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A RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY OF GIFTS

A Dissertation

Submitted to The McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Mary J. Eberhardinger

May 2020

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Mary J. Eberhardinger

2020

A RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY OF GIFTS

By

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Approved March 13, 2020

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ABSTRACT

A RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY OF GIFTS

By

Mary J. Eberhardinger

May 2020

Dissertation supervised by Dr. Erik A. Garrett

This project synthesizes a selected scope of rhetorical and philosophical perspectives of the gift. The research question is what the relationship between gifts and rhetoric might be. In order to approach this question, this project offers a review of related literature on the topic of gifts. It then provides analysis and discussion that contextualize the question. The project finally concludes by offering implications. The implications address why the question concerning the relationship between gifts and rhetoric matters for the larger landscape of international relations.

DEDICATION

For Mark Anthony Panza.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thank you to my committee and parents.

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Introduction

Gift-giving is a universally symbolic gesture practiced in a multiplicity of ways among various cultural traditions. When thinking locally about etiquette, expectations, ethics, and communication that surrounds ceremonial activities of gift exchange, we also experience multiple petite narratives in a post-modern historical moment. Gift character may be considered one of the qualities that make us human. The presence of gifts in ceremonial rituals give it an epideictic quality and rhetorical function. Cultural specificity and particulars within practices of gift-giving are housed in a universally understood horizon gestures.

Particularity from practices are expressed in the concrete communication patterns of thanking, crediting, praising, and expressing acknowledgement of what has been done. In this regard, both gift-giving and credit-giving function rhetorically as connected speech events, as the mere action of thanking brings forth the embeddedness of credit, which often comes attached to a particular name. Names and gifts, in this sense, become attached to names of real individuals. Whether large or small, gifts come with tags and can form semantic imprints, functioning as a form of debt, entering a system that circulates to an owing back to the gift-giver.

This project considers a selected scope of schools of thought on the gift from the disciplines of rhetoric, communication, and philosophy to not only synthesize what they offer to the ongoing conversation in the literatures on the gift, but how the roles of rhetoric and credit may be embedded in the gift. This project therefore seeks to respond to the general research question of what the relationship between gift and rhetoric might be. In order to respond to this question, this project will address a review of selected related literature on the gift, an analytical application that contextualizes the question in the historical moment, then offer implications for how this question can contribute to multiple disciplines today. The implications will address

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possibilities for the relationship between gift and rhetoric's application to disciplines outside of communication such as peace and conflict studies, political science, and international relations.

The drawn implications of this project will arrive at an argument for the significance of a rhetorical and philosophical analysis on gifts in the larger public sphere by use of soft-power diplomacy. The hope is for a rhetoric and philosophy of the gift to be considered as an important political tool for today's international relationship building. Bringing an analysis of the gift to the international, macro level can be achieved by first recognizing its import on the interpersonal and community-based levels. In other words, an analysis of the gift can glean insight into micro, meso, and macro-level relational spheres.

Personal exigence for writing on the topic of gifts comes from years of living in East Asia, particularly Japan and Singapore, for three years. Additional travels to surrounding countries while living there also inspired me to pursue this topic. Specifically, during my time living, working, and studying abroad in other countries, I was able to observe the rich cultural traditions of giving and receiving in the workplace, personal relationships, and anticipated relationships. My observations started a long time ago as ethnographic observations and forms of note taking. I found myself actively participating in these customs and traditional practices of preparing, thinking of, and giving gifts to many people I encountered especially in Japan.

Moreover, the presence of gifts in Japan serves as an important way to diffuse the beginning of a relationship and show respect and appreciation. In Japan, from my first-hand experience, it is an authentic display of other centeredness as a cultural value orientation. I think that the rest of the world can learn much from these traditional practices, and I find hermeneutic entrances for a rhetoric and philosophy of gifts into other fields of study such as peace and

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conflict studies as well as topics concerning friendship, public diplomacy, and soft-power interactions in the political sphere.

This project progresses through seven chapters that reveal a selected scope of the gift's significant situatedness in continental philosophy as well as what it can now offer in this current political historical moment. The first chapter addresses objects as gift. The second chapter addresses language as gift. The third chapter addresses life and death as gifts. The fourth chapter addresses the possibility of gift. The fifth chapter addresses implications for gifts in international public diplomacy efforts and how we can view gifts as integral proponents of soft power. The sixth chapter discusses the occasions for which one gives. The seventh chapter discusses how the anachronism of the gift or anachronistic giving presents an authentic possibility for the event of the gift.

Statement of Problem

Literature on the gift in communication and philosophy addresses the topic from perspectives including gift as life, death, symbolic exchange, cultural traditions, and givenness. The topic is embraced by the interdisciplinarity of the phenomenological tradition, philosophical hermeneutic tradition, and rhetorical tradition. The topic of the gift requires a breadth and depth of reading across thinkers who have already contributed and started the conversation on the gift. Interdisciplinarity allows for the necessary crossings between perspectives as well as the opportunity to engage in a rich comparison and contrasting between major voices on gift. This kind of intellectual comparison helps support the gift's deep rhetorical, philosophical, economic, and relational import. Understanding the role of the gift through history is an important way to also understand how humans have come to terms with exchange, economy, and labor leading to class distinctions and disparities.

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The traditions offered in this project's first chapter are demonstrated by Marion's (2011) work on a phenomenology of givenness, Derrida's (1992, 1995) work on the impossibility and possibility of the gift, and Mauss's (1990) sociological account of the gift. While these traditional underpinnings present what the gift could be as well as what it has been established in the literature, there is still not enough emphasis on its role for contributing to positive international relations and public diplomacy. Therefore, this project takes a rhetorical and philosophical approach to explore the gap in literatures on the gift. This project operates under the bias that if more serious attention were paid to the gift within international peace relations and political friendship building, then the world could be a bit happier of a place. If countries were to take a deeper rhetorical and philosophical approach to understanding the definitions and approaches of gift, then such an emergent philosophy of communication on the gift today could be helpful for international relations.

This project could be helpful in a moment that is especially fraught with international suspicion, doubt, risk, contention, and destructive competition. For Derrida and Marion, a gift is one that does not need to be announced or named. Nor does it have to come attached to cultural traditions and expectations for reciprocity of exchange, repetition, and credit. Such a deeper philosophical understanding of gift, if taken into consideration by political leaders of countries, could leverage the very power that soft diplomacy offers. Soft power diplomacy as opposed to traditional or hard power diplomacy may indeed be something that we have left to offer after all, especially when harder and traditional ways of politics cease to work for the benefit of international peace and relationship building. This approach is housed in the philosophical hermeneutics tradition.

Significance of Problem

The gap in literatures should be explored in this current historical moment due to the increased need to consider international relations, soft-power, diplomacy, and world peace from a philosophical and rhetorical perspective. The argument for the power of the gift in making positive impressions and friendship-building could make a contribution to public sphere's ongoing conversation about peace building between countries. An application to peace and conflict studies appears to be a timely need that yields a rich political exigence especially considering today's international leadership, international negotiations, and trust. Applying the topic of gifts to the international political arena could open up the possibility towards a repairing of certain intercultural and international relations.

Such an opening up of gifts as text could be a step closer to what our current political climate might need, due to increasing tensions between certain countries and cultures as a result of current presidential actions. Thus, there is a possibility for a situatedness of the gift as a rhetorically and philosophically powerful option for crossing boundaries, borders, and foreign languages. Also, repairing wounds and bringing peoples closer together. In addition, gifts, from a communication ethics perspective, can be viewed as goods that one or one culture protects and promotes. In this way, a rhetoric and philosophy of communication of gifts can become the articulation of how persons, communities, and countries come to use language, naming, and crediting about gifts in the public sphere.

Chapter 1 Objects as Gift

This chapter aims to present a synthesis of selected theories on the gift from the perspective of gift as object. In doing so, the chapter evokes a scope of perspectives that offer a kind of conundrum or *aporia* of gift, which is the notion of an unsolvable puzzle or logical contradiction. This chapter presents both hopeful and critical views on the reality of reciprocity, obligation and the economics of exchange. It offers the sub-section “Happy Gifts”, which sets to show how gifts can be both material and immaterial forms.

In the West, the gift has been interpreted in object form and exchanged as a form of symbolic value from perspectives of religion, anthropology, and economics. These various cultural traditions of gifts (Mauss, 1990) show the economic function of gifts (Marion, 2011), the symmetrical relation of gifts and symbolic exchange (Baudrillard, 1981) of gifts, social mediation of material representation of wealth (Meikle, 1995), and the impossibility of gifts (Derrida, 1992, 1995). Understanding gift as a formal cause (McLuhan, 1964; Anton, Logan, & Strate, 2018) or something recalcitrant and concrete is a perspective to open up its possibility for influencing rhetoric among persons and nations. By adopting the view of gift as object or commodity, there is an implication of an “as-such” structure behind it, involving three elements (Caputo & Scanlon, 1999). The three elements are a giver, receiver, and something given. Something given can also be interpreted as something present. These three elements constitute the object or constitute the structure/essence of an object and make it repeatable. For Derrida, it is the repeatable quality or the promise of repetition that makes its function as a commodity with the expectation for return. The moment a gift is understood as such, with these three structures, it destroys itself because it can no longer be freely given.

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Structuralism is at play in the identification of the three aforementioned parts to the gift process. Structuration is unique because it is both a theory and paradigm. Some scholars use it merely as a theory in another, broader paradigm. Other scholars use it as an over-arching worldview. Structuralists share commonality with systems theorists, as they both view organizations in a layered, multi-faceted way. Without each layer, the holism of a system or structure would not function. The difference, however, between these two closely related paradigms is that structuralists look not only at meso and macro levels but micro levels of communication as well.

As cited in May and Mumby (2005), structuration theory is “a framework that could explain individual behavior and the development and effects of social institutions such as the economy, religion, and government” (p. 173). They equally consider interaction between individuals and then moreover, in the broader realm of the environment. Several scholars have noticeable influences of structuration theory in their scholarship. Influence of structuration theory as a paradigm, philosophically, means that any speech act, gesture, or text becomes part of a structure, becoming both “the medium and the outcome of actions” (May & Mumby, 2005, p. 175). In other words, a structure both produces and reproduces itself through texts/acts/words/gestures. Stuart Hall (1973/1980) asserts a similar concept in his seminal article on encoding and decoding, stating how media produces and reproduces dominant ideologies. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) also makes a similar assertion by describing institutions as structuring structures. Methodologically, structuration theory uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Structuration theory also shares threads from the constitutive paradigm, meaning that it shares the ontological belief that realities are constituted in and by communication.

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Axiologically, it places emphasis on this kind of constitution between micro, meso, and macro levels.

Although Derrida calls this the impossibility of the gift, he does not imply that the word impossible means something negative. In fact, Derrida still has hope that the gift is possible. The conditions which a gift may be possible is if the gift is not known or named as such. In other words, the moment a gift is called “gift” and semantically understood as gift, the value and essence of it becomes destroyed. It is, however, through an impossibility that the gift is still possible. Derrida calls this possibility the ability to have non-political hospitality. Importantly, for Derrida, the main conundrum or paradox with the gift is the issue of language. The naming of the gift is indeed what it is within this philosophy that gifts can actually occur. A genuine account of a gift happening, or arriving, however, is not necessarily through the object form of a gift. Genuine gifts would be those that we are not conscious or knowing of. This is how, for Derrida, a genuine gift goes beyond and escapes the object form. This is how Derrida understands gift as *aporia*, which is a way to describe blind spots or a logical contradiction in a metaphysical argument (Derrida, 1993).

In addition to challenging the object-form of the gift, Derrida also challenges the phenomenology of the gift. He challenges Marion’s understanding of the gift as givenness. For Marion, givenness of anything in the world implies that we take something as given to us. Marion does not see the “As-such” structures of a phenomenologically understood gift as necessary. For instance, two out of the three components may be present. A giver may not be present and a gift may be given without a giver or receiver. In addition, the gift without present refers to the object form of the gift not being seen, understood, or present. The concrete formal cause of an object- gift necessitates guilt and expectations to be reconciled with. In short, for

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Marion (2011), a gift is a phenomenon as given. The whole question of the gift is actually about givenness, which invokes early Husserl and his definition of the phenomenon, which is “being given.”

Traditions of gift-giving and receiving are practiced in a multiplicity of ways around the world. When thinking locally about etiquette, expectations, ethics, and the communication that surrounds the activity of gift exchange, we also experience multiple petite narratives in a post-modern historical moment. In addition to culturally specific particulars within practices of gift-giving, there might be universally understood gestures, which are expressed in the concrete communication patterns of thanking and expressing acknowledgement of what has been done. The mere action of thanking brings forth the embeddedness of credit, which often comes attached to a particular name.

Gifts, in this sense, are attached to the names of real individuals. When a gift is given, one’s notion of personhood might reach the level of an individual, whether desired or not. Whether large or small, gifts come with tags and can form semantic imprints. Semantic imprints may, at times, function as a form of debt, entering a system that circulates to owing back to the gift-giver. This is how rhetorical naming is so important to the event of the gift. The name and the gifted object become inextricably linked. For example, upon receiving a compliment about a certain gift, the receiver may mention the name of someone who thought to give it. Credit and attention are immediately given to this name, as it forms a mental imprint that often refers to a kind of goodwill towards the name of the giver.

When credit becomes less important or even irrelevant, a different kind of appreciation and understanding of gifts becomes possible. Buddhist thinker, Soestu Yanagi (1989) offers a Japanese philosophy behind making crafts in a book, *The Unknown Craftsman*. Such objects that

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are “unsigned” are one example of how gifts can indeed be psychologically detached from human credit. Moreover, this Asiatic bias and way of thinking enables more of a postmodern understanding of how to offer credit for an object. A postmodern understanding of appreciating gifted objects might point to the surroundings and environment where the gifted objects were created. This contrasts to a modern understanding of appreciating objects and art, which would place an emphasis on crediting the individual artist or creator.

In a gift-giving world, it can be challenging for some Western-biased individuals may have a tendency to separate the giver from the gift or the creator behind the gift-giving. One gets stuck in the system of credit. Another related issue is what the goal of the gift might be. For instance, is the goal of giving a gift a reaction from the self? Is the goal of giving a gift a reaction from Others? Or, is the goal of giving a gift to feel a reaction from oneself due to a reaction sensed from Others? If one’s goal behind giving a gift aims at the first aforementioned question, then one enters a therapeutic kind of goal; a goal that is about feeling good. If one’s goal behind giving a gift aims at the second question, then one might move toward more toward a genuinely Other-centered approach to giving.

In addition, communication ethics is also embedded in the gift. Mere decisions behind gifts seem to imply one’s own code or decisions to protect and promote some kind of good(s). When considering the impact that gifts have in everyday personal, professional, and political life, one should also ask what the role of communication ethics could be in gift giving and receiving. Responding to the related question of how ethics might be embedded in everyday practices of gift-giving and receiving requires an analytical application that contextualizes the question in the historical moment and offering a few implications for the role or even deterioration of ethics in this practice. Implications should address possibilities and effects of the topic of the gift’s

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possibility of finding a connection to communication ethics. These implications will consider how gifts play a part in the larger public sphere.

Gifts should be considered through a communication ethics angle because this topic invites readers to see how both form and content can change in a gift across time and within different traditions. The first angle will consider the notion of a final cause. If a final cause is considered to ultimately come to death, a debate over whether a post-life, purgatory, or kind of soul transcendence enters philosophical questions. To avoid or mask the ultimate, which is death, some scholars have argued how people might resort to making lists (Eco, 2009) or experiencing guilt, depression, and dread (Beck, 1973, Heidegger, 1996). For Anton (2010), the best way of approaching the issue or final cause of death is through what he refers to as gift character. Gift character, he argues, is one of the few characteristics that makes humans unique from animals. As examples, other characteristics unique to the human include humor and rhetoric.

In returning to gift character, a gift happens in a way that is “thrown upon” a person. This comes from Heidegger’s notion of thrownness, or *geworfenheit*. Such a thrownness reminds us that we do not ask for nor deserve gifts. In fact, for Anton, life is a gift so grandiose that it cannot be repaid. Such a non-reciprocity or asymmetry in life ends up causing humans various levels of guilt. Humans sense a gift and associated guilt with the gift and want to repay it somehow. The paradox is that we can never pay back the gift of life in full and the resulted anxiety can stay with humans throughout life. The anxiety and heaviness that may be felt does not realize a reason, though. Life, in this regard, is treated as an ultimate mystery; life is an ultimate gift.

Anton’s position on the gift is one representative of a version of an atheist view on life-as-gift which gains light through thinking about death as a gift as well. Anton also moves a bit

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further into a position of how guilt, cultivated by a gift, is what motivates a death-phobic culture. The fear, anxiety, mystery, and dread of death can serve to complicate how we view final cause, which has been interpreted as a purpose behind some kind of form. When Anton points to a final cause of life as living as good of a life as one can before death, he embraces the mystery in a freeing and positive way. This perspective lends a more positive approach to realistically thinking about the inevitability of death as well as “letting go” of common conceptions of death.

Anton makes a pro-death claim public in the book, *Sources of Significance*. In addition, he presents ways of thinking about how the self comes to be one in a consumerist society. This self can become one that does not have clear enough vision to see the ambiguity of life’s gifts. Such a clouded self by consumerist tendencies does not have a grasp on life’s gifts and may not be able to appreciate life as given without a giver. The life without a giver standpoint is a way of thinking through an atheist mindset, which Anton makes quite clear in his book. Not every gift is desired, asked for, or even positive. He argues that a key characteristic of a gift is that it is something you get without asking for it. Important examples of this theory include the idea that no one asks to be born. No one asks for life. You wake up and it comes to you. Things come to you.

Anton is showing a connection to Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein*’s thrownness in life. Thrownness, or *geworfenheit* has a different originary relation to *Dasein* than being-toward-death, or *Sein-Zum-Tode*. For Heidegger, both create anxiety. Throughout life, one develops an awareness of death, which brings about life’s gift character. The awareness of one’s inevitable death, or the possibility of non-being brings about anxiety. Ironically, however, *Dasein* eventually does not experience one’s own death. The ones who experience the death are those who are alongside of *Dasein* during death. The ones alongside *Dasein* are those who are left in

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the lifeworld to experience the effects of the loss of a person. Such a specific connotation on the gift implies that the Universe has inflated the word. For Anton, the unfortunate part about the non-recognition of life-as-gift leads humans to becoming individuated or self-aware to a degree of seeing the self as separate to the universe. This perspective could indeed be interpreted as an over-awareness. Taken to extreme, however, such a kind of solipsistic awareness may perpetuate undesired levels of anxiety, dread, and even depression.

Furthermore, the value of Levinas' notions of non-reciprocity and asymmetry lends way to considering communication ethics as embedded in gift giving and receiving. Buber demanded reciprocal recognition whereas Levinas did not (Arnett, 2010). For Levinas, responsibility is within the call of *illegitimacy* and call to the Other. This contrasts with Buber, who, on the other hand, holds that responsibility is within the call of *ipseity* and a call to individuality through encountering the Other. The origin of language is a response. Infinity is found in the responsibility of the other. *Illegitimacy* emphasizes how God is beyond knowledge and incomprehensible. God shows himself's totality through our infinite relationship and responsibility to others. In this work, Levinas (1969) makes ethics and responsibility for others a first philosophy. The Other is infinitely other. There is an alterity versus totality. For Levinas, (1987), the "I" has temporality and the Other interrupts it with time. The other serves as a disruption or interruption to the temporality. This further points to how Being (God) cannot be reduced to ontological distinctions and rather, it is a paradoxical discourse that is beyond Being, itself. The revealing of Being is not ontological, but rather, "beyond essence" (Levinas, 1998). Following this first philosophy by Levinas, giving to others seems to be an infinite gesture we perform throughout life.

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The life-as-gift angle is important to situate as one of the more in-depth theoretical positions on what a gift could mean in continental philosophy and rhetorically. Some theories may directly work with the term, “gift”, while others allude to it. For instance, the gift can be situated in theories regarding the Other. In particular, Levinas's description of ethics falls within a responsibility for the Other (Arnett, 2004). Such a responsibility represents infinity. Both Levinas and Buber “point to a dialogic ethic within a phenomenological focus of attention upon ethics and responsibility and the dialogic importance of existential invitational reciprocity” (p. 11). Arnett et al (2012) refer to the exchange as constituted in the betweenness of two monologic spheres or in between persons. “Interpreting otherwise” refers to an “I” that is formed in response to the call of others. This can be extended to an “I” being constructed out of the act of giving or gifting to others. This way of giving or gifting can simply be communication. Communication as a gift is a notion that considers presence, call, and response as gifts. The expression, “Thank you,” therefore, could even suffice as gift.

There are multiple “I’s” formed out of Levinas and Buber’s theories. The monologic I, the dialogic I, and the responsive ethical I. “Whereas Levinas understands the “I” as responsive to a primordial ethical call, Buber sees the “I” as a responsive resultant encounter “between” story, historical situation, and the Other” (Arnett, 2004). “They understand the “I” emerging as a by-product, responding to a call of responsibility. The “I” enacts responsibility; the “I” finds identity in response to a call from the Other (Levinas) and the “between” (Buber, 1970, p. 11). The discussion of these “I’s” can inform a new way of looking at how “I” or a sense of self can form through the activity of giving gifts throughout one’s life. In other words, the act of giving serves to create a version of the self. When interpreted in this way, and with the assistance of reading how Levinas and Buber respectively understand the I’s emergence, gifts can be

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compared to the Aristotelian material causes that give way to a version of a self. The version of the self that comes after giving can be compared to an Aristotelian formal cause. Whether this version of the (giving) self is positive or negative is another question. In any case, this self that is emerged through giving that I am proposing seems to happen across diachronic time.

In respect to the discussion of time, Heidegger (1996), for instance, might have pointed to a response that describes how gift character could be possible across time. As being reveals itself over time, one of the things that makes humans a unique species, their gift character, is also expressed across time. A self that forms across diachronic time sets forth an ethical kind of self. Arnett et al (2009) articulate a communication ethics that protects and promotes given goods. Diachronic can be understood as time in historical context of flow (Garrett, 2019). In the context of gifts, we can come to understand gifts as goods, ones that we culturally learn how to protect and promote in order to initiate and sustain everyday relations. The goods that are gifts are not learned in schools.

When making the ethical decision of whether or not to answer the call to this first responsibility, one may very well engage in an analysis over whether or not the Other is a generalized or concrete Other. This kind of analysis that takes place with oneself regarding gifts may also include monologue. In other words, the decision, timing, choice in content, and severity of a gift can be pursued first through monologue. What becomes dialogic, however, is when the gift enters the space in between two persons. For Buber, I come to know of myself through the Other. For instance, I might not know myself until I interact, communicate, and socialize with Others. During the in-between process articulated by Buber, I might also learn who I am not. This process makes meaning through negation and affirmation and through the in-between of dialogue. The I-Thou relationship can sometimes get confused with the I-It relationship, which

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does not consider the other as a concrete other. In the I-It relational structure, one regards the other as more of a generalized other. During monologue, we come to consider whether someone is a generalized or concrete other.

For Benhabib (1992), generalized others are affirmed in the public sphere through institutional norms. “The generalized other requires us to view each individual as a rational being entitled to the same rights and duties we would want for ourselves” (p. 158). Norms of interaction are based on institutional ones. The concrete other “requires us to view each rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution.” (p. 159). The basic premise that humans develop defense and survival mechanisms in life that do not recognize or reconcile death is also expressed through Becker (1973). In other words, there is a kind of living within a belief system of immortality.

Decisions over how and what to give depending on what kind of Other is present is beyond the point for other philosophers on the topic of gift. Moving on to another issue, there is the appearance of a gift, which in turn serves as a signifier for repayment or debt. Derrida (1992) sets out to deconstruct the process of and around the gift. After two books, however, he does not fully come to an answer. Gift, for Derrida, is a paradox that starts with the circulation and naming of an object as a gift. For Derrida, whom is indebted to the alterity of Levinas, metaphysics itself is a kind of hospitality characterized by an unlimited openness to the Other. This unlimited or infinite openness is a demand for hospitality that precedes all revelation and obligates all humans to welcome every Other. This perspective informs his thinking on the gift. The gift is “that which interrupts economy”. In other words, a true gift is one without an expectation for an economically beneficial exchange.

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Gifts may also not be possible due to the mere pleasure that can be experienced upon the act of giving. The giver receives something, even if not material. In this school of thought, genuine gifts are ones that are not announced, appearing, or understood as gifts. Once it is conceived and perceived as a gift, the object has lost its value as a gift. This could point to how the only genuine gifts for certain philosophers like Derrida might be life and death, respectively. A caveat in Derrida's philosophy of the gift is the assertion that traditional gift giving results in a negation of the gift. This is a negation that incurs indebtedness.

Some cultures and traditions have been socially conditioned to thank someone for a gift. There is a communicative acknowledgement of the gift. This practice of thanking for a gift is actually giving something back. Gratitude becomes a gift in this sense. Overall, for Derrida, a gift needs to be forgotten the very moment it is received. It cannot be acknowledged as a gift from either party! If one takes this position, then gift giving and receiving is an impossibility. While a gift is still possible within this impossibility, it is highly unlikely. Furthermore, the gift of death gives us freedom and rouses us to responsibility--"to what no one else can do in my place" (Derrida, 1995, p. 44).

Derrida, in his unwavering position, has critiqued Marcel Mauss's (1990) classic treatment of the gift, regarding it as everything but the gift. Mauss deals with economy, exchange, contract, and everything that impels and annuls the gift. The book discusses the exchange of gifts, obligation to reciprocate, and how this system was extended as a means of survival in ancient times. Central examples in this book are potlatch and the kula. Potlatch is an event where Native Americans congregated to exchange a variety of goods in a communal atmosphere that was usually outdoors, involving food, and other community events. Potlatch was the primary mode of economic exchange for Native Americans. There was honor in both

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the giver and receiver during potlatch events. Rules for the events involved the expectation that there is constant circulation of goods at such a community event. Mauss lands on the main idea, however, through his book, *The gift: The form and reason for exchange in Archaic societies*, that there is no such thing as a free gift. The practice of potlatch has been outlawed. There is always interest around and created by gifts.

What each philosopher brings to the table is a set of biases, axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and philosophy behind why some kind of theory works in the world. MacIntyre is another philosopher who enters the discussion to show how each worldview is influenced by some kind of surrounding narrative structure that he calls a tradition. We come to know the practice of gift-giving based on culturally laden traditions. Such traditions, as MacIntyre (1988) would suggest, do indeed come from somewhere. It would be egregious to consider that the learned practices and traditions randomly fall from the sky. Based on a culturally specific tradition that contextualizes gifts, we are faced with the face of the Other, and ethical choices in how, when, what, where, and to whom to give.

Another distinct direction for the creating of a new tradition in thinking about God and gift is offered by Calvin Schrag. Schrag (2002) wants to point toward the question of whether God could be re-thought of in terms of a gift or giving of something. God “as otherwise” points to an influence from Levinas, that we can interpret otherwise. Levinas’ view, though, is about interpreting the I as otherwise which arrives out of responsibility to Others. He also engages Levinas’ view and book *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*. For Schrag, there is the theme of unrepayability of the gift. It is clear that there is no expectation of some kind of return. This is quite different from the classic economic exchange model that Mauss would engage.

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Schrag is mainly engaging and responding to Derrida's book, *Given Time*. Through this engagement, he recognizes the uniqueness of the previously discussed notion of gift character.

Gift culture, on the other hand, refers to the way that gifts become commodified in a capitalistic and economically efficient society. The example for children to pay their parents back for labor involved in raising could be answered by paying it back in some kind of other way to someone else. Gift culture in this way becomes a commodified exchange of humanity.

Following in line with Derrida and Anton's approach to gifts, gifts need not be intentional in order to be a gift. In fact, within the unrecognizability of the gift, it is able to actually become one. Overall, Schrag agrees with Derrida on the impossibility and paradox of the gift.

The gift [of God] is otherwise known as 'conscience' (Latin: *conscientia*: *con* [with] *scientia* [knowing]), a gift that facilitates a knowing-with God about matters of importance (for example, perfection). Moreover, gifted with a heart, our lived bodies provide God a 'dwelling place' (Hebrew: *makom*) where God's presence can be felt in times of need. The health of the lived body is born, as is living a good life. (2018, p. 22)

Moving away from Western traditions within continental philosophy, Asiatic thinker, Soetsu Yanagi (1989) offers a way of thinking about a contemporary historical moment where many persons are caught up in giving credit to a giver. The issue of credit is one worth raising within the topic of gifts. The idea that gifts do not have to yield, demand, or come with the expectation of credit might be radical or challenging for one with a Western bias and upbringing. Moving forward, however, we know that the writing about communication ethics implies that the writer acts within realms of bias, prejudice, and philosophical assumptions.

Yanagi's (1989) foundational work on Japanese aesthetics helps to inform a way of viewing gift-giving. In particular, he mentions the importance of separating the self from the

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artwork. One of the tenets of Buddhist ways of seeing beauty is by removing the self from the artwork or object at hand. Moreover, Yanagi refers to the concept of infinity when making art in a way noticeable enough to read alongside of Levinas' notion of infinity, which is seen in the face of the Other. For Yanagi (1989), "Such a pot or any work of art is not an expression of the maker alone, but a degree of enlightenment wherein infinity, however briefly, obliterates the minor self" (p. 90). Here, it is clear that Yanagi is placing the self below what he calls a kind of enlightenment that can occur within the expression of making a work.

In application to gift-giving, it becomes difficult for some people to separate between the person and the gift. This can be compared to how difficult it can be to separate between the medium and the message in a McLuhan sense. Furthermore, he talks about what becomes the risk of art for art's sake. "If, however, it ceases to serve a functional need it runs the risk of becoming art for art's sake and untrue to its nature, depending upon the sincerity of the craftsman" (Yanagi, 1989, p. 97). With gift-giving, especially surrounding marks in life such as weddings, baby showers, birthdays, and holidays, some Americans, at least, may run into a commercialized, commodified, exchange of material for the mere sake of exchanging something. This dangerously points to a gift for a gift's sake, similar to Yanagi's warning for making art for art's sake.

Furthermore, the previously discussed concept of asymmetry is regarded highly in the world of Japanese aesthetics as well. While asymmetry is key for Levinas's theory on the call to the Other, it is revealed as a key principal also in Buddhist and Japanese aesthetics. As expressed in the text, "The beauty of irregularity, which in its true form is actually liberated from both regularity and irregularity-the asymmetric principle contains the seed of the highest form of

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beauty known to man.” (Yanagi, 1989, p. 126). When thinking about and taking things as and for what they are, we encounter an idea from Buddhism, which reveals,

If you can void your mind of all intellectualization, like a clear mirror that simply reflects, all the better. This non-conceptualization-the Zen state of *mushin* (no mind) may seem to represent a negative attitude, but from it springs the true ability to contact things directly and positively. (Yanagi, 1989, p. 112)

Approaching gifts with a kind of emptiness might be both positive and negative. The positive might occur if we rid ourselves of expectations about the gift before any exchange. The negative might occur if we are so empty-minded that we do not consider the Other at all.

Yanagi’s (1989) view of keeping the credit anonymous is something that could assist the economic-influenced cycle of giving and receiving gifts. As aforementioned, it can be challenging to separate the notion of one’s own name and the gift. For example, gifts often come with tags, clearly stating who it is from and who it is for. This naming system can implicate a feeling of obligation to respond or reciprocate, a systematic reflexive impulse to mimic the behavior. While reciprocity is not a negative thing, this reflexive gesture of giving back is one that is initiated by an initial nudge. To naturally and anonymously come to the idea of giving a gift would implicate that one does not stock up in socially constructed name-based credit that gets remembered and used in various ways. In this way, the tags associated with gifts become forms of action for posterity.

After addressing some common ground among Jewish and Japanese philosophies, I now move to a French theorist who posits an original position on the gift economy. In *The Accursed Share*, Bataille (1988) makes the argument that society will inevitably have an excess of time and energy that needs to be expunged. He argues that this kind of leisure time needs to be

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luxuriously spent, though giving or hedonistic activities. It is important to him that these activities do not directly contribute to some kind of economic productivity or efficiency. Bataille stands behind the idea that without such an expunging of this “excess” that all humans inevitably face, that serious consequences and disruption could occur, even war. His theory is a counter-position on classic economic schools of thought and Marxism. His analysis on what needs to occur in order to keep a productive economy going and society content is tangential to gift culture and a gift economy. Gift economies take an excess and decide to give rather than sell or create an efficient exchange. Gift economies based on this alternative economic concept may be one way to help reach vulnerable populations of societies. With all the excess that inevitably becomes up for decision, one may pay the excess forward. If everyone decides to do something productive with all the inevitable waste, it could create a gestalt effect where more people might come to see a bit more even of a playing field.

Bataille’s analysis on gift economies is a post-modern look at how an alternative economy may ensue. The post-modern paradigm is a major time period that follows modernity. Scholars such as Jacques Derrida, Jean Francois Lyotard, and Hannah Arendt also consider post-modernism as a condition. Under this time period or condition, all of the other perspectives and paradigms discussed in this project can be viewed through the post-modern lens. Ontologically, the nature of reality is not grasped empirically. The reality of being can be interpreted, deconstructed, and analyzed through various analyses (discourse, textual, semiotic).

One view under the post-modern paradigm reveals an assumption on epistemology, understanding deconstruction as a method “to reveal arbitrary patterns of language use and to open the text to alternative interpretations that are otherwise hidden by dominant meanings.” (May & Mumby, 2005). Philosophically, post-modern scholars tend to put emphasis on finding

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new and different ways to reach understanding that is sometimes not even conclusive. Post-modernism moves on and away from the scientific method that was once revered in modernity. It embraces hyphenation, polysemy, mixed methods, and moving beyond the norms set in place once by modernist thinking.

Hallmarks of the paradigm, axiologically speaking, include the value of skepticism, questioning, fragmentation of methods and voices, and an embracing of contradictions. This paradigm houses a multiplicity of ways to analyze a phenomenon in communication. Under the post-modern time frame, the discursive turn is a phenomenological focus that values the following: concerns with essentialism, intersectionality, concerns with binary thinking, group identity politics, and representation.

