their marriages, did not indicate more complex institutions.¹ The elements of rivalry, destruction and fighting seemed to be absent, although we found they were present in Melanesia. We now reconsider the matter in the light of new material.

The system of contractual gifts in Samoa is not confined to marriage; it is present also in respect of childbirth,² circumcision,³ sickness,⁴ girls' puberty,⁵ funeral ceremonies⁶ and trade.⁷ Moreover, two elements of the potlatch have in fact been attested to: the honour, prestige or *mana* which wealth confers;⁸ and the absolute obligation to make return gifts under the penalty of losing the *mana*, authority and wealth.⁹

Turner tells us that on birth ceremonies, after receiving the *oloa* and the *tonga*, the 'masculine' and 'feminine' property, 'the husband and wife were left no richer than they were. Still, they had the satisfaction of seeing what they considered to be a great honour, namely, the heaps of property collected on the occasion of the birth of their child.'¹⁰ These gifts are probably of an obligatory and permanent nature, and returns are made only through the system of rights which compels them. In this society, where cross-cousin marriage is the rule, a man gives his child to his sister and brother-in-law to bring up; and the brother-in-law, who is the child's maternal uncle, calls the child a *tonga*, a piece of feminine property.¹¹ It is then a 'channel through which native property'¹² or *tonga*, continues to flow to that family from the parents of the child. On the other

hand, the child is to its parents a source of foreign property or *oloa*, coming from the parties who adopt it, as long as the child lives.' 'This sacrifice of natural ties creates a systematic facility in native and foreign property.' In short, the child (feminine property) is the means whereby the maternal family's property is exchanged for that of the paternal family. Since the child in fact lives with his maternal uncle he clearly has a right to live there and thus has a general right over his uncle's property. This system of fosterage is much akin to the generally recognized right of the sister's son over his uncle's property in Melanesia.¹³ We need only the elements of rivalry, fighting and destruction for the complete potlatch.

Now let us consider the terms *oloa* and more particularly *tonga*. The latter means indestructible property, especially the marriage mats¹⁴ inherited by the daughters of a marriage, and the trinkets and talismans which, on condition of repayment, come through the wife into the newly founded family; these constitute real property.¹⁵ The *oloa* designates all the things which are particularly the husband's personal property.¹⁶ This term is also applied today to things obtained from Europeans, clearly a recent extension.¹⁷ We may disregard as inexact and insufficient the translation suggested by Turner of *oloa* as foreign and *tonga* as native; yet it is not without significance, since it suggests that certain property called *tonga* is more closely bound up with the land, the clan and the family than certain other property called *oloa*.¹⁸

But if we extend our field of observation we immediately find a wider meaning of the notion *tonga*. In the Maori, Tahitian, Tongan and Mangarevan languages it denotes everything which may be rightly considered property, which makes a man rich, powerful or influential, and which can be exchanged or used as compensation: that is to say, such objects of value as emblems, charms, mats and sacred idols, and perhaps even traditions, magic and ritual.¹⁹ Here we meet that notion of magical property which we believe to be widely spread in the Malayo-Polynesian world and right over the Pacific.²⁰

2. THE SPIRIT OF THE THING GIVEN (MAORI)

This last remark leads to a contention of some importance. The *taonga* are, at any rate with the Maori, closely attached to the individual, the clan and the land; they are the vehicle of their *mana*—magical, religious and spiritual power. In a proverb collected by Sir G. Grey²¹ and C. O. Davis,²² *taonga* are asked to destroy the person who receives them; and they have the power to do this if the law, or rather the obligation, about making a return gift is not observed.

Our late friend Hertz saw the significance of this; disinterestedly he had written 'for Davy and Mauss' on the card containing the following note by

Colenso: 'They had a kind of system of exchange, or rather of giving presents which had later to be exchanged or repaid.'²³ For example, they exchange dried fish for pickled birds and mats.²⁴ The exchange is carried out between tribes or acquainted families without any kind of stipulation.

But Hertz had also found—I discovered it amongst his papers—a text whose significance we had both missed, for I had been unaware of it myself. Speaking of the *hau*, the spirit of things and particularly of the forest and forest game, Tamati Ranaipiri, one of Mr. Elsdon Best's most useful informants, gives quite by chance the key to the whole problem.²⁵ 'I shall tell you about *hau*. *Hau* is not the wind. Not at all. Suppose you have some particular object, *taonga*, and you give it to me; you give it to me without a price.²⁶ We do not bargain over it. Now I give this thing to a third person who after a time decides to give me something in repayment for it (*utu*),²⁷ and he makes me a present of something (*taonga*). Now this *taonga* I received from him is the spirit (*hau*) of the *taonga* I received from you and which I passed on to him. The *taonga* which I receive on account of the *taonga* that came from you, I must return to you. It would not be right on my part to keep these *taonga* whether they were desirable or not. I must give them to you since they are the *hau*²⁸ of the *taonga* which you gave me. If I were to keep this second *taonga* a for myself I might become ill or even die. Such is *hau*, the *hau* of personal property, the *hau* of the *taonga*, the *hau* of the forest. Enough on that subject.'

This capital text deserves comment. It is characteristic of the indefinite legal and religious atmosphere of the Maori and their doctrine of the 'house of secrets'; it is surprisingly clear in places and offers only one obscurity: the intervention of a third person. But to be able to understand this Maori lawyer we need only say: 'The *taonga* and all strictly personal possessions have a *hau*, a spiritual power. You give me *taonga*, I give it to another, the latter gives me *taonga* back, since he is forced to do so by the *hau* of my gift; and I am obliged to give this one to you since I must return to you what is in fact the product of the *hau* of your *taonga*.'

