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The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies

Marcel Mauss

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THE GIFT

{ *The Form and Reason for Exchange*
in Archaic Societies }

TRANSLATED BY W. D. HALLS • FOREWORD BY MARY DOUGLAS

MARCEL MAUSS

"[A] profound and original book."—from the foreword

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#58457 in Books Marcel Mauss W D Halls 2000-08-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.30 x .60 x 5.50l,
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Marcel Mauss : The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Mauss's Big IdeaBy krebsmanMarcel Mauss was Emil Durkheims

nephew and protégé. Durkheim's attention and support paid off. In *THE GIFT*, Mauss ponders The Big Idea. The idea of reciprocal giving may be the primary act of all individual human relationships and all societies. Mauss examines gifts and giving across several cultures from American Indians, Asian Indians, Polynesian Islanders to Ancient Romans. These phenomena of exchange he says are at the same time juridical, economic, religious, and even aesthetic and morphological, etc. He justifies this statement on many levels. This is a profound work that allowed me to see things as I had never seen them before and can never see again in the same way. It's a brief, but pithy book. I don't think it's possible to do a superficial reading. The actual text covers 83 pages, but there are an additional 74 of notes that are essential. Allow yourself some time to read this. I'm not really sure that I agree with Mauss's conclusion, which seemed a bit wishy-washy to me, but I'd nonetheless recommend this to any thinking person. Pure gold. Five stars. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A good read that challenges the western view of philanthropy. By Ted Flack. Worth the read because it responds to the lurking suspicion in my mind that there is more to philanthropy than selfless giving. Mauss posits the notion that all so-called "free gifts" are actually part of a complex and deeply ingrained cultural practice in us all of exchanging gifts. Whether for religious or charitable purposes, this insight suggests that in fact they are all part of a set of mutual obligations and are not "free" at all. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A well-researched historical and anthropological work. By Rian Nejar. A well-researched historical and anthropological work; an enlightening perspective on gift economies and social consciousness. A book that clearly distinguishes contemporary one-dimensional society from advanced culture in many archaic societies. A little difficult for the lay reader.

Since its first publication in English in 1954, *The Gift*, Marcel Mauss's groundbreaking study of the relation between forms of exchange and social structure, has been acclaimed as a classic among anthropology texts. A brilliant example of the comparative method, *The Gift* presents the first systematic study of the custom widespread in primitive societies from ancient Rome to present-day Melanesia of exchanging gifts. The gift is a perfect example of what Mauss calls a total social phenomenon, since it involves legal, economic, moral, religious, aesthetic, and other dimensions. He sees the gift exchange as related to individuals and groups as much as to the objects themselves, and his analysis calls into question the social conventions and economic systems that had been taken for granted for so many years. In a modern translation, introduced by distinguished anthropologist Mary Douglas, *The Gift* is essential reading for students of social anthropology and sociology.

'The Gift is quite undeniably the masterwork of Marcel Mauss, his most justly famous writing, and the work whose influence has been the deepest.' - Claude Lévi-Strauss
Language Notes: Text: English, French (translation)
About the Author: Marcel Mauss was a French sociologist and anthropologist. His work profoundly influenced the field of anthropology with respect to topics such as magic, sacrifice, and gift exchange in primitive cultures.