Bataille's (1988) version of a gift economy that requires luxurious expenditures from time to time is another hermeneutic entrance into a world of giving. It is in this way that a gift economy poses an alternative organizational system of economy, one that relies on a different kind of semiotic system of exchange. In comparison, Baudrillard (1975) mentions this kind of place where

...an entirely different organization: the signified and the referent are now abolished to the sole profit of the play of signifiers, or a generalized formalization in which the code no longer refers back to any subjective or objective 'reality', but to its own logic.

(pp.127-128)

The responsibility to give is learned and culturally conditioned across multiple ethnic traditions for varying reasons. In certain traditions in East Asia, the need to expunge sin and evil is accomplished through the conduit of giving to others. Giving, in this way, serves as the

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medium for accumulating a kind of spiritual credit or karma. A potential problem with this kind of expunging is that certain classes of people are not equipped with mere material to give.

The question of what the role of communication ethics might be in gift giving and receiving is an important one to ponder in today's historical moment. As Levinas would mention how an ethically responsive I emerges out of the call to be responsible for the Other, a kind of I can emerge out of gift-giving or giving in general. Such an "I" that emerges is formed, learns, communicates, and acquires efficacy and even a new final cause through giving.

Giving goes beyond the material realm and extends into presence and communication. Presence and communication themselves are gifts that we give to Others. Coming to know oneself, in this regard, might come forward through a continuous process of giving in one's life. Such a continuous process is also a way to describe the notion of thirdness. Gift-giving aids in the Peircian sense of thirdness if one considers that giving, whether embraced or hastily performed, aids in a constitution of an "I". This evolved "I" can emerge through giving across time. In this life, we continue to give, whether intentional or non-intentional, and we are continuously carving out an I.

Communication ethics, as a way to understand how goods are promoted and protected, seems to have import within the process of giving and receiving. Future directions for this initial study could further explore the role of ethics in practices of the gift within a specific selection of culturally diverse traditions. The consistency of the form of gift-giving would remain across the changing content of how the gift is interpreted differently within cultures. Such an Aristotelian analysis of form and content could then be a rhetoric of the gift. Goods discussed in this section is different from subsequent sections in this project, which look to Mary Douglas's interpretation

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on goods based on her critical feminist account on how we come to desire the accumulation of many goods in life.

A further direction of exploration in the topic of gifts could also show how various cultural traditions create practices to protect and promote the goods of gifts. This display of practices of the gift could provide patchwork or intellectual history behind such a universal practice. The universality of gift-giving is expressed in its particularity when contextualized within specific cultural traditions. Some gifts can be viewed as goods that involve intention while other gifts are spontaneous goods that emerge without a predetermination. Again, those gifts that are not premeditated are argued by Levinas and Derrida to be genuine gifts. Derrida, Levinas, and Yanagi's positions matter for communication ethics because they show a human responsibility to give or serve Others through gifts.

The event of giving and receiving gifts enters what Baudrillard (1976) would refer to as a symbolic and semiotic order. For Baudrillard, the very possibility of a commodified give and take of capital in an economy that operates on money as symbolic exchange for goods, life, happiness, and prosperity is made possible through simulacra. For Baudrillard, one example of objects that falls under a symbolic order are antiques.

The antique object no longer has any practical application, its role being merely to signify. It is astructural, it refuses structure, it is the extreme case of disavowal of the primary functions. Yet it is not afunctional, nor purely decorative, for it has a very specific function within the system, namely the signifying of time. (Baudrillard, 1976, p. 74)

The exchange and free flow of goods is what constitutes simulacra, which is a free-floating of signifiers. It is out of these simulacra that reality emerges. Reality is perceived by

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way of semiotic simulacra. In this way, reality can change according to the given free-floating signification of signs. One of the largest used forms of capital is money. According to his theory of symbolic exchange, new signifiers can be used to signify or symbolically represent new forms of values of exchange. This is precisely where gifts enter the scene as a possibility as new forms of signifiers.

For Baudrillard, a gift is a kind of sacrifice. It represents a kind of power that can also be reversed. He describes sacrifice as “The potential to reverse and undo capitalist power structures that are founded on economic principles of accumulation” (Baudrillard, 1976, p. 9). The problem with the theory of the gift is that it operates in a sign-exchange system that is alternative to the dominant, pathological system also known as capitalism. Outside of the registered system of capitalism, the gift operates in spheres of ritual and cultural tradition. He goes on to articulate how societies that heavily use the event of the gift as sign-exchange are ones that are heavily rule-governed. In other words, such gift-giving societies tend to also have norms in place around the semiotic tradition of the gift. For example, there are unsaid and unwritten rules about returning a gift or returning the favor of a gift.

One unwritten rule that various cultures have accustomed to is the etiquette of whether to immediately return a gift to the giver or keep it. To return a gift would be to reverse power. In this sense, gift-giving asserts a kind of power that is bestowed upon by the giver. It presents the issue of debt upon the receiver. As he states, “The rhythm of gift-exchange is cyclical in a mode characterized by challenge and reversibility. The importance of the return of the gift in the form of the counter-gift is that it contains the potential to cancel power” (Baudrillard, 1976, p. 7). What happens for Baudrillard’s theory of the gift, when taking Marx’s theory of labor into account, is that the gift of work becomes the gift of capital.

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Baudrillard demonstrates his Marxian influence in the discussion of how objects accumulate value and even surplus value across time and space.

A mutation shakes this edifice of a natural distribution or dispensing of wealth as soon as value is produced, as its reference becomes labour, and its law of equivalence is generalized to every type of labour. Value is now assigned to the distinct and rational operation of human (social) labor. It is measurable, and, in consequence, so is surplus value. (Baudrillard, 1976, p.31)

Labor that becomes recognized, legitimized, constituted, and exchanged thus enters the process of commodification. Exchanging gift-giving gestures can be measured and thought in terms of equivalent or insufficient to other categories of work performed. Gift-giving labor performed is necessary and important to also consider whenever discussing how these relations accrue value. The very process of accruing value over time implies a general semantic process where a culture decides to legitimize such performed work. This process of legitimization heavily relies upon social constructivism. In other words, semantics pertaining to objects and performed work value decided across time and space becomes constituted through social construction. Value, in this way, is a social construct.

Social constructivists value how language plays a central and crucial role to not only creating realities, but also identities, communities, and laws. One foundational premise in this paradigm comes from Edward Sapir and his student, Benjamin Lee Whorf. They came up with the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Whorf, 1956), which states that language is constitutive to reality and culture rather than reflective of it. While this theory has never been tested and may even be considered a weaker theory of reality by other scholars in the field, it is general enough to apply as a philosophical basis for the social constructivist paradigm. The language as constitutive

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approach to a philosophy of communication rejects the notion that language merely reflects reality. This is an important principle to take when also understanding how discursivity or discursive formations work in society. This leads to a better understanding of how subject positions and identities are formed in cultures. Social construction of reality shows a philosophical standpoint on how to view the world, which is through the lens that language it what makes things possible.

Understanding social constructivism means understanding that humans are the ones who hold the power over language reversal and a detangling of societal problems today. Since humans have the power to produce or work to reverse constructs, it goes in line with constructivism. Social constructivism is indeed a form of constructivist logic, which should be taken into account. We can try out best to unwind constructs, contributing to a semiotics or philosophy of how stories are told, retold, and untold. The socially constructed realities created around the practices of gift giving and receiving are ones constituted through means of verbal and non-verbal communication in many *epideictic* contexts throughout one's life. Epideictic, here, refers to the structured and celebratory occasions in one's life where gifts are involved. For example, for the purposes of this project, epideictic contexts include one's birthday, wedding, anniversary, graduation, or other major holidays. One learns what to do, how to do it, when to do it, where to do it, and what to say around the ceremonial rituals of gift giving and receiving. These socially constructed behaviors are what perpetuate the event of the gift to present itself in future generations.

Ontologically, the belief is that nature is largely socially determined. What this means is that meaning arises from "social systems rather than from individual members of society" (Allen, 2005). This paradigm is a clear case in which we can see overlap with other paradigms,

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especially the rhetorical and constitutive paradigms. Other paradigms certainly borrow elements from social constructivism, which is a mild deviation from constructivism. Viewing objects such as gifts, interactions, documents, and situations as “text” is in line also with concepts of the collective mind, institutional memory, and distributed cognition (Taylor, 1999), as they become understood in this paradigm as “social facts”.

Methodologically, the social constructivist paradigm also sees multiplicity in doing research, whether it is Geertz’s notion of a thick description when doing ethnography on a culture, or interviewing methods taken from qualitative angles. Social constructivists tend to lean toward qualitative rather than quantitative approaches to phenomena. Last, they value words and acts as powerfully symbolic in determining situations and outcomes.

Leading figures in the field such as Alfred Korzybski and S. I. Hayakawa have discussed the process of general semantics and how value changes across time. They have constructed a semantic ladder of abstraction that applies to whatever valued objects is available during a certain synchronic period in time. In *Science and Sanity*, Korzybski (1933) shows how the value of something changes over time, such as a cow. The cow is first understood as a form of currency and an object that gains value over time. He shows how the cow becomes traded for multiple cattle, then finally transforms into the concept of money or hard, publicly legitimized currency.

The creation of currency such as dollars and coins are a way to attempt to equalize the value of objects for many different types of people. It is in this way that the innovation of cash currency served as a symbolic system of order where people can participate and use money to trade, purchase, and be rewarded for performed labor in a free-market capitalist society.

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The system of abstraction theorized through Korzybski and Hayakawa's concept of value creation across time is relevant to a rhetoric and philosophy of the gift. The gift could be a much more seriously regarded form of exchange and status creation.

It is possible that the gift could, at times, take the place of hard currency. This is part of the argument that Bataille makes in *The Accursed Share*, that the alternative economy could exist, one that uses the act of giving and surrendering. This act of excess or extra is the accursed share, or the slice of wealth that becomes used either in luxurious expenditure or for the productive and for-profit reasons in a restrictive economy. The option to give with the accursed share that everyone has the option to intentionally give and participate in the event of the gift rather than operating in and competing in a mainstream capitalistic way of earning and exchanging hard currency.

Other authors who have contributed to the discussion on alternative economy and the possible function of the gift as an economic means of survival are Gibson-Graham (2006). The feminist authors admit to the growing contemporary phenomenon that some people no longer get up, get dressed, and go to an office or cubicle. Instead, people may work from home or find alternative economic means to “do work”. When the physical environmental structure of the workplace shifts to the virtual or the home, scholarship should attend to the implications of these shifts. Some scholars have been attentive to major economic shifts, like the feminist authors, Gibson-Graham (2006) in their book, *A Post-Capitalist Politics*. The book reflects some real changes and effects that capitalism continues to endure on the ways that people find and do work.

The discussion on how gifts play a role in an alternative economy connect to organizational communication. In particular, postmodern and critical scholars in organizational

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communication in particular are interested in the ways that people find meaning in ways that they find and do work. Work affects meaning making in relations to people's lives, self-efficacy, and even their sense of Being. This notion is more fully articulated in a book by George Cheney (2009) called *Just a Job?* Cheney questions how the everyday labor-based job affects a person's sense of worth, confidence and efficacy. He finds that in some cases, it is just not worth it to work a job that you don't feel happy or human in. Such pressing questions about the nature of how work has evolved today also leads to the discussion of alternative economies that revolve around give and take.

Bataille was highly influenced by Derrida's interpretation of Potlatch within Native American communities. Inspired by this traditional large communal event, Bataille's classic and controversial treatment of a general economy brought the fundamental idea that part of the problem with economic imbalances is the problem of excess. Excess, he argues, is found in every cultural system. What cultures decide to do with the excess, however, remains an interesting opening to what could be. Excess, when treated at its worst, causes destruction to an economy. However, when excess is treated as an opportunity to give, it can serve a highly rhetorical and philosophical function. The excess that many persons possess in life, whether it be through clothing, books, wealth, knowledge, or other material objects, can play symbolic roles when given. Such newly created value is something that could serve as a baby step in reducing socio-economic imbalance and egregious class discrepancies.

Understanding the origins in Marx's theory on how capital forms and flows is essential to unpack before moving into Baudrillard's theory of simulacra. As Meikle (1985) explains, capital is the final form of value (p. 84). Money, in this case, is referred to as a lower form of capital. In terms of *entelechia* or *entelechy*, which is discussed first by Aristotle, then by Kenneth Burke,

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the potential of money arriving at the form of capital may take place if it indeed reaches its point of actuality. Tracing the intellectual lineage, in this case, becomes enlightening in order to discover the influences between thinkers.

Potentiality and actuality lead to a conundrum of obligation in gift exchanges. In terms of how potentiality and actuality affect each other dialectically, from Hegel's dialectic, he presents a few positions on how a law or principle is formed in how

...the form of law in terms of the realization of potentialities in a whole which has an essence in which those potentialities in here.. there is something implicit, which is not completely real (Actual) not yet in reality.. a possibility. (Meikle, p. 31-32.)

He takes it as far as identifying how nature might realize its final purpose in the world, which is how he describes *telos*. He goes on, "For the potentiality of the essence to become historically actual, a second element must be added.. namely activity, actualization, which for Hegel means the human will, passion and interest" (p. 32). For Hegel, the teleology of history and great ideas, and innovations is brought forth by passions. Passions are what propel action and execute an efficient causation that is necessary to put ideas into forms, or possibilities into actualities. *Telos*, in this sense, can be shifted and made new depending on human passions.

Understanding Hume's theory on the passions can serve as support and deeper contextualization behind Hegel's emphasis on passions and *telos*. Hegel's emphasis on how human passions propel *telos* are in conversation with what David Hume cautioned many in his philosophy on the passions. In particular, he believed that "passions must be educated so that a human being qua rational human being may pursue ends specific to that rationality" (MacIntyre, 1988, p. 201). Moreover, passions arise as a result to exertion of the will. Examples of dialectical passions for Hume include desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear.

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The power of passions explain why and how they often seem to take the place of rationality. To understand a select few passions even further, Hume offers calm passions, violent passions, and the intentionality of objects. First, calm passions indicate benevolence and resentment, the love of life, kindness to children, general appetite to good, and general aversion to evil. In addition, calm passions make people more sociable (1985, p. 306.). Violent passions, on the other hand, are what receive injuries from another, immediate threat of any grievous ill. Hume maintains that it is from calm passions that we can cultivate a strength of mind. This strength of mind is a virtue and any rational activity as well as the ends of any rational activity is set forth by passions. These “passions must be educated so that a human being qua rational human being may pursue ends specific to that rationality” (p. 201).

Reasons do not motivate us—passions do. Passions are not reasonable or unreasonable—they are existential. “A passion is an original existence” (p. 301). Some criticism on Hume’s account of passions is that he doesn’t take emotions into consideration—emotions that presuppose judgment. On the intentionality of objects, passions are motivated not by intentionality alone but the intentionality of objects. In other words, whatever the object of desire is will propel a passion to put forth an action. Objects, in this sense, is treated broadly, such as an “object of desire”. This is different from other views of object-oriented-ontology, for instance.

Passions are representations of their objects. In judging acts of passion, to be virtuous is an expression of pride or love. To be vicious is an expression of hatred or humility. In his analysis on David Hume’s theory of passions, one of Alasdair MacIntyre’s main questions is to ask how the passions relate to the utterance of moral or other evaluative or practical judgments? (p. 303) Utterances are signs of passions (p. 305) and expressive rather than assertive in function.

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“Reason is, and ought to be the slave of the passions..” (p. 204). One supplies reasoning about means and ends towards his or her passions. Similarly, one supplies reasoning about the passions of others and regularities which relate to their passions and actions to our own. Hume maintains that there are two species of obligation (p. 310). First, there is the natural obligation to justice, which are inferred from factual premises about human passions (p. 311). Then, there is the moral obligation, concerned with an “ought or ought not” (p. 310).

Connecting passions and the moral obligation behind motivations for gift giving can help explain why and when we choose to give. Although human passions may be organic to the point of not readily controllable, an awareness of directing the passions toward an intentional gift exchange could be a possibility. Indeed, gift-giving falls into many cultural traditions, including ones of obligation, economic exchange, and flattery. To redirect some of these traditions and harness the rhetorical power of the gift when given could lead to a reclaiming of human passions for public diplomacy, international relations, and even peace and conflict resolution.

Marx’s influence on Baudrillard is significant to unpacking his theory of simulacra. When labor from work turns into capital, a kind of gift from capital is able to emerge. In order for a new kind of order to emerge, one that is not consistent with the dominant feudalism-oriented way of capitalism, a new semiotic order may emerge out of a reduced play of signs. He also states that there are various orders of simulacra, including counterfeit, masks, theatre, and *tompe l’oeil*. Gifts may enter a cultural sphere as a new order of signs when the semiotic significant of capital runs out of starts to change or lose its value. In order for objects such as forms of capital to lose their value, a confrontation with a code of some sort must occur. In this way, new signifiers may emerge if there is a disruption of a code at hand.

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A disruption of code is what will allow for a new semiotic order of exchange to emerge and evolve. The disruption of capital flowing in a traditional capitalist and feudalist way is in line with Bataille's theory of an alternative economy of gift, luxury, and excess. For him, living outside of a mainstream working class means to actually live life. Quality of life seems to be paramount rather than working for a living in this particular French line of philosophy.

Importantly, disruption of a code such as capital may very well be an alternative option for some cultures. The Native American tradition of potlatch, for example, was a large banquet-oriented forum with food and various stages of gifts. Potlatches included everything from metal to animals and were held as the primary economic events for people to acquire status and wealth in certain Native American circles. Even though potlatch has been outlawed, it presents an alternative message and disruption of what was a dominant code. Instead of using money as code for everyday exchange, the accumulation of goods was held periodically at these large community events.

The recognition of what Baudrillard calls "the original gift" is a pointing to life as gift. Here, he tends to share a view that others such as Schrag, Derrida, and Marion share, which is that life itself is a gift. While Baudrillard refrains from using religious terms, such as God or creator, he does admit to this "original gift" of life. People are created without consultation, without being asked, and they enter a semiotic world of simulacra and exchange. In other words, there is not a request from us to be put to life. The "giver" in this case acts without a request. This points to the givenness of life. In response to the original gift, a new world is able to unravel, one that is highly symbolic and based on simulacra. This new semiotic order is an alternative to capitalism and hegemony.

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The differences between a synchronism, diachronism, and anachronism of objects (Baudrillard, 1996) can be applied to the event of the gift. For Baudrillard, the example of antiques hold a different quality of being than everyday functional objects. Everyday functional objects simply hold a purpose without allowing the user into a metaphorical escape into an aesthetic or previous time. The mere ability for an antique object to allow the possessor to escape current time and think back to another time period represents an anachronism. The anachronism of antiques is contrasted to the internal or external qualities of objects, or the synchronic and diachronic qualities. Functional objects are considered to be devoid of meaning and the ability to be precious, whereas an antique takes us to a place elsewhere and is defined by its mythical quality (1976, p. 80).

As mentioned, Baudrillard's concept of anachronism is indeed a positive treatment and connotation of what the word anachronism means. It offers a positive angle by showing how objects out of time as well as mythical objects can hold unique and eccentric value. Later, in chapter seven, I will demonstrate how gifts given in genuine spontaneity, without rigid expectations for time, obligations for return, or even naming from the given or receiver can be considered anachronistic gifts. This connotation of anachronism, this positive treatment of what is sometimes thought with negative connotation, is what could point towards a possibility of the gift. The possibility of the gift is a gift given asymmetrically.

The difference between functional objects and antiques brings up opportunities for discussing an alternative economic system. An alternative economic system based on object exchange may function by using both antiques, or meaning-filled objects, as well as functional objects, or meaning devoid objects. The richer possibility for these signifiers to enter and impact a system depends on the complementarity between antiques and objects. For example, it is

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common for a home to have two different kinds of devices. A common example for complementarity in the home is the possession of a real wood-burning fireplace in a main room in the home in addition to a central heating system. The presence of one object compliments and expresses the other.

Moreover, Baudrillard's notion of the anachronism of objects could support a new way of thinking about gift-giving that fosters better every day interpersonal and public relations. I am arguing that a new way to think about anachronistic giving in this case, would be to give without a real reason, warning, purpose, or, in some cases, without relevance of the subject of the gift. Such an anachronism could indeed disrupt an already existing flow of capital. The extant flow of capital could use a disruption due to its oppressive capacities. The way of capitalism, how labor turns to work, which turns into money, which turns into forms of capital, is a system that indeed may include and violently exclude persons. Various forms of capital such as economic, social, and cultural, (Bourdieu, 1985) cannot be as easily obtained but certain members as others. This is why the anachronism of giving has the rhetorical power to change up the system towards positive relationship-building among friends and strangers.

Gifts harness power to change and maintain relational systems as well as influence human memory. Memory can be triggered especially when gifts take the form of physical objects. Specifically, the hermeneutic and memorable role that objects constitute in our lives leaves a trace of human action in the lifeworld. While any person could consider the hermeneutic role of objects in one's everyday life, more specificity should be placed upon the gift quality and gift potential of these everyday objects. After all, "objects provide comfort in dealing with transitions in one's life" (Turan, 2014).

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Gifted objects are a powerful conduit for consciousness and memory especially if we choose to accept the premise that we can understand any given subject matter as a medium. Inspired by McLuhan, gifted objects can be thought of as media extensions of ourselves. Such gifted objects communicate what is otherwise incommunicable. In other words, the inexpressible finds a medium of expression through objects. While communication from thoughts is never perfect, objects can help fill in the communicative gaps in everyday relational and professional life. Moreover, from a Media Ecology perspective, things or objects can also be described as constitutive to the human condition.

In the media ecology tradition, Lance Strate (2017) incorporates an Arendtian understanding to his version of media ecology by describing how technology, things, or articles in a lifeworld make up the conditions of human existence. Phenomenology begins with Husserl's (2001) call "to the things themselves!" These gifted objects possess such pathos-driven capacity that they seem to aid in the process of remembering, recognizing, learning, and processing signs in spaces of temporality.

A gift's potential to leave a semantic imprint upon human memory can be connected to the existing scholarship on memory, place, and object. Adopting Edward Casey's (2013) description of space as a physical extension in the world whereas place is a lived habituation of the subject(s) in the world. There are various spaces of temporality where gifted objects function both rhetorically and philosophically. Some of these spaces include a workplace as well as one's personal dwelling location or home.

In the workplace, gifts may be given strategically as professional rituals as well as sentimentally within home environments. In a sense, these two spaces—workplace and dwelling location—dialectically work together to constitute one's *sense* of place. Both a workplace and a

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dwelling location bounce off of each other in a noticeable dialectical tension, affecting the other locale thoroughly and meaningfully. In this regard, a workplace is not place. It is a space. Space differs from place in its characteristic of somewhere that is used for coming and going rather than more substantial dwelling. Place, therefore, may not be fully achieved during one's everyday work-life process.

As Cassin (2016) states in her book, *Nostalgia, when are we ever at home?*, people may never actually be quite "at home" during their endeavors and every day organizational life. From a post-modern understanding, we are always on the move, becoming, not quite there, or not yet arrived. During this time, the identity is becoming, performing (Butler, 1988), and in flux. For Butler, to think of identity as a fixed, permanent state is not the point.

Identity is a social construct that is constantly adapting and picking up on signs in the environment. Identity, therefore, in one's work environment as well as in a home environment changes through time and space. Part of the gift's role in entering the fleeting spaces of work life and more substantial places of a home is the capacity to affect one's mood, well-being, and sense of identity in these two locations. Showing the connection between what gifted objects can do and how they affect everyday performance in a workspace draws attention to such gifted objects rhetorical and philosophical capacities. The power of the event of the gift happens discursively and rhetorically. Gifted objects hold status, significance, and aid in performance related roles in everyday life.

In addition to the process of becoming identities with the aid of gifted objects in both workspaces and home places, people within a workplace can be considered as guests to the space. Janie Harden Fritz (2013) uses the term "guest" metaphorically in her book, *Professional Civility* to emphasize that the workplace is not one's home or place. While some workplaces and

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school programs may use the rhetoric of home and place to foster a feeling of comfort and common ground, Fritz argues how this metaphor can be unproductive for members of that given community. As an alternative, her guest metaphor describes how members or apprentices within a profession should consider themselves as guests entering and exiting someone else's home when arriving and leaving work.

Treating oneself as guest with the expectation that fellow workplace members also treat you as a guest implies cultural etiquettes that depend on one's rooted traditions and narratives. For example, it may be a polite gesture to offer a gift upon entering someone else's home for the first time. This is how gifts and professionalism under the guest metaphor may work hand and hand with each other. Gifts may signal a higher sign of maturity, respect, and an ethical demeanor especially in workplace settings between both colleagues and across other power hierarchies.

Fritz's articulation of how one's role as guest may be a more functional way for productivity in workplaces is crucial to understanding how the gift is able to discursively function in everyday organizational life. The guest metaphor in the workplace offered by Fritz connotes a range of gift-giving connections. For example, if the worker is treated as a guest then the employer might think of that worker as a gift. Reciprocally, if a worker is to take on a guest metaphor towards the workplace, then employment could be thought of as a gift. Objects exchanged during holidays, special occasions, or on days of commencement constitute traditions and narratives for how other guests might be and behave in the future. The practices of gifting objects in workplaces during special occasions, in this sense, become scripts, both professionally and personally, both formally and informally, for how one might perform around various people of status and distinction.

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While human life is temporal, objects have time and can exist beyond our lifetime. In this sense, even everyday objects seem to have a special power that can be experienced and considered further. Taken-for-granted gifted objects in spaces of temporality and places of dwelling have potentiality in their physical and metaphysical forms. One way that gifted objects in work and home locations reach one form of their actuality is by rhetorically and hermeneutically functioning as mnemonic devices. Any person doing some kind of work for an employer involves a degree of memory. Work-life requires the remembering roles, practices, information, names, procedures, policies, and other scripts. The human memory changes across time with temporal events, whether positive or negative.

Gifted objects in time are able to serve as positive rhetorical interruptions and with these attention-earning things, we are able to create a powerful, meaningful, and complementary form of mnemonics. The process of receiving and subsequently placing and arranging gifted objects within a workspace constitute as visual and mnemonic aids. When gifted objects are received, placed, and arranged in one's dwelling space, we choose to honor the giver of the objects. Thus, by choosing to display gifted objects within someone's home, the receiver, in this sense, gives power to the giver. The giving back-and-forth between giver and receiver is a highly discursive process of communication that implies respect, power, role, and tradition. The process of power that is given through a back-and-forth interaction between giver and receiver can be a cyclical or circular process.

The presence of gifted objects in a home or workspace can trigger the capacity to remember and other forms of memory. As memory may be mediated by such objects, the relationships between memory and objects has been discussed in humanities literature. Francis Yates's (1966) project in her book, *The Art of Memory* presents the thesis that objects and visual

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stimuli serve as aids to natural human memory. She discusses how artificial memory becomes an extension upon natural memory, which is “already engrafted upon our minds, born simultaneously with thought” (Yates, 1996, p. 18). She draws our attention to ancient forms of *techne* for memory, which include the slow process of memorizing long texts. This ancient *techne* for memory was once performed through the deliberate use of taking the mind through a series of diverse visual images and places previously experienced. For example, ancient orators and poets relied on scenes of nature, architecture of buildings, and even ornaments within rooms to provoke and stimulate the arranged sections and subject matter within long oral presentations of literature such as speeches and epics. The practice taken by ancient orators was in the seeing of images stored onto places that reflected the art and architecture of the ancient pre-scribal (pre-written) world. Speakers created new memory images based on real-life visual images encountered in everyday life.

Yates builds her thesis from the work of Cicero, quoting how vision is the strongest or keenest of all the senses. In other words, in some cases, what is seen trumps what is heard. For Cicero, memory allows for the other canons of rhetoric to emerge. As expressed from *Ad Herennium*, it is “...the treasure house of invention, the custodian of all the parts of rhetoric, memory” (Cicero or Cornificius, 80 BCE, p. 18). In Cicero’s *Rhetoric Ad Herennium* (80 BCE), he indicates how the organization of the mind in antiquity involved a rigorous training of memory through experiencing images within places. Orators with high capacities for memory were among the most respected in antiquity. Today, part of what could be responsible ways of giving and receiving involves human memory. While orators in antiquity had uniquely impressive feats of memorizing epics in their day, we, too, can consider adapted ways of borrowing some of these ancient forms of *techne* for the formulation and retaining of memory.

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In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger (1977) offers how objects actually have a being that can be enacted through human motivation and intention. Objects become material and even technologies through our human extension. We extend possibilities to them. Gifted objects enter my argument, here, as material that may help to extend natural human memory. Indeed, human memory can only do so much, so some people might come to naturally need the material extensions of objects to help supplement what we are experiencing when putting experiences and individuals to memory. The capacity to remember can be extended by media objects. McLuhan's (1964) argument that media are extensions of man reminds us that materials serve to extend our already innate abilities. Art functions in this way to extend and reinforce what is already naturally occurring human memory. The aid of art as a form of mnemonic device serves to develop artificial memory while enhancing what is already given by nature.

The process of studying and cultivating memory is slow and without shortcuts, tricks, or "hacks". One of Ellul's (1954) seminal works, *The Technological Society*, presents the difference between technique and *techne*. While Yates does not cite Ellul in her book, it should be recognized that the various systems of memory referenced in *The Art of Memory*, such as Lull's use of *notae*, Schenkel's use of mnemonics, Bacon's "force of imagination" tricks, or Leibniz's *ars combinatoria* refer to slow processes or forms of *techne*. They are the opposite of techniques or *la technique*, which would be easier ways, or, as commonly expressed, "hacks" into something. Considering the media ecological claim, the art as media objects in a space in fact, can help create us as we create the objects. Gifted objects function as memory knots (Turan, 2014). Memory knots, for Turan, occur when narratives are embedded and evoked in material objects.

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In *Rhetorica Ad Herennium*, Cicero or Cornificus (unknown authorship) states that “Memory for words is given distinctness by a greater variety of images... we may grasp ideas by means of images and their order by means of places”. Memory is first given by nature, then we encounter many things and interruptions in life which may draw a tendency to forget. Images and places, however, serve to strengthen human memory. Cicero arrives at the position that memory can be improved by art. The classic theories of art, place, and memory for the orator having to memorize long speeches before the technology of writing can be thought in relation to memory abilities in everyday life. Francis Yates (1966) describes the story of poet Simonides of Ceos’ approach to reciting poetry from memory. According to Yates, poets are advised to:

Select places form mental images of the things they wish to remember and store those images in the places, so that the order of the places will preserve the order of the things, and the images of the things will denote the things themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a way writing-tablet and the letters written on it. (p. 15)

Such a selection of individual, diverse *loci* ensures that an image from that location could be semantically attached to a new memory formation. New texts may be read and remembered differently if we bother to take the time to create diverse *loci* of visuals in our living quarters. Natural memory, in this sense, is aided by a media extension (McLuhan, 1964) of objects, extending it to artificial memory.

Happy Gifts

Objects can be philosophically defined in many ways, ranging from a standing reserve of technology that we present possibilities upon (Heidegger, 1977), to people or events (Ahmed, 2010). Sarah Ahmed is a feminist queer scholar who has written on the role of objects and happiness in line with affect theory scholarship. Her view of objects, however, are not reduced

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to physical objects, which this paper centrally considers. Rather, objects can be events or persons encountered. Ahmed explains her view of objects in *The Affect Reader* in the following passage: “Happiness thus puts us into intimate contact with things. “We can be happily affected in the present of an encounter; you are affected positively by something, even if that something does not present itself as an object of consciousness”. In her book, *Killing joy: Feminism and the history of happiness*, Sara Ahmed writes about objects of happiness and the problem of inheriting notions of what happiness means. Ahmed, a queer critical feminist scholar is queering traditional notions of happiness and challenging many historically understood objects of happiness, both physical and figurative.

Objects may enter our lives with an affect already attributed to it, or ideas of happiness that might follow if certain objects are possessed. Ahmed also describes the generational passing down of affective habits in *The Affect Reader*. Traditional objects of happiness that are often used in reasoning for parents “Wanting children to be happy” include the objects of marriage and kids. The newly created generational objects of happiness, however, are changing especially within queer individuals. Traditional objects of happiness may not be shared values that are passed down from non-queer parents to queer children.

Ahmed’s critical perspective on objects brings a different level of depth to the discussion on what other forms gifted objects might take in people’s lives. Objects go beyond the material. Objects of happiness, in this discussion, can be the notion of marriage, the experience of having children, and other markers in life. Importantly, she points to alternative and contemporary ways to think about happy objects which affect how we also should understand gifts. Gifts can simply be the giving of one’s blessing for a unique or untraditional couple to be happy together in

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marriage or non-marriage. Giving of one's blessings is a large way to give gifts to loved ones who may not follow traditional paths of pursuing objects in life.

Since gifted objects under focus in this project are highly close to me in both proximity and sentiment, it is important to address limitations with the closeness of my position as the writer or researcher in relation to my objects. Isaac Catt (2018) mentions this very bias and argues how limitations and problems exist when taking a phenomenological approach to an object of study. The problem he articulates is about the distance between a human researcher and object of study. In this problem, he sees a difference between the experience of something and the ability for reflection of the experience of something. While it seems that a participant-observer would gain an advantage or some kind of benefit towards being so close to some environment or object under study, the researcher should also recognize what Catt calls some "phenomenological risk" in the endeavor. This goes in line with the notion that one cannot be phenomenologically focused on two things at once. By me looking at gifted objects as bracketed, one can make the critique that I am not taking a simultaneously broader look at other things around it. In other words, my attention is only turned towards the objects of study.