Interpreted thus not only does the meaning become clear, but it is found to emerge as one of the *leitmotifs* of Maori custom. The obligation attached to a gift itself is not inert. Even when abandoned by the giver, it still forms a part of him. Through it he has a hold over the recipient, just as he had, while its owner, a hold over anyone who stole it.²⁹ For the *taonga* is animated with the *hau* of its forest, its soil, its homeland, and the *hau* pursues him who holds it.³⁰

It pursues not only the first recipient of it or the second or the third, but every individual to whom the *taonga* is transmitted.³¹ The *hau* wants to return to the place of its birth, to its sanctuary of forest and clan and to its owner. The *taonga* or its *hau*—itself a kind of individual³²—constrains a series of users to return some kind of *taonga* of their own, some property or merchandise or labour, by means of feasts, entertainments or gifts of equivalent or superior

value. Such a return will give its donor authority and power over the original donor, who now becomes the latest recipient. That seems to be the motivating force behind the obligatory circulation of wealth, tribute and gifts in Samoa and New Zealand.

This or something parallel helps to explain two sets of important social phenomena in Polynesia and elsewhere. We can see the nature of the bond created by the transfer of a possession. We shall return shortly to this point and show how our facts contribute to a general theory of obligation. But for the moment it is clear that in Maori custom this bond created by things is in fact a bond between persons, since the thing itself is a person or pertains to a person. Hence it follows that to give something is to give a part of oneself. Secondly, we are led to a better understanding of gift exchange and total prestation, including the potlatch. It follows clearly from what we have seen that in this system of ideas one gives away what is in reality a part of one's nature and substance, while to receive something is to receive a part of someone's spiritual essence. To keep this thing is dangerous, not only because it is illicit to do so, but also because it comes morally, physically and spiritually from a person. Whatever it is, food,³³ possessions, women, children or ritual, it retains a magical and religious hold over the recipient. The thing given is not inert. It is alive and often personified, and strives to bring to its original clan and homeland some equivalent to take its place.

3. THE OBLIGATION TO GIVE AND THE OBLIGATION TO RECEIVE

To appreciate fully the institutions of total prestation and the potlatch we must seek to explain two complementary factors. Total prestation not only carries with it the obligation to repay gifts received, but it implies two others equally important: the obligation to give presents and the obligation to receive them. A complete theory of the three obligations would include a satisfactory fundamental explanation of this form of contract among Polynesian clans. For the moment we simply indicate the manner in which the subject might be treated.

It is easy to find a large number of facts on the obligation to receive. A clan, household, association or guest are constrained to demand hospitality,³⁴ to receive presents, to barter³⁵ or to make blood and marriage alliances. The Dayaks have even developed a whole set of customs based on the obligation to partake of any meal at which one is present or which one has seen in preparation.³⁶

The obligation to give is no less important. If we understood this, we should also know how men came to exchange things with each other. We merely point out a few facts. To refuse to give, or to fail to invite, is like refusing to accept— the equivalent of a declaration of war; it is a refusal of friendship and intercourse.³⁷ Again, one gives because one is forced to do so, because the

recipient has a sort of proprietary right over everything which belongs to the donor.³⁸ This right is expressed and conceived as a sort of spiritual bond. Thus in Australia the man who owes all the game he kills to his father and mother-in-law may eat nothing in their presence for fear that their very breath should poison his food.³⁹ We have seen above that the *taonga* sister's son has customs of this kind in Samoa, which are comparable with those of the sister's son (*vasu*) in Fiji.⁴⁰

In all these instances there is a series of rights and duties about consuming and repaying existing side by side with rights and duties about giving and receiving. The pattern of symmetrical and reciprocal rights is not difficult to understand if we realize that it is first and foremost a pattern of spiritual bonds between things which are to some extent parts of persons, and persons and groups that behave in some measure as if they were things.

All these institutions reveal the same kind of social and psychological pattern. Food, women, children, possessions, charms, land, labour, services, religious offices, rank—everything is stuff to be given away and repaid. In perpetual interchange of what we may call spiritual matter, comprising men and things, these elements pass and repass between clans and individuals, ranks, sexes and generations.

4. GIFTS TO MEN AND GIFTS TO GODS

Another theme plays its part in the economy and morality of the gift: that of the gift made to men in the sight of gods or nature. We have not undertaken the wider study necessary to reveal its real import; for the facts at our disposal do not all come from the areas to which we have limited ourselves; and a strongly marked mythological element which we do not yet fully understand prevents us from advancing a theory. We simply give some indications of the theme.

In the societies of North-East Siberia⁴¹ and amongst the Eskimo of West Alaska⁴² and the Asiatic coast of the Behring Straits, the potlatch concerns not only men who rival each other in generosity, and the objects they transmit or destroy, and the spirits of the dead which take part in the transactions and whose names the men bear; it concerns nature as well. Exchanges between namesakes—people named after the same spirits—incite the spirits of the dead, of gods, animals and natural objects to be generous towards them.⁴³ Men say that gift-exchange brings abundance of wealth. Nelson and Porter have given us good descriptions of these ceremonies and the effect they have on the dead, on the game, the fish and shellfish of the Eskimo. They are expressively called, in the language of British trappers, the 'Asking Festival' or the 'Inviting-in Festival'.⁴⁴ Ordinarily they are not confined within the limits of winter settlements. The effect upon nature has been well shown in a recent work on the Eskimo.⁴⁵