Returning to Frances Yates' account of the classical art of memory for contemporary reasons involves an adaptation of how the visual imagining of places, art, architecture, and outside nature were used as mnemonic devices. This kind of indirect training of memory means that natural memory can be extended as artificial memory with the help of gift objects. This is not empirically or scientifically proven. For example, some psychologists have reported how there is no real evidence behind the neuromyth of learning styles. The trend to categorize people into the three groups, whether the person becomes grouped as a visual, audio, or textual learner, has been researched and debunked to a degree (*The Guardian*, 2017).

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The relationship I draw between gifted objects and memory cannot be scientifically or empirically proven. Rather, the relationship is perceived, based on the senses. Related topics to the relationship between gifted objects and memories could involve the role that different objects play on human moods, productivity, memory, or well-being. In other words, the presence of gifted objects in our lives seems to enhance one's overall well-being and mental health or mental capabilities. This is found in mere feelings of encouragement, care, love, or support that may be elicited due to the exchange and presence of gifts in one's life. These sub-topics could leverage into some helpful supporting evidence for the claims I attempt to make about the relationship between gifted objects and the human capacity for memory.

Chapter 2 Language as Gift

This chapter connects the language of the gift to the role of rhetoric of the gift. Specifically, communication occurring before, during, and after gift-giving processes are considered to all play a part in the relationship between gift and rhetoric. This chapter shows the relationship between gift and rhetoric. It shows this by addressing the two sub-sections of “The Role of Acknowledgement” and “Credit and Validation”. The language of gratitude, credit, acknowledgment, or disappointment become inextricably linked in gift processes and will be explored from a rhetorical and philosophical standpoint, which is one that considers the articulation of goods protected and promoted. This project defines gift as ethical, social, symbolic, and communicative in nature.

The language of credit after a gift is given is one of the uniquely anthropocentric characteristics of humans. The ability to say, “thank you” and acknowledge gifts are part of the event of the gift process. Andy Warhol once mentioned, “Don’t think about making art, just get it done. Let everyone else decide if its good or bad, whether they love it or hate it. While they are deciding, make even more art.” In relation to taking and receiving social credit for any given work created, it seems that one ought to never fully take it. An author, artist, scholar, teacher, or even priest cannot take full credit for the things that have epistemologically come to be known or done. This may come off as a bit radical of an assertion when heard by Western ears in particular. Some traditions within Western culture seem to place noticeable emphasis, pressure, and expectation to come up with things yourself. This is shown in movements such as the “DIY” or “Do-It-Yourself” approach.

The Do-It-Yourself approach can be thought of as tangential to a kind of Protestant ethic of work. From a Protestant work ethic perspective, to do work honestly is to do work yourself.

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The Protestant ethic leans towards an understanding of hard work that is done without cheating, copying, or deliberate taking from another (Weber, 2003). Working in this fashion is linked to being a good Christian and appealing to God. This kind of culturally conditioned and socially constructed expectation is also related to Western mythological imagery. Such imagery includes known expressions including a pulling oneself up from their bootstraps or the exploring of uncharted territory in a solitary fashion and climbing to the top of mountains. In all of these activities, emphasis is placed on performing them alone.

Roland Barthes (1957) mentions such individualistic Western mythological imagery through expressions of taken-for-granted myths in his book, *Mythologies*. Several culturally insightful topics that employ an accent of individualism are explored, including “The Writer on Vacation”, “The Blue Blood Cruise”, and “The Jet Man”. To put it simply, Barthes calls out several popular ideas that are expressed through everyday activities in bourgeois French culture in the 1950s. Although written in the 1950s, a careful reader can discern their relevance in the contemporary historical moment. Within these essays, topics range from a vacationer hiking to the top of a mountain and feeling a sense of achievement and accomplishment.

Another essay in *Mythologies*, “The Blue Guide”, points to another bourgeois notion of dogmatically following a tourism itinerary as a tourist in hopes of achieving some sense of accomplishment, personal enlightenment, or enrichment. In these brief yet poignant essays, he shows how we climb, hike, and pull ourselves up because they have been culturally conditioned as honorable things to do for oneself. Emphasis on the self and the credit one earns are inextricably linked to such physical and intellectual endeavors. Such endeavors can even take on a connotation that they can and should be completed alone. One performs an activity, earns a kind of social credit, then markets the social credit through a variety of social mediums, such as

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post-card writing, social media posting, or other technologies of the historical moment. The performance aspect of the endeavor relates to the performance of the gift. Indeed, the performative quality of gift-giving is now seen across various mediums, including social media, professional social websites, personal messages, and community bulletin boards.

Barthes helps us understand how it is through a kind of cultural conditioning, through mythology, that one comes to seek, desire, respect, market, purchase, communicate, and compete for notions of social credit. Based on a phenomenological understanding of how we come to know things epistemologically, this essay presents how the popular move of taking complete credit for any given thing becomes unjustified. The de-justification of claiming complete social credit presented in this essay is also influenced by a Catholic Intellectual Tradition perspective, one that considers a community of saints present and behind any activity or narrative. Mainly, credit cannot be wholly given due to a creator's embeddedness within influence, others, and sources.

The language of the gift raises another question, which is how credit is inextricably linked to the event of the gift? This chapter responds to this question by a review of related literature, analysis of the synthesis of chosen sources, and implications for a future that considering the ongoing issue of credit as situated in human communication. Considering the interdisciplinary angle of psychology helps round out why we seek credit in our everyday professional, personal, and political lives. One view from psychology comes from the Adlerian view of making goals in everyday life.

Adler (2010) presents a view of the importance of abstaining from requiring recognition or acknowledgment from an endeavor or achievement. While Adler does not use the specific language of "credit", he opens up an angle of conversation on credit and the question at hand in

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this essay by contributing a perspective about the human tendency to seek recognition in everyday life. For Adler, recognition from others of one's endeavors does not positively support one's ego or sense of self when considering the long haul that one takes in life. One's frequent requirement for recognition (credit) or attention may even lead to an infinite insatiable demand. Such an insatiable demand situates the credit-seeker in the social category known as "high maintenance"; a forever not-maintenanced-enough discontentment that perpetually looks for the "what's next?" The "What's next?" inclination can create a self-destructive never-ending cycle; one always looks for what is better.

The "What's next?" inclination is akin to how McLuhan (1964) conceptualizes televised news in a media age watching headlines unapologetically change to the next urgent crisis happening in the neighborhood. In addition, the self-destruction that can occur due to a constant need for credit or recognition has been noted by other scholars in continental philosophy by using the word, autoimmunity (Esposito, 2002; Derrida & Borradori, 2003).

Esposito (2010) considers the communalization of social relationships and how the gift plays into these emotionally understood relationships involving solidarity. The word community, which comes from *communis*, breaks down further etymologically to *munus*. While there are different hermeneutic interpretations of the word, one conception is the public/private distinction of a group that shares something in common. This implies a reducing of the distance and a sense of obligation or duty within a group. Esposito's problem with the gift comes into question when a gift is given out of some kind of communal duty rather than a spontaneous urge to simply give. Another etymological reduction of *communis* is *mei*, which denotes to exchange. With gift, the circular exchange gets even further away from a voluntary sense of giving. Esposito brings both Beneviste and Mauss into conversation with each other to discuss what

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becomes the necessity for exchange within communities. This necessity for exchange is an opposite perspective to Levinas's view of asymmetrical giving, and therefore helps round out discussion on the gift's import in social relations.

The constant seeking for something even more is an ingrained myth in Western culture. Engaging in myths behind notions of credit helps get to origins of a current social phenomenon. As Dewey (1910/1996) recognized, "the better is the enemy of the best". As an American pragmatic thinker, Dewey was keen in his observations about how aspects of the American psyche were cultivated by notions of achievement and pragmatics. This achievement-oriented tendency is an effect of the capitalist enterprise as a mechanism for wondering what is next to achieve, conquer, and win. A Western mindset may be conditioned to think, "What can I do better?" or "What's next?" These monologic questions are heavily influenced by a Western notion of pulling oneself up by their own bootstraps, hiking, following complex tour guides, and climbing tall mountains.

The irony with assuming that one achieves such mythological Western activities alone is related to Husserl's notion of limits. Husserl (1954) would say that "I cannot fully imbue on the world on my own." In the issue of achieving and earning credit, if one takes Husserl's claim seriously, then the incompleteness of knowing and therefore claiming credit to something. For Steinbock (2017), who cites Husserl, there are, in fact, limits or edges to knowing and experience. Husserl's whole purpose of phenomenology is a critique on solipsism. The idea that one's memories are not their own and are not based on a first-person point of view. The memories we claim come from a degree of second person point of view, such as the stories told to us about our memories. Limit phenomena (Steinbock, 2017; Husserl, 1954) refers to life

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experiences and things that have edges or limits. For example, life, death, birth, and joy can be considered as limit phenomena for Steinbock and Husserl.

Considering Husserl's stance on limit phenomena in the human lifeworld, I'd like to add that the notion of credit could be a hermeneutic addition to the limit phenomena list. Limit phenomena show the incompleteness of individual present descriptive experience. This incompleteness of our experience needs a history and sociality. This concept is never closed or complete. In creating work, writing papers, or doing descriptions phenomenologically, we are attempting to achieve completeness but the task is impossible. This is how our ongoing tasks are possibilities within an impossibility (Chang, 1996, Derrida, 2007). This is part of Natanson's (1973) point in calling Husserl a philosopher of infinite tasks. It is an infinite task to describe anything completely. In credit earning, there can never be a completeness of claiming whole credit. Partial credit, on the contrary, seems more realistic to claim for anyone. One cannot be the ultimate source of meaning. One cannot be self-grounded.

Husserl is also concerned with the question of how essences become particularized. This ongoing project, of individuating and particularizing, can illustrate the perspective of not taking whole credit for any given thing, endeavor, or work. A person, in his or her incompleteness and temporality, could defer to the influences of everyone else around them. Individuation (Steinbock, 2017, Beck, 1992) refers to a development-based process of recognizing oneself as distinct and individual from one's mother or place of natality. This recognition is one that develops and responds to limits of oneself and surroundings. Steinbock refers to this process of being an individual and extends how the process applies to objects as well. Objects and selves can individuate themselves by way of particularizing. This individualizing-particularizing is what constitutes the essence of an object or person. Such a k/constitution creates a reality of

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something in its incompleteness. The important part about individualization is the assertion of incompleteness. Husserl is concerned with the question: where is the starting point of individuality? While it seems to remain impossible to pinpoint one self's or object's originating source point of individuality, another characteristic of a self or object, for Husserl, is temporality.

Incompleteness of a self and a self's own knowledge base is sometimes not considered when awarding credit to someone or something. Derrida (1988) also alludes to the condition of human temporality, incompleteness, and impossibility in communication. His discussion in *Signature, Event, Context*, invites us to consider how a mark, which can be thought of as one made by an author, a piece of writing, an artwork, or even communication in general is a trace within a moment of temporality. The temporal quality of the mark makes it a difficult task for anyone to claim complete credit for a mark. A mark that is fleeting, not quite there, and not having yet arrived cannot enter a space for one to claim. This post-modern understanding of communication and a mark can challenge us to think about how credit enters the philosophical picture.

Interestingly, we live in a culture, the West, that seems to encourage one to claim credit to even the fragments of what is done. In a work or mark's fragmented condition, what we sometimes find is a competition for credit of these pieces of the pie. This impossibility or incompleteness of the trace is expressed in the "never enough" of proximity, and the acute uniqueness of subjectivity. The subject that arises is undeclinable (p. 139). The proximity of the neighbor is never close enough. This proximity calls for a difficult freedom, which is a responsibility for the freedom of the other as prior to one's own. In other words, the freedom of another proceeds the freedom of my own. This speaking to the other can be not only life-giving, but an unending task and rhetorical demand (Arnett, 2017). Such an unequal relationship that

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one sets for with the other is part of the process of crediting, and part of Levinas's (1997) confessional writings based on the Talmud.

Credit, related to the issue of competition, is shown to be a serious area considered by psychologists and post-modern philosophers. By situating credit into an ongoing conversation within human communication, we can notice how our language becomes a representation of the myths of an achievement-base culture. It might even go without saying that the mere competition to earn credit for an array of things in one's life can lead to unethical behaviors when it comes to responsibility. The notion to evade responsibility for one's actions due to simply following orders traces back to Eichmann on trial (Arendt, 1963), who claimed to not take the blame for mandating Jewish people to death. In this historical example, blame constitutes as a reversal of credit. Taking orders or doing one's duty, even when evading personal responsibility for one's self, can be a way of earning credit by helping some superior own their own.

As demonstrated in the well-known Eichmann on trial example, the act of following of orders is not always noble when you know something is not right. On a daily basis, we can observe instances of individuals who do extreme amounts of work for others without a mark of credit attached. Credit, in this brief example, instead of going to the worker, goes to the superior who relies heavily upon the work of others. It is in this regard that the complexity of credit circulation, coupled with the blind spots that accompany it, is worth pondering for the sake of justice. Derrida (1988) offers more regarding the mark:

To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to, reading and rewriting. When I say my future

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disappearance, I do so to make this proposition more immediately acceptable. (Derrida, 1988)

The impossibility of achieving and archiving the completeness of a mark at least finds acknowledgement as a communicative gesture in everyday life. This notion of incompleteness is important when considering the communicative act of giving and receiving credit. Credit, whether evidenced through a name signed, initials stamped, a name spoken during a meeting, or comment of praise, functions as a trace.

Credit as trace reveals the very incompleteness of the performer's act. This kind of nuanced understanding of credit as trace could contribute to an ongoing conversation about the phenomenological experience of giving and receiving credit in everyday organizational and even personal life. In everyday organizational life, job performance, which is often revealed through end-of-semester surveys, meetings with supervisors, or even informal comments by colleagues, is a constant reminder of how credit is encoded and decoded.

In everyday personal life, the direct example of gift-giving and receiving involves multiple parties who make decisions about how and when to express credit regarding what is given. These personal life decisions may not be given too much conscious thought, either. Such an ingrained, taken for granted practice of giving and receiving credit in personal life in relation to gifts points to practices learned through the medium and dwelling place of many traditions. Indeed, these learned practice do not fall from the sky. Practices of credit and gift can be thought to come from and through traditions that have been iteratively passed through generations (MacIntyre, 1988).

Credit expressed after a gift exchange is a form of ethical acknowledgment. Hyde (2005) posits that the mere communicative act of acknowledgment can be persuasive enough to save

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lives. He situates this assertion in consideration of the broader horizon of the complexities of human life, including the choice of suicide, loneliness, and depression. Subtle words of acknowledging reinforcement can work in high prosocial function, for they signal to the receiver that the sender is making room for him or her in a life. As Levinas reminds us, the form of acknowledgement, for has a corporeal quality to it as well. In other words, when confronted with the nakedness of the other's human face, one is immediately implicated in an ethical encounter and called upon. The corporeality of this responsibility makes face-to-face communication an ultimate dwelling place where ethics resides. The acknowledgement during corporeal instances instantiates a notion of welcome. To respond is to make space in one's own life for the other to at least temporarily enter.

Hyde's contribution to communication, through his analysis of acknowledgement is a positive perspective to balance with other contrasting perspectives of credit as related to gift. One important position on the gift and credit is Schrag's (2004) understanding of the gift, which takes us to a deeper philosophy of viewing the gift as something unrepayable, something transcendent. The semantics of the gift is one given that become unrepayable. At the very least, we can recognize a kind of religious gift and respond in everyday life.

Credit, from a Catholic Intellectual Tradition perspective, takes the past, present, and the future into consideration. The past community of saints, the present influences, and future people who will benefit from something. The gifts one can endure are transcendental in the respect that they sometimes cannot be fully comprehended, received, used, or reciprocated. Gifts from above, depicted as heaven, enter the philosophical picture in this regard. The transcendental descriptor of this gesture and of the signification that occurs out of a relationship to alterity is in itself, responsibility. The verticality and asymmetry in the crediting gesture to the

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Other is what becomes a way of pointing to a certain ethical place. As Levinas describes it, “the kingdom of heaven is an ethical place” (1999, p. 183). While verticality is significant for him, the on-the-ground proximity of day-to-day relations and encounters is a way to work in a corporeal manner with the other.

This asymmetry or vertical height is an important transcendental, metaphysical, and religious thought employed by Levinas. To consider Levinas as one of the transcendental thinkers in philosophy is to recognize how he approaches the notion of verticality. The responsibility toward the other involves all of these areas in ways especially when the other is defenseless. He offers also how there is a unique power that is emitted from the other in the direct face of his or her helplessness. It is clear through indirectness and at times, directness, that his observations and experiences from his life, those involving experience of the historical moment of World War Two, have armed him with a strong exigence for ethics as a first philosophy. In this way, although he is not writing based on a concrete artifact, a reader can ascertain his significant contribution based on an acknowledgment and recognition of the historical moment from which he operated from.

Arnett (2008) acknowledges one of the major contributors to the topic of acknowledgement, Michael Hyde, situating him as an important philosopher of communication on the topic. The topic is related to the issue of credit and how one can choose to go through life reversing the approval of others through the communicative gift of acknowledgment. In the book, *The life-giving gift of acknowledgment*, Hyde contributes to communication ethics theory building by giving careful insight that goes beyond providing a simple description. Furthermore, Arnett’s (2008) acknowledgement of Hyde provides an unasked for strengthening and validation of Hyde’s contribution to the field. It is in this kind of recognition, a review of a major text, that

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the rhetorical process of carefully and closely listening to the Other reveals itself. This revealing may not be immediate, but it does arrive. In short, to offer a review of a major text is to offer acknowledgement. In this way, a review can be interpreted as a high compliment to a fellow author; the recognition of another's work.

As Arnett mentions in Hyde's work, it is in this very way that one would hope to earn or receive acknowledgment, which is through the spontaneous and authentic noticing of another and other's work. Such a spontaneous and authentic noticing is something very different than advertising for, complaining about, asking for, or even demanding for acknowledgment. Authentic noticing is the very difference between talented people recognizing other talented people versus people in power positions recognizing only the persons who shout the loudest or kowtow to ones in power for approval.

Acknowledgement, for Levinas (1998), enters the realm of ethical responsibility, in its ambiguity and subjectivity, as he states, "Responsibility is a form of recognition—acknowledgement of a claim, an order, which is even constitutive of subjectivity—a summons to arise and to present oneself" (Levinas, 1998). To be a brother's keeper is to acknowledge and welcome the other, in his or her radical alterity, in his or her nakedness of the face. The face-to-face encounter, specifically, is one that presents an unavoidable and unending responsibility. In the Levinasian way of acknowledgement, one implies that the face of the other is worthy of speaking to. The other is worthy of saving a life over, albeit a stranger. In fact, language is regarded in this way to never be just for oneself. In other words, language is always addressed to the other Levinas (2001). One must always be ready to address this other in communication as a way of Being-For-The-Other. This worth implies a basic yet important, metaphysical and transcendent form of credit.

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Speaking to another, in this way, for Levinas, is a way to give credit to another. Speaking with and for the Other is a way to be otherwise. He explains the difference of the beyond, which is “being’s other and of the otherwise than being” (1998, p. 3). Relating to credit, the ability to think or even consider the position of the other is a first baby step of getting at transcendence and what is otherwise. Baby steps towards transcendence include these intentional gestures that get closer to arriving to a place that is otherwise and beyond one’s self. Otherwise, in this case, is the capability of thinking other than about oneself. Some cannot do this, and some cannot offer credit when credit is due. Levinas is talking about a fundamental and metaphysical kind of non-selfishness, one that may be actually impossible to achieve. Levinas is talking about how we must respond, somehow, and some way. Response-ability, in this way, is a form of credit-giving.

Ethics as first philosophy refers to a departure that Levinas takes from Heidegger and Descartes. Rather than center the question of philosophy *par excellence* on the meaning of being, Levinas offers another question, which is akin to the question, “How can being justify itself?” In this way, he is concerned first with an ethics that presupposes our own birth, an ethics that has been present for centuries of time. This is an ethics that we then become responsible for passing on. In this way, ethics comes before discourse. Ethics precedes rhetoric. Levinas is concerned with the inherent right for beings to be. The right for humans to be, due to them being present in the world. This right to be does not necessitate a reference to some abstract universal law, but rather due to what he calls a fear for the other. The fear for the other does refer here to the fright of the other. Rather, it alludes to the ability to be moved by the other. In this movement one experiences due the other, one can feel the repercussions in effect to being within

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proximity to the other. Once in proximity to the other, one does not escape the face and dealing with its presence.

The other's face and our responsibility to it does not refer to a mask or superficial image of a face. Rather, it refers to what is beyond the anterior, which includes emotion and the right to be. In this regard, an other's face is an other's mortality. Going beyond visibility of the face, we encounter, recognize, and feel an other's mortality at the first and last resort. At birth and at death, one is able to encounter this notion of face that Levinas refers to. In fact, to know of another's being therefore promotes an inescapable responsibility to the other. Knowledge is part of the "burden" in this case.

Knowledge, alone, implicates a responsibility that is ever-present long before one's birth. Levinas refers to the length of responsibility enduring for centuries long, extending into antiquity. "A responsibility stemming from a time before my freedom-before my beginning, before any present". This is a kind of guiltless responsibility. This responsibility "summons me to a present time". This metaphysical kind of understanding of others and face also supports the idea that one person may be re-presented as a fellow person in perhaps another life.

Ethics as first philosophy can only be possible when one lays down one's ego. One can lay down the site of sovereignty of the ego especially in the dire cases of a border situation, which would be at a situation of murder or other imposed death of another. In the case of a usurpation of an other's place, due to ego, Levinas says that what is needed is not a new theory or new information. Rather, what is needed is a return to the basic idea of responsibility. After all, Levinas does refer to the ego as the crisis of a being's being. Rather than focusing on the philosophical question and fundamental anxiety of a being's suffering and anticipation towards death, one can shift the phenomenological focus to asking oneself if the other has a right to be.

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When we choose to shift to this fundamental philosophical question offered by Levinas, we are able to justify our own being. In other words, it is through the justification of other's being that we are able to be justified, ourselves. This kind of justification promotes a kind of immemorial freedom that dates long before deeds, decisions, or beings. The responsibility to the other is what permits one's freedom. This kind of freedom is what Achtenburg (2014) refers to as an essential vulnerability that we all share. This kind of freedom presents the idea that we must respond, somehow. Although we must respond, as Derrida reminded us, it is an imperfect response. For Shrag, he considers it a "fitting response". The other reveals him or herself to us through interruptions. These interruptions from the other are good, and they allow for the freedom of learning, interpretations, and even, the possibility to be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

The notion that our meanings and descriptions never come from our own, original place or experience is articulated by Husserl (1970). Our descriptions and epistemological judgments come from others. For instance, we are first spoken to, whether from a mother, friend, or other family member. Some of us are even lucky enough to have been held as babies, rocked, sang, and spoken to. From the moment we are born, we are born into a world that speaks a language to us, a language that simultaneously shows us how to live, act, respond, communicate, and think in a world. Credit, therefore, is recognized by Husserl in an indirect way but his claim that we do now own our meanings. He offers this assertion in his reinforcing statements concerning phenomenological evidence or *evidenz*.

Husserl invites us to understand a passively passing world through the entry point that we merely select limited views of perception into reality and "things themselves". In relation to credit, we can therefore never fully take it. It becomes unjustified to take complete credit for any

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given thing, based on a phenomenological understanding of how we come to know things as well as a Catholic Intellectual Traditionalist way of understanding the process of influence.

Influence, in this regard, refers to how we come up with ideas to talk and write about in the first place, for we are always influenced by the Other.

The notion that originality is unattainable is related to the issue of credit. Originality, creativity, and intertextuality are argued to have been made possible due to the printing press (Ong, 2002). Print culture, catalyzed by the printing press, is one of the fundamental factors that paved the way for artists and writers to recognize works as isolated with the potential to be reflected upon, commodified, and marked. The mark of one's signatures was a sign of authorship for a text or artistic work. Ong even goes as far to say that "Print culture gave birth to the romantic notions of originality and creativity" (2002, p. 131). The printing press enabled people to compete for, recognize, and understand credit.

With print culture and the rise of recognizing authorship came the rise of anxiety over creating. Bloom (1997) offers a critical analysis of how poets who have previously received enormous amounts of credit develop work that can sometimes be ultimately weak due to an anxiety of influence that hangs over the poet's "head". He directly confronts the well-established issue of the role of influence in poets and how it impedes their processes and usual questioning of their originality. For Bloom, the role of anxiety is important for rhetoric since it is argued to be one of the modalities for producing works.

Anxiety, in this sense, can be destructive or productive. At worst, anxiety halts creativity and at best, it propels it, turning new forms into knowing. The continuation of this part of traditional rhetorical lineage depends on the ability for poets to create. While anxiety has been

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addressed as a problem or blockage to creating for many artists, we should also note its power in catalyzing, using, and channeling such dreadful emotion to productively create.

Anxiety is a significant mood discussed in existential philosophy by Heidegger and others. Anxiety over whether or not one can live up to a previously successful work is an existential phenomenon felt by some artists in this contemporary historical moment. That anxiety is due to a celebration, and perhaps over-celebration of credit toward a work. This kind of over celebrating is akin to a Western individualism that projects the creator as solely responsible for the concept, capability, mental energy, and attitude that went into a work. As a brief side note, from a Marxist angle, the many aspects that come into play when producing a work, such as energy, food, drink, sleep, support, and communication, have been seen as forms of uncompensated labor when performed by a romantic partner (Marx, 1867).

The anxiety to create is related to what it means to have credit. Once a creation enters a known sphere, it cannot be unseen or unheard, and usual responses to works is some form of credit-giving. Credit-giving seems like the right thing to do, to call upon one's name as a cause-agent for some kind of work. A cause agent versus an embedded agent, however, becomes salient for the thesis of this paper, which is that credit cannot be wholly given, due to a creator's embeddedness within influence, others, socio-economic conditions, the luck of health, the luck of location, the availability of mentors or comrades, and sources.

Credit-giving can be related to Levinas's theoretical notion of "the said". The differences between the saying and the said are explicated across Levinas's works. In particular, his description of "The said in which everything is thematized, in which everything shows itself in a theme, has to be reduced to its signification a saying, beyond the simple correlation to the signification of saying, giving it over to the philosophical said, which also has to be reduced.

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The voice interrupts the saying with the already said” (Levinas, 1999, p. 183). It is in this way, that credit giving can sometimes interrupt good work already being done. Although credit may appear individualistic, it enters a communal fashion that does not forget nor ignore the individual when considering Levinas’s language of the Saying and the Said. For Levinas, genuine acknowledgement is both a Saying and a Said. Once uttered, it poses obligations for whoever is acknowledged and for anyone who has heard the acknowledgement.

Obligations for parties involved who heard an acknowledgment is a way of opening a line of credit that may have an extension across time. Since the acknowledgment is uttered, it opens a route for continued transactions. Credit, however, can become reversed or not even acknowledged as a power play. It can be ignored or suppressed. Derrida explains part of the phenomenon of credit here,

It is almost as if the other had not honored the credit that his friend the narrator had opened for him by lending wings to his mind. He lent him wings, the other did not return them. Remains the enigma: the narrator occupies here the place of nature, he has represented himself by nature or he represents it; he takes himself for the nature. (1992, p. 169).

The narrator or the giver that occupies the place of nature is a way to say that the non-recognition of credit in this situation of give and take is deemed as natural. Derrida’s point of critique in this situation is that the givenness in this example is something appearing to be natural when in fact it does not come from nature.

The Role of Acknowledgment

One discussant on the value of acknowledgment with a Levinasian tone is Michael Hyde. Hyde (2005) posits that the mere communicative act of acknowledgment can be persuasive

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enough to save lives. Acknowledgment is based on the concept of welcome, that we welcome the other through the gesture of acknowledging. He situates this assertion in consideration of the broader horizon of the complexities of human life, including the choice of suicide, loneliness, and depression. Subtle words of acknowledging reinforcement can work in high prosocial function, for they signal to the receiver that the sender is making room for him or her in a life.

This prosocial communicative gesture described by Hyde would be akin to how Nussbaum thinks about sympathy as pro-social behavior. Sympathy as pro-social contrasts with empathy, which can be eclipsing of the attention by imposing stories of oneself to the other in order to relate to and make the other feel better. For Nussbaum, empathy is not always the answer in dealing with everyday interpersonal communicative contexts. Empathy, when used in conversation to deflect the attention from the subject to another subject, does not always offer pro-social qualities. Hyde's position on acknowledgment contributes to the communication perspective of gift-giving and credit-giving as he presents how acknowledgment is part of our responsibility to the Other.

Arnett (2008) writes about one of the major contributors to the topic of acknowledgement, Michael Hyde, situating him as an important philosopher of communication on the topic. The topic is related to the issue of credit and how one can choose to go through life by not requiring the approval of others through the communicative gift of acknowledgment. In the book, *The life-giving gift of acknowledgment*, Hyde contributes to communication ethics theory building by giving careful insight that goes beyond providing a simple description. Arnett's (2008) acknowledgement of Hyde provides an unasked for strengthening and validation of Hyde's contribution to the field. It is in this kind of recognition, a review of a major text, that the rhetorical process of carefully and closely listening to the Other reveals itself.

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Revealing by way of acknowledgement may not be immediate, but it does arrive. In short, to offer a review of a major text like Arnett does with Hyde is to offer acknowledgement. In this way, a review can be interpreted as a high compliment to a fellow author; the recognition of another's work. As Arnett mentions in Hyde's work, it is in this very way that one would hope to earn or receive acknowledgment, which is through the spontaneous and authentic noticing of another and other's work. Such a spontaneous and authentic noticing is something very different than and advertising for, complaining about, asking for, or even demanding for acknowledgment.

There are multiple "I's" formed out of Levinas and Buber's theories. The monologic I, the dialogic I, and the responsive ethical I. "Whereas Levinas understands the "I" as responsive to a primordial ethical call, Buber sees the "I" as a responsive resultant encounter "between" story, historical situation, and the Other" (Arnett, 2012). "They understand the "I" emerging as a by-product, responding to a call of responsibility. The "I" enacts responsibility; the "I" finds identity in response to a call from the Other (Levinas) and the "between" (Arnett, 2012, p. 11). The discussion of these "I's" can inform a new way of looking at how "I" or a sense of self can form through the activity of giving gifts throughout one's life. In other words, the act of giving serves to create a version of the self. When interpreted in this way, and with the assistance of reading how Levinas and Buber respectively understand the I's emergence, gifts can be compared to the Aristotelian material causes that give way to a version of a self. The version of the self that comes after giving can be compared to an Aristotelian formal cause. Whether this version of the (giving) self is positive or negative is another question.

Furthermore, the Other is infinitely other. There is an alterity versus totality. Totality would be a reductionist totalizing and understanding of something. It can be related to the

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“Said” rather than the saying of something. For Levinas, (1987), the “I” has temporality and the Other interrupts it with time. The other serves as a disruption or interruption to the temporality. This further points to how Being (God) cannot be reduced to ontological distinctions and rather, it is a paradoxical discourse that is beyond Being, itself. The revealing of Being is not ontological, but rather, beyond essence (Levinas, 1999). Following this first philosophy by Levinas, giving to Others seems to be an infinite gesture we perform throughout life.

Calvin O. Schrag (2004) works with Levinas’s idea of otherwise than being to offer a foundational perspective on the gift and a responsibility. As a major contributor to the topic of gift, he explains how the idea for a book gave birth from asking the question of being and the problem of God. By asking these questions and already teaching about the philosophy of religion, he explains how a semantics of the gift started in an interview published in the *Symposium* Journal. Schrag developed what he calls at the time was a “thought experiment”, which were the nascent stages towards a semantics and philosophy of the gift. He had arrived at publishing what became a book, *God is otherwise than being: Toward a semantics of the gift*, through an investigation of how language permits us to say things about divinity.

Schrag’s (2004) notion of the unrepayability of the gift of life is influenced by the feminist thinkers Patricia Huntington and Marion Young. Huntington (2016) writes on asymmetrical reciprocity, an idea that ties in the thoughts of Benhabib, Young, and Kristeva. Asymmetry must rely on symmetry in order to “develop the expanded consciousness and affective empathy requisite to recognize another as a three-dimensional moral agent.” (Huntington, 2016, p. 353). Huntington sides more with Young than Benhabib on the topic of imagination and the potential for one to understand others across difference rather than occupy the other’s position.

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For Young, it takes imagination to “get out of oneself” but not go as far as transcending outside of oneself in order to understand the other. Huntington asserts that such a use of imagination is a way to depict enlarged thinking. Young also would disagree with Benhabib’s approach of understanding another by taking inventory of one’s own stock of emotions and experiences. For Young, turning inward would limit our understanding of the other by attempting to look for common ground in between the self and the other. These feminist thinkers all respond to the notion of responsibility to the other. They all argue a position on responsibility through modalities such as empathy and asymmetrical reciprocity. Their views on responsibility and reciprocity helps develop a feminist perspective on the gift.

When making the ethical decision of whether or not to answer the call to this first responsibility, one may very well engage in an analysis over whether or not the Other is a generalized or concrete Other. For Buber, I come to know of myself through the Other. For instance, I might not know myself until I interact, communicate, and socialize with Others. During this in-between process, I might also learn who I am not. This process makes meaning through negation and affirmation and through the in-between of dialogue. Dialogue can become where an “I” am then able to make decisions about what I am not. The I-Thou relationship can sometimes get confused with the I-It relationship, which does not consider the other as a concrete other. In the I-It relational structure, one regards the other as more of a generalized other. During monologue, we come to consider whether someone is a generalized or concrete other. Levinas would mention how an “ethically responsive-I” emerges out of the call to be responsible for the Other.

Levinas (1999) provides a sequel to his *Totality and Infinity* by offering an extension to his system of ethics of becoming, which is different from an ontology of being. Levinas

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promotes a responsibility that he calls responsible subjectivity which differs from Heidegger's aim for meaning by answering it for oneself. The differences between Heidegger and Levinas become clearer, here, as Levinas would promote an ethics-as-first-responsibility toward the other, while Heidegger would promote a search to return to oneself or *Dasein* in order to contribute to a collective world history (Sloterdijk, 2018). Although differing in focus on who the subject is, both philosophers place a prodigy on responsibility. Responsibility for each philosopher is just positioned differently. For Levinas, the responsibility of the other is transcendental and subjective. The allegiance to the other in this case is clear and total. The eclipse of the other is a dwelling spot for an infinite responsibility. One seeks an ethical subjectivity through intentions rather than moral experiences. For Heidegger, the responsibility is placed towards the self. For this reason, some criticize Heidegger for an over-emphasis on the self.

The call to the other as transcendental takes a sphere beyond being and nonbeing. This subjective understanding of beyond is essential for Levinas. The face of the other is the locus where this responsibility is articulated, and it is already in action. There seems to be no limit to this act of responsibility toward the other. In fact, responsibilities increase as the demands from the other never cease, hence the linguistic choice of infinity. As he states: "Responsibility is a form of recognition—acknowledgement of a claim, an order, which is even constitutive of subjectivity—a summons to arise and to present oneself" (Levinas, 1999). When we choose to give gifts, we choose to expose a part of ourselves. We choose to make ourselves somewhat vulnerable to the risk of judgment by the receiver. Will the receiver like the gift? Is the gift good enough? We present ourselves as oneself that is barren before the Other, as Levinas says. This vulnerability is shown through the role of or lack of acknowledgment during and especially

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after the event of the gift. What proceeds the gift may be words of disappointment, disapproval, or possibly worst: no words at all.

For Levinas, the form of acknowledgement has a corporeal quality to it as well. In other words, when confronted with the nakedness of the other's human face, one is immediately implicated in an ethical encounter and called upon. Face, however, is not purely corporeal. Face involves a metaphorical understanding of the presence and being of others as implicated in our lives. Face is presence and unavoidable in this regard. The face is unavoidable to the point of demanding an answer or at the very least, an acknowledgment of such.

The corporeality of this responsibility makes face-to-face communication an ultimate dwelling place where ethics resides. Levinas is talking about a fundamental and metaphysical kind of non-selfishness, one that may be actually impossible to achieve. This impossibility or incompleteness of the trace is expressed in the "never enough" of proximity, and the acute uniqueness of subjectivity. The subject that arises is undeclinable" (p. 139). The proximity of the neighbor is never close enough. This proximity calls for a difficult freedom, which is a responsibility for the freedom of the other as prior to one's own. In other words, the freedom of another proceeds the freedom of my own. While face-to-face communication is the raw site of responsibility, the concept of face can also be extended to other contexts and mediums, such as online, through text messaging, email, video-messaging, or Apple's Facetime. These related contexts put the issue and responsibility of face as a decision for agents involved.

Ethics as first philosophy refers to a departure that Levinas takes from Heidegger and Descartes. Rather than center the question of philosophy *par excellence* on the meaning of being, Levinas offers another question, which is akin to asking, "How can being justify itself?" In this way, he is concerned first with an ethics that presupposes our own birth, an ethics that has

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been present for centuries of time. This is an ethics that we then become responsible for passing on. In this way, ethics comes before discourse. Ethics precedes rhetoric, in this sense, and takes into consideration how critical Levinas was towards rhetoric. Levinas is concerned with the inherent right for beings to be. The right for humans to be, due to them being present in the world. This right to be does not necessitate a reference to some abstract universal law, but rather due to what he calls a fear for the other. The fear for the other does not refer here to the fright of the other. Rather, it alludes to the ability to be moved by the other. In this movement one experiences due to the other, one can feel the repercussions in effect to being within proximity to the other.

The other's face and our responsibility to it does not refer to a mask or superficial image of a face. Rather, it refers to what is beyond the anterior, which includes emotion and the right to be. In this regard, an other's face is an other's mortality. Going beyond visibility of the face, we encounter, recognize, and feel an other's mortality at the first and last resort. At birth and at death, one is able to encounter this notion of face that Levinas refers to. In fact, to know of another's being therefore promotes an inescapable responsibility to the other. Knowledge is part of the "burden" in this case. In this way, knowledge, alone, implicates a responsibility that is ever-present long before one's birth. Levinas (1999) refers to the length of responsibility enduring for centuries long, extending into antiquity. "A responsibility stemming from a time before my freedom-before my beginning, before any present". This is a kind of responsibility where we are always guilty, even for the other's sins. This responsibility "summons me to a present time". This metaphysical kind of understanding of others and face also supports the idea that one person may be re-presented as a fellow person in perhaps another life.

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Ethics as first philosophy can only be possible when one lays down one's ego. One can lay down the site of sovereignty of the ego especially in the dire cases of a border situation, which would be at a situation of murder or other imposed death of another. In the case of a usurpation of an other's place, due to ego, Levinas says that what is needed is not a new theory or new information. Rather, what is needed is a return to the basic idea of responsibility. After all, Levinas does refer to the ego as the crisis of a being's being. Rather than focusing on the philosophical question and fundamental anxiety of a being's suffering and anticipation towards death, one can shift the phenomenological focus to asking oneself if the other has a right to be. When we choose to shift to this fundamental philosophical question offered by Levinas, we are able to justify our own being. In other words, it is through the justification of Other's being that we are able to be justified, ourselves. This kind of justification promotes a kind of immemorial freedom that dates long before deeds, decisions, or beings.

The responsibility for the Other is what permits one's freedom. This kind of freedom is what Achtenburg (2014) refers to as an essential vulnerability that we all share. This kind of freedom presents the idea that we must respond, somehow. The other reveals him or herself to us through interruptions. These interruptions from the other are good, and they allow for the freedom of learning, interpretations, and even the possibility to be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Credit and Validation in Gift Events

Credit, acknowledgment, and recognition are communicative versions of asymmetry or non-remittance due to a transcendently based position. This position articulates how the goal and infinite duty to become otherwise than being or beyond essence is in fact, impossible or unattainable, due the extreme verticality of the theory. This verticality is a way of describing

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height or heaven, and heaven is regarded as ethical. This asymmetry or vertical height is an important transcendental, metaphysical, and religious thought employed by Levinas. The responsibility toward the other involves all of these areas in ways especially when the other is defenseless. He offers also how there is a unique power that is emitted from the other in the direct face of his or her helplessness. It is clear through indirectness and at times, directness, that his observations and experiences from his life, those involving experience of the historical moment of World War Two, have armed him with a strong exigence for ethics as a first philosophy. In this way, although he is not writing based from a concrete artifact, a reader can ascertain his significant contribution based on an acknowledgment and recognition of the historical moment from which he operated from.

The answerability which is described as a responsibility is a position that I consider a form of acknowledgment. Answering, communicating, and responding to others is to welcome them, even at risk. We risk ourselves and time to defer to this call. Answerability is about attention and we give power to others when they have our attention. To ignore, neglect, or deflect attention is to reverse acknowledgement and answerability. These reverse gestures are ways of reversing credit. Not offering credit when credit is due can become a dangerous way to deflect responsibility toward the Other. Part of the asymmetrical responsibility that we are born with toward the Other is knowing when and when not to offer credit. Such decisions involve discernment over when, to whom, and where to offer credit. If indeed credit is earned, it becomes everyone's responsibility to recognize it and find a way to communicate such credit on the public level.

A mistreatment of appropriateness in time, frequency, and place of the credit serve as part of the fundamental root of serious problems in professional, political, and personal spheres. The

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sheer lack of giving credit when one has achieved at least the minimum as well as beyond the standard of excellence in his or her professional job expectations can present issues of resentment and cynicism.

The case example of not recognizing, acknowledging, or crediting certain individuals when they perform great endeavors has led to issues of complex, unsolvable conflict. This kind of conflict becomes embedded and even transferred over generationally. The level of disturbance and even trauma that incurs over issues of non-credit have been historically associated to problems in representation over race and people of color in certain professions.

Transgenerational conflict and resentment, in this way, are carried over to new groups of professionals. Although Levinas does not spend as much time speaking on the issue of credit, this concept is embedded with the notion of responsibility. This way of reading Levinas could be more prosocial and productive of a theoretical framework if applied to how cultures co-exist together in a lifeworld.

Based on the increased market-based pressures to buy gifts for ordinary as well as special occasions, there have been noted problems with assessments of gifts received. In Robles (2012) study of gift assessments, she analyzes forty-four gift opening occasions. Her article is noteworthy in the sense where it analyzes complex interactions that occur at the event of the opening of the gift. For example, she notes the expectations, assumptions, practices, and formalities that are embedded in this act. Ultimately, Robles argues that participants from the forty-four gift opening encounters she analyzed experience difficulties in proffering gift assessments. That is, she notes that participants in her study had a hard time coming up with genuine words of acknowledgement, appreciation, or satisfaction when given a gift.

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Robles (2012) points out several problems in finding the right words to compliment, validate, receive, and appreciate gifts received in family ritualized occasions and holidays. After a discourse analysis of several home family videos, she mentions how several of the participants suffer from oral freight or guided rules for how and when to respond to gifts given. As she mentions, “one must perform the expected identities of being gracious and being appreciative” (Robles, 2012, p. 755).

Credit, whether expressed verbally or non-verbally, is a significant puzzle piece of communication in the event of the gift. The non-verbal potential that exudes opening the reception, opening, and acknowledgement of the gift is a significant sign that serves to legitimize or delegitimize this social act. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson’s (1966) thesis of the impossibility of not communicating. They discuss how “every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication”. By addressing a central question in their project, “What is analogic communication?”, they answer by stating that it is virtually all nonverbal communication.

The notion that all nonverbal communication is analogic is a strong and sweeping claim that contributes to an understanding about human behavior around gift giving and receiving. The analog is the physical, real, and even silent realms of human interaction. This interactionist approach is helpful when taking even post-modern perspectives in the discipline on the ability for a phenomenon to have many different and possible connotational meanings, receptions, and implications. This open-door to multiple interpretations can be extremely helpful for scholars wishing to employ creative methods and methodologies or even hyphenated methodologies and mixed methods into their choice of explaining phenomena. Multiplicity in general is one value

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that keeps the discipline growing and with one eye open to considering new topic and content material, subjects, and ways of thinking about intersectionality.

Understanding Watzlawick, Jackson, and Beavin's (1966) premise that one cannot not communicate contributes to the aporetic structure of the gift. This approach asserts that a message is always being encoded and decoded. This approach does not consider the idea that noise or non-communicative phenomena can occur. This approach assumes that everything, both verbal and nonverbal, is meaningful. Moreover, every communication has a content and relationship aspect in which these two modes exist in complement to every message. The content is referred to as digital and the relationship part is analogic. Or, the analogues are approximations whereas the digitizations are perfect precision.

Analogic communication is in the realm of the ambiguous versus digital communication is something more precise. The analogic- contains semantics with no syntax. The dialogic contains syntax without proper semantics. What one brings, the other lacks. Digitization means specialization and a movement out of abstract concepts of expression. The claim that all gestures are communicative and able to transmit meaning leans towards the opposite from some communicology standpoints in the discipline. The meaningfulness of this theory helps to rationalize why gift giving and receiving is a richly semiotic activity, full of both verbal and non-verbal gestures that create codes, norms, feelings, and traditions.

Chapter 3 Life and Death as Gifts

This chapter invokes religious views of gift, including Christian and Atheist standpoints to life and death. The connection to the giving of life and motherhood as gift is argued through the sub-section, “Feminist Views of Gift”. In this section, the perspective of how matriarchs contribute to the semiosis of life is offered in conversation with religious themes. The theological view of the gift invokes a connection between the gift and revelation of a great giver or creator. For Marion (2011), the connection between the gift and giver reveals a reason behind the gift, showing the option as God as a potential first cause. The standpoint of God as the great giver of life to all implies that everything in life is given to us. Whether we realize it or not, we are actually all takers or receivers on this Earth. Such a receiving invokes a feeling of guilt and debt. To be the receiver of something as grand as the gift of life, in reciprocity, implies the human feeling of being unable to repay such a great gift. The existential manifestations of guilt, anxiety, debt, and even dread can point to the relationship between receiving a great gift and the subsequent responsibility to do something in response.

The feelings of guilt and debt can be finally satisfied through the gift of death. However, throughout life, there are feelings of wanting to pay back or reciprocate for such a grand gift given to us. Heidegger’s notion of dread and anxiety relate to such existential feelings. The Christian beliefs of life and death, respectively, as gifts, teaches Christians the practices of giving and receiving. The biblical hermeneutical story of Christ as living gift will be addressed by scholars who have undertaken this philosophical task (Schrag, 2002, 2004). Death as an inevitability is explored, here, with the recognition of positive bias or towards an inclination of not fearing death from scholars such as Anton (2010). Death acceptance and a positive

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anticipation towards death becomes part of Anton's task that responds to Heidegger's human dread toward death.

Heidegger approaches gift and its residual effects of guilt, anxiety, and dread through a brief discussion of the gift in *Being & Time*. For him, Being happens as a gift-event. While Heidegger does not use the explicit language of God, he does refer to Being or *Sein* as something that gives (Schrift, 1997). The gift given to being is referred to as *ereignis*. In this way, he tries to think of being not as something that is but something that happens. For Heidegger, the task of being becomes to recollect the event of the gift and determine how to receive the gift event properly across time.

The acceptance of gifts in one's lifetime not only holds depth in meaning in continental philosophy, but in theology as well. In *An Existential Approach to Theology*, Father G.M.A. Jansen discusses the aspect of charity in the spiritual journey of a Christian who seeks a total union with God. He offers three stages that Christians go through, all involving gifts from God. The first stage is labeled as the beginning stage: the ascetic or purgative life. This stage is described about a person who first enters the goals and relationship with God, during a time where forms of charity are overwhelming. Moreover, any gesture of acting on purely charitable motives is spoiled when the person becomes frustrated when his or her charity is not met with appreciation.

During this first stage, Jansen writes how the developing Christian may get frustrated to the point of giving up deliberate forms of charity. As a result of the challenging first stage, a new consciousness eventually develops and gives a new sense of destiny to fulfill. This stage, however, does evolve through the revelation of gifts that are given from God into the newly developing Christian's life. Several gifts mentioned during this phase in Christian life include

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the gift of counsel, the gift of fortitude, the gift of filial fear, the gift of piety, the gift of knowledge, and a remarkable intuition to know what is right and wrong to believe. The next stage is often described as a stage of contemplation, which is regarded as the gift of intellect or understanding. For St. Thomas, this gift is known in the literal sense as *intus legere*, or “to read within” (Jansen, 1966, p. 104). During this process, the relationship with God starts to enter a more natural state. The relationship evolves from a former state of discursive judgments based on rational arguments to one that is a sharing of feelings with Christ. Once a Christian is able to reach this level of naturalness, it is referred to as reaching a gift of wisdom.

According to Jansen’s account of existential Christian philosophy, after the first stage, the second stage arrives, which is the stage of the proficient. This stage is reached as a gradual consciousness to a different dimension that cannot be described in words. At this stage, a greater development of the three divine virtues, faith hope, and charity, become more prominent. In this stage, in order to start developing these three virtues, one must acknowledge and submit to a state of passivity. This kind of passiveness is necessary in order to be able to fully receive the potentiality of gifts from God. It is in this stage that “the gifts of the Holy Spirit have taken over completely” (p. 106). The final stage in the development process is the arrival to a mystical stage. In this stage, there are two gifts that are rooted in speculative reason, which are understanding and wisdom. These go hand-in-hand with the *intus-legere* or an inner con-naturalness that creates a new dimension of spiritual life. Other gifts are rooted in the passions, which are filial fear and fortitude. The gift of piety is “the sense of justice which arises from living with Christ” (p. 107).

All aforementioned gifts are said to create an openness and receptiveness to God’s approach based on passivity. Within this stage of mystical life, distance between the Christian

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and God disappears and the life with Christ becomes a more natural thing. It is the gifts brought by the Holy Spirit that allowed such a depth of relationship with the Christian and God. The prominence of the gifts is not only important for the relationship, but for the forming of Christian virtues as well. As passivity increases, or ability and inclination towards performing virtuous deeds also increases. Jansen describes the mystical stage as one where a person truly “feels gifted”, inspired, and driven by passions.

Feminist Views of Gift

Putting religious standpoints in conversation with feminist views of the gift offers a new way to look at gift. It synthesizes the Christian notion of the gift of a mother giving birth. The matriarch is therefore allowed power on earth through the uniqueness of a gift that cannot be given by men. For some feminist perspectives, the art of the gift has seen many problems when positioned in an exchange-based economy. The obligation of exchange that now surrounds the gift depends on skeptical appraisal of how the gift will be received, adherence to a giver’s budget, in some cases, a gift that mirrors what the giver may actually desire rather than something that aligns with the receiver’s authentic desires. Theodore Adorno, while not always considered a feminist theorist, may be considered as such based on his foundational scholarship in critical theory that he contributed to with Karl Marx.

In response to what the gift evolved into, Adorno (1944) warned of the dangers of how the market has affected what the gift has become. Specifically, “real giving had its joy in imagining the joy of the receiver which means expending time, choosing, going out of one’s way, thinking of the other as subject. The decay of giving is mirror in the invention of gift-giving articles, based on the assumption that one does not know what to give because one does not really want to” (Adorno, 1944, p. 200). He continues that the idea of giving joy as we now know

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it becomes impossible in a market-based economy where thoughts, feelings, and many other human phenomena become commodified. The commodification is one of the direct results of the capitalization of thinking and behavior. In other words, selling joy becomes possible within the sense that capitalism's puts forth.

Adorno points to how this kind of relationship that we now have with obligated gifts is one that is induced by the economy and spending of money. The gift relationship, for Adorno, is one that is inescapable. Even for those who do not choose or want to give, find themselves in situations that drive desire to give. He goes on to express how the act of giving is one that fulfills faculties that other things simply cannot. Even for those who desire to be as inward as possible, for those who do not have many opportunities to give, reach a point that wants to experience the warmth of things. This warmth of things comes from organic life. The organicism of human life is brought forth by the gift that is born by women.

One of the complex aspects within the event of the gift is how joy is achieved by both giver and receiver. As Hegel and Lacan would affirm, in addition to the giver's desire to figure out the most inner needs and desires of the recipient, what the giver also accomplishes in the event of the gift is the gesture of recognition towards the other. Recognition, for Hegel and Lacan, is the fundamental human desire that we crave above anything else (Dilnot, 1993). Another aspect of complexity of the gift is when the gift takes the form of concretized materialization. When gift takes the material or physical form, Dilnot goes on to argue that it takes an embedded quality with money.

The requirement to spend money presents a new problem for the giver, which is how Adorno describes bad grace. Bad grace comes from the obligatory event of needing to give and needing to spend. He describes a double meanness, which comes from the already-in-place myth

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of scarcity of resources in our economy. The scarcity coupled with the feeling of squandering when purchasing a gift presents part of what becomes a “bad grace” and resentment that can sometimes guide the event of buying and giving a gift. This is one example of how bad conscience and resentment can drive the act of giving rather than joy.

Adorno would continue on this theme to introduce reasons why gift articles have been created. He describes the advent of gift articles as coming from the market-created desire for people who do not really want to give in the first place. Such an audience developed out of the necessity to give gifts is one that has lost the authentic and possible joy of giving gifts for the happiness of other people. In this way, the gift-article should be contrasted with a gift-object given with the intention of joy for the other. Gift-articles are the kind of objects that are often facilitated by political leaders, which are described as those signifying empty relationships. The vast number of empty and necessary relationships in the political sphere brings about the need for gift-articles. Gift-articles are objects that are not particularly in line with the recipient’s actual desires, needs, or character. Gift-articles mark a formal rather than substantive relationship with the recipient. For Adorno, gift-articles mark certain kinds of relationships that do not reach intimacy.

Power

Gifts hold enormous rhetorical power if the receiver allows for it. While control is attempted upon the receiver by the giver, the receiver does not have to accept such favors or gifts. The rejection of gift functions as a veto in another party’s attempt at gaining a kind of influence or power over the gift receiver. Such an attempt to control through giving has been described as masculine by female French theorists including Irigaray and Cixous.

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In Cixous's book, *The Newly Born Woman*, she suggests that we call attempts at gift giving masculine, which can be traced back to Hegelian dialectic. She offers the idea that giving implies a kind of fear of separation and losing a certain attribute. This shows a perspective of how this kind of giving is a type of sacrifice where the giver loses out on something. Losing or missing out on something functions negatively in a "winner takes all" capitalistic economy. This conception on how giving is a form of losing (something) functions on a system of returns.

As Cixous offers what may be argued as a feminist theoretical tendency, she views the economy as phallogentric. This kind of phallogentric economy functions on the concept of debt. To support this position, she points to the Hegelian dialectic of self and other, arguing that the dialectic comes into play when there is an underlying desire for appropriation upon the other. This classic dialectic shows the role of power in give giving and receiving. In fact, the vulnerability that one experiences as a receiver points to the person in the dyad who actually holds the control or power. The receiver, thus, learns how to accept a gift. This acceptance is important in the attempt to take control or power. The receiver has a choice to accept, reject, or even counter a gift. Accepting a gift would signify vulnerability. Rejecting a gift would signify a veto of power as the possible offense to the giver. A counter gift would signify a move into the game of exchange and serve to neutralize statuses between giver and receiver.

Feminist theories relating to the gift and the role of the giver such as Cixous and Irigaray's are part of the critical theory paradigm. The giver is the one in control or power in a giving situation, even when something is lost or sacrificed. From this kind of critical theory standpoint, axiologically, we know that critical scholars are concerned with the role or power in societal structures. They care deeply about how power is used, abused, not used, deflected, and negotiated between agents in everyday life. Critical theory scholars often find gaps in discourses

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and texts and in a way, may come to view their scholarship as advocacy. Critical scholars share similar methods and methodologies as those who call themselves interpretivists.

Philosophically, as some critical scholars are originally influenced by the Frankfurt School in Germany, they aim to emancipate the disenfranchised. Critical scholars such as the women aforementioned seek to liberate some kind of socially unjust norm or reality.

Epistemologically, injustices brought to the fore by critical scholarship come into the known sphere through acts of communication. Critical scholarship often maintains a keen eye for how authorities exercise their power and gestures in everyday life. For these reasons, critical falls under the post-modern time period or moment and can include an interpretive approach as well. An example of critical scholarship is Stan Deetz's creation of the word "managerialism" in 1992, which is something that shapes definitions of what is, what is good, and what is possible (Corman & Poole, 2000). Critical scholars study topics such as "conflict" and encourage the exploration of conflict as a site of liberating disempowering tensions. For example, rather than viewing conflict as destructive, conflict can become a productive speech act.

Methodologically, we see that critical scholars will do what they have to do to unveil some kind of injustice at play in a system, structure, place or space. Feminists, generally speaking, are a group of scholars who do this. In this regard, feminist scholarship can be considered a paradigm of its own, involving feminist ways of viewing the world (philosophically, epistemologically, ontologically, methodologically, axiologically). First-wave, second-wave, third wave, and now even post-wave feminists fall under the critical paradigm. They believe that some group has been systematically disenfranchised, marginalized, or silenced. Importantly, these patriarchal norms are systematically perpetuated, reproduced, and reified as a cycle through acts of communication.

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The relationship between feminist theory and practice and philosophies on the gift is important to notice for this project. While there is no specifically outlines feminist theory on the gift that is labeled as such, there are, however, feminist thoughts towards gift giving and receiving, as evidenced from Cixous and Irigary's scholarship. Viewing the gesture of the gift as a rhetorical way to diffuse power-locked relationships and slowly dismantle patriarchal tendencies is an important possibility for applying the gift to power systems in politics today. While this project appreciates and puts critical perspectives into conversation for the topic of the gift, this analysis remains largely rhetorical in its orientation.

The rhetorical worldview values the reading of messages in everyday life originally from classically rhetorical concepts, theories, and frameworks of persuasion. From this axiological standpoint, a "rhetorical sensibility" can emerge. As Cheney & Lair (2005) mention, "both symbolic and non-symbolic resources in persuasion where more than one outcome is possible and the outcome can be effected through persuasive means" involves viewing phenomena from a rhetorical standpoint. Methodologically, there are many ways to do analysis, including rhetorical criticism and rhetorical theory.

Philosophically, the roots of the rhetorical worldview start with classic theories from Aristotle, Cicero, Burke, and Bitzer. Interactions and interpretations in everyday life are analyzed from a ground of understanding how persuasion works, first. Persuasion is then applied to these everyday utterances and gestures. For example, for Bitzer, contexts can have varying degrees of rhetorical exigencies depending on the urgency of a situation. For Burke, contexts can yield varying degrees of identification and common ground among employees as well, heightening the persuasive potential. For Cicero, communication can be analyzed in terms of its

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invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. For Aristotle, communication can be analyzed in terms of its artistic appeals or proofs.

A possible underlying desire for appropriation upon the other is related to a communication theory called social exchange theory. Social exchange theory or SET operates on the premise that in human interaction, people tend to view others in terms of what they can get from them or how the other can benefit the self in any kind of way. Social exchange is one of the communication theories that operates on a basis of economics at the core of all human interactions.

According to SET, when people meet for the first time, they may immediately analyze and “size up one another” in an effort to see what the potential advantages are in continuing and maintaining a relationship with the other person. As Cixous shows in her theory, such a masculine way of giving offers a diverse perspective and feminist explanation of the phenomenon of gifts that may be tangential to gestures of bribery, policies, and other agenda-driven cultural etiquettes in other countries. Giving throws off a previous advantage that the giver might have had on the other. Giving sets the game in an imbalance where the receiver now has gained some kind of capital.

Another significant direction for analyzing and interpreting the gift comes from the work of Bulgarian semiotician and psychoanalyst, Julia Kristeva. Like Adorno in the sense that she does not consider herself a feminist theorist, I make the argument in this dissertation that her work on the *chora*, a Greek concept she adopts originally from Plato, presents a possibility for thinking about the reconfiguring the gift specifically from a women’s perspective. *Chora* is thought to be a place of forces and drives that allow a subject to therefore be open to important semiotic and sensible activity. As she states, "The drives that extract the body from its

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homogeneous shell and turn it into a space linked to the outside, they are the forces which mark out the chora in process" (Kristeva, 1998, 143).

Kristeva's work on *chora* presents an opportunity for scholars interested in synthesizing angles on the gift to understand how a combination of both women and semiotics contribute uniquely in unparalleled ways to literature and philosophy on the gift. In this direction, she offers the conceptual differences between what she calls the symbolic and the semiotic. The symbolic space is thought to be the patriarchal, phallogentric, and socialized world that a child comes to terms with. The semiotic, on the other hand, is a place where the mother has radical opportunities to distinguish sign processes that permeate to the child. The mother figure, in this regard, can be thought of as serving as a kind of filter between the womb or women's matrix and to the outside world. The semiotic stage of life for the child is where the matriarchal figure or the mother has an original influence. Some philosophers such as Jacques Derrida have chosen to frame the chora as a receptacle that extends between the real, recalcitrant semiotic world and the child's primitive symbolic space.

For Kristeva, these two aspects of language, the symbolic and the semiotic, are interdependent. The semiotic eventually becomes suppressed and layered as something hidden as a child grows and matures with the external influence of societal life. The semiotic does not completely disappear. The drives, forces, and desires that comprise the *chora* are always there. This is an important aspect of the gift that the mother gives to the child. The semiotic *chora* stay with the child even though they become buried by the progression of maturing through life and encountering other external forces. Kristeva sees these external forces encountered in society as both patriarchal and oppressive (Sadehi, 2012). The inevitable influence from the symbolic is

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part of the process and rationale why the maternal figure learns to let go of her child. To hold on too tightly would be against notions of love from this point of view.

Such a necessary letting go relies on the maternal figure to relinquish forms of control that she once had with her child. The separation between mother and child is part of what allows the subject to be in process. One of the most central aspects of Kristeva's work is the position that the subject is always in process rather than fixed. This position is where she takes off from Freud and Lacan, who would point to a subject that is fixed rather than becoming. Kristeva's view, here, is in conversation with Judith Butler's view on identity. For Butler, one's identity is always in flux, being performed, and becoming. Love is a natural thing in this process of separation. It is from within the human will to love. From this point, it is natural for the human will to learn of separation.

The concept of letting go, the way of separation, is central to the semiosis of love from both Kristeva and Peirce's perspectives. As difficult as it may be, mothers that resist letting go would risk stagnating the natural process of continuity or synechism. This synechism, for Peirce, is synonymous with life. The movement away from the mother is also referred to as abjection, a process where the subject or child initiates him or herself in the social or in the world of sociality. The social is synonymous with the process of the symbolic. This is the world of language that is learned through the external. The world of language, culture, and meaning are all part of the process of moving away from the mother.

Through Kristeva's work with *chora*, some scholars have argued that she offers a feminist refiguring of the gift. As Berry (1995) mentions:

...the implications of these quasi-religious themes in Kristeva's attempt to define a new philosophy-and experience- of love, a love that exceeds or differs from Freud's

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influential model of desire in important respects. Such a knowledge or state, she suggests can help to cure the crises of the modern era, through the construction of a new psychic structure and a new capacity for idealization. (p. 225)

Some scholars have treated the word *chora* as uterus. In the case of Kristeva's perspective, *chora* concerns the connecting, sharing, and giving of what may therefore be intelligible to the child. The difference between what is intelligible and what is sensible is one of the goals of Plato's explanation of the *khôra* (Plato, *Timaeus*, section 51a). The role of the mother and semiotics come into play for the child in making signs sensible from a previous intelligible place.

For Plato, the mother plays a significant role in putting Forms from the intelligible into the sensible, Earthly realm. If it were not for the mother figure and the *khôra*, the child would be left without such a life-giving opportunity to enter the world and in turn, give life to someone else in the world, representing a Peircian angle of life-giving semiosis. Particularly, the opportunity for a feminist angle is made possible by scholars such as Kristeva and Irigary, who discuss the opening or spacing of a pre-Oedipal phase or pre-signifying stage of the subject. Kristeva's thesis on the subject in process presents such an opportunity to view the gift from the lens as something made entirely possibly by the mother who, in turn, presents and gives life and love to the child. The giving of life and love are key proponents to Kristeva's (1987) work in *Tales of Love*.

As demonstrated, love is a central concept and theme in Kristeva's work. This is the kind of maternal love that eventually requires a specific and sometimes difficult kind of understanding. This understanding is that in order for a child to live, flourish, grow, and continue in the becoming of a subject in process, a mother must learn to "let go" of her child.

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For Kristeva, the mother's role and perspective is semiotically and inextricably related to the gift. The mother's gift to the child and to the world is unparalleled in the sense that she gives, nurtures, and loves something without possessing it. After the process of giving birth, nurturing, loving, and other forms of giving within the *chora* takes place, the mother then lets go.

The letting go that needs to happen is an important part of what it means to love without holding the subject too tight. For Kristeva, to squeeze, manipulate, or possess the subject in process would be something other than love. The concept of letting go resembles the Peircian notion of thirdness, which is a continuousness or synechism. The unique gifts that mothers give to their born children and the world is one without any real expectation for return. From a Peircian perspective, this kind of giving is what brings ongoing semiosis of life. The mother embodies a kind of love and nurturing that allows for the letting go of her child later in life. This gesture of letting go is semiotically important for the child's growth, development and learning to interact and deal with signs in the lifeworld.

It is critical, then, to put Kristeva and Peirce into conversation with each other. A subject in process is a subject in thirdness. Thirdness as continuity allows the necessary room for signs to grow. Understanding that symbols grow can be explained by Peircian thirdness. Symbols and subjects grow when we let them go and relinquish control. Other scholars have supported the notion of love and release. Letting go (Beck & Beck-Gersheim, 2014) becomes a hermeneutically constructive response not only to truly loving something or someone, but also as inextricably linked to the issue of credit. The mother takes care not to demand for credit in entirety during the point of needing to let go of the child.

Since letting go is a risk of not being recognized again by the subject in process, the child could therefore choose to take care in giving credit back to the mother figure when appropriate

while navigating a new world of signs and signification. In this way, through letting go, the maternal figure opens up the possibility for others to then take credit. The world of the social, a world of free interpretation, is a world that might, indeed actually take credit away from original maternal sources. This is one angle why Kristeva might refer to the social as oppressive and patriarchal. The social becomes a place that inserts, interpellates, and competes for ever-going signification.

Peirce's View of Self

While there is not one separate book dedicated to the respective subject, Charles Sanders Peirce's theory of the individual, also known as an "approach to the self" is scattered but interestingly revealed in a scarce few of his works. This essay uses key concepts of his notion of self and intentionally maintains them in the vernacular language that Peirce uses in order to garner a closer hermeneutic interpretation of his texts. The Peircian theory of self largely contributes to understanding Julia Kristeva's perspective and theory of women, semiotics, and gift and more broadly, the human condition. In *The Law of the Mind* (1892), he argues that the self must function as an agency of self-control- that the self is a communicative agent. Furthermore, it is the possibility of communication that is the essence of the self. This Peircian contingency of building the self through communication parallels what other philosophers have posited in semiotics, language, and philosophy of communication. Notably, Brianke Chang and his reading of Jacques Derrida specifically harness the notion of impossibility. In this case, it is the impossibility that actually propels a reductionistic "something". We can also cull some relation or perhaps unintentional influence from Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, as they would argue that through language, realities are created rather than merely reflected.

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What we can glean from the passages where Peirce discusses the self is that selves need to be in relation to distinguish their entity as an identity.

For example, in *Some Consequences of Four Incapacities*, he posits that:

The individual man, since his separate existence is manifested only by ignorance and error, so far as he is anything apart from his fellows, and from what he and they are to be, is only a negation. (Peirce, 1868)

The self needs to experience, see, and learn from the Other in order to understand its own capabilities. The conception of experiencing the negative parallels some resemblance with Burke's notion of discerning meaning through negation or what oneself is not. This is what Peirce refers to in the Latin vernacular as *determinatio negatio est*. He further supports the non-originality of the self in the following:

The selfhood you attribute to yourself is the vulgarest delusion of vanity. All men who resemble you are in analogous circumstance, in a measure, yourself, though not in quite the same sense that your neighbors are you... There is nothing that distinguishes my personal identity except my faults and limitations. (1868, p.61)

Peirce, like many philosophers, builds from the premise provided by René Descartes, *cogito, ergo sum* or *I think, therefore I am*. Theorists have shown how they take the Cartesian mind-body split and abstract their own thoughts from this premise. Hence, the Peircian premise for the self becomes, *I think, therefore I am fragmented*. As the fragmentation becomes a key difference between Cartesian and Peircian thought, we see the latter departure as an entry into a more pragmatic approach that involves three aspects of the self.