The Yuit have a mechanism, a wheel decorated with all manner of provisions, carried on a greasy pole surmounted with the head of a walrus. The top of the pole protrudes above the tent of which it forms the centre. Inside the tent it is manoeuvred by means of another wheel and is made to turn clockwise like the sun. It would be hard to find a better expression of this mode of thought.⁴⁶

The theme is also to be found with the Koryak and Chukchee of the extreme north-west of Siberia.⁴⁷ Both have the potlatch. But it is the maritime Chukchee who, like their Yuit neighbours, practise most the obligatory-voluntary gift exchanges in the course of protracted thanksgiving ceremonies which follow one after the other in every house throughout the winter. The remains of the festival sacrifice are thrown into the sea or cast to the winds; they return to their original home, taking with them all the game killed that year, ready to return again in the next. Jochelsen mentions festivals of the same kind among the Koryak, although he was present only at the whale festival. The system of sacrifice seems there to be very highly developed.⁴⁸

Bogoras rightly compares these with the Russian *koliada* customs in which masked children go from house to house begging eggs and flour and none dare refuse them. This is a European custom.⁴⁹

The connection of exchange contracts among men with those between men and gods explains a whole aspect of the theory of sacrifice. It is best seen in those societies where contractual and economic ritual is practised between men. Where the men are masked incarnations, often shamanistic, being possessed by the spirit whose name they bear, they act as representatives of the spirits.⁵⁰ In that case the exchanges and contracts concern not only men and things but also the sacred beings that are associated with them.⁵¹ This is very evident in Eskimo, Tlingit, and one of the two kinds of Haida potlatch.

There has been a natural evolution. Among the first groups of beings with whom men must have made contracts were the spirits of the dead and the gods. They in fact are the real owners of the world's wealth.⁵² With them it was particularly necessary to exchange and particularly dangerous not to; but, on the other hand, with them exchange was easiest and safest.

Sacrificial destruction implies giving something that is to be repaid. All forms of North-West American and North-East Asian potlatch contain this element of destruction.⁵³ It is not simply to show power and wealth and unselfishness that a man puts his slaves to death, burns his precious oil, throws coppers into the sea, and sets his house on fire. In doing this he is also sacrificing to the gods and spirits, who appear incarnate in the men who are at once their namesakes and ritual allies.

But another theme appears which does not require this human support, and which may be as old as the potlatch itself: the belief that one has to buy from the gods and that the gods know how to repay the price. This is expressed typically by the Toradja of the Celebes. Kruyt tells us that the 'owner' can 'buy'

from the spirits the right to do certain things with his or rather 'their' property. Before he cuts his wood or digs his garden or stakes out his house he must make a payment to the gods. Thus although the notion of purchase seems to be little developed in the personal economic life of the Toradja, nevertheless, the idea of purchase from gods and spirits is universally understood.⁵⁴

With regard to certain forms of exchange which we describe later Malinowski remarks on facts of the same order from the Trobriands. A malignant spirit is evoked—a *tauvau* whose body has been found in a snake or a land crab—by means of giving it *vaygu'a* (a precious object used in *kula* exchanges, at once ornament, charm and valuable). This gift has a direct effect on the spirit of the *tauvau*.⁵⁵ Again at the *mila-mila* festival,⁵⁶ a potlatch in honour of the dead, the two kinds of *vaygu'a* — the *kula* ones and those which Malinowski now describes for the first time as 'permanent' *vaygu'a*⁵⁷ — are exposed and offered up to the spirits, who take the shades of them away to the country of the dead;⁵⁸ there the spirits rival each other in wealth as men do on their return from a solemn *kula*.⁵⁹

Van Ossenbruggen, who is both a theorist and a distinguished observer, and who lives on the spot, has noted another point about these institutions.⁶⁰ Gifts to men and to gods have the further aim of buying peace. In this way evil influences are kept at bay, even when not personified; for a human curse will allow these jealous spirits to enter and kill you and permit evil influences to act, and if you commit a fault towards another man you become powerless against them. Van Ossenbruggen interprets in this way not only the throwing of money over the wedding procession in China, but even bridewealth itself. This is an interesting suggestion which raises a series of points.⁶¹

We see how it might be possible to embark upon a theory and history of contractual sacrifice. Now this sacrifice presupposes institutions of the type we are describing, and conversely it realizes them to the full, for the gods who give and repay are there to give something great in exchange for something small. Perhaps then it is not the result of pure chance that the two solemn formulas of contract, the Latin *do ut des* and the Sanskrit *dadami se, dehi me* have come down to us through religious texts.⁶²

A further note: on Alms

Later in legal and religious evolution man appears once more as representative of the gods and the dead, if indeed he had ever ceased to be so. For instance among the Hausa there is often a fever epidemic when the guinea-corn is ripe, and the only way to prevent it is to give presents of wheat to the poor.⁶³ Again, among the Hausa of Tripolitania, at the time of the great prayer (*Baban Salla*), the children go round the huts saying: 'Shall I enter?' The reply is: 'Oh prick-eared hare, for a bone one gets service' (the poor man is happy to work for the rich). These gifts to children and poor people are pleasing to the dead.⁶⁴ These

customs may be Islamic in origin,⁶⁵ or Islamic, Negro, European and Berber at the same time.