First, the self experiences *firstness*, utter uniqueness. Next, the self experiences *secondness*, discreteness or a stopping from the original. Then, the self experiences *thirdness*,

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which is continuousness. The human and semiotic quality of thirdness is one of the many general concepts that Peirce is known for. Thirdness is synechism, or the tendency to regard everything as continuous (Colapietro, 1988). If we adopt the notion of thirdness, we recognize that semiosis is infinite. The mother's gift of life is direct evidence that we are constantly in flux, struggle, tension, and negotiation with our environments. The giving of birth signifies continuity and they embody the possibility of being manipulated and adapted ad infinitum.

A mother's gift of life directly represents the ongoing semiosis that humans face. In this regard, thirdness can be thought of as life. The scaffolding of thirdness, however, is important. For example, there cannot be thirdness without secondness or firstness, first. He argues that people are also signs and to cut off a person from future interpretants is a sign denied the possibility of being a sign. To deny semiosis, according to Peirce, would be "death". The spreading of ideas is also within their nature. Similarly, for Kristeva, the gift of life made possible by women is captured in her description of the semiotic and symbolic:

If the symbolic function comprises all communicative activity, then the semiotic designates those unconscious, instinctual, bodily impulses which precede syntactic language. The semiotic also include the effects of pre-symbolic impulses which come into language, as "rhythms, intonations," which cannot be captured as sign, signifier, signified. (Kristeva, et al., 1975)

Here, Kristeva demonstrates the crucial differences between the semiotic and symbolic in the very context of mother, child, and father. That is, the difference between the semiotic and the symbolic is the difference between the maternal and the paternal.

Equally important for Peirce, on the other hand, the semiosis of ideas, language, and signs tend to spread continuously and affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar

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relation of affectability. It is their nature to spread. In spreading, however, they lose intensity and especially the power of affecting others but gain generality and become welded with other ideas (Peirce, 1892, p.75). Peirce saw all aspects of life as part of a triadic system of elements. For him, if we did not engage in thirdness, it would be going against our nature.

Chapter 4 The Possibility of Gift

This chapter aims to present a way to think about the concept of gift specifically through a Levinasian approach. This is argued by the chapter's sub-section, "Levinas's Contribution of Responsibility". This chapter responds to previous perspectives offered by Derrida and Mauss, who both argue that a gift is not free. The argument set forth in the chapter is that when one adopts a welcomeness and answer-ability towards the other without expectation for return of the favor, then an authentic gift then becomes finally possible.

While various views on the authenticity of the gift bring its essence into question, there is a standpoint that a genuine gift is still possible. The achievement in reach of such an authentic event of the gift comes from both Derridean and Levinasian applications to the gift. The Levinasian approach will be addressed in direct juxtaposition to Derrida's assertion that a gift is not possible. Levinas's approach to our responsibility to the Other is offered in an analysis of a possibility of the gift. Such a responsibility to Others involves responsibilities before, during, and after the gift. This chapter will present a Levinasian idea of responsibility to also embrace an understanding of the possibility of gifts being unannounced. The incessant response-ability as gift to the Other will be put in conversation with Derrida's idea of a gift not being possible if language is involved. Since the issue of language is what deteriorates some kind of essence of a gift for Derrida, common ground can be presented with Levinas's idea of responsibility.

Responsibility may be uncredited for and unacknowledged as well. True gifts, also, may be lacking in formal credit or understanding by publics. In addition to the non-announcement or non-naming of the gift, such an unawareness of the gift is also made possible by anonymity of the gift's giver. The absence of a name, a name that inevitably functions rhetorically and persuasively, may provide a needed absence for reciprocal expectations of returning a gift. The

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absence of reciprocity is what constitutes the asymmetrical relation. The asymmetrical relation of genuine gifts (Levinas, 1998, 1969) presents gifts given without expectation for return or credit. For this reason, this chapter will address the related phenomenological concept of givenness discussed by Marion (2011).

The responsibility before, during, and after the gift are all inclined toward the Other. The asymmetrical relation of this responsibility to Others (Levinas, 1969) is one angle to responding to the question of the gift. When considering the question of how to respond or receive a gift, it becomes a possibility to understand the gift as an essentially non-reciprocated event. In other words, true gifts are ones with no expectation for a return. However, under common circumstances and practices of gift, there is the notions of debt and credit at play. As Derrida describes,

Nature made him the gift, as it does to everyone, in the present or on credit, of a present: the capital of a faculty of understanding. It thus put him in debt with true money, a natural and therefore non-monetary money which is absolutely original and authentic.

(1991, p. 169)

For Derrida, the debt occurring at the very moment a gift is given is a literal monetary sacrifice. It is also in this spirit that gifts may be unannounced, anonymous, and made unaware to the receiver. This presents the option that a gift may not have a giver or even receiver. Bringing both Derrida and Levinas into conversation on the gift calls for the possibility of a genuine gift as unknown, not fully understood, and not to have the favor returned.

Levinas's Contribution of Responsibility

While various philosophers offer ideas about responsibility to the self, others, or some kind of culture, Levinas' theory on this topic has unique breadth and depth worth taking the time

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to go through. His thoughts on responsibility to the other are rewarding, generous, and at times, impossible. As a man who endured being placed in prison camps during the Holocaust era, it seems as though he has propelled these traumatic realities and experiences in a productive, servant, and religious way. This way is what he calls ethics as first philosophy. His exegesis of what we must do for others is humbling, insightful, and challenging to accept at times. For these reasons, a focused look at a selection of his works becomes pertinent to a conversation on how one might rationalize giving to others. He stands firm on his position that we all have a duty to respond and assist others in face-to-face encounters.

One reason why Levinas's position towards the Other is challenging is because it remains unequivocal even when encountering those who do not wish us well, such as strangers who do not care at all about us. The disruption of the Other is important and central to the idea of welcome. This disruption circles back to the concept of gift when one is able to view the disruption as a form of gift. When one has a welcoming orientation, one welcomes disruption. To leave the door open and leave the door able to be knocked upon is to leave your proxemic space vulnerable for interruption of the other. This disruptive rhetoric is what "takes the self beyond the moment of interaction" (Arnett, 2017, p. 26). The notion of beyond is another important way to understand what Levinas is doing with his ethics as a first philosophy. As he states, "transcendence is passing over to being's other, otherwise than being. Not to be otherwise but otherwise than being" (Levinas, 1999, p. 3).

Otherwise than being is akin to total empathy given to another; a kind of sacrifice of the self in order to fully offer, relate, and communicate with the other. The stranger and the alien's significance show that we should not evade responsibility to them by a merely bureaucratic and dutiful order-following. Levinas's contribution to the gift as well as related issues of credit offer

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the angle of asymmetry in gift-giving. The question of why Levinas views our responsibility to the other as asymmetrical is worth pondering in order to achieve a greater angle of depth on what the gift's possibility could be in today's historical moment.

For Levinas, the epiphany in the face of the other calls us to a rhetorical demand that is infinite (Arnett, 2017). An even more unique power in the other is offered when the person is defenseless. "Thou shalt not kill" as a known expression takes on a meaning that seems transcendental, going beyond the colloquial understanding of it. Levinas employs a polysemous quality to the expression, which goes to the everyday ways of killing with a good conscience or killing as an innocent person who is doing what one is told to do (Levinas, 2001). In this regard, killing is not simply killing with a knife or gun.

During interviews with Levinas, he expresses some of his first influences that have fundamentally shaped his philosophy. Of those are Russian novels that portrayed themes of transcendental love, religious, and metaphysical anxiety. The Russian demonstration of love is what seems to have struck a chord for Levinas, moving him to write about love in his own words, through the words of an ethical responsibility. For Levinas, a communication model does not follow a traditional sender receiver model. Rather, a communication model is one of contestation, disruption, irruption, surprise, aggravation, and pacification. The later model is one that offers a way for a self to be in communication with and experience the eclipse of the other. This model works in a way that does not reduce the other to an object of appropriation, which can be the case with other models of communication.

He asserts that the primordial ethical language comes to relate to the other in a non-totalizing way. In fact, language is never for oneself. For Levinas (2001), language is always addressed to the other. One must always be ready to address this other in communication as a

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way of Being-For-The-Other. The responsibility for the other runs a certain kind of metaphysical and indeed, transcendental depth that is actually unattainable for the self. The theme of impossibility of response-ability is how he settles it. There is no limit to my responsibility to the Other. In other words, I am so responsible for the Other to the point that I may even be responsible for their death.

The theme of impossibility of fully responding and therefore being responsible to the other makes it clear how Derrida drew significant influence from Levinas. Derrida draws such themes of paradox from Levinas. The main paradoxes relevant to a rhetoric and philosophy of gifts are those of impossibility and possibility of both an actual gift and communication, itself which are related. For Derrida, it is within the impossibility of the gift, or the dream of the gift that it can actually happen. Likewise, with communication, it is within the very conundrum of human language and expression itself that communicative utterance becomes possible. Another paradox articulated by Levinas is the privilege of Greek language. Greek language is privileged in philosophy and the university because it excludes other traditions. In this way, to speak Greek language is to do violence to other languages, cultures, and traditions. In the same way, to set one's gaze at another is doing violence by not seeing a personal beyond the dyad.

Responsibility is one that includes a "Difficult freedom" (Levinas, 1997), based in reason and learning. Responsibility is a relationship with alterity, which he calls, signification (Levinas, 1999, p. 184). Responsibility is being within proximity. This responsibility, however, does not include employing justice. Justice would be a comparison to something incomparable. It would become a compromising with the Said. One way to think about the difference between the saying and the said can be thought of as the difference between infinity and totality (Arnett, 2017).

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When thinking about how a single philosopher came to choose specific questions and topics for inquiry, that Levinas had what many might consider a traumatic background. Mainly, as aforementioned, he was a surviving prisoner of war during the Holocaust. The violence observed and experienced by Levinas propels the act and need for a recognition of what ethics and thinking otherwise can do. While in prison, he jotted down notes in a notebook and began to promote a life's work to ethics as a first responsibility. He offers a definition of violence which situates an exigence for such a dedication to responsibility in the following:

Violence is to be found in any action in which one acts as if one were alone to act: as the rest of the universe were only there to *receive* the action; violence is consequently also any action which we endure without at every point collaborating in it. (Levinas, 1997, p. 6)

One can open up the text of this quotations or understand it from an informed hermeneutic perspective when considering the historicity of when Levinas writes, which is during the context of the Holocaust. If one did not know that Levinas experienced and witnessed the events of the Holocaust first-hand, then one might be left to wonder how he had arrived at his position, which puts ethics as a first philosophy. The quotation is important for making an entrance into Levinas's idea of responsibility since it reinforces the danger of the sender-receiver model, one that does not consider the other fully, as well as any decisions that do not involve others or a third (party).

Furthermore, a communication model in the West fails to attend, listen, and respond to an ethical echo that charges and transforms one with responsibility (Arnett, 2017, p. 27). Levinas is pointing to how there is danger when others merely receive information or orders. He is pointing to the Holocaust and other events of egregious order-following at the sake of human lives. This

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is both a direct and indirect reference to such historical times of irresponsibility, which presented a lack of listening and attending to the other. The lack of collaboration, of thinking of other possibilities, through conversation, has been proven to yield violent and traumatic results. The results of not thinking of the other and otherwise by Levinas directly reference human death.

The emphasis Levinas puts on a different communication model encourages the notion of embracing interruptions and disruptions within any given moment. Ethics works by disruption from justice. The just is in relation to the third, or the political, while the ethical responsibility is in the face and interpersonal. In this sense, justice gets productively interrupted by ethics. The quotation can also indirectly refer to Adolf Eichmann's decision to order Jews to die yet evade responsibility for his actions. When put on trial for his actions, he confessed to not feeling guilty for being one of the primarily responsible people for the Holocaust.

Levinas, as a self-described phenomenologist, dedicated a focus of phenomenology on alterity. In particular, he wanted to explore intentionality in an object. Subjectivity is more than what is possible to contain. Subjectivity is more than object relations. Intentionality seems to be closed-off and totalizing, and this is his very problem with it. All knowingness presupposes the idea of infinity. "Totalizers", for Levinas, are the ones who do not entertain or consider what could be other or what else could be possible. From what is within the interiority of the self, he is trying to go beyond, into the exterior. The difference between interiority and exteriority points to how we can think otherwise, which points to how we can think differently for, about, and to Others.

As people realize their responsibility to the other as time passes, Heidegger (1996) points to a response that describes how an ethical self could be possible across time. As being reveals itself over time, one of the things that makes humans a unique species, a gift character and

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responsibility to give and receive gifts from the other, are also expressed across time. This self that gives forms across diachronic time. The self that gives is socially conditioned to do so after watching and learning how, when, and to whom to perform this speech act. The self that gives learns the gift through acts of mimesis or imitating the communicative actions of others. It is in this regard that the performative act of giving is one of the most learned expressions of being across time.

For those who do not catch on to the learned act of giving, there becomes the reciprocal performative act of taking. Giving and taking work together dialectically to constitute both credit and debt. The taker becomes indebted to the giver in a way that Derrida considers to be inescapable. The inescapable trap of debt occurs simultaneous to the gift transaction or gift exchange. In addition, the simultaneous act of credit becomes semantically imprinted to the consciousness of both agents involved in the gift-exchange event. The act of giving is one unique aspect of the human species, and we learn this responsibility as time passes. Arnett et al (2009) articulate a communication ethics that protects and promotes given goods. In the context of giving to the Other as duty, we can come to understand our communicative gifts of dialogue and acknowledgment as goods. These goods are ones that we culturally learn how to protect and promote in order to initiate and sustain everyday relations. The communicative goods as gifts to the other are not necessarily learned in a school system.

Chapter 5 Gifts, Public Diplomacy, and Soft Power

This chapter sets to accomplish the argument that gifts are a vital form of public diplomacy and soft power. Gift does this by playing a political role in international friendship. This chapter demonstrates how soft power happens through examples that I have experienced, which are shown through the sub-sections of “The Public Diplomacy of The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program”, “The Case of Japan”, “International Friendship”, “The Value of Face”, “Singapore”, “Power”, “The 1964 and 2020 Tokyo Olympics”, and “Trust, Cooperation, and Uncertainty”.

According to Nye (2008), there are three ways that a country can influence another country. First, through coercion or war. Second, through “the carrot” or reward. Third, through attraction, or soft power. Soft power includes various acts of exchange, giving, and interacting that yield effective levels of influence or even compliance gaining. As Nye puts it simply, “power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want” (2008, p. 94). This form of soft power includes the ability to entice and attract. The relationship between public diplomacy and soft power involves many nuanced gestures that governments are not always able to control, document, expect or even teach.

Soft power is a phenomenon that happens phenomenologically. It happens sometimes when least expected. Soft power, as it happens in non-forceful and non-coercive ways, is able to happen through the event of the gift. The event of the gift is one that may catch the receiving party off-guard. In some cases, the event of the gift may be strategic, with the agenda-set goal of obtaining some kind of particular means to an end. In other cases, the event of the gift may be one of tradition, with no obvious calculated motive beyond simply wanting to share one’s culture with the other. The subtlety of soft power is one that is silent and powerful. Soft power and

public diplomacy are two-way streets. The relationship involves a give and take. Listening and speaking. Exchanging and reciprocity. Public diplomacy is regarded as a set of actions rather than a form of broadcast communication or news. The set of actions can be effective alone, without the supplement of mass messages aimed towards other countries.

The Public Diplomacy of The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program

A major contributor to the effects of soft power facilitated by The JET Program is Emily Metzgar in her book, *The JET Program and the US-Relationship: Goodwill goldmine*. As a former diplomat and now tenured professor at The University of Iowa, she makes a case in her book how the participants in this program continue to perform the actions and lessons learned during the tenure of the exchange beyond the JET experience. The sharing of stories, material culture, gifts, and other artifacts home after living in Japan is significant and rhetorically discursive to spreading messages to other audiences about a foreign country. This kind of rhetorical power made almost accidentally through friendship and coming to know the other through natural and grassroots interactions has the fundamental ingredients of both public relations and public diplomacy, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

The previous synthesis of literatures from chapters one through four bring this rhetorical and philosophical analysis to present an application for the gift's rhetorical import for international relationship building. Following the exposition of Emily Metzgar's in-depth analysis on the rich political potential of The JET Program, she offers the fundamental connections between The JET Program, public relations, and public diplomacy theories. Specifically, she writes how "public relations scholars have considered public diplomacy a case where organizational public relations functions are transferred to governmental activities at an international level" (Metzgar, 2017, p. 22). Moreover, she continues that "public relations and

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public diplomacy people often pursue the same objective—to affect public opinion for the benefit of their client/organization” (p. 22). In public relations research, a goal is related to determine how to advance influence and image between corporation, whereas in public diplomacy, a goal is related to how to advance influence and image between governmental constituents. In this way, Metzgar effectively demonstrates how public diplomacy indeed has theoretical roots and overlap with public relations.

The Case of Japan

Japan and the United States have enjoyed a relatively positive alliance since the signing of the Treaty of Peace or The Treaty of San Francisco in 1951. Through this time frame, various examples of peaceful public diplomacy and soft power relations have occurred. One example of soft power exercised in a successful and positive way is the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program. This competitive program has interviewed and selected native English speakers to relocate to rural parts of Japan to teach English to elementary, middle, and high schools in particularly rural parts of Japan. Native English speakers are often placed in rural areas where there is less chance of Japanese people coming into contact with international people.

A largely functioning and important part of The JET Program is the exchange component, which involves the active sharing of both home and host cultures. The common misconception about the job roles for those who work for The JET Program is that the “E” in JET stands for English. In actuality, the “E” stands for exchange. In this regard, this program is not just about teaching English to Japanese students. In addition to performing English teaching services, the program also relies on active gestures of exchanging information, stories, artifacts, objects, food, and other symbolic forms of culture. JET participants are highly visible figures in their communities by means of their active attendance of festivals, events, conferences, speaking

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engagements, and other opportunities to show public diplomacy and represent their home countries.

The grassroots philosophy of friendship building and exchange through people-to-people relations is one that falls in line with Nye's theory of the attraction made possible by engaging in soft power politics. One of the prominent parts of the JET Program experience, based on my personal experience of participating in the program for two years as an assistant language teacher, is the active symbolic gestures of hospitality, sharing objects, exchanging material culture, and telling stories about one's own country. Without this component of exchange, the program falls flat of what it could possibly be. Although half of the major responsibilities of JET Program participants is teaching English to Japanese people, there is a constant active other half of major responsibilities that center soft power.

In Japan, the mandated subject of English infused in foreign countries is also schooled as a subject of pain, difficulty, and generalized grunt-work implemented from the West. For these reasons, foreign governments hire perceivably young, creative, and flexible English teachers for prescribed amounts of time to help "bring color" to the curriculum. The JET Program can be viewed as an important rhetorical link between the necessity for Japanese youth to learn language and finding a way to make it engaging and interesting. The JET Program finds candidates who serve in various capacities alongside of teaching English. This is what makes is an authentic intercultural exchange.

The JET must be ready at all times to engage, explain, give, and communication about unknowns of one's home country. If international teachers do not re-claim the importance of their roles in helping students find these links, then such standardized tests in Japan and other East Asian countries become regarded as mandatory, painful constructions with non-enjoyable

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reputations, reinforced through cram schools (*juku*). From my observations in Japan, cram schools commonly operate late at night during dangerous times when children should already be home with families or friends after long days at school.

In the JET Program, part of the job responsibilities among Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) and Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) is to serve as public figures that act as cultural ambassadors of their respective home countries. The language used by the Center for Language and International Relations (CLAIR) and The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to describe the position of the JET Program participant is “civil servant”. CLAIR and MOFA are constituents of the Japanese government. The ambassadorial nature of the job role presents an enormous opportunity to be an interpreter and receiver of culture in significantly rhetorical ways that have the power to disseminate stories to others who care to listen. As part of her collection on soft power, Metzgar extends on Nye’s scholarship by confirming how participants become “willing interpreters and receivers” of an international exchange program that yields benefits for both sponsors and participants.

The connection between public relations, public diplomacy and gift becomes clear to most participants who do various kinds of international ambassadorial work, as I have demonstrated through first-hand experience as a participant in The JET Program. The gift, whether it be a material object, verbal story, or other kind gesture, is a key factor for the maintaining, strengthening, and continuing of diplomatic relations on the grassroots level. Acceptance of a foreign gift may signify an openness for future negotiation. Rejection of a foreign gift, however, may signify an offensive gesture, on that implies a closed attitude toward future relations with the giver.

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Understanding codes for how to accept and gift objects when crossing international borders becomes an important skill in public diplomacy. At times, due to language barriers, gift objects from home countries that are wrapped up, presented, and given with pride serve to communicate what cannot be communicated. The gift's rhetorical potential of leaving a lasting semantic imprint on memories of parties involved in the exchange is worth taking note of and might be a needed part of the puzzle to repairing some of the most complex issues on the table of international relations and friendship today.

International Friendship

The interdisciplinary nature of the gift can allow for hermeneutic entrances for Peace and Conflict Studies as well. This sub-section mainly presents the argument that a rhetorical and philosophical analysis on gifts can be a powerful tool in international relations and the greater public sphere that goes beyond the interpersonal realm. The interpersonal, in this way, serves as a microcosm for what could also be possible for nation-to-nation relationship building through the genuine givenness of goods that one protects or promotes. Such a need to think otherwise about gifts could enhance initiatives in public diplomacy and policy making.

Gifts has been used by countries to initiate international friendship for centuries. One example of this is gift-giving between Japan and Russia. In 2012, Japan presented Russian president, Vladimir Putin with a female Akita dog. The *akita* breed, one of Japan's prominent types of dog, was proudly presented to Putin. Putin accepted this gift from the Japanese and revealed a rarely seen smile with his new dog in public photographs. The Japanese were delighted at the acceptance of their gift. In this way, the acceptance of the gift offered a form of credit to the gift-giver. It offered a symbolic gesture of smoother possible business and political negotiations ahead.

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Not all gift moments in history were enthusiastically celebrated between countries. In 1854, Commander Matthew Perry from the United States brought a fleet crew to Japan to establish diplomatic missions. At the time, Japan had offered Perry and his crew gifts consisting of Japanese cuisine and a type of Japanese spaniel dog called a Japanese Chin. Perry and the crew did not particularly care for the taste of Japanese cuisine and ended up not bringing these gifts back home to the United States. This refusal of gifts, in a way, dampened the political relationship between the United States and Japan and prevented a more robust form of international diplomacy at the time. One gift, however, that did make its way back with Perry was an exact replica of a *Gokoku-ji* temple bell. The gift was from the Ryukyu Kingdom in Okinawa, Japan. Okinawa is often described as the “Hawai-i of Japan”. The gift of the bell was eventually returned to Okinawa in 1987. In the case of the bell being returned to the place of origin, it demonstrates the power of Derrida’s philosophy on the gifts in a political economy.

The gift, which was originally given for political reasons, was eventually returned to the giver. This case also puts into question the authenticity of the status of the gift. If a gift is to be returned one day, is it appropriate to call it a gift or should it be called something else, such as a loaned object? In addition, this case also shows how the Levinasian view of asymmetry in gift-giving was violated. The violation in the status of the gift occurs when there is symmetry in the gift-giving process. Again, from the Levinasian perspective on gift, once a gift is given, there is the expectation and implication for the receiver to simply accept it without devising an agenda for return.

The case of the returned gift of the *Gokoku-ji* temple bell back to Japan offers an example of how gifts can indeed become re-circulated back into an economy. Gifts can be inherited by future parties who are unaware of the gift’s arrival. Recirculation of publicly presented gifts

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back into an economy is especially apparent when the recipient of the gift is no longer present in the world. The ethical decision of how to return, sell, or forfeit a gift opens up the opportunity for gifts to be given yet again to someone else or even depreciate their value all together. Other cases of returned gifts also open up the conversation of other agendas associated in the exchange. In some cases, to return a gift to a store it was purchased could be a slight to the gift-giver in the first place. In the cases when gifts are returned for cash, it becomes a form of de-crediting the intentional thoughts of the gift-giver. A total reversal of credit, however, could occur if the gift was returned in entirety to the gift-giver after being taken.

An example of a de-crediting in the form of a refusal of a gift has occurred on the international political scene. In 2016, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe presented Russian president Vladimir Putin with a gift that was not accepted. Based on the positive reception of the first female Japanese *Akita* dog, the Japanese had hoped to offer the female dog a male companion named Hachiko. Putin declined the second dog for claimed practical reasons of not wanting future puppies from the two dogs. Not accepting a gift in Japan can be seen as highly offensive. Moreover, it was interpreted as Russia firming its negotiation ability for the upcoming global summit. This example demonstrates the rhetorical power of the gesture of the gift and the contrasting cultural interpretations for etiquette in receiving. Indeed, the refusal of the gift could have been seen as highly impolite. At this time, Putin's knowledge of the Japanese cultural value of manners, respect, and etiquette around receiving gifts was either not at a high level or simply not taken into consideration. It was as if Putin did not care about disrespecting the gesture of receiving a gift from Japan.

The case between Japan and Russia is just one international example. This practice, however, is prevalent across the globe. The example of the philosophy behind the gift in Japan

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is used in this project to show how the presence and gesture of a gift is used to diffuse tensions and make a smoother path to future relations. It is seen as a good-will gesture, borrowing from and demonstrating some residue from a Confucian value and belief system. Based on my personal first-hand experience of living in Japan for two years working on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program, I have directly observed that gift-giving is widely practiced in the workplace in Japan to ease stress and the well-known high work ethic. High work ethic in Japan can be seen by some company employees who very publicly and visibly opt to stay long hours from morning to night.

The public and visual presence of *zangyou-suru*, or overwork is directly linked to the maintenance of facework in Japan as understood in Stella Ting-Toomey and John Oetzel's description of face negotiation theory. In response to long and intense work hours coupled with a traditional hard work ethic in Japan, the country has seen innovations in reaction to the work ethic in the area of sleep hygiene. Small sleep capsule hotels, for example, are prevalent in cities like Tokyo. The cultural and traditional context of Japan is necessary to paint a more holistic picture for why gift enters the scene in a heavy way. Gifts are ways to put others first and engage in commonly practiced face restoration gestures such as saving face, building face, or repairing face.

In some Asian countries such as Japan, the idea of face is highly valued and regarded in public, professional, and personal spheres. For this reason, Stella Ting Toomey and John Oetzel's face negotiation theory is an adequate framework to discuss how gifts enter face relations in certain countries such as Japan. According to their theory, people will strategically employ various gestures to protect one's face in various contexts (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). The ways that individuals choose to save and protect face also affects his or her conflict

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management style. Conflict management styles include at least five, which are compromising, competing, collaborating, obliging, and avoiding conflict. Understanding how face functions in Japan and other collectivistic Asian cultures helps to bring a more rounded context to why gifts are routinely bought and exchanged on a daily basis in various communicative spheres. Face management and face negotiation theory are related communication theories to impression management. The flow of gifts between two parties maintains a sense of *wabi* or *wa*, which interprets to harmony. Harmonious relations among potentially stressful relationships, especially those relations between international people or across power and political hierarchies in a workplace is a highly valued aspect in Japan. Maintaining harmony is believed to keep a greater peace in the macro-level society and ensure smooth relations and movements for individuals. In other words, if attention is given to the whole or a group, this serves to protect and maintain the harmonious flows of individuals on the micro level.

While gift-giving in Japan is a way of creating an initial and lasting impression, it also shows a degree of overall goodwill towards others. Showing goodwill toward others and a general regard for treating other people well, politely, and with respect is part of a Confucian religious belief system. Doh and Inoguchi (2009) describe the preference in Confucian societies that value interpersonal relationships and ways to live a happy life. Gift-giving falls under the umbrella as one of these other-centered acts that has deep religious, social, and cultural roots. Doh and Inoguchi contend that there is a difference between simply feeling happy and being happy. Their connotation of happiness constitutes the “whole life quality” of a person.

While the value of happiness changes according to the country and context, Doh and Inoguchi’s findings on happiness shed light on why discursive practices such as gift-giving and gift-presentation have deep traditional roots in Japan. The silenced messages embedded within

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practices of consent are uniquely specific and contextual to preserving the notion of happiness. Happiness as a cultural value is conveyed through communicative practices during various important occasions in Japan. The speech act of suppressing conflicting opinions or statements is indicative of a “whole life quality” approach that is found in Japan.

The ideological politeness displayed in certain cases in Japan is inextricable with the reality of not saying what one truly thinks or believes. In Japan, the notion of keeping things to oneself is called *tatemae* (建前). *Tatemae* is widely practiced in the Japanese cultural system and is sincerely believed to be the best way to cooperate with groups and in public. Spaces to practice *tatemae* include public areas, workplaces, school, and on athletic fields. Conversely, private spaces such as within one’s home, around family, or amongst a circle of close friends, people do not feel that *tatemae* must be practiced. In these private spaces, *hon ne*, or one’s real face, is accepted as the comfortable social face that one takes on when in familiar and secure places. John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey (2003) discuss how face negotiation theory is a way to describe those who strategically use different sides of one’s face to mitigate potential conflict.

Facework is largely at play in Japanese schools as a component that contributes to their status of overall, highly organizational efficiency. Facework and consent in workplaces and schools lead to problems of hindered individuality and other sacrifices for the sake of the group. The upholding of long-lasting traditions could unfortunately contribute to the discursive suppression of conflicts. Face negotiation theory (FNT) is used to help understand why various cultural groups choose various conflict management styles. Furthermore, it becomes especially problematic in uncertainty situations, such as embarrassment and conflict situations (Oetzel &

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Ting-Toomey, 2003, p. 600). In this way, FNT is an underpinning framework for explaining gift-giving behavior in Japan.

American anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, comprehensively studied the degrees of *tatemaie* and *hon ne* in Japan. Benedict was hired by the United States government to analyze Japan during a war period. She is most known for her analysis on Japan “at a distance” as a means of depicting patterns within the culture. Importantly, Benedict (1946) offers an explanation to Japanese words such as *haji* (shame). In Benedict’s 1946 book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, she explains a certain ideology called *haji no bunka*. This concept translates to “culture of shame”. The notion, *haji no bunka* has been heavily criticized by Japanese scholars such as Takeo Doi (1973) for sounding inferior. However, *haji no bunka* is an integral perspective on perceived differences between Japan and the United States in a World War II context.

The notion of shame in Japan addresses a perspective of why conflict is suppressed. For instance, one may adjust or discipline oneself due to how he or she feels about the people within close proximity. Put a different way, the person holds an embedded value for caring about how other people might feel or think. In contrast to this type of other-orientation, a person may adjust or self-discipline public behavior or self-serving, opinion-based communication due to a self-fulfilling expectation. This means that a person will not act out in a rude or obnoxious way because this would not be good for one’s own ethical code. The violation of one’s own ethical code is described as an ideology of guilt culture (Benedict, 1946). The guilt culture conceptualization is I-centered or perceives how “focusing the group on my own opinion is not something I would do because it is not *my* character”. Conversely, a “shame culture” conceptualization or *haji no bunka*, is framed as other centered, warranting that focusing the group on one’s own opinion shouldn’t be done because *other* people would be affected.

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Treating newly acquainted relationships with respect and a giving etiquette is also part of the Japanese cultural concepts of *tatemae* and *hon ne*. *Tatemae* is commonly referred to as one's "outdoor" or public face, whereas *hon ne* is commonly referred to as one's "inside" or true face or self (Doi, 1973). For some scholars, such as Doi, *tatemae* and *hon ne* are essential concepts that lie under Japanese society. Without *tatemae*, the smooth inner-workings and efficiency of society may not run as well. In order for a relatively small island with a high population to coexist in as happily and coherently as possible, the unwritten but well-known social norms for the mannerly ways how to behave become crucial for everyone to get along, find their places, and ensure productivity. *Tatemae* ensures a kind of protection or shield from one's authentic, inner self, desires, emotions, and feelings. In this regard, one's true feelings should not be publicly expressed. Instead, what is best for the group is what should be expressed. To express one's own feelings and desires, especially in workplaces, professional, and other group-oriented situations, is viewed as selfish and not contributing to the bigger, greater good of the group.

Common expressions of *tatemae* include clear, strong, and discernibly heard greetings such as "good morning", "hello", and "please excuse me for leaving early than you". These various greetings in the workplace ensure a form of acknowledgement to all without specialization to one individual or the risk of getting too personal with another. There are times when a minimalist greeting as the ones aforementioned is simply sufficient for the up keeping of everyday, professional relations. Some may find such minimal simplicity and efficiency in Japanese manners to be liberating. For example, you are not expected to go into great personal detail about what you did over the weekend with your family while in the workplace. *Tatemae*, in this regard, rhetorically functions to protect one's face, place, and role in the workplace.

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On the other hand, *hon ne* comprises of expressions reserved for one's inside of the home. The ones inside of one's home are the people who are privileged enough to hear and listen about your personal worries or woes. The workplace is not the place to air out personal problems. *Hon ne* is shown when one lets one's guard down and acts in his or her authentic self. One's true feelings are finally able to be heard when one displays the face of *hon ne*. To mix *hone ne* and *tatemae* together would be the risk of compromising an efficient workflow and transport of people from place to place. The home where *hon ne* is practice and informal, non-honorific language is used is where you trust the people enough to say what you really want to say and mean what you really mean.

Other important contexts besides the Japanese workplace where *tatemae* helps hold everything together are public transportation sites. Japan is known for having some of the most efficient trains and bullet trains (*shinkansen*) in the world. Public transportation is highly relied upon for daily commutes to and from work. The trains are known to get quite crowded during rush hour times, referred to in Japanese as *mainin densha* or packed train car. An expedited facility of *tatemae* gestures such as keeping a small personal proxemic space, being aware of one's surroundings, not talking too loudly or on the phone, and not eating on public transportation vehicles are just a few common actions taken to ensure swift and peaceful transportation.

Another contributor to the structure of Japanese public face, etiquette, and manners is Edward T. Hall in his book *Beyond Culture* (1976). Hall's cross-cultural commentary in a more detailed way. He coins the ideas of high and low-context cultures, stating the examples of Japan and the US. Hall would later go on to publish a book specifically about communication between these two cultures. As shown in language, Hall uses nation-state constructs to talk about culture.

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In Hall's example of Japanese culture, he identifies what he calls to be a paradox of culture. He also makes the claim more universally, that all cultures have their paradoxes. The paradox he brings to the table about Japan is that the people are trained to have two ways of behaving. One way is a public way that regards one's outer face at high value. In this public mode, one would conceal emotions and act respectfully in order for society to flow smoothly. The "inside face" reveals a much warmer, personal, and honest approach to communication. Hall claims that even though Japanese people really want to perform with an "inside face" that they do not and feel that they cannot.

He also addresses the importance of context, with chapters dedicated to the inextricable nature between context and meaning. Context and situation, he would say, are "building blocks" to culture. Hall shows his use of the term, "Extension", which is a word that Marshall McLuhan later used in his media ecology publications. This is noteworthy because it shows the intellectual lineage between E.T. Hall and M. McLuhan. In fact, it was E.T. Hall who first came up with the notion of extension in his concept of extension transference. Extension transference is described as a permitting of men to solve problems in satisfactory ways to evolve and adapt at speed without changing the body (Hall, 1976, p. 25). Another concept he coined was "situational dialects" (SD), which he describes as a skill kind of sensibility or wisdom that is similar to rhetorical sensitivity. This skill can be developed in new jobs or foreign lands. In any case, the areas of space and time, those of which he is noted for, are discussed in detail in this book.

In addition to *Beyond Culture*, E. T. Hall extended on his cultural observations in the book, *Silent Language*. Edward T. Hall's first published book, which started a trajectory of a handful of other insightful books for the field of intercultural communication. His stance is specifically from a cross-cultural communication perspective, and it is clear when reading this

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book. He treats cultures as essentialized entities that one can read like a text. His conception of culture is as “text” rather than as “theory” as Miike would discern in a later article dealing with critical intercultural communication. E.T. Hall is not concerned with viewing culture through the lens of power.

In the book, *Silent Language*, Hall outlines and describes the plethora of ways that cultures communicate without using verbal signs. In other words, cultures rely on manners, etiquette, gestures, non-verbal behavior, loudness, softness, time, and space to define, delineate, and differentiate themselves from other cultures. Hall specifically focuses on and coins the ideas of space in a theory of proxemics as well as time orientation. These two coordinates have specificity in every culture. Hall takes the position that one can learn a culture, which is in line with the etic approach to research. It should be noted that based on Hall’s research, Japan is considered a high-context culture. This refers to a culture that reads non-verbal behavior and the environment of a message more so than what is considered low-context culture. Low-context culture, as contrary to high-context culture, refers to cultures that may rely more on literal messages and words being communicated rather than the surrounding environmental feelings and non-verbal cues offered by participants.

Hall believes in the power of observation, and through his kind of cultural anthropological observation, one can pick out patterns. One of the cultures he refers to many times throughout the books as an example is the Japanese culture. It is important to note that Hall spent time in Japan and has given a detailed account of the ways that people in Japanese use space and distance to communicate different things, such as status, rank, power, and values. He identifies ten kinds of human activity, which are: Primary Message Systems. Such kinds include interaction, association, subsistence, bisexuality, territoriality, temporality, learning, play,

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defense, and exploitation (Hall, 1973, p. 38). While this list may seem rather limited, he still identifies it for illustrative purposes. If Hall had not spent time in Japan, then this somewhat dated perspective about a non-Asian person describing the Other, in this case, the Orient, would be at risk of coming off as cavalier or even as stereotype.

The Value of Face

The differences between *hone ne* and *tatemaie* are significant to discuss because they point to how and why a certain culture has grown to make gift-giving etiquette such a commonplace activity in daily life. Gift-giving in Japanese culture is increased through the deep traditions of *tatemaie*. Giving something small to others in the workplace helps to build one's positive and professional face among co-workers. One common example of this can occur when a member of a workplace environment goes for a short leisure, day, or weekend trip somewhere.

If one person from the workplace is lucky enough to take a leisure or business trip somewhere, it is good manners to bring back something small, edible, and individually wrapped for the whole workplace crew or cohort. This small gesture symbolizes that one person was fortunate enough to escape and enjoy oneself even for a short bit. To be respectful for the whole group, including those who might not have such a luxury to take a short leisure trip, this gesture goes a long way to show solidarity for the collective. It shows consideration for the rest of the group who might have spent their time working while one person was able to go away for a short trip. Travel gifts are called *omiyage*, and often reflect some kind of specialty or delicacy of the region. *Omiyage* and other small, inexpensive gifts can rhetorically function to build, repair, save, or give face.

While the specific cultural traditions of *tatemaie* and *omiyage* are distinctly Japanese, other East Asian cultures practice similar concepts. In China, the concept of *guanxi* remains a

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widely believed tradition of nurturing and valuing important professional relationships that could facilitate future business in various kinds of ways. In the spirit of *guanxi*, small or large favors or gifts may be given in spontaneity if another is realized as a potential influential connection to have in one's network.

Interestingly, the concept of giving favors for others or even gifts can cross boundaries and be viewed as illegal in other countries. For example, what one country may regard as commonplace gift or favor-giving, another country may regard as bribery and illegal. Connotation, here, becomes vital to discerning the semiotics of how objects are named. The shifting of meanings that depends on culture can bring to bear the difference between giving some help to someone in need and cheating in order to help someone. The gift of help is one example that is specifically complex and dependent upon cultural historicity, norms, and connotations.

In addition to the possibility of gift-giving contributing to the maintaining and re-working of someone's positive public face, it also presents rich opportunities for living a good life of flourishing, or *eudaimonia*. *Nichomachean Ethics* presents the idea that the cultivating of oneself and one's life are within our own control. The book does not argue, however, for a completely free will account of the conditioning and cultivating of oneself and life. For instance, one may have been exposed to non-virtuous people during childhood or formative years. This is out of the person's control.

Aristotle does acknowledge that some people are not as exposed or as privileged to becoming as virtuous as others. In addition, virtuosity is something that can be learned. This advances the theoretical concept of mimesis in everyday social life. This notion also supports the example that one does not roll out of bed with a genetic predisposition to being a virtuous

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person. The school of thought that one can be born with virtuous or leadership traits is in line with trait theory of leadership that is discussed in the leadership studies and organizational communication field. This is one way that Aristotle's discussion on the virtues provides a rebuttal for trait theory. Moreover, Aristotle's view solidifies the difference between actions and character. Performing various actions can lead to becoming a certain state of character. For example, in order to be a just person, one should perform just acts. In many aspects of the gesture, giving is related to the performance of acts that one takes out of a desire to be a virtuous person living a good life.

The rituals, practices, and traditions of giving gifts are a temporal response to questions in our life. What does it mean to live a good life? Or, how can one become more skilled at living a good life? What does it mean to live excellently or an excellent life? This question is relevant and applicable to anyone in any field. It is a healthy philosophical question to consider, sparking curiosity that prompts a deep explanation through the book. The way to live a good life or achieve happiness, as Aristotle argues, is through the learning and habituating oneself to virtue ethics. This project aims to make the contributive argument that part of *eudaimonia* is a space for gift-giving and receiving. Both gestures are equally important in the flourishing of happy life.

Virtue, through gift giving and receiving, has to express itself. To become virtuous through the act of giving and gracefully receiving, one cannot simply be of non-action. One needs to practice. This happens through activity in life. Virtues such as courage, temperance, justice, and generosity need to be put into action. They cannot be dormant. Once the virtues become active, they can become pleasurable. One needs to share virtues with friends and family.

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If one has virtues but keeps them to his or herself, then they are not being put to practice and therefore, are no good. The determining factor in virtues coming into being is their relation with others. This is paralleled to the argument on the relation of gifts to others. Gift comes for someone else as well as for oneself. While gift may have an audience of the self of others, the difference with gift and Aristotle's notion of attaining virtuosity is that the virtues must be practiced in relation to and for others. Understanding the one's character traits and virtues are put into play (action) only within relation to others is essential to one's and others' flourishing within workplace, marketplace, and classroom matters. If one is aware of the virtues or character traits that they have, they can put these to action in teaching or business.

On the other hand, understanding one's vices can help one recognize weakness and seek to improve by learning directly within a classroom or marketplace. Whether it is vice or virtue, people inevitably put these traits to play in the contemporary marketplace. If one is wise enough to recognize a personal trait (vice or virtue), then a person can hopefully learn how to either correct it or use it productively. If one is blessed with a particular virtue, that person can use it to one's advantage or try appropriating it for another person's advantage. The possibly vice that could occur with gift and virtuosity is if one tends to over give to someone who is a heavy taker. The imbalance of the exchange is what can exploit the gift or virtuosity.

The main metaphor of *Nicomachen Ethics* is a scale. This directly relates to Aristotle's notion of a mean or golden mean. Achieving the virtue ethics requires a great deal of moderation or balance of the extremes. One can think of these extremes as dialectics. In between each extreme or side of the scale, you will find the moderate balance of the virtue ethics, which include, to name a few: temperance, beauty, justice, bravery, courage, and generosity. Each virtue is in the middle (of a scale). When giving, one must constantly determine a right balance for

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how much to give, when, and where. To over-give would risk a form of over-compensation where a taker becomes accustomed to the hand-out.

Singapore

An example based on personal observation of living in another country is offered in this sub-section as a story of reflection from my one year of teaching in Singapore. In this section, I am to show how cultural connotations gift of help change based on the culture's context for the gesture. This is especially evident in what Hofstede would refer to as high-context cultures. To reiterate, high context cultures are those that rely heavily on the context of a message for interpreting meaning. High context cultures can be contrasted to low-context cultures, which rely heavily on the literal words or messages for interpretation of meaning.

For one academic year, I taught communication theory at Singapore Institute of Management at the overseas location of The State University of New York at Buffalo. The communication department at that time in 2012 was looking for someone who had both experience in Asia as well as the ability to teach communication theory. After interviewing for the visiting lectureship, I was offered the position overseas for at least a one-year appointment. I packed my bags and set off for the year to live in a new country alone. It was the job I took after earning my Master's degree.

During the classes I taught, I would periodically administer pop quizzes to large lecture classes of around fifty students per class. There was one instance where I saw two of my students in the front row of a large lecture hall cheat directly in front of my face. A student had allowed a friend sitting in proximity to view answers to the pop quiz. When class was over, I confronted the pair of students, asking if and why they cheated. Their response was "I was helping my friend with something hard. It's important that friends help each other". This is one

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specific case where I believe that the cultural connotation of the word “help” had taken on a different semiotic meaning than what we may understand here in the United States. Although people here in the United States, too, may go to lengths to help out friends or loved ones, even when it breaks certain rules or customs of a given context, after discussing the event with some of my colleagues who were also working in Singapore at the time, it seemed that there was cultural specificity in the reasoning behind why the action was done.

Although what I saw that day in my class in Singapore was clearly cheating from my perspective, to my students, it was a positive gesture done out of help and goodwill toward a fellow friend. My student’s friend genuinely needed the assistance of a neighbor’s answers in order to pass my communication theory pop quiz. When confronted, my students never admitted to the word “cheating” or other negative connotations with the act that I saw.

It is with gratitude and specific personal exigence that my time living in Asian countries, both Japan and Singapore, allowed me to see how different cultural perspectives are formed and operate based on diverse histories. In reflection of this event, I choose to not take my former students’ behavior personally. Although at the time the cheating occurred, I felt offended and wanted to “teach them a lesson” about *not* cheating, it dawned on me later that there are deep cultural constructions at place and reasons why some people believe it is right or wrong to do certain things. My students did not cheat that day on the pop quiz to spite me or out of disrespect to me, they had decided to do it out of a serious cultural expectation of competitiveness.

The reality for students in Singapore is that they grow up in what is referred as a high-level “testing culture”. Although the United States has various standardized tests, it is not at the level that Singapore has. The students must take several kinds of tests throughout their life for various reasons. They are not just any tests. They are high-stakes tests that largely determine

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the routes they will take, whether they will get into certain kinds of schools, and other life tracks. Similarly, Japan also still operates heavily upon testing culture norms. For example, in Japan, there are cram schools or *juku* that are common for students to attend after regular hours of school. Students in Japan may go to *juku* in order to get extra study practice in English and other subjects.

The shifting of cultural connotations around how and when to give in Singapore is noteworthy as a cultural angle to this analysis. There are specific reasons for the various cultural connotations that point to historicity of what Singaporeans have gone through in history. I was able to learn about this history first-hand while I lived, worked, and studied Mandarin Chinese there for one year. First, the Singapore government's website reports that Singapore ranks number one as having the best investment potential as well as top two competitive cities. In 2013, the once Japanese-occupied state and now British colonized island boldly makes its mark on the map. The frequently used Hokkien Chinese term *kiasu*, which translates to "fear of being last" is the mantra for the demand of best and superior rankings in a wide array of areas, whether it be the economy, education, cuisine, luxury living, or materialistic wealth.

It is in this kind of fast track and newly competitive economy where superior education fits into the Singapore formula for excellence. While it is common for students in Singapore grow up in a British style of training from pre-school, more international and global-oriented choices are becoming even more capitalized and commercialized. Several highly ranked international programs seek space in Singapore to recruit students to learn from a cutting edge and global perspective. A few international programs that have campuses in Singapore are The Stanford Executive Program, The University of London Programmes, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business, The University at Buffalo Singapore Program, and Wheelock

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College. The strong presence of international higher education options is a reflection to the overall mindset how Singapore wishes to be prepared in the most superior measures possible.

The dialectic, or tension, between individualism and collectivism within the Singaporean classroom starts when the aforementioned international programs make a presence in the system. An important part of the marketing of international programs in Singapore is the selling of perceived individualistic tendencies. Signs of individualism are often practiced and encouraged within what is marketed and labeled to be Western education systems. For example, the ideology of open participation, expressing one's voice and opinions, openly disagreeing, and related scholarly behavior, are key selling points to enrollment for local Singaporean students. There is something exotic about the so-called Western way of education. Aside from claiming any value on Eastern or Western styles of education, the bifurcation between the two creates a competitive demand to enroll in global education and be "global".

The advice for teachers entering the Singaporean classroom is to prepare a large amount of group-oriented assignments and spaces for learning. This advice derives from the cultural assumption that Singaporean students are comfortable to engage in individualistic practices such as open participation and expressing opinions when divided into groups. The teacher should recognize the needs and comfort levels of the students and embrace the dialectic by creating a space that promotes both sides of individualism and collectivism. For example, students in the Singaporean classroom engage in openly critiquing, discussing, and argumentation, which are individualistic traits, but voiced within group contexts.

There is a dialectic of favoritism versus impartiality at play in Singapore. The history of Singapore is laden with painful memories of inequality and race crime. The current economic and governmental success is not taken for granted, as older generations will attest to the battles,

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falling, and rise of Singapore that occurred quickly before the eyes of the citizens. In 1942, the Japanese occupation in Singapore presented many challenges to the local citizens that were unfair and based on race. Unfair treatment of local Singaporeans by outside force was exercised by the dominant Japanese troops until 1945. The American bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 ended the Japanese occupation in Singapore.

The historical implications of the newly formed colony, Singapore, are important in understanding cultural connotations of how giving works in the country. The cultural value of equality becomes sensitive considering the tumultuous history of local abuse from outsiders. In the classroom, the teacher must take caution if his or her actions are biased in any way that is perceived as favorable to towards particular students. Students and administration are continuously on high alert to be careful of any unfairly made preferences. The main concern in the Singaporean school system is making a partisan decision based on a student's race, class, or ethnicity.

The dialectical tension between favoritism and impartiality encourages instructors in Singapore to use a more democratic, or impartial approach to teaching. Impartiality ensures that no student receives preferential treatment, hints, extra credit, or other privileges over others. The dialectical pull is reflective of the highly diverse population of Singapore. When considering the melting-pot characteristic of the country, the added value of a multilingual community and classroom does not mean that every race and ethnicity is equally regarded in society. As Chinese Singaporeans create the majority of the population, higher positions as well as leadership roles are often placed with Chinese people. This social reality is sometimes compared to the dominance of white people in the United States. While the bigger Singaporean society endures a high percentage of Chinese in leadership roles, those involved in the school system are careful to

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confront the dialectic between favoritism and impartiality by adhering to more standardized rules and assessment.

In addition, there is a dialectic of authority versus equality at play in Singapore. As previously mentioned, the equal treatment of all students, regardless of race, is highly valued and observed in Singaporean schools. The sensitivity to the equality measure was once confirmed while teaching college students. After classes, students frequently spoke with me about details of the lesson or any questions they had. If other students overheard conversations that occurred between the question-askers and I, it was commonly perceived that some students may be receiving privileged, extra, or special information.

The cultural value for equality created a perception that all students were not receiving the same treatment from the class and instructor if students were seen interacting with the teacher after class. Another instance occurred when a student had a tragic emergency in her life-the sudden death of a family member-which caused her to miss an exam. I granted the student the opportunity to take the test a few days after the rest of the class, due to her emergency. Her initial response was “Would that be fair to everyone else?”

Responses and rationalizations learned over time with my students pointed to a certain cultural value in Singapore called *kiasu*. The etymological origins of *kiasu* derive from a Hokkien dialect of Chinese language. *Kiasu's* interpretation is widely known and celebrated as “fear of being last”. *Kiasu* is a widespread cultural acceptance of competitiveness that is alive in both the streets and the college classroom. This desire to be “first”, however, leads to academic integrity problems/cheating in the higher education arena. Cheating and academic dishonesty might not be considered to an affable international college teacher in Singapore. The new

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teacher may assume that cheating is a problem that occurred in high school or lower institutional levels.

For example, during one instance, a student asked me to go out for coffee or tea after class. After a friendly and interesting discussion with the female student over chai tea lattes, we returned to class the next day. Later in class, the student who asked me to have tea blatantly cheated on a quiz while I was in front of her. The student did not try to make the act of cheating on the quiz unobvious. What new teachers should know is that while the very gesture of going for tea seemed like a friendly move by the student, the matter at hand is that a student might do anything to get the grade, even going against morals in a friendly relationship.

For many educators, the very thought of “cheaters” can be enough to get “tougher” and restructure the syllabus as a strategic defensive mechanism to catch cheaters. When we catch cheaters in our classroom, we have a duty to treat everyone fairly by establishing a repercussion for the ingenuous acts. The educator who chooses to teach in Singapore must understand the cultural mantra that is preached from a young age, which is the fact that nobody wants to be last. This mantra is taken seriously on many levels and inside of the college classroom. When the teacher begins to understand that those students who go against academic integrity are not to blame, teachers will also begin to understand that this is an effect of geographical location, or positionality. Put another way, growing up in a culture that pressures one to “never be last” pushes some students to take drastic measures. As previously discussed, the dialectic of favoritism versus impartiality is taken seriously in Singapore.

A new teacher in Singapore should also understand the demand and pressure for students to enroll in summer classes. In contrast, while the US offers summer classes for college students, an understanding that American students can apply to summer jobs, internships, or

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simply take a break for the summer is widely understood. Keeping *kiasu* in mind, the pressure to take classes, or modules, as soon as possible fits into the “strive not to be last” cultural mentality. When the teacher understands that there is an invisible race taking place among the students, he or she will be able to better adjust communication and instruction to best serve these students. Modules are sometimes treated as capitalistic commodities. There are times when students will reserve a seat (*chopping*) or see how far one can get with an “A” in the class before deciding whether to “Drop” or “Add” the class. Culturally, the educational system is set up in a way that treats classes like products that one would buy at a grocery store.

Another helpful Singaporean word that gave me more context to understanding the dialectic of give and take was the word *chope*. Singlish dialect English translates to saving or marking a place. The most usual context for chopping to occur is when ordering food at a local hawker center and scouring for a seat. As the hawker center is uniquely Singaporean, it is a very public, outdoor, open-air eatery. The seats can be difficult to find, and it is common to use a place marker such as a pack of tissues, on seats to reserve the spaces. This nonverbal system of marking is practiced by many people in public eating areas and is a way to participate and celebrate local culture.

The public eatery in Singapore reflects today’s Singaporean college classroom. The idea of *chope* makes a presence in everyday, strategic actions by the students. It is important for instructors to not be alarmed or frustrated by behavior that can be classified as a *chope*. One instance this occurred the in classroom was before the class even started. I received an email from a student before class one day, which said the following:

“Hi Ms. E,

I just wanted to let you know that tomorrow is the day for us to sign up for

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modules, starting at 12PM. Since everyone will be on their laptops during class and it might be rude to the guest speaker, would it be possible to start class later?

Sincerely,

Lee”

The honesty and thoughtfulness of the student were appreciated at the time. What the student was describing, however, was the reality that students will competitively *chope* or reserve their seats for next semester’s modules online. Lee was indicating that while students may have been physically present in class, mentally, they would be absent. In this way, Lee was helping me understand cultural norms and perspectives in Singapore, which allowed me to get to know my audience at that time at a deeper level. Listening to the various reasons why students do what they do showed me what they actually care about. It is an important form of audience analysis for me, wherever I teach.

By living and teaching abroad, I discovered ways to not only listen for the literal interpretation of the request, but the context and surrounding expectations of the cultural environment as well. I was attempting to understand a high context culture by listening to the reasons and motivations communicated to me via email and face-to-face. Listening without quickly judging was challenging for me. With time, however, I came to understand why my students may have acted the way they have, given the historicity of the younger autonomous country, Singapore. Regardless of classroom policies that required students to participate and be emotionally present during class, the fear of not being first to reserve a class (*kiasu*) along with the need to reserve a class by placing an earmarker on it (*chope*) was a challenge to the instructor during the semester. The instructor, in this case, could understand the cultural values and practices of the students, and accept those differences rather than fight with them.

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In the specific case of being asked to give in to a certain kind of compliance gaining question from my student in Singapore, I had a few options as the instructor. I could have continued to hold class at the regular starting time, delay the class, or allow the ego to feel offended. When teaching in a culture that is different from the instructor's, it is important to rather retreat to competition and defensiveness, to attempt collaboration and embracing of the cultural difference. After I received the message from the student, I thanked her and delayed class for fifteen minutes.

The British borrowed word, "queue" comes into play to help explain cultural behaviors and choices among my students in Singapore. Queue comes into play as a British English colloquial word that commonly used in Europe and Singapore. Translates in American English to "forming a line" for something. Due to the high-context and collectivistic culture of Singapore, queues were one non-verbal way of visibly understanding where it might be desirable to put one's energy. The high context nature of the location give way to a kind of competitiveness of resources. Forming queues is one mechanism for creating order and rules in a society that uses everyday words such as *chope* and *kiasu*.

The brief rhetorical analysis on selected terms and dialectics commonly found in Singapore bring light to the argument that connotations of give and take depend on historically laden reasons. What may be considered a gift in one country may be considered cheating in another. What may be considered generous and giving in spirit in one culture may be considered rude, pushy, and competitive in another culture. Importantly, as a guest in Singapore for one year, these experiences, interactions, and observations only scratch the surface on how and why cultural connotations yield way to certain cultural behaviors, patterns, and communication.

The 1964 and 2020 Tokyo Olympics

The giving of objects and hospitality to international audiences can especially be seen in the Olympic games held every four years. In the summer of 2020, the Olympic games will be held in Tokyo, Japan. This event follows a previous hosting of the Olympics by Tokyo in 1964. Both instances serve timely needs and open up important political possibilities in history. Participants in the Olympic games may have previously thought that by participating, that they were simply doing it for the love of the sport and one's country. While thoughts towards the Olympics may have sounded apolitical, strategies behind the Olympic games in both historical instantiations serve to show that Tokyo, Japan's involvement is indeed political.

The Olympic events prompt the facilitating of an array of traditions, practices, rituals, and ceremonies. The *epideictic* qualities of the Olympic ceremonies, especially during the beginning and conclusion of the games, are ways that a host country shows hospitality to guest nations through gestures of gift. *Epideictic*, as discussed in chapter 2, describes the ceremonial context that offers the very environments for gift giving to occur. The gifting of medals is particularly one of *epideictic* quality. As Sheard (1996) describes,

From antiquity to the twentieth century, epideictic has been seen as a rhetoric of identification and conformity whose function is to confirm and promote adherence to the commonly held values of a community with the goal of sustaining that community; unlike deliberative or forensic rhetoric, epideictic rhetoric can be seen as both beginning and ending in argument. (p. 766)

In the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the first, second, and third place winners of each event were awarded their respective gold, silver, or bronze medals. These earned objects are given with the highest levels of pride and honor. The gifted medals are of central importance to the

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symbolism of achievement, success, integrity, and tradition. Epideictic details surround the context of awarding the medals. For example, the medals of honor were presented to the winning athletes by Japanese women dressed in traditional *kimono*. Specificity in the beautifully crafted authentic garments worn by the women show a notion of cultural hospitality and attraction through soft power. The Olympic games show how an environment is set up to give the gift of making the best impression possible on the public international stage. This public giving of an image and impression is sent through technology, via television, newspapers, and now, the internet.

Other objects given to both winning and non-winning athletes by the host country, Japan, included memorabilia, clothing, and traditional cuisine of the culture. These given cultural objects are important to a collective memory that could thus be created by participants, whether those participants were the athletes, fans, coaches, workers, or volunteers during the Olympic games. The collective memory of the 1964 Olympiad remains in the minds, books, conversations, stories, documentaries, and interviews passed down by a diversity of people involved.

In addition to medals, other gifts offered at the Olympic games include laurel wreaths that are placed on the heads of the winning athletes. The usual aftermath of the games involves a celebration for the winning athlete in the hometown upon return back to the home country. The gifts given during these celebratory ceremonies are generous and out of support, pride, and gratitude for the athlete representing a country so well on the global playing field. One particular example of a tremendous gift given by an anonymous party during one of these returning parades was a suitcase given to the four-time gold medal winning African American athlete, Jesse Owens. Owens claimed to come from a poor family from Alabama.

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During his return ceremony, Owens was instructed to take a bag home from the celebration. Later on, he discovered that this bag contained ten thousand dollars in it. The surprise and anonymous gift came to tremendous use for his family. The name of the giver, or credit for the giver was not as important as the gift itself as well as the receiver. This particular example shows a way that the giver was able to veto the notion of credit. By not signing a name for who the gift was from, the anonymous giver was effectively able to keep the attention on giving credit to a deserving American Olympic athlete. This Olympic athlete was not only deserving due to his four-time gold medal success, but also due to being from a family who was in genuine need. It should be noted that Olympic athletes do not agree to any major salary or form of other compensation for competing in the Olympic games.

The Olympic rituals of preparation, presentation, and reception of gifts for foreign countries as honorable guests is significant for contributing theory to the field of peace and conflict studies. As a rich semiotic site for the event of the gift, the Olympics is particularly imminent in this very historical moment, as it lends a rich possibility for international friendship and exchange between macro-level nations. The Olympics houses a given future application as well as historical place to look back on. Arguably, the traditional Olympic practices and attitudes of positivity, peace, friendly competition, and cooperation make this world-wide event one of the most authentic forms of public diplomacy and soft-power relations between countries. During these games, soft power is made possible through a related sub-field field in communication studies, which is sports diplomacy.

The Olympic games has proven to become a rich site of exchange in several ways. The forms of exchange that take place before, during, and after the games are part of what may be called sports diplomacy. Sports diplomacy is an increasingly popular and emerging sub-field in

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communication studies, expanding theory, practice, and understanding that the communication taking place about and because of sports is one that has the potential to promote positive relations, bonds, publicity, spirit, and public relations. Political actions that undermine and propel the operations of major sporting events between countries are concrete gestures of practice that hope to contribute to the promise of a civil society. Part of why sports diplomacy, a subset of soft power diplomacy, is effective is because it is orchestrated by non-governmental means.

In fact, soft power and sports diplomacy loses its power when the government starts to meddle with its structure and affairs. The grassroots efforts, organizing, and deciding occur among people who are not in governmental positions. Their interactions and relations created by means of proximity, mutual interest in topics, and attraction is why soft power works, and at times, even more effectively than traditional practices of hard power politics. Soft power is political in its ability to create long-stranding, positive, and deeper relations between countries. These relations are obtained in more organic, non-manufactured, forced, or imposed contexts. For these reasons, the Tokyo 1964 Olympics as a historical example had been deemed by scholars as the Olympic games that was conducted by “people’s diplomacy” (Abel, 2012, p. 205).

Since soft power is often comprised of everyday people in non-politically influential positions coupled with the idea that government is not as in control of how it is performed, there is a greater possibility for a diverse creation of rules at the events. Diversity and liberty of rules at events lead to different ways of connecting with people. The decreased presence of the government’s hand in these soft power interactions during sport events paves the way for flows

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of authentic forms of connection, communication, and intercultural understanding between cultures and nations.

Additionally, the 1936 documentarian of the movie, *Olympiad*, Leni Riefenstahl, was encouraged by Hitler to not include footage of Owens winning anything by the United States Olympic team. Despite the historic odds against Owens, he found genuine friendship with a German athlete named Luz Long. In fact, Owens credits his winning the gold medal in long jump to Long, citing that Long showed him a way to place wood in front of the jump mark, which he alleges made him jump farther and win the event that year. The gift of friendship coupled with the gift of giving friendly athletic advice are part of the gems that can spawn from the Olympic games even when in such a context that is fraught with underlying political fascism and pressure to be homogenous in one's interests and relations.

It is important to note that the 1936 Olympics in Berlin was an opportunity for Adolf Hitler to promote the propaganda of Nazism. While the façade of hosting the Olympics may have been to promote peace and friendship, given the specific agenda of the Nazi regime, the hidden interests were actually to promote the symbolism of Nazism, as seen in the repetitious use of the swastika symbol on every German athlete's uniform. Additional agenda by the Nazi party at the 1936 aimed to portray positive images of the country, through means of showing lavish hospitality to the foreign athletes. Athletes such as Jesse Owens remarked on how great the occasions were to make friends and break bread with international colleagues. Indeed, the context did show a high level of hospitality, which is part of the hospitality of the gift during this specific indexical time in history, 1936. The rich hospitality demonstrated by Germany at the 1936 Olympiad, in this way, serves many purposes.

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In order to look at the historicity of the Olympics in contributing to the promise of a more civil society, the example of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics constitutes as one that had effective timeliness in a world that was fraught with tensions from the Cold War. Japan in particular was already positioned as a country that somewhat had its hands tied in terms of aggressively participating in politics and the right to defend themselves in war. Such a status of peace was arguably imposed by The Treaty of Peace with Japan or the Treaty of San Francisco in 1952. This treaty was an agreement between Japan and the Allied Powers to not use acts of war as a resolution to the aftermath of World War Two. In addition, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations during the early post-war years. These events arguably put substantial limitations to Japan's role as an imperial power in the world.

The historical event of the Treaty of Peace with Japan contextualizes the exigence for decisions to engage in soft power diplomacy, gift, and the Olympics. As Abel (2012) describes, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics was a form of alternative political participation on the global playing field. Hosting the event, in this regard, was one concrete practice to engage with the international community. It is also notable to point out that the act of hosting and hospitality in Japan takes on specific traditions that function rhetorically with international audiences, due to reasons for being perceived as radically different or radically other than what might be normal in other countries. Hosting and introducing others to Japan's culture, by way of housing, cuisine, teamwork, gifts, and etiquette, among other areas, are ways that soft power politics come together to create lasting impressions with international audiences.

Hosting the Olympics in 1964 was one way that Japan was able to demonstrate that although sports and politics might have previously been considered separate, they can go hand-in-hand in terms of creating rhetorical power or persuasive power between people. This kind of

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rhetorical or persuasive power refers to the ability for separate parties to develop an inclination towards each other due to attraction. For Nye (2004; 2008), attraction through means of soft power is one of the three ways that countries form relations. Other examples of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan's use of popular cultural exports to make impressionable influence on the global playing stage include the dispatching of style, fashion, and other "cool" and "cute" trends (Abel, 2012).

Part of the strategy for utilizing popular cultural aspects of Japan were also from the historical example of past Prime Ministers such as Koizume Jun Ichiro attempting to obtain a seat United Nations security council. He was unsuccessful in this direct or hard power-oriented position in policy. This example is one of several that serves as stymied attempts to gain entrance back into organizational and political policy-making circles after World War Two.

Major sporting events involve the exchange of gift objects are part of a courtesy for visiting guests in a country. These exchanges facilitated by major athletic events such as the Olympics function to promote international connections and deeper cultural knowledge between countries (Abel, 2012, p. 203). In these contexts, gift objects are ways to maintain needed alliances between Japan and other countries. One of the more glaring examples of necessity for maintaining a strength in alliance is the one between the United States and Japan. The Olympics, in particular, is an especially rhetorically robust way to revive old, present, and event future symbols of Japan or any country that is hosting. In this way, the Olympics may serve to promote a kind of internationalism for the host country. As Abel (2012) describes,

By internationalism, the pursuit of national goals by building and strengthening co-operative ties among the nations, including private and grass roots endeavors as well as government-level activities. The period of time from Tokyo's 1952 bid to host the games

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to the closing ceremonies twelve years later overlapped with Japan's emergence of from the shadow of the Occupation into the spotlight at the center of the world stage. (p. 204)

In this way, culture, as executed during an event such as the Olympics, serves to politicize a country that may have a more difficult time entering other mainstream political arenas. The idea behind a soft import of culture is that it may happen especially by means of person-to-person or grassroots connections and interactions rather than through other mass-produced means of persuasion. In other words, the conversations, gift exchanges, and other discourse around Olympic events occurs within an interpersonal communication sphere, serving to draw, sometimes, a greater intimacy and effect on the created relationships.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics, as demonstrated, is an important historical example to relate and compare to the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The timeliness of the world event was significant in the sense that Japan was able to achieve three distinct things. First, Japan was able to utilize technology to present an image of their country during the 1964 Olympics. Second, Japan was able to welcome foreigners into what was deemed as an internationalized and world-class city. Third, Japan was able to participate in politics through the means of sports competition. These forms of soft power paved the way for Japan to develop its hand in being able to facilitate more forms of hard power.