Here at any rate is the beginning of a theory of alms. Alms are the result on the one hand of a moral idea about gifts and wealth⁶⁶ and on the other of an idea about sacrifice. Generosity is necessary because otherwise Nemesis will take vengeance upon the excessive wealth and happiness of the rich by giving to the poor and the gods. It is the old gift morality raised to the position of a principle of justice; the gods and spirits consent that the portion reserved for them and destroyed in useless sacrifice should go to the poor and the children. Originally the Arabic *sadaka* meant, like the Hebrew *zedaka*, exclusively justice, and it later came to mean alms. We can say that the Mishnic era, the time of the victory of the Paupers at Jerusalem, begot the doctrine of charity and alms which later went round the world with Christianity and Islam. It was at this time that the word *zedaka* changed its meaning, since it does not mean alms in *The Bible*.⁶⁷

The value of the documents and commentaries we have quoted in this chapter is not merely local. Comparison takes us farther afield. For we can say that the basic elements of the potlatch are found in Polynesia even if the complete institution is not found there;⁶⁸ in any event gift-exchange is the rule. But to emphasize this theme would simply be a show of erudition if it did not extend beyond Polynesia. Let us now shift the subject and demonstrate that at least the *obligation to give* has a much wider distribution. Then we shall show the distribution of the other types of obligation and demonstrate that our interpretation is valid for several other groups of societies.

NOTES to INTRODUCTORY

¹ Cassel in his *Theory of Social Economy*, Vol. II, p. 345, mentions this text.

² I have been unable to consult Burckhard, *Zum Begriff der Schenkung*, pp. 53 ff. But for Anglo-Saxon law our immediate point has been noted by Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, Vol. II, p. 82: 'The wide word "gift" . . . will cover sale, exchange, gage and lease.' Cf. pp. 12, 212-14: 'Perhaps we may doubt whether . . . a purely gratuitous promise . . . would have been enforced.' See also the essay by Neubecker on the Germanic dowry, *Die Mitgift*, 1909, pp. 65 ff.

³ 'Foi Jurée'; see bibliography in Mauss, 'Une Forme archaïque de Contrat chez les Thraces' in *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 1921; R. Lenoir, 'L'Institution du Potlatch' in *Revue Philosophique*, 1924.

⁴ M. F. Samlo, *Der Güterverkehr in der Urgesellschaft*, Institut Solvay, 1909, has some sound discussion on this, and on p. 156 suggests that he is on the lines of our own argument.

⁵ Grierson, *Silent Trade*, 1903, argued conclusively against this view. See also Von Moszkowski, *Wirtschaftsleben der primitiven Völker*, 1911; although he considers theft to be primitive and confuses it with the right to take. A good exposition of Maori data is to be found in W. von Brun, 'Wirtschaftsorganisation der Maori' in *Beiträgungen Lamprecht*, 18, 1912, in which a chapter is devoted to exchange. The most recent comprehensive work on so-called primitive economics is Koppers, 'Ethnologische Wirtschaftsordnung', in *Anthropos*, 1915-16, pp. 611-51 and 971-1079; strong on presentation of material but for the rest rather hair-splitting.

⁶ We wrote recently that in Australia, especially on a death, there is the beginning of exchange on a tribal basis, and not merely amongst clans and phratries. Among the Kakadu of the Northern Territory there are three mortuary ceremonies. During the third the men have a kind of inquest to find out who is the sorcerer responsible for the death. Contrary to normal Australian custom no feud follows. The men simply gather with their spears and state what they require in exchange. Next day the spears are taken to another tribe, e.g. the Umoriu, who realize the reason for the visit. The spears are piled and in accordance with a known scale the required objects are set before them. Then the Kakadu take them away (Baldwin Spencer, *Tribes of the Northern Territories*, 1914, p. 247). Spencer then states that the objects can then be exchanged for spears, a fact we do not fully understand. But he fails to see the connection between the mortuary ceremony and the exchange of gifts, adding that the natives themselves do not see it. But the custom is easy enough to understand. It is a pact which takes the place of a feud, and which sets up an inter-tribal market. The exchange of objects is simultaneously an exchange of peace pledges and of sentiments of solidarity in mourning. In Australia this is normally seen only between clans and families which are in some way associated or related by marriage. The only difference here is that the custom is extended to the tribal basis.

⁷ A poet as late as Pindar could say *νεανια γαμβρω προπινων οικοθν οικαδε*, *Olympiads*, VIII, 4. The whole passage still reflects the kind of situation we are describing. The themes of the gift, of wealth, marriage, honour, favour, alliance, of shared food and drink, and the theme of jealousy in marriage are all clearly represented.

⁸ See specially the remarkable rules of the ball game among the Omaha: Fletcher and la Flesche, 'Omaha Tribe' in *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, 1905-6, pp. 197 and 366.

⁹ Krause, *Tlingit Indianer*, pp. 234 ff., notes the character of the festivals and rituals although he did not call them 'potlatch'. Boursin in *Eleventh Census*, pp. 54-66, and Porter, *ibid.* p. 33, saw and named the reciprocal glorification in

the potlatch. Swanton, however, has the best commentary, in 'Social Conditions . . . of the Tlingit Indians' in *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, XXVI, 345. Cf. our notes in A.S., XI, 207 and in *Foi Jurée*, p. 172.

¹⁰ On the meaning of the word potlatch, see Barbeau, *Bulletin de la Societe de Géographie de Québec*, 1911, and *Foi Jurée*, p. 162. It seems to us, however, that Davy does not take into account the original meaning of the word. Boas, admittedly for the Kwakiutl and not the Chinook, uses the word 'feeder', although the literal meaning is 'Place of getting Satiated' — *Kwa. T.*, II, p. 43; cf. *Kwa. T.*, I, pp. 255, 517. But the two meanings suggested, gift and food, are not exclusive since the usual content of the gift, here at any rate, is food.

¹¹ The legal aspect of potlatch has been discussed by Adam in his articles in the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft* starting 1911, and in the *Festschrift* to Seler, 1920, and by Davy in *Foi Jurée*. The economic and ritual aspects are no less important and merit the same detailed study. The religious nature of the people involved and of the objects exchanged or destroyed have a bearing on the nature of the contracts, as have the values attributed to them.

¹² The Haida call it 'killing wealth'.

¹³ See Hunt's documents in *Eth. Kwa.*, p. 1340, where there is an interesting description of the way the clan brings its potlatch contributions to the chief, and a record of some of the discourses. The chief says: 'It will not be in my name. It will be in your name, and you will become famous among the tribes, when it is said that you have given your property for a potlatch' (p. 1342).

¹⁴ The potlatch is not confined to the tribes of the North-West. We consider also the 'Asking Festival' of the Alaskan Eskimo as something more than a mere borrowing from neighbouring Indian tribes.

¹⁵ See our observations in A.S., XI, 101 and XIII, 372-4, and *Anthropologie*, 1920. Lenoir notes two clear potlatch traits in South America, 'Expéditions Maritimes en Mélanésie' in *Anthropologie*, Sept. 1924.

¹⁶ Thurnwald, in *Forschungen*, Vol. III, 1912, p. 8, uses this word.

¹⁷ *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, XXXIV, 1921.

NOTES to CHAPTER I

¹ Davy, in *Foi Jurée*, p. 140, studies these exchanges with reference to the marriage contract. Here we point out further implications.

² *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 178; *Samoa*, pp. 82 ff.; Stair, *Old Samoa*, p. 75.

³ Krämer, *Samoa-Inseln*, Vol. II, pp. 52-63.

⁴ Stair, *Old Samoa*, p. 180; Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 225; *Samoa*, p. 91.

⁵ Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 184; *Samoa*, p. gl.

⁶ Krämer, *Samoa-Insel*, Vol. II, p. 105; Turner, *Samoa*, p. 146.

⁷ Krämer, *ibid.*, pp. 96, 313. The *malaga* trading expedition (cf the *walaga* of New Guinea) is very like the potlatch and characteristic of the neighbouring Melanesian archipelago. Krämer uses the word *Gegenschenk* for the exchange of *oloa* and *tonga* which we shall discuss. We do not intend to follow the exaggerations of the English school of Rivers and Elliot Smith or those of the Americans who, after Boas, see the whole American potlatch as a series of borrowings, but still we grant that an important part is played by the spreading of institutions. It is specially important in this area where trading expeditions go great distances between islands and have done from early times; there must have been transmitted not only the articles of merchandise but also methods of exchange. Malinowski, whom we quote later, recognizes this. See Lenoir, 'Expéditions maritimes en Mélanésie' in *Anthropologie*, 1924.

⁸ Rivalry among Maori clans is often mentioned, particularly with regard to festivals, e.g. by S. P. Smith, *Journal of Polynesian Society* XV, 87.

⁹ This is not properly potlatch because the counter-prestation lacks the element of usury. But as we shall see with the Maori the fact that no return is made implies the loss of *mana*, or of 'face' as the Chinese say; the same is true for Samoa.

¹⁰ Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 178; *Samoa*, p. 52. The theme of honour through ruin is fundamental to North-West American potlatch.

¹¹ Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 178; *Samoa*, p. 83, says the young man is 'adopted'. This is wrong; it is fosterage. Education is outside his own family certainly, but in fact it marks a return to his uterine family (the father's sister is the spouse of the mother's brother). In Polynesia both maternal and paternal relatives are classificatory. See our review of E. Best, *Maori Nomenclature* in *A.S.*, VII, 420 and Durkheim's remarks in V, 37.

¹² *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 179; *Samoa*, p. 83.

¹³ See our remarks on the Fiji *vasu* in 'Procès verbal de J.I.F.A.', *Anthropologie*, 1921.

¹⁴ Krämer, *Samoa-Inseln*, Vol. I, p. 482; Vol. II, p. 90.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 296. Cf. p. go (*toga* equals *Mitgift*); p. 94 exchanges of *oloa* and *toga*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 477. Violette, *Dictionnaire Samoan-Français*, defines *toga* as 'native valuables consisting of fine mats, and *oloa* valuables such as houses, cloth, boats, guns'; and he refers back to *oa*, valuables in general.

¹⁷ *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, p. 179; cf p. 186; *Maori Comparative Dictionary*, p. 468 under *taonga* confuses this with *oloa*.

The Rev. Ella, 'Polynesian Native Clothing', in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, VIII, 165, describes the *ie tonga* (mats); they were 'the chief wealth of the natives; indeed at one time were used as a medium of currency in payment

for work, etc., also for barter, interchange of property, at marriage and other special occasions of courtesy. They are often retained in families as heirlooms, and many old *ie* are well known and more highly valued as having belonged to some celebrated family.’ Cf. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 120. We shall see that these expressions have their equivalents in Melanesia, in North America and in our own folklore.

¹⁸ Krämer, *Samoa-Inseln*, Vol. II, pp. 90, 93.

¹⁹ See Maori Comparative Dictionary under *taonga*: (Tahitian) *tataoa*, to give property, *faataoa*, to compensate; (Marquesan) Lesson, *Polynésiens*, Vol. II, p. 232, *taetae*; *tiau tae-tae*, presents given, ‘local produce given in exchange for foreign goods’. Radiguet, *Derniers Sauvages*, p. 157. The root of the word is *tahu*, etc.