The international and media success from the 1964 Tokyo Olympics also paved the way for Japan to host the Olympics again in 2020. The city was legitimized and considered to be outstanding enough to host again in the future. The Olympics proved that sports and politics are indeed, not separate. Rather, they are inextricably linked to each other. To reiterate, the political participation afforded by Tokyo accepting the bid to host the Olympics was one that employed different strategies and forms of power than other forms such as having seats in political

negotiating contexts. As Nye (2004; 2008) states, soft power is a form of admiration that triggers a cooperation between countries that is not enforced by coercion. This kind of cooperation can serve to set up the possibility for future negotiations, peace-making, and even trade.

Trust, Cooperation, and Uncertainty

The means to building cooperative trust in the start of a relationship has been theorized by social scientists in both communication and economic market studies. The tendency and desire to reduce forms of uncertainty while especially during the beginning of a newly developing relationship has rich implications for thinking about political cross-cultural relations today. The role of the gift in reducing uncertainty in such interpersonal communication encounters indeed deserves more attention. The presence of gifted objects, after all, play substantial roles in relationship management, development, and overall attraction. Attraction is a large part of soft power theory according to Nye (2004; 2008), which was discussed thoroughly in chapter five.

One way to increase attraction between newly developing parties is by participating in uncertainty reduction or uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty reduction theory identifies individual smaller rules such as postulates, theorems, and axioms that compile a larger/umbrella-like concept. The takeaway from this theory is that when humans are involved in encounters that are fertile for anxiousness, novelty, embarrassment, or approval, they seek to reduce uncertainty by performing predictable behaviors in both verbal and nonverbal ways. When applied to everyday situations, we may identify praxis in action when we start to notice (unconventional) symbols and signs in public contexts. As Berger further mentions,

Uncertainty reduction theory (URT) proposes that individuals must reduce their

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uncertainties to some degree in order to be able to fashion verbal discourse and actions that will allow them to achieve their interaction goals. The theory's propositions describe relationships between verbal and nonverbal communication and information seeking, self-disclosure and interpersonal attraction. (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Berger & Gudykunst 1991)

Uncertainty avoidance is also one of Hofstede's five basic cultural dimensions. Gudykunst and Nishida highlight their findings on experiments in URT, originally postulated by Berger & Calabrese (1975). These American and Japanese authors share their insights on how some assertions in URT relate to cultural studies scholarship. Furthermore, they mention that this kind of harmony is achieved by determining what behavior is socially appropriate in the context (Gudykunst & Nishida 1984, p. 27). These cultural findings link to URT's claim that an increase in uncertainty leads to an increase in self-monitoring, self-observing, and self-controlling behaviors. Uncertainty reduction theory is further discussed by Berger and Gudykunst (1991). They outline the concept by situating a context that is richly ambiguous for the encoder and decoder. As Berger and Gudykunst (1991) mention,

The acquisition, processing, retention, and retrieval of information is vital to the growth, maintenance, and decline of personal and social relationships. Relationships can be viewed as systems of information exchange that must reduce uncertainty in order to survive. (p. 255)

The natural need to discover information and diminish feelings of uncertainty is one of the many things that might serve as a characteristic of being human, along with rhetoric, humor, and the gift quality of our species.

Chapter 6 The Occasions When One Gives

This chapter aims to show select *epideictic* contexts where people choose to give and the semiotic implications they set forth. Specifically, the sub-sections of “The Semiotics of Souvenirs” and “The Semiosis of Giving” offer semiotic theoretical framework behind motivations for bringing souvenirs home and the stories that those objects tell to loved ones and friends, whom are often the receivers. The chapter rounds out by reiterating the learned nature to give by revisiting the Percian definition of semiosis. This sub-section aims to show that the gesture of giving survives by way of being passed on and learned by current and future receivers, who in turn, learn to give.

The storied histories of appropriate occasions to give gifts depends on cultural traditions as well as changing norms in the current historical moment. Carmichael, H. L. & MacLeod (1997) discuss the undermined value of cooperation that transpires in the event of a gift. The unwritten and passed down scripts of giving and receiving are performed and played out in events regarding interpersonal and public (political) encounters. The authors regard the rules around the event of the gift to be arcane in addition to the gifts, themselves, which they refer to as useless in comparison to the institution of giving, itself. Their thesis is that “the imposing costs of gift-giving at the beginning of a relationship can support cooperation in a market where even cheaters never get caught” (p. 485).

Carmichael and MacLeod’s (1997) analysis is pertinent to the field of international economic relations, since the connotation of the word “gift” can be misconstrued. For example, a political leader may use the word “gift” when he or she means “favor”. The signified, or the culturally constructed meaning behind what gift-related signifiers actually mean variate depending on whether interacting with a Russian, Japanese, American, or other national leader.

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Signified meanings change according to the culturally specific audience at play. While the signified changes according to what cultural area one is negotiating in, the signifiers, or the words themselves, also enter an ongoing semiotic system of interpretation and possible misinterpretation. This is why the semiotics of the gift is worth taking into closer consideration when observing the current state of affairs in international politics.

The semiotics of the gift is an important step forward in attempting to balance what is now a world of fraught international friendship and political relationships. In this way, one may observe the current political and diplomatic scene in our world as a risk society. A risk society defined by Beck (1992) shapes the current professional place as one that now entertains the everyday phenomenon of waking up to managing a myriad of micro-level (personal), meso-level (institutional) and macro-level (global) risks.

On the macro level, the degree of risk felt in one country can transcend to other nation-states like a domino effect on the macro-level. Beck (1992, 1999) argues that this is the effect of a cosmopolitan society that starts to feel similar challenges across borders. For Beck, cosmopolitanism is an outlook that analyzes the process of overcoming boundaries that trigger the neo-national reflex to re-erect walls and boundaries (1999, p. 18). Fear of perceived threats and fears may occur either personally, locally, or globally, translating into a psychological state called a global risk society.

Importantly, *Risk Society's* thesis is that a risk society is a new form of modernity that replaces pre-modernity, industrial modernity, and their respective institutions. Previously relied upon institutions are no longer trusted in confidence. The notion of global risk at all times presented by Ulrich Beck brings a contemporary significance and exigence to the possibility of

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gifts as soft power and public diplomacy. An awareness of macro-level effects is an important intersection into the field of organizational communication.

The Semiotics of Souvenirs

Cultural sociologist Ian Woodward (2001) defines material culture as objects that we surround ourselves with that have greater value than strict functional utility. This definition comes from a conceptualization of everyday objects as signifiers in a socially constructed and intentional space. Woodward's concept of an object existing with a greater value than consumption or commodity supports the analysis of gift-objects as material culture. That is, gift-objects are multi-layered objects with structured functions that promote smooth social behavior and relations in public.

When the gift is conceptualized as authentic, which, as Derrida reminds us, as one without expectation for return, it then has the potential to exist with a greater value than what Theodore Adorno would conceptualize as merely a gift article. Authentic gifts versus gift articles are, in this way, an important distinction to make. Authentic gifts can be thought as given with consideration for what the other might genuinely like or need. They may be given anonymously or simply given without a named or predetermined receiver. Authentic gifts are not given frivolously or with a calculated plan for future return of some object. This contrasts to gift articles, which Adorno explains as a resort to prescribed, commodified items or objects that are given sometimes out of haste or obligation. He speaks negatively about how society has resorted to gift articles rather than authentic gifts as a result to market-based capitalist tendencies, practices, and patterns.

The reality that material culture is multi-layered and constituted from varied motivations leads to a question of how these objects are coded. French cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-

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Strauss described in his book, *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture* (1978), how a certain culture or speech community produces myths. Levi-Strauss (1978) and Roland Barthes (1957) both examine everyday objects and the myths those objects represent. In fact, Barthes conducts a detailed analysis of Japanese material culture in his book *Empire of Signs* (1982). The language propelling such cultural myths can be traced back to the people who use the objects. As semioticians Levi-Strauss and Barthes argue, cultural objects are embedded in codes.

When myths circulate in a society, they are able to resurface in other cultures or countries. The aftermath of World War II resulted in dissemination of new gift-objects around the world from a larger global network. Appropriation, as described by American anthropologist Judith Benson (2010), occurs when objects that are valued in a community as non-excludable become non-competitive to outsiders and are, therefore, given access. In addition, as communication theorist Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) argues, appropriation occurs “when a sign is used by one culture for use in another culture, thus giving it new meaning in the process” (p. 168).

When people hear the word *appropriation*, they might think that it refers to a negative process. However, it is important to note that this kind of appropriation, the East creatively signifying meanings with gift-objects from the West, is not out of maliciousness or manipulation. In other words, the appropriation processes in gift-objects do not exploit worldly material culture in an offensive or competitive way.

Since appropriation tests an audience’s prior knowledge with the intended signified meanings of the object or text, we move closer to how objects become intertextual. Intertextuality, as Bulgarian-French semiotic theorist, Julia Kristeva (1980) argues, is a matter of understanding the process of structuration behind a text, rather than one single structure of a text. Kristeva further contends that every text and discourse depends on other prior codes and

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discourses. Therefore, in order to fully interpret the historical meanings behind gift-objects, the readers must know at least some degree of background coding to discover the layered reality of a and given gift-object. British semiotician Daniel Chandler (2007) further contends that intertextuality is understood as an interaction or interplay between codes and warns that codes should be studied in relation to other codes.

While some givers of souvenirs may harness genuinely positive intention to spread and bring back culture to a recipient in a homeland, the souvenir may also serve to commodify and essentialize a culture. Balangee-Morris (2002) discusses some reasons why people buy souvenirs and the effects they have on recipients in a home country. She indicates that people often buy souvenirs in order to connect with some kind of personal memory they had with an area overseas. While the recipient experiences a second-hand version of this overseas place, the ethnic tradition and history that situates the souvenir also becomes secondary. This secondary residual effect that ends up becoming circulated in other countries is tied to the tourism industry in overseas locations. Tourism industries market and cater intentional gift objects to be desirable and purchasable for easy transporting back to a tourist's home country. This can be seen in tourist knick-knacks that are often brought home as tokens of memory. As discussed in chapter 1, memory is largely at play at the site of gift. The gift serves to trigger a memory, whether positive, negative, or otherwise. The link between memory and the gift-object as souvenir creates a rhetorical bond between the tourist, place, and material object.

Ballangee-Morris further contends that circulated souvenir gifts can prompt dynamic discussions back home involving topics of race, bias, prejudice, exoticness, romanticism, class stratification, authenticity, and stereotyping (2002, p. 102). In this way, tourist souvenirs harness the rhetorical capacity to have a lifetime effect on how we come to know, epistemologically,

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other people's places, culture, values, and people. This perspective highlights a more capitalocentric, market-based view on how purchased objects indeed may serve to commodify human beings who live far away.

Ballangee-Morris's (2012) perspective is in conversation with classic theories on Orientalism based on Edward Said's analysis on how people from the West come to create a spectacle-like attitude about individuals from the East and far East. It is both the packaging, presenting, and goods themselves that illustrate representations of people, places, and things. Whoever purchases a souvenir makes a decision on connecting to that particular object for some kind of emotional or semantics reasons, which in turn, leads to another recipient to then connect to the chosen cultural object. In this way, the consumer's story becomes inextricably linked to the souvenir-gifted-object. The detachment, however, that inevitably occurs is part of the problem that Ballangee-Morris argues.

When a souvenir is originally purchased, it has a symbolic value to it. Once the souvenir reaches the home country or state and becomes circulated there, it enters the possibility of being a market commodity. An example would be someone purchasing a Mickey Mouse tee shirt from a vacation at Walt Disney World in the 1960s for a loved one back home. As time passes, the souvenir's symbolic value, or value that was associated with memories made at the location, converges with market value. The price of the tee shirt may increase or decrease based on demand, popularity, and known signification of the icons within the shirt. The newly converged market and symbolic value of the past souvenir will hold as much value as the codes within the tee shirt will allow.

As an object that acquires codes across time, the object's worth depends on its sign producing and sign functioning characteristics. Since the example of the Mickey Mouse tee shirt

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is one that is popular around the globe, it could be considered an open text. The openness and knownness of Mickey Mouse souvenir objects are what allows others to signify meaning, connotation, and myth to the objects. This open text status of this example is opposed to a closed text, which would be a sign that only sends meaning to select audiences who have an inside knowledge of the sign.

After time, the souvenir-gifted object become circulated and re-circulated in and out of the hands of new audience members. For example, souvenirs from a previous generation may be found in yard-sale piles, antique stores, or estate sales. When souvenir-gifted-objects become circulated in this kind of way, they reach second and third orders of signification. Semiotically, this means that the objects reach a point of commodification where they are quickly and easily flipped from one location to the next. Second order signification occurs when a semiotic object becomes once removed from an original audience and takes on a new connotation.

After second order signification, third order signification becomes the repeated circulation of a semiotic object in its third round of reaching viewers and states of commodification. For Roland Barthes, the third order signification of a semiotic object is myth. Chandler and Munday (2011) refer to Barthes's argument that the two orders of signification, denotation and connotation work together to produce new ideology. These new ideologies are also called myths. For Barthes, myths are also known as a third orders of signification. Myths take on connotations that divert and take new directions from the original, signifier and signified relationship, or first order sign signification.

The possibility that gifted-souvenir objects may prompt myths about people from afar that are detached from the original referent offers a few semiotic implications forward. First, the souvenir functions rhetorically to prompt different kinds of information about a culture,

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ethnicity, religion, or group of people, which become talked about due to the presence of a newly discovered object. This information may or may not be close to original stories about a certain group of people. Semiotically, this is the difference between something that may be considered communication and what may be considered information (Eco, 1979, p. 5).

Furthermore, Eco mentions that within any communication process, there is also an informational process. This is akin to signals being sent from some kind of object without signification taking place. This would entail messages being responded to yet not fully grasped in meaning. In this regard, signals do not reach the point of becoming sign-producing or code-producing in a culture. Eco refers to these signals as merely informational and physical noise transmissions. He goes on to confirm that any process of signification involves culture. Not all communication, however, is cultural or signifying. For the purposes of a gifted souvenir, a code refers to a system of sign functions (Eco, 1979, p. 47). Souvenirs may fall under Eco's categories of either sign-producing, code-producing, communication, information, or signification.

As previously mentioned, the conclusion of World War Two enabled the access, custom-setting, and newer possibilities of the exchange of international gift-objects by more global audiences. As Ballangee-Morris (2002) argues, "since World War Two, the growth of tourism has developed into a multi-million-dollar international industry" (p. 103). Such multicultural accessibility to the exchange of gifts is partially understood through polysemy (Hebdige, 1979), when each object is seen to generate a potentially infinite range of meanings. After World War Two, a general increase in internationally traveling audiences of tourists and businesspeople could have developed multiple, different meanings about the gift-objects. French semiotician Roland Barthes (1988) also theorizes the concept of polysemy, warning readers that an object

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may develop a chain of signifiers that multiply in many ways, rather than developing one, static meaning.

Iconicity is one quality that gift-objects may embody as a result of wider dissemination post World War Two. This project adopts the Peircean conceptualization of iconicity, described as a mere resemblance, or something represented by its similarity or likeness (Peirce, 1931). Similarly, Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) supports the concept of an icon as any sign displaying a similarity between the present and the absent components. The implementation of global icons in everyday tourist-oriented gift-objects reminds audiences of popular figures and celebrities that serve as a kind of public relations for the respective country. This is especially the case when decided to purchase souvenir gifts from other countries to bring home and present loved ones or friends with. The gesture of the souvenir is a significant way that public diplomacy occurs in everyday life. The decision over what is interesting and bringing such gift-object-souvenirs back home is indeed one way to share culture and different views with people back home.

World War Two is acknowledged as a pivotal historical event for the opening up of possibilities for new kinds of gift-objects and souvenirs. In the specific case of Japan as a site that experienced greater public access, the contemporary artist and art theorist Takashi Murakami (2005) argues that the condition of Japan's cultural psyche had undergone a transition before World War Two to post-war context. Before World War Two, Japanese art, subculture, and objects were fairly separated from the rest of the world. This kind of geographical isolation was preserved by Japan's political choice to withdraw from the League of Nations in the early 1930s. What becomes less acknowledged is how the period of withdrawal from the League of Nations had served a positive role for the country by preserving the traditional Japanese customs and art on the island.

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In addition to an increased access to global flows of everyday gift-objects, the changing peace-time status among nations also allowed for the possibility for openness and closedness of gift-objects as texts. Italian semiotician Umberto Eco (1981) argues how a text functions as either *open* or *closed*, depending on how interpretable the text is to an audience. Open texts invite larger audiences to participate in multiple, free interpretations, while closed texts signify to select audiences who have a niche or exclusive knowledge with the intended meaning.

If a gift-souvenir-object recipient receives an object from a foreign place that they already have some kind of personal experience in, then the gifted souvenir may very well maintain a dual functionality of *closed* and *open* text status. This is in the specific case that the recipient is already informed and experienced in the culture and land where the gift came from. If, however, the gifted souvenir is given to someone with no experience and little knowledge of the foreign country where the gift came from, the gift offers a kind of *open* text status.

Gifted objects, in this case, and from a semiotic standpoint, can be read as texts. As Eco mentions, *open* texts fulfill an *open* status, since they are highly interpretable. Radically new and different souvenirs introduced to another country, however, may indeed function rhetorically and semiotically as *closed* texts when read by outsiders of the culture that created the souvenir. Open texts also fall into related semiotic theory of being considered as empty or floating signifiers (Levi-Strauss 1987, p. 63). Such empty or floating signifiers are simply up for interpretation and open for free coding by outsiders.

Open and closed texts fall into the discourse on the gift, since gifts may be given as inspiration from part of a specific memory or conversation that the giver has had with the receiver. In other words, generic gifts, or as Adorno would say, gift articles, would be the opposite of closed text. Generic gifts or gift articles would constitute as the following common examples for women: candles, flowers, soaps, lotions, and potpourri. For men, generic or gift articles may include, but are not limited to gift cards,

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wallets, slippers, socks, undergarments, or hats. While it is also possible that the aforementioned gift articles may be given out of a specific need or request from the recipient, these examples are somewhat common among American middle-class holiday interactions. The example of gift cards should be noted as gender neutral, depending on the specificity of the store for the gift card. These examples can be considered open texts. They are highly understandable, easier to decode, and open to interpretation.

Contrasted to open texts as generic gifts, closed texts, on the other hand, would constitute as gifts given out of a personal experience or even inside joke between the giver and receiver. Closed texts, in spirit of Eco's semiotic description, are ones that are readable and interpretable only to specific audiences. They have specific meaning, purpose, and exigence in the event of the gift. Gifts given as closed texts may show a level of intimacy that a giver has with a receiver. Gifts as closed texts may sometimes show a different level of thoughtfulness or consideration toward what the receiver may really want, need, or have asked for.

Closed text gifts are ones that may only be readable by the receiver, and not other family members. Examples of gifts as closed text may include: concert or event tickets framed, a photograph of a first date, a poem written by a family member, or a collage of the receiver's pets or children. Although these closed text gifts are readable by outsiders, the point that Eco makes is that there is a closed reading of the closed text, one that garners a personal response and semantic reaction that becomes inevitably unique to the receiver. This can be imagined if someone were to give you a custom framed photograph of your first pet dog. While others or outsiders can clearly see that it is a dog, their semantic reaction will be different to the receiver's semantic reaction.

Eco's semiotic discussion of open and closed texts, when applied to the event of the gift, brings up the reality of semantic or emotional reactions. This brings us naturally to related semiotic theory of Roland Barthes, and his discussion of the *studium* and *punctum*. While Barthes discusses theory of *studium* and *punctum* in photography, it can also be applied to gift giving and receiving. In the next section, I will argue how the experience of looking at photography can be compared to the experience of receiving gifts.

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In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes (1981) offers a semiotic and phenomenological analysis on photography, from the standpoint of the photographer but mostly from the standpoint of the viewer or reader of the photography. He draws a difference between the *studium* and *punctum* in photographs. Both have different kinds of effect and evoke different semantic and emotional reactions from the viewer. *Studium* refers to a general feeling or understanding able to be felt upon viewing a photograph. For example, a photograph that shows a class of students being taught by a teacher could evoke a *studium* of study taking place. The *punctum*, however, is described as a puncture, something that shoots out, or pricks the viewer. The *punctum* is something more poignant in the photograph noticed by the viewer. For example, in the same example photograph of a class of students being led by a teacher, a viewer may notice a particularity such as one student sleeping in the back row, which evokes could evoke a sense of *punctum*. It is often a detail that relates and connects to the viewer in some kind of personal and emotional way. As Barthes mentions,

To recognize the *studium* is inevitably to encounter the photographer's intentions, to enter into harmony with them, to approve or disapprove of them, but always to understand them, to argue them within myself, for culture is a contract arrived at between creators and consumers. (p. 27)

The *studium* is shown to offer a more general idea about a photograph. Compared to the act of gift giving, a receiver may be able to interpret a giver's intentions by the content matter of the gift. The *punctum*, on the other hand, is a more deeply emotional experience that one may have with a photograph. A *punctum*, therefore, for a gift, could be the moment of detail where a receiver feels a shock, prick, or sense of genuine excitement upon seeing whatever gift has been given. A *punctum* is not always achieved in the gift giving and receiving context. Sometimes, simply a *studium* is evoked by the receiver. A *punctum* may be evoked when a giver thinks about nuance, need, and sentimentality between the object, giver, and receiver. These three areas, in this way, connect and operate in a way similar to Barthes' notion of *punctum*. As he mentions,

Despite its clarity, the *punctum* should be revealed only after the fact, when the photograph is no longer in front of me and I think back on it. I may know better a photograph I remember than a

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photograph I am looking at, as if direct vision oriented its language wrongly, engaging it in an effort of description which will always miss its point of effect, the punctum. (p. 53)

Punctum, when applied to gifts, happens after the fact. It may happen in retrospect. For examples, some other possibilities of punctum in the event of the gift could be, the presence of a giver's handwriting on a card or label, the choice of location of the purchased gift, certain people or certain objects in a gifted photograph. Punctum, in a gift, is what has the ability to cause tears of joy or sadness. Moving moments when a giver is able to think of the perfect gift, which may be one of founded upon memory or involved in some kind of sentimental family event, are the moments that spark a semantic reaction that goes beyond a general feeling of gratitude. These moments would go beyond the general feelings involved with the studium.

Other examples of gifts that evoke a feeling of studium would include what Adorno would categorize as gift articles. Gift articles, to reiterate, or gifts that are sometimes given out of obligation. Such gifts may not hold deep or overly thoughtful memories, connections, or personal relevance. Examples of possibilities that may constitute as gifts that evoke stadium include candles, gift cards, socks, plants, flowers, or undergarments. While the act of giving is achieved, and the gesture and credit of the act is given back to the giver, the intrinsic value of such gift articles may not penetrate as deeply as those that evoke a stadium or a nuanced detail that triggers the receiver.

The punctum has the "power of expansion" (Barthes, 1981, p. 27). We are trained to go through gifts with a spirit of consumption. Barthes also says this about photographs. We receive the photographs and consume, while not always receiving the photograph politically. Furthermore, he argues that photographs have a relation to history. This refers to a way of chronologically going back in time and understanding what life might have been like during certain indexical moments. Gifts, too, in this sense, have an indexical quality to them. One may go back in time and review a chronology of gifts in a way that has a relation to history.

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Barthes discusses the many possibilities for surprise that a photograph may have upon a viewer. These surprises can be applied to how a receiver may experience a gift. The surprises in photography include:

The first surprise is that of the rare (rarity of the referent). The second surprise is that of the reproduced gesture that the eye cannot attest. The third surprise is that of the prowess. The fourth surprise is that of technique, where the photographer looks for contortions. The fifth surprise is a lucky find, where something appears to be natural. (Barthes, 1981, pp. 32-33)

These surprises are at play when considering the impact that a gift will bring to a receiver. Finding a rare gift, one that involves technique by creating it, one that shows a kind of specific prowess or power, or one that is just lucky, given the time and place of finding it, all factor into the reception, attitude, and assessment of gifts given in everyday situations and holidays.

In addition to Eco's (1981) concept of *open* and *closed* texts, Barthes' (1974) concept of readerly and writerly texts expands the interpretation of gifted souvenirs. A readerly text is regarded as a static, prescribed message. A writerly text, on the other hand, is a more fluid process of making meaning that is produced by the reader (Barthes, 1974). Moreover, viewing gifted souvenir-objects as both readerly and writerly texts help us see how gifted souvenir objects may actually function to preserve safety and overall happiness in a culture's speech community.

Gifted souvenir objects may serve to maintain peaceful relations and goodwill toward the other. Such a fluid sharing of one culture to the next is a gesture more genuine than motivated or agenda-laden gift exchange. In this light, souvenirs are a unique form of gift that embody a kind of pro-social function that other gifts do not. The semiotics of souvenirs serves as one way that gift objects are given with intentions of sincerity, more authenticity, or genuine gesture of simply thinking of another person without any other agenda of reciprocity.

The Semiosis of Giving

Almost every country in the world has its own unique way of using identity and culture-specific value-orientations as sign vehicles of modernity, globalization, and first-world status. Juri Lotman (1992) emphasized that a minimum of two languages is necessary in order for semiotic space to realize its meaning-generating potential. The event of the exchange of a gift can prompt many future similar encounters. In other words, once someone decides to begin the process of offering one a gift, there then enters the choice to reciprocate with a gift in return. The synechistic approach is helpful in the present analysis since I am exploring how and why people resort to gifts as continuous, ever-changing, dynamic forms of expression. Gifts signify continuity and they embody the possibility of being manipulated and adapted *ad infinitum*. Gifts directly represent the ongoing semiosis that humans face. In this regard, thirdness can be thought of as life. The scaffolding of thirdness, however, is important. For example, there cannot be thirdness without secondness or firstness, first. He argues that people are also signs and to cut off a person from future interpretants is a sign denied the possibility of being a sign. To deny semiosis, according to Peirce, would be “death”. The spreading of ideas is also within their nature.

Ideas tend to spread continuously and affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. It is their nature to spread. In spreading, however, they lose intensity and especially the power of affecting others but gain generality and become welded with other ideas. (Peirce, 1892, p.75)

For Peirce, the triadic system of signs consists of icons, or firstness, indices, or secondness, and symbols, or thirdness. Relating to thirdness, semiosis, and the ongoingness of signs, “a symbol is a sign naturally fit to declare that the set of objects which is denoted by whatever set of indices

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may be in certain ways attached to it is represented by an icon associated with it” (Peirce, 1940 p. 112). An important notion in Peirce’s semiotic is that symbols grow. Symbols grow by partaking in a blend with other icons and indices. Once a symbol finds itself in being, it spreads amongst groups of people. New and different meanings are set forth into a semiosphere. Symbols are connected to objects or referents, which come into play together, by way of semiosis, by symbol-using minds. In this way, people can make new symbols.

Gifts fall under the semiotic category of symbols that people continuously make, use, and assign new meanings to. The symbol of the gift lives in the minds of those who use it. Gifts become symbols when their practices, meanings, and potentialities are passed in between and among various groups of symbol-using cultures. The social learning around gift-giving and receiving becomes synechistic when ideas spread to new parties. In C. S. Peirce’s *The Law of Mind*, he presents the idea that ideas spread continuously and affect that stand in a relation of affectibility.

By way of spreading ideas signs lose their intensity as well as the power to affect others. Importantly, however, is that through this continuous spreading of ideas, the ideas gain generality. They gain the power to mend with other ideas as well. Through generations of fluctuating market pressure and intercultural adaptations and assimilations of gift giving and receiving, the scripts for when, how, and what to give has been spread rapidly. This rapid spreading of cultural scripts around the gift has presented not only new facilitations and diversions of existing traditions, but a generalizing tendency as well. Following Peirce’s theory on the generalization of ideas as the increase of their breadth spreads, we can see a kind of dilution to the rules behind gift giving.

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Adopting Peirce's notion of the weakened intensity of ideas once they become rapidly spread, so do cultural scripts around the giving and receiving of gifts. New ways of giving are emerging. People are now making their own gifts and even giving what is called experience gifts. Experience gifts are ones where the giver buys a membership or one-time experience to attend a show, activity, or location with the receiver. New rules are being made each day for what is considered a desirable way to bring someone joy. Returning to Theodore Adorno's critique on the gift, that the contemporary market-based tendencies around actions relating to gifts and spending money has incurred a lost sense of authentic joy from the giver and to the receiver, people are now reinventing ways that will work for them. These new gifts are not always objects that are bought with money. Such experience gifts defy traditional norms around commodified gift-objects in progressive ways.

Adorno's view on gift-article expresses how gifts are given as a symbolic gesture to show expenditure. The excess of the gift object itself shows the unfortunate reality that such a gift article is actually not necessary in one's life. Gift-articles are described as things bought to show a transaction of spending. Common examples involve a middle-class bride and groom receiving fondue kits or coffee table books to display in one's home. Gift articles are conceptually different from authentic gifts due to the fact that gift articles function as a sign of spending money. These items are often enacted in workplace relationships (Dilnot, 1993, p. 55). Thus, if one were to give an actual loved one a gift-article, it could likely be interpreted as insensitive. The gift-article is bought without any deep or actual consideration for what the receiver would genuinely want or need. As Dilnot (1993) mentions,

The small gift article is often used precisely to signify or mark a relationship to the other (the gift of friendship, a sign of caring), a generalized culture of gift-articles marks the

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existence of a formal but not a substantial relationship to the other. Because most of our relationships are now of this order, the gift-article is paradoxically their perfect representation (p. 53).

Dilnot's article makes several key points, including political ones. One can simply look to the White House to see many trinkets and objects that signify deteriorating or empty relationships with other countries. Gift-articles, here, are compared to what gifts could possibly be, when conceptualized with intention, sincerity, and goodwill towards the other. The culture of the gift becomes something corporatized especially when we start to notice possible contempt for Hallmark and other companies that capitalize on providing a breadth and rotating variety of gift-articles for every season, reason, and occasion. This is seen especially in the example of a corporate gift buyer. Even though these examples show how gifts have accumulated over time to a superfluous and excessive nature with assistance from a market-based culture, Dilnot points to the argument that there is always a need to give. Even when someone has given out all that one can possibly give and is no longer capable of thinking about what, when, how, where, or to whom to give, there is always a need.

As discussed, the gift has transformed both semiotically and semantically across time due to a market-driven and visually based culture. The act of giving in some corporate and political settings becomes a mere gesture of visual semantics. This refers to the important visual act of an audience understanding what is largely perceived as a positive interaction of goodwill. The audience in this case includes both giver and receiver. The universally signified meaning of the goodwill gesture of giving is what allows a mere semiotic appearance of something positive happening when in fact, this appearance could be merely empty and less meaningful that led to believe. This possibly empty semiotic gesture is akin to mere public relations between giver and

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receiver for the sake of public relations. This kind of possible public relations through the empty semiotic act of gift giving is also related to the previous cultural discussion on face. Public relations gestures surrounding the gift in corporate and political contexts is in line with face negotiation theory as understood and previously discussed by communication theorists Stella Ting Toomey and John Oetzel.

In short, through the discussion on gift-articles, it can be seen how the culture of the gift has been perpetuated by the market of the gift. Critical theory, in this regard, provides a foundational infrastructure to explain why and how gifts are now akin to commodities. He goes on to specify that it is not that the gift does not have the power to transform relationships and interactions, it's that when given in haste, through the form of gift-articles, it keeps relations at the surface and formal level. The level of formality is even marked materially by such object exchanges.

Dilnot offers a high-level overview of Adorno's view of the gift. Adorno's perspective arrives from a deeper level understanding of critical theory, particularly what happens to an over-produced commodity over time. The loss of symbolic value over gift-articles over time points to the loss of a real relation to the subject. Optimistically, however, the spreading of gifts can be viewed as a healthy sign of living one's life. He admits to giving being possibly one of the genuine characteristics that makes us human:

The act of giving- in the wide positive and reciprocal sense I sketched above- is more integral than we might think both to the work of design and to making in general, and to the art of being human.... The quantum joy lying in the gift relation is there to be potentially opened in any everyday relation between a product and a user. (Dilnot, 1993, p. 54)

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While Dilnot offers most commentary on the critical nature of Adorno's treatment of gifts through a marketized culture, he does admit to a positive and significant view of gift as well, "Every undistorted relationship, perhaps indeed the conciliation that is part of organic life itself, is a gift" (1993, p. 54). Dilnot, whether he realizes it or not, is pointing to what could be considered a parallel view that he shares with Jacques Derrida. The similarity between Adorno and Derrida is that they both believe that gift in life is inescapable. Derrida calls this inescapability a form of madness. Adorno calls this inescapability a form of "keeping a passage between the inner and outer life (Dilnot, 1993, p. 55). The object's visibility, or the warmth of the object constitutes as the outer form of the gift.

Furthermore, he describes how the act of creating things, of making things is akin to the gift. He asks the question why would anyone make anything if it could not be used by someone else in some kind of way? He parallels the act of creating to gift culture in life. While one may argue that an artist may be engaged in the act of making art simply for her own pleasure or form of self-therapy, Adorno points to what may be a more subconscious reason why we create anything at all. The parallel drawn between artists or creators and gift culture is one that helps us understand deeper rhetorical and philosophical meanings behind potential reasons why human area drawn toward creating, displaying, exhibiting, talking about, and giving art in one's lifetime.