²⁰ See Mauss, ‘Origines de la Notion de la Monnaie’ in *Anthropologie*, 1914, where most of the facts quoted, except for Negrito and American material, belong to this domain.

²¹ *Proverbs*, p. 103.

²² *Maori Momentoes*, p. 21.

²³ In *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, I, 354.

²⁴ New Zealand tribes are divided in theory by the Maori themselves into fishermen, agriculturalists and hunters, who are supposed to exchange their produce. Cf. Best, ‘Forest-Lore’, in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, XLII, 435.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 431; translation, p. 439.

²⁶ The word *hau*, like the Latin *spiritus*, means both wind and soul. More precisely *hau* is the spirit and power of inanimate and vegetable things. The word *mana* is reserved for men and spirits and is not applied to things as much as in Melanesian languages.

²⁷ *Utu* means satisfaction in blood vengeance.

²⁸ *He hau*. These sentences were all abridged by Best.

²⁹ Many facts illustrating this point were collected by R. Hertz in his *Péché et l'Expiation*. They show that the sanction against theft is the mystical effect of the *mana* of the object stolen; moreover, the object is surrounded by taboos and marked by its owner, and has *hau*, spiritual power, as a result. This *hau* avenges theft, controls the thief, bewitches him and leads him to death or constrains him to restore the object.

³⁰ In Hertz will be found material on the *mauri* to which we allude here. *Mauri* are talismans, safeguards and sanctuaries where the clan soul (*hapu*) dwells with its *mana* and the *hau* of its land.

Best’s documents require more comment than we can give here, especially those concerned with *hau whitia* and *kai hau*. See especially ‘Spiritual Concepts’ in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, X, 10 (Maori text), and IX, 198. Best translates *hau whitia* well as ‘averted *hau*’. The sins of theft, of non-repayment,

of non-counter-prestation are a 'turning aside' of the spirit (*hau*) as in the case of a refusal to make an exchange or give a present. *Kai hau* is badly translated as the equivalent of *hau whitia*. It implies the act of eating the soul, and may well be synonymous with *whangai hau* (cf. Tregear, *Maori Comparative Dictionary*, under *kai* and *whangai*). But *kai* refers to food and the word alludes to the sharing of food and the fault of remaining in debt over it. Further, the word *hau* itself also belongs to the realm of ideas. Williams, *Maori Dictionary*, p. 47, says '*hau*, return present by way of acknowledgement for a present received'.

³¹ We draw attention to the expression *kai-hau-kai*, *Maori Comparative Dictionary*, p. 116: 'The return present of food, etc., made by one tribe to another. A feast (in the South).' This signifies that the return gift is really the 'spirit' of the original prestation returning to its point of departure: 'food that is the *hau* of other food.' European vocabularies have not the ability to describe the complexity of these ideas.

³² The *taonga* seem to have an individuality beyond that of the *hau*, which derives from their relationship with their owner. They bear names. According to the best authorities (*Maori Comparative Dictionary* under *pounamu*, from the manuscript of Colenso) they comprise: the *pounamu*, jades that are the sacred property of the clan chiefs; the rare, sculptured *tiki*; various kinds of mats of which one is called *koruwai* (the only Maori word recalling the Samoan *oloa*, although we have sought for an equivalent). A Maori document gives the name *taonga* to the *karakia*, individual heritable magic spells. *Journal of Polynesian Society*, IX, 126, 133.

³³ E. Best, 'Forest Lore', in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute*, XLII, 449.

³⁴ We should really discuss here the ideas implied in the interesting Maori expression 'to despise *tahu*'. The main document is Best, 'Maori Mythology', in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, IX, 113. *Tahu* is a symbolic name for food in general, its personification. 'Do not despise *tahu*' is the injunction to a person who refuses a gift of food. It would take much space to study Maori food beliefs so we simply point out that this personification of food is identical with Rongo, the god of plants and of peace. The association of ideas becomes clearer: hospitality, food, communion, peace, exchange, law.

³⁵ See Best, 'Spiritual Concepts' in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, IX, 198.

³⁶ See Hardeland, *Dayak Wörterbuch* under *indjok*, *irek*, *pahuni*. The comparative study of these institutions could be extended to cover the whole of Malayan, Indonesian and Polynesian civilization. The only difficulty is in recognizing the institution. For instance, it is under the name of 'compulsory trade' that Spencer St. John describes the way in which (in Brunei) the aristocrats seek tribute from the Bisayas by first giving them a present of cloth to be repaid with high interest over a number of years (*Life in the Forests of the Far East*,

Vol. II). The error arises from the custom of civilized Malayans of borrowing cultural traits from their less civilized brothers without understanding them. We do not enumerate all the Indonesian data on this point.

³⁷ Not to invite one to a war dance is a sin, a fault which, in the South Island, is called *puha*. H. T. de Croisilles, 'Short Traditions of the South Island' in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, X, 76. (Note *tahua* means a gift of food.)

Maori ritual of hospitality comprises: an obligatory invitation that should not be refused or solicited; the guest must approach the reception house looking straight ahead; his host should have a meal ready for him straight away and himself partake of it humbly; on leaving, the guest receives a parting gift (Tregear, *The Maori Race*, p. 29). See later, identical rites in Hindu hospitality.

In fact the two rules are closely connected like the gifts they prescribe. Taylor, *Te ika a mani*, p. 132, no. 60, translates a proverb expressing this: 'When raw it is seen, when cooked it is taken' (it is better to eat half-cooked food and to wait until strangers arrive than to have it cooked and be obliged to share it with them).

Chief Hekemaru, according to legend, refused food unless he had been seen and received by the village he was visiting. If his procession passed through unnoticed and then messengers arrived begging him to return and take food, he replied that 'food would not follow his back'. He meant that food offered to the 'sacred back of his head' would endanger those who gave it. Hence the proverb: 'Food will not follow at the back of Hekemaru' (Tregear, *The Maori Race*, p. 79).

³⁸ Among the tribe of Tuhoe Best ('Maori Mythology' in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, VIII, 113) saw these principles: When a famous chief is to visit a district, his *mana* precedes him. The people hunt and fish for good food. They get nothing. 'That is because our *mana* has preceded us and driven all the food (fish and birds) afar off that they may not be visible to the people. Our *mana* has banished them.' (There follows an explanation of snow in terms of *whai riri*—a sin against water—which keeps food away from men.) This rather difficult passage describes the condition of the land as the result of a *hapu* of hunters who had failed to make preparations to receive the chief of another clan. They would have committed *kaipapa*, a 'sin against food', and thus destroyed their cultivations, hunting grounds and fisheries—their entire sources of food.

³⁹ E.g. Arunta, UnmatJera, Kaitish; Spencer and Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 610.

⁴⁰ On *vasu* see especially Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, 1858, Vol. I, p. 34, and cf. Steinmetz, *Entwickelung für die Strafe*, Vol. II, pp. 241 ff. The right of the sister's son is only analogous to family communism. There are other rights present, the right of in-laws and what may be called 'permitted theft'.

⁴¹ See *Chakchee*. Obligation to give, receive and return gifts and hospitality is more marked with the Maritime than the Reindeer Chukchee. See

'Social Organization', *Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, VII, 634, 637. Cf rules for sacrificing and slaughtering reindeer. 'Religion', *ibid.*, II, 375; the duty of inviting, the right of the guest to demand what he wants and his obligation to give a present.

⁴² The obligation to give is a marked Eskimo characteristic. See our 'Variations saisonnières des Sociétés Eskimos' in *A.S.*, IX, 121. A recent work on the Eskimo gives other tales which impart generosity; Hawkes, 'The Labrador Eskimo' in *Canadian Geological Survey*, Anthropological Series, p. 159.

In 'Variations saisonnières' we considered Alaskan Eskimo feasts as a combination of Eskimo elements and potlatch borrowings. But since writing that we have found the true potlatch as well as gift customs described for the Chukchee and Koryak in Siberia, so the Eskimo might have borrowed from them. Also the plausible theory of Sauvageot ('Journal des Américanistes', 1924) on the Asiatic origin of Eskimo languages should be taken into account. This theory confirms the archaeological and anthropological theories on the origin of the Eskimo and their civilization. Everything points to the fact that the western Eskimo are nearer the origin linguistically and ethnologically than the eastern and central. This seems proved by Thalbitzer.

One must then say that the eastern Eskimo have a potlatch of very ancient origin. The special totems and masks of the western festivals are clearly of Indian derivation. The disappearance in east and central Arctic America of the Eskimo potlatch is ill explained except by the gradual degeneration of the eastern Eskimo societies.

⁴³ Hall, *Life with the Esquimaux*, Vol. II, p. 320. It is remarkable that this is found not with reference to the Alaskan potlatch, but to the central Eskimo, who have only communal winter festivals and gift exchange. This shows that the notion extends beyond the limits of the potlatch proper.

⁴⁴ Nelson, 'Eskimos about Behring Straits' in *Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology.*, XVIII, 303, and Porter, *11th Census*, pp. 138, 141, and especially Wrangold *Statistische Ergebnisse*, etc., p. 132. For the 'asking stick', cf. Hawkes, 'The Inviting-in Feast of the Alaskan Eskimos' in *Canadian Geological Survey*, Memo. 45, Anthropological Series, II, 7.

⁴⁵ Hawkes, *ibid.*, pp. 3, 7. Cf p. 9 description of one such festival, Unalaklit v. Malemiut. One of the most characteristic traits is the series of comical prestations on the first day and the gifts concerned. One tribe tries to make the other laugh and can demand anything it wants. The best dancers receive valuable presents (pp. 12-14). This is a clear and rare example (I know of others in Australia and America) of representation in ritual of a theme which is frequent enough in mythology: the spirit of jealousy which, when it laughs, leaves hold of its object.

The Inviting-in Festival ends with a visit of the *angedkok* (shaman) to the spirit-men, *inua*, whose mask he wears and who tell him they have enjoyed the

dance and will send game. Cf the gift made to seals, Jennes, 'Life of the Copper Eskimos' in *Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition*, Vol. XII, 1922, p. 178.

Other themes of gift-giving customs are strongly marked; e.g. the chief *naskuk* has no right to refuse a gift or food however scarce it may be for fear of being evermore disgraced. Hawkes, *ibid.*, p. 9.

Hawkes rightly considers (p. 19) the festival of the Dene described by Chapman (Congrès des Américanistes de Québec, 1907, Vol. II) as an Eskimo borrowing from Indians.

⁴⁶ See illustration in *Chukchee*, p. 403.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 399-401.

⁴⁸ *Koryak*, pp. 64, go, 98.

⁴⁹ *Chukchee*, p. 400. On customs of this type see Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (3rd edn.), Vol. III, pp. 78-85, 91 ff.; Vol. X, pp. 169 ff., also pp. I, 161.

⁵⁰ This is a basic trait of all North-West American potlatch. It is not very noticeable, however, since the ritual is so totemistic that its effect upon nature is less evident than its influence over spirits. It is more obvious in the Behring Straits, especially with the Chukchee and the Eskimo potlatch of Saint-Lawrence Isle.

⁵¹ See potlatch myth in Bogoras, *Chukchee Mythology*, p. 14. One shaman asks another: 'With what will you answer?' (i.e. make return gift). A struggle ensues but finally they come to an agreement; they exchange their magic knives and necklaces, then their (assistant) spirits and lastly their bodies (p. 15). Thereafter they are not entirely successful for they forget to exchange their bracelets and tassels ('my guide in motion'), p. 16. These objects have the same spiritual value as the spirits themselves.

⁵² Jochelsen, 'Koryak Religion', *Jesup North Pacific Expedition*, VI, 30. A Kwakiutl spirit song (from winter ceremony shamanism) comments:

'You send us all things from the other world, O spirits
You heard that we were hungry
We shall receive many things from you.'

Sec. Soc., p. 487.

⁵³ *Foi Jurée*, pp. 224 ff., refers.

⁵⁴ Koopen, pp. r63-8, Is8-9, 3 and 5 of the summary.

⁵⁵ *Argonauts*, p. 511.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 184

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 512. Cf 'Baloma, Spirits of the Dead', in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1917.

⁵⁸ The Maori myth of Te Kanava (Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, Routledge edn., p. 213) relates how spirits took the shadows of the *pounamu* (jasper, etc.—in other words taonga) displayed in their honour. An identical myth

from Mangaia (Wyatt Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, p. 257) tells the same tale about red shell necklaces and how they gain the favours of the beautiful Manapu.

⁵⁹ *Argonauts*, p. 513. Malinowski (p. 510, etc.) lays too much claim to the novelty of his data which are identical with aspects of Tlingit and Haida potlatch.

⁶⁰ 'Het Primitieve Denken, voorn. in Pokkengebruiken' in *Bijdr. tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenk. v. Nederl. Indie*, LXXI, 245-6.

⁶¹ Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 386, has already put forward a hypothesis on these lines, and Westermarck examined it and adduced some proof. See especially *History of Human Marriage*, 2nd edn., Vol. I, pp. 394 ff. His approach is vitiated since he identifies the system of total prestations and the more highly developed potlatch in which the exchanges (including exchange of women in marriage) form only a part. On fertility in marriage assured by gifts made to the spouses see later.

⁶² Vajasaneyisamhita. See Hubert and Mauss, 'Essai sur le Sacrifice' in *A.S.*, II. 105.

⁶³ Tremearne, *Haussa Superstitions and Customs*, 1913, p. 55.

⁶⁴ Tremearne, *The Ban of the Bori*, 1915, p. 239.

⁶⁵ Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 283: the poor are the guests of God.

⁶⁶ The Betsimisaraka of Madagascar tell how of two chiefs one shared out all his possessions and the other kept all of his. God sent fortune to the generous chief and ruined the selfish one (Grandidier, *Ethnographie de Madagascar*, Vol. II, p. 67).

⁶⁷ See Westermarck, *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, Vol. I, Chap. XXIII on notions of alms, generosity and liberality.

⁶⁸ Questions tend to pose themselves after one's research is finished, and I have not been able to re-read all the literature. But I have no doubt that we could find many more significant traces of the potlatch in Polynesia, e.g. the display of food, *hakari* (Tregear, *The Maori Race*, p. 113) has many of the same details as the similarly named *hekarai* of the Koita Melanesians. See Seligman, *Melanesians*, pp. 141-5. On the *hakari* see also Taylor, *Te ika a mani*, p. 13; Yeats, *An Account of New Zealand*, 1835, p. 139. Cf. Tregear, *Maori Comparative Dictionary* under *hakari*. Cf. a myth in Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 189 which describes the *hakari* of Maru, god of war, when the attitude of the recipients is identical with that in New Caledonian, Fijian and New Guinea festivals.

A song collected by Sir E. Grey (*Konga Moteatea, Mythology and Traditions in New Zealand*, 1853, p. 132) has verse 2:

'Give me *taonga* from this direction
Give me *taonga*, that I may place in heaps

To place them in heaps towards the land
To place them in heaps towards the sea, etc....
Give me my *taonga*.'

It is seen how important the notion of *taonga* is to the ritual of the festival. Cf. Percy Smith, 'Wars of the Northern against the Southern Tribes' in *Journal of Polynesian Society*, VIII, 156.

Even although the potlatch may not exist in present Polynesian society it may well have existed in the civilization overrun and absorbed by the immigration of Polynesians, and the latter themselves may have had it before their migration. There is in fact a good reason why it should have disappeared from a part of the area, for in the islands there is a hierarchy of clans clustered round a monarchy; thus one of the chief conditions of the potlatch is absent: an unstable hierarchy changeable from time to time by the jealousy of chiefs. There are clearer traces with the Maori who have chiefs and where clans are set in rivalry against each other.

See Krämer, *Samoa-Inseln*, Vol. I, p. 375 and index under *ifoga* for destruction of property of the American and Melanesian manner. Perhaps the Maori *nuru*, destruction of property following a misdemeanour, may be studied from this angle. In Madagascar the relationships amongst the Lohateny who trade and may insult or ruin each other also show traces of a former potlatch; Grandidier, *Ethnologie de Madagascar*, Vol. II, pp. 131-3; cf. p. 155.

Translated by Ian Cunnison
from
Essai sur le don, forme archaïque de l'échange,
Marcel Mauss, 1925