Dilnot's admission to the wonders of the gift in everyday human life through the lens of Adorno complements a semiotic theory by C. S. Peirce. For Peirce, if we did not engage in forms of expression and thirdness, it would be going against our nature. If we did not feel compelled to give back, reciprocate and return the favor of the gift, then it would be a cutting off of semiosis of the life of the gift. In the Peircian sense, to not give gifts to loved ones is to go against our nature. From a philosophy of communication perspective, gifts are responses in the

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moment to a certain temporal exigence. According to Arnett (2010), “Philosophy of communication engages particulars contingent on a particular situation, a particular moment, and a particular public contribution to public opinion.” Gifts, when taking Arnett’s description into consideration, are particular responses to particular issues and prompted situations that have temporal significance.

Considering the philosophy of communication perspective and descriptions offered gifts may embody a specificity to the given moment, from a particular person, for a certain recipient, for a specific reason. This highly rhetorical process is part of the reason why gifts have persuasive power. To employ rhetoric, or in this case, rhetorically charged objects at certain times for certain reasons demonstrates a *kairotic* quality that they have. As described by Pantelides, McIntyre, and McKee (2011),

Kairos is an ancient rhetorical concept that has gained importance in different disciplines over the centuries. So what is it? *Kairos* is knowing what is most appropriate in a given situation; for our purposes, let’s think of it as saying (or writing) the right thing at the right time. (p. 73)

Gifts and rhetoric have parallel qualities that offer a collective persuasion power. That parallel power is the ability to be given at the right time, by the right person, for the right recipient, for right reason(s). *Kairos* is timeliness, appropriateness, decorum, symmetry, balance—awareness of the rhetorical situation or “the circumstances that open moments of opportunity” (Kinneavy; Sipiora; Vatz; Bitzer; Hill 217). They are continuously recreated to reflect some kind of work-life, political, personal situation, or issue at hand. Gifts are given as encouragement, in regret, as a form of remorse, in commemoration, as celebration, as congratulatory, in sympathy, or in romance. The *kairotic* quality of gifts can be life-saving or life-giving. *Kairos* and the gift is

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one possible genuine avenue for the gift to make an important difference in one's life. The thoughtfulness and discernment behind placement and timeliness of how and when the giver decides to give would go in a different direction from giving with the intention of manipulation or to gain power in some kind of situation.

The ongoingness of the event of the gift is the Peircian synechistic quality of the gift character within human life. Gift-giving is semiosis because it is a continuousness throughout and after human life. The tradition and gesture of giving is one that is passed down by generations. Future generations learn the act of giving and by way of mimesis, humans learn what to do. Humans learn who to give to and who not to give to. Humans learn when to give and when not to give. Humans learn how to give and how not to give. Humans learn what to say when something is given. Humans learn what not to say when something is given. This semiosis, this ongoing creation of signifiers in the lifeworld, is one of the few things that makes our human race distinct, unique, and linguistically sophisticated in comparison to other animals.

Chapter 7 Towards an Anachronistic Gift

This chapter argues for the reader to think about a positive connotation of anachronism in a meaningful and positive way that describes gifts. Specifically, the gifts that are given outside of *epideictic* contexts such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, or other major holidays may catch the receiver as unexpected or “off-time”. This synthesis of anachronism and gift is offered out of hope to invite the reader outside of a word, anachronism, that may be commonly connoted negatively. To give anachronistically means to give outside of the epideictic structures of expected life events and rather, to be open to opportunities to give when the case calls for it. The sub-sections in this chapter are “Non-Gifts” and “Professional Gift Variations”. These sub-sections aim to show how trickery may occur when an object appears as gift but is not. This project defines gift as ethical, social, symbolic, and communicative in nature. Based on this definition, this chapter looks at the possibility of "Non-Gifts" through examples that violate the structures that have been previously laid out. The mere appearance of something genuine is what sparks the trickery or smoke screen for what is otherwise an agenda-laden and calculated gesture. The appearance of gift, in this regard, is akin to giving in order to coerce, gain control over, or manipulate the receiver.

The Greek words *ana* and *chronos* come together to give form to what we now call anachronism (Syjamaki, 2011). Anachronism has been discussed in various disciplines, including history, philosophy, and communication. While the word anachronism may indicate negative connotations, the word can be thought of in new ways and in new contexts. This chapter’s main goal is to present a new possibility for viewing authentic gifts as anachronistic. Anachronistic gifts, in this sense, would refer to gifts given unexpectedly, out of traditional

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epideictic exchange, without reason, without naming of a giver, and sometimes, without naming of a receiver.

A positive connotation of anachronism, when used in the context of authentic and possible gifts, was also briefly aforementioned in chapter two in discussion of Baudrillard's (1996) conception of anachronistic antiques. Baudrillard, too, treats the concept of anachrony with a positive connotation- one that supports a kind of individuality and uniqueness of an object from a different synchronic time in history. In this way, Baudrillard's anachronistic antiques have vintages that are specific to the time of manufacture. The word "vintage" can be often confused for "retro" when describing objects. However, it should be noted that when talking about the vintage of something, it refers to the time period of manufacture of a certain object. Therefore, an anachronistic antique may have a vintage of 1920, 1930, 1990, or 2020. Vintage does not mean old in this case.

An anachronistic antique is one that is often embedded in the context of a specific historicity that lends way to stories within a narrative. An anachronistic object given at an unexpected time, place, and from an unexpected person may very well be part of a narrative in one's life. In this regard, anachronistic gifts may rhetorically fit into a receiver's life in a way that creates more ground for a narrative that they have chosen or even been given.

Anachronistic gifts may fit into a critical perspective of the gift. While there is no such "critical theory on the gift" publicly available and acknowledged, this gap is important for pointing to the possibility of one. Gifts, when considered from a critical perspective, have the capacity to bring out qualities in a relationship that are dialogic. This capacity is brought to attention by Dilnot (1993) when he describes the strengthening relationship between subject and subject rather than subject and object in the following remarks:

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Objects work not only possessively, for the individual subject but also dialogically, that is, between subjects, working at once to aid subjects materially in how they live but working also as a means of establishing concrete relations with the other? (p. 55)

He brings attention to the possessive model of acquiring and accumulating objects in human life. The other kind of possibility, however, is to have a different kind of relationship to objects and to selves. The utilitarian way of looking at gifts, one that depends on more of an economic theory-driven way of understanding gift, sees how gifts are given to replace certain every day, ordinary objects. This utilitarian possessive model of objects contrasts to what could be a feminist theoretical approach to understanding gift-objects.

When one pauses to consider what a gift does to a relationship, one is taking the time to notice how certain gestures can aid to nurture, maintain, and grow human relationships. The gift-as-nurturing and relationship-strengthening angle is one in line with feminist ways of thinking about everyday human relations. Feminist theory can be contrasted to economic theories of relating to humans, objects, and material in general. The difference I am demonstrating between economic ways of thinking and feminist ways of thinking is similar to the difference that one may make between social exchange theory versus empathetic and sympathetic giving in interpersonal interactions.

This kind of feminist orientation of the gift calls for a need to ask how we can rethink the relationship between things and subjects. This feminist rethinking challenges what is otherwise a commodity-driven economic world of goods. One starting place to understand a feminist's point of view when it comes to objects is in Mary Douglas (1976) in her book *The World of Goods*. Douglas (1976) combines economic theories of demand and possibilities to explain how societies have grown accustomed to acquiring more goods than what they may really need. She provides

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a critical take on how and why cultures come to revere an ownership in an excess amount of goods, relating this also to the cultivation of tastes in societies. Specifically, she points to how the flow of goods should be watched in order to better understand how society is formed.

Second, the desiring for, purchasing of, planning for, and communication about goods in general is part of a way of life. Third, as the market perpetuates the flow of goods, rhetoric keeps certain flows in place while excluding, resigning, and replacing other flows of goods. All aforementioned contributions from Douglas's book rely on rhetoric to develop these "rituals".

For Douglas, the book's central metaphor of goods are products that consumers buy to mark identities, holidays, events, and many other special and ordinary occasions. The patterns of consumption become culturally specific rituals in that are learned, followed, and taught by dominant members of a public. These rituals affect self-esteem of individuals as well as their identity. These rituals help to develop meaning in people's lives. From a philosophy of communication perspective, the rituals are constitutive to people's realities.

Douglas's central thesis as it relates to a formidable rationale behind the ritual of gift buying and giving, is that patterns of consumption behavior determine the form(s) of society. Indeed, patterns of buying are seen visibly, heard audibly, tasted with the mouth, and felt with the body. The ways that everyday products engage the sensory complex shows us the vast power- rhetorically, financially, mentally, and physically- held by these "goods". Buying and owning power of such goods through the gestures of gift receiving can be bestowed upon people without their consent. In other words, this process can be done in a complicit way without a public's awareness. Shopping becomes a ritualistic activity that prepares us for the ritual of consumption. In other words, it is not consumption in itself. This shows how there are multiple rituals at play before, during, and after the event of the gift. For example, before the gift, one

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shops. During the gift, one presents an object as such in an epideictic context. After the gift, one responds either with praise, dissatisfaction, or otherwise. On a meta-level, planning to shop means planning the plans for consumption. Lives become adjusted and embedded in these behavior shifts that attend to practices that eventually form traditions that range in difference depending on the culture. Cultures develop practices and traditions of identity based on goods circulated, learned about, and spoken about.

This book is relevant to contributing to an explanation why rituals of gift buying and giving are embedded in the marketplace and advertisement industries. First, the book can inform marketing practice about sources of buying, consumption, and the differences between those two actions. Not only does Douglas help us understand the differences between buying and consuming, but the relationship between them as well. In this way, her theory also helps us develop a more philosophical way of thinking about the flows of goods.

Douglas's work pushes us to ask questions of why and how the production of external (manufactured) goods occur. Examples of questions pursued include: what are the human motivations behind the production and flows of goods? Can flows of goods be predicted, anticipated, and therefore, planned? How can we better understand the relationship between apparel, goods, new products, and identity? How and why does the flow of goods impact identity politics, self-esteem, class values, and the feeling of economic stability?

Goods are so powerful that people develop intrinsic and extrinsic motivation towards the attainment of goods. This high cultural and universal value of goods lends it way into practices of the gift, which never cease. Practices of the gift from the past and present will be carried on to future generations as long as there remains a consistent value over the economic accumulation of material goods. These are several of the important questions that Douglas addresses with

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seriousness in her project that relate to the powerful phenomenon of the gift in contemporary and historical cultures.

Douglas's orientation to the accumulation of goods lead to a greater understanding the power of gifts is in line with a communicative constitutive orientation of creating meaning. The communicative constitution of organizations or CCO is a model under this paradigm that philosophically considers a relationship or a culture as a container. The container metaphor is useful in understanding this approach as opposed to other metaphors such as Fordist-oriented organization as a machine or Christensen, Morrison, & Cheney's approach as the diseased body. Ontologically language creates reality rather than simply reflect it (Whorf, 1956). Epistemologically, linguistic phenomena, inclusive of speech acts beyond utterance, bring things and objects into the known sphere. In other words, we come to know things through language.

Philosophically, this paradigm seeks to answer the question of how relationships and cultures have become discursive material configuration. In other words, the assumption in this worldview is that meaning is configured primarily through (many and various) forms of communication. Methods used in this paradigm include Ricoeur's distanciation, conversation analysis, narrative theory, speech act theory, systems theory, and actor-network theory (Brummans et al, 2014). Axiologically, this paradigm adopts values from the following other paradigms: structuration theory, systems theory, and the rhetorical approach. Returning to the container metaphor, the belief is that all semantic and semiotic activity takes place within a relationship or culture. Less emphasis is placed on phenomena or influence outside of a given dyad or culture's walls or boundaries.

In history, authors have cited how modern historians have fallen in the problem of writing about a time in the past during a time that would be considered alien to the perspective

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under analysis in the past. It is akin to writing about an event in history during a historical moment that is from a great distance in time from the event occurring. For historians, the problem of anachronism is similar to the problem of “past ideas being present” for C. S. Peirce. For Peirce, in his *Law of Mind*, he draws out an argument around how ideas are made and spread. Because past ideas existed in a particular time, place, and mindset of a symbol-using person, the same exact idea cannot exist again. As simple as his theory is, it has direct relevance when put into conversation with the notion of anachronism. As anachronism presents a problem of authenticity of perspective for some historians, the problem of a past idea being perfectly represented by a symbol in the present is impossible for Peirce.

The problem of anachronism is debated among historians for various reasons. For example, the trap of writing from an anachronistic point of view, for some, is unavoidable. While the problem of anachronism may be unavoidable to some, to escape it and enter a purely sanitized form of describing and recording history may also be impossible at times. After all, a writer, an observer, and historian are always bound to the present. While this view discussed by Syjamaki presents the problem with anachronism in history, there is the reverse perspective to this stance as well. Anachronism as positive is an acceptance that reality may not be able to be presented objectively and accurately in the first place. One scholar who viewed anachrony as a necessity for talking about, critiquing, and predicting patterns in time was Peter Burke (1969). He viewed anachrony as a sense of historical distance, change, or perspective.

When one chooses to give outside of traditional *epideictic* structures such as a birthday, wedding, anniversary, graduation, or major holiday, without warning, naming, or even credit, one enters a kind of anachrony. One breaks a tradition of continuity in such a way that the expectation for return or reciprocity becomes less contemplated. The economics of exchange is

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less apparent and less obvious during such a genuinely surprising gesture of anachronistic giving. The opposite of anachronistic giving would be to give during occasions such as a recipient's birthday, major holiday, graduation, or wedding day, to name a few known examples.

Considering the chronology of many occasions when one feels the impulse to give, it becomes all the more noticeable when someone decides to give "out of time" or during an unexpected and uneventful moment. Such an untimely choice to give can catch people off guard and harnesses the potential to genuinely create a surprise for the other. Such a deliberate gesture can be seen as a deliberate anachronism. It means "what is out of time, or what resists chronology" (Tambling, 2010). To aim for a time, place, and reason that are unexpected may be the whole purpose of giving to some people. The break in narrativity is in sync with a break in what is otherwise expected traditional ways, forms, and times for giving. When looking at gift through the lens of anachrony, one is able to find new and creative possibilities for understanding how gift functions in one's life and during certain critical times in one's life. For others, as the aforementioned chapter revealed, there remain steadfast and expected times in one's life where it is tradition to give something to others. Such traditions of longevity in a culture are part of a larger cultural values system.

According to Hofstede (2001), there are classified characteristics of societies as cultural dimensions. Collectivism is one of the societal positions that a group of people with a shared history, values, and ideology have. Hofstede's five basic cultural dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and time-horizon. First, Hofstede's power distance is the degree to which members of a society automatically accept a hierarchical or unequal distribution of power in organizations and society at large. Next, uncertainty avoidance or the acceptance/non-acceptance of risk is the degree of which

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members of a given society deal with the uncertainty and risk of everyday life and prefer to work long-term acquaintances and friends rather than with strangers.

Furthermore, Hofstede's individualism-collectivism is the degree to which individuals perceive themselves to be separate from a group and to be free from group pressure to conform. Next, Hofstede's masculinity-femininity is the degree to which a society looks favorable on aggressive and materialistic behavior and clearly separates male from female roles. Some experts do not like the term masculinity and prefer to term assertiveness.

Finally, Hofstede's time horizon, from short to long term, is the degree to which members of a culture are willing to defer present gratification to achieve long-term goals (Hofstede, 1991). Collectivism can be associated with communitarian philosophy. Rather than a liberal perspective, which would put emphasis on the individual and his or her rights, Christie and Roy (2001) describe a communitarian perspective that seeks to assert that their cultures protect the community at the expense of restricting the freedoms of the individual. Hofstede's cultural dimensions are one way to explain patterns behind why certain cultures may choose to give gifts more frequently and for reasons such as to avoid uncertainty or to decrease power distance between two parties.

Interpreting the possibility of genuine gifts as anachronistic falls in line with an interpretivist world view. The argument made in this project, that gifts given anachronistically can harness different and transformational power in everyday micro, meso, and macro-political contexts, is an interpretive way of thinking about gift. The interpretive turn in communication emerges from the broader post-positivist movement, falling under the post-modern moment. Philosophically, we see a shift, as Tompkins (1997, p.370) mentions, from functionalism as a devil term in the Burkean sense to interpretivism as a God term. Interpretive scholarship attends

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to culture within life and finally recognizes the importance that people other than those in power positions participate in the constitution of everyday realities. Ontologically and axiologically, this paradigm values descriptive rather than prescriptive approaches to the discovery and revealing of the nature of being.

Methodologically, interpretive scholarship pulls from various creative forms of discerning the nature of culture as constituted by persons in organizational life. Scholars treat organizational territory as fields where they can physically embark upon, making their bodies as instruments for research in the holistic research design and project. As Doerfel & Gibbs (2014, p. 229) confirm, field-based scholarship values context. Related to contexts, interpretivists believe that there are various texts out there to be rigorously analyzed, discerned, studied, or interpreted. Texts are defined broadly in this paradigm, denoting anything from people, actions, representative statements, and or documents. Fairhurst & Putnam (2014) discuss discourse analysis as one methodology under interpretivist research and define discourse as “a collection of texts” (p.272).

Interpretive scholars value any and all forms of communication as texts able to be read. Some view texts from a semiotic standpoint or make claims of patterns at play after engaging in methods such as ethnography, textual analysis, and other participant-observer situations. An important takeaway from this paradigm is the axiological shift to caring about the qualitative rather than quantitative data and patterns that can be engaged. While this paradigm tends to focus on the qualitative side, this does not mean that interpretive scholarship must be strictly qualitative. When analyzing gifts as texts, an interpretive paradigm is invoked in this project.

Non-Gifts

In the political arena, the lines between what is considered an outright gift, a *quid pro quo*, dual transaction, or random favor become blurred. Along with *quid pro quo* is the phrase “I scratch your back, you scratch mine”. For the purposes of this section, a non-gift is conceptualized as the opposite of sincere, genuine gift given out of good character and goodwill toward the other. This is different from Derrida’s aporia of the gift because with non-gift, there are explicitly clear expectations behind the gesture. The gesture of a non-gift may appear as a gift. The non-gift makes an appearance in this arena with historical examples to illustrate. Such is the case in Mahoney’s (1991) analysis of the court case, *Transamerica Corporation versus The United States*. Transamerica Corporation had claimed to have made a charitable donation of rights in a motion picture film to the Congress Library of America. However, the case developed that they indeed, did not make a charitable donation, or, in other words, a gift. Instead, the corporation had received a substantial benefit that was not shown. Rather than an outright gift, evidence found that commercial exploitation and benefits for both parties destroyed any possibility of the act being charitable, categorizing the act as a *quid pro quo*.

The unfortunate reality of agenda-laden charitable acts is seen too often across many contexts, including corporate, university, non-profit, and even religious. Acts are seen as charitable for public relations reasons. However, charitable acts are sometimes done in order to simply be seen or acknowledged as the performer of a good deed. In this way, charitable acts performed publicly in order to gain competitive advantage in some kind of playing field is related to face negotiation theory. Charitable acts become a way to assert positive face in a competitive context where people are looking. In addition, the taxpayer was unable to furnish a complete account of the transaction, leading to the investigation.

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Other similar cases of a non-gift have been documented in history. Such are cases when there is indeed an allusion of a gift but in actuality, is simply an appearance. One may refer to such an appearance of a gift to be the rhetoric of a gift. The rhetoric of a gift gives a mere appearance that it is functioning authentically as something given without reason, cause, or in some cases, giver. The rhetoric of the gift, sometimes without knowing true origin or motive behind the gift, has a way of speaking for itself. The rhetoric of the gift speaks a language that falls upon diverse audience members. An audience may interpret the rhetoric of the gift in polysemous ways. This multiplicity of meaning when decoding the rhetoric of the gift is what protects dominant interpretations of the gift being well-intentioned, positive, and derived from someone with goodwill. The appearance of an authentic gift is what also functions as the persuasion of a gift. The appearance of the gift is similar, in this case, to Plato's view of a world of appearances. Plato viewed a world on Earth as one with mere shadows serving as representations to essences of things that are beyond the existential realm.

An object may give the appearance of a genuine or well-intentioned gift, one given out of kindness, generosity, and good will. However, the possibility for mere trickery should also be considered an equal risk in the event of the gift. For example, someone who notices that a certain friend always arrives armed with a gift to give may grow suspicious of the over-generous behavior of this friend. Questioning the motives behind the gift becomes important in discerning if one is being set up for an intended action or being groomed to behave in a way that the giver wishes. In this way, to judge the appearance of a gift refers to healthy ways for the receiver to judge the intentions of the act and remain cautious of what other meanings this symbol may bring.

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The issue of appearances, or what certain parties may interpret and argue as gift or a gift as such or as given becomes especially difficult when considering certain theories from phenomenology. Heidegger (1927) describes this conundrum in *Being and Time*, where he asserts that the intention is to describe and interpret human life based on what is available or presented to the human consciousness. It is for this reason that he describes death as something we are not actually able to experience. His interpretation of death does not point to the idea that death can be a gift to *Dasein*.

The greater the phenomenal appropriateness with which we take the no-longer-Dasein of the deceased, the more plainly is it shown that in such Being-with the dead, the authentic Being-come-to-an-end of the deceased is precisely the sort of thing which we do *not* experience. Death does indeed reveal itself as a loss, but a loss such as is experienced by those who remain. In suffering this loss, however, we have no way of access to the loss-of-Being as such which the dying man 'suffers'. The dying of Others is not something which we experience in a genuine sense; at most we are always just 'there alongside'. (Heidegger, 1927, p. 282)

Heidegger, as influenced by Husserl, presents how there is a difference between a phenomenon and appearance. A phenomenon shows itself in itself. An appearance is something else that shows itself in its place. For example, sickness appears through its symptoms such as flushed skin. Additionally, he argues that all hermeneutic, interpretive, or descriptive accounts originate from a pre-ontological understanding. For Heidegger, this pre-understanding refers to the notion that everything extends out of human assumptions.

Heidegger's account on appearances and phenomena relate to cases of misinterpretation over what is an outright gift versus forms of non-gifts. The sensory trickery over what one may

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be fooled over as a gift is an important connection to understanding how humans interpret the phenomenological world through the senses. This perspective on how gifts may be misleading is an important layer to the many semiotic possibilities for gift in everyday political society. Gifts as bribes puts those in power in serious ethical situations where the leader or person in power should determine what kind of gift is being given and why. This ethical determination is important since if an object or gesture appears as a gift but has underhanded intentions, the possibility of breaking trust with a public is at stake. Simply put, the accepting of certain gifts may not be the right things to do. In these circumstances, it is up to the integrity of the gift receiver to assert and revert the gesture in as diplomatic of a way as possible. Even though rejecting an object that one calls gift may be seen as rude, it is sometimes the ethical decision that needs to be made in order to have clearly fair consequences. As Plato reminds us, since we use our senses to attempt to understand realities around us, it does not pose an accurate account over the essence of things. It is for this reason that Plato warned people in Athens at the time of what he called false rhetorics.

Plato believed things on the Earthly realm were false when compared to their actual forms. His theory on forms argues that forms are present on a transcendental level. In addition, he believed that there were both true and false rhetorics. In other words, truth was thought to only be obtained through the transcendent realm. This is also referred to as absolute truth. Both Plato and Aristotle agreed that truth in general could be conveyed to ignorant audiences. Aristotle makes rhetoric a kind of critical theory which becomes a hermeneutic of what he says to be “the rhetorical”. This kind of hermeneutic explores what makes a persuasive thing persuasive. After all, rhetoric is “an attempt to abstract the principles that underlie a set of observations” (Vickers,

1989). This peripatetic view follows a methodological approach to having distanced, philosophical, dialectical, theorizing activities about rhetorical phenomena.

The warning to be on guard for fake accounts of what was real was part of the routine training offered at Plato's Academy. This was the venue for Plato's student, Aristotle, to eventually venture off into his own philosophical school of thought (Bizzell & Herzberg, 2000). Platonic school of thought involved the teaching of a Theory of Forms, transcendental truth, and on an ideal society whereas Aristotle insisted on practical, earthly ways of viewing ethics, virtuosity, and the capacity of discovery in rhetoric. Platonism even privileged the interlocutors who had the very access to converse in his two methods of dialogue and dialectic. These two methods were for informed speakers.

Professional Gift Variations

In professional and political life, the private gain for public office has been called out by a number of writers. This form of giving is another nuanced way that professional use the concept of gift to appear in desired ways for career and public-oriented reasons. For example, one scholar, Stark (1991), describes the generic components of *quid pro quo*, which consist of

Generals of officials whose judgment is impaired because (1) they have the official capacity to affect the interests of a private party to whom (2) they are in some way beholden because they have received from that party something of value for which they have provided no private-market consideration in return (p. 1).

The key word in Stark's categorization of what a *quid pro quo* consists of is value. The determination over what object, service, communication, or other symbolic gesture holds value is what drives the pursuit and ethical implications of a *quid pro quo*. Such a categorization has recently come under the public's eye and judicial scrutiny, considering the impeachment of the

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president in the year 2020. This public exposure to what has been called a *quid pro quo* opens the topic of professional give and take to a world audience. Whether *quid pro quo* is ethically right or wrong becomes the interpretation of a jury or the rest of the world. In any case, this professional variation of the gift is one of the most important concepts to clarify in today's politics in The United States and other countries as well.

Another form of professional service without compensation would be a *service pro bono*. A world related to gift, the world of *pro bono*, offers the notion that someone within a profession giving their time, labor, and energy to some cause without any monetary receipt. When a person enters the possibility of his or her services being considered *pro bono*, there has been a cultural understanding that the service has reached a level expertise and value. What cultures and societies decide on what constitutes as value is an important part of the event of the gift. If objects exchanged in the event of gifts were not considered to be of any value, then the naming of such object would not be a gift. As Stark (1991) further describes, some classic characteristics of a *quid pro quo* include:

An official's role affects a particular private interest that transfers value to the official, but in which—because the official provides proportional private economic consideration in return—s/he claims not to be beholden. An official's role affects a particular private interest that transfers value to the official, but in which—because the official provides proportional private economic consideration in return—s/he claims not to be beholden. (p. 108).

The question of whether an act is *quid pro quo* or not has been debated through history, especially when thinking about countries who have made more egregious acts of corruption. For some, the publicly recorded historical acts of bribery, corruption, office-buying, and other forms

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of gross malfeasance have created an unshakable level of political cynicism that has shown to be unhealthy for everyday political participation and interest. Once a public learns of the act of corruption, it can become part of a public memory about a particular leader or figure, which can also emerge into a transgenerational memory, crossing over time and space and carried on to future generations. These disappointing acts in history are part of a game of language and naming.

Corruption is related to the gift as what happens when gift becomes abused. Gift, although originating from a genuine pro-social intention and gesture, becomes overdone when one realizes its very rhetorical power in relationships. Corruption by way of bribery and trick-gifts are a reality in today's governments across the world. The origination of corruption from gift is what makes this bad gesture perhaps able to be reversed to something good.

What one country refers to as a gift, another country may consider pure an unethical bribery. It is within these kind of language games (Wittgenstein, 1953) that signified interpretations of the word "gift" get caught up in a messy semiotic system of floating signifiers (Levi-Strauss, 1987). These multiple redirections of significations for the word "gift" as a signifier is what tricks others into thinking that certain political interactions and events of giving are genuine, valid, true, or right. In this way, the semantic value placed on the word "gift" gets abused or misused. Indeed, this is a word that also gets used out of context. Levi-Strauss refers to floating signifiers as ones absent of a referent. In these cases, there may be mere assumptions that signifiers have attached referents. However, this taken-for-grantedness, after time, becomes a mere appearance to something that has accumulated empty semiotic roots. While a signifier might have once incurred a strong referent or reference point in the real world, due to somewhat of a bastardization of the term, it gets loose.

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Looseness with language, by way of Levi-Strauss's floating signifiers as one concept that explains this phenomenon, may end up sending the wrong signals. The risk of interpretation of a floating signifier is that new meanings or new signifieds may become created due to a mixing and remixing of cultural connotations to the signifier. The new meanings accultured may become so commonplace, that again, the original referent becomes long gone. An original referent may become something of the past. With the help of Levi-Strauss, this distancing from an original referent is one possible explanation for how sometimes, today's gifts become something quite different and far removed from original gifts in life.

The occurrence of floating signifiers as one explanation of what has happened with gift points to a separation and dislocation between what should be an authentic referent behind the gift and the signifier, or the word used in everyday communication. What gift could actually be when considered for another with thoughtfulness and sincerity could be closer to a referent that resembles a genuine pro-sociality in intention and result. Contrary to thoughtfulness and sincerity, however, what has become commonplace with the help of a market-driven and economically- oriented culture is sometimes a giving in haste.

Giving in haste is the result of following a cultural code that pressure one to do something that is not completely aligned with their will. While giving in haste is considered the opposite of true giving, it should be noted that hasty giving still yields a context for rich learning. However, what has happened with gift and its connotation across time and cultures is that certain meanings of the word, "gift", have become somewhat dislodged from former meanings. This is what happens when a signifier gets circulated in many situations and audiences with diverse intentions. Things that appear as gift are thought of as genuine. In other words, people may sometimes misuse or even abuse the word gift and act as if they are giving honestly.

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Levi-Strauss's theory on floating signifiers can also point us back to the aforementioned discussion on gifted-souvenir objects. As discussed, the third order of signification that can take place especially in the case of souvenirs. When an unintended party receives a certain souvenir object, at that point, the story behind the souvenir may be so far removed that any ideological associations with the new object may fall under the category of myth. The concept of Levi-Strauss's theory on floating signifiers is expressed in one way by Mehlman (1972):

For the "floating signifier" is a concept constructed by Levi-Strauss on the basis of what seemed like an unexplainable incoherence in native thought (ubiquitous mana as trace). To explain it was to accede to the very mechanism through which (inter-) subjectivity becomes possible. On the other hand, the Introduction is an essay not primarily about the natives but about Marcel Mauss. The "concept" was theoretically already (implicit) in Mauss as "trace" or indication of the hidden explanation. (p. 25)

Mehlman, here, is showing how the concept of floating signifier is related to trace, the unconscious, and further develops the connections to Lacan, Freud, and Mauss. Similarly, also in conversation with Mauss, Derrida (1992) relates the concept of trace to mark in the following:

The term "term" marks a mark: It is the limit of a due date, the cadence of a falling due. It thus implies time, the interval that separates reception from restitution. In Mauss's view, the term forms the original and essential feature of gift. The interval of this delay to deadline allows Mauss to pass unnoticed over that contradiction between gift and exchange on which I have insisted so much and which leads to madness in the case both where the gift must remain foreign to circular exchange as well as where it is pulled into that exchange, unless it is the gift itself that does the pulling. (p. 39)

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Trace as mark signifies the ending of term of time. Derrida demonstrates how the event of the gift is inevitably and inescapably involved in a circular system of events of exchange. Some events occur at an exchange within the same time, whereas other events may occur across intervals or terms of time. Regardless, the gift sets forth a cycle of time where participants come to understand when and where to reciprocate. For these reasons he states that a more authentic gift might be one that is given in a foreign manner or anonymous manner.

The circular system of the event of the gift is why he draws to what he calls the madness of the gift. Madness is led on with the contradiction or conundrum of exchange. Madness refers to a cycle that has no end. In this way, there is somewhat of a negative connotation detected upon reading Derrida's view on the madness of the gift. Derrida also points out that Marcel Mauss is not concerned with this kind of madness or economically influence cycle. The pulling aspect is constitutive to the madness brought about by the event of the gift. In this way, the gift object "pulls" at the receiver or triggers a sense of obligation or sometimes guilt for the receiver to then act in altered ways towards to giver.

This psychology, the mental influence that gifts have upon both givers and receivers have a term or time limit for newly created expectations. The time or term, as Derrida mentions, is what brings a madness into reality for the two parties involved.

It is in the nature of a gift to impose an obligatory time limit or term. By definition, even a meal shared in common, a distribution of kava, or a talisman that one takes away, cannot be reciprocated immediately. Time is needed to perform any counter-service.

(Derrida, 1992, p. 38-39)

As shown above, the necessity for time to pass is a crucial element at play in the gift in every society. The passing of time is part of what makes a counter-service possible. A counter gift or

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counter service may be expressed across time rather than synchronously at the very second a gift is given. Time is part of what puts the pull or madness for exchange into realization and actuality. The pull, here, serves as a metaphor for a kind of intrinsic knowing and obligation toward the giver and toward the other. As time passes, the feeling of layered debt increases, just like any other kind of loan one takes in life. As time passes, the pull becomes greater. We eventually become pulled to respond and reciprocate, and sometimes, in much greater ways than originally conceived.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this project seeks to respond to the question of what the relationship between gift and rhetoric might be. The hope of this project is to provide a synthesis of literatures in a new way to offer a fresh possibility for what the gift can be not only for communication, rhetoric, and philosophy, but for the field of international relations as well. A gift's rhetorical import as a means of soft-power diplomacy opens up the potential to cross boundaries, engage in intercultural communication, and use a semiotic sign-system that has universal signification.

A nuanced analysis on the gift that considers the current historical moment in international relations provides a response to an ongoing conversation and question in a temporal moment. The response offered in this project will also be a temporal possibility for this historical moment and current political climate. This synthetic approach on the gift seeks to gather various experiences and perspectives on the gift in order to influence epistemic judgments, which serve to affect worldviews that may trigger a new philosophy of communication (Arnett, 2016). The language of the gift has universality in its symbolically understood system of gestures. Such semiotic gestures could contribute to peace and conflict negotiation in a current historical moment that is fraught with border control, broken international trust, and contested intercultural friendship.

The specific examples offered in this analysis serve to synthesize an original and also personal account of how the gift works between persons, states, countries, teams, and families. Its theoretical applicability is clear and relevant especially in today's international context, which could use all the help it can get. If and when countries decide to think about relations, friendship, and giving in ways that authentically and sincerely service the other without agenda,

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money, or other sorts of bribery, then countries will find themselves acting in ways of kindness, responsibility, hospitality, care, and out of the need for nurturing.

In order for this rhetorical and philosophical analysis to apply theories to today's given historical moment as well as past and future moments, several examples were highlighted and discussed. The examples discussed in this rhetorical and philosophical analysis include life, death, the Olympics, the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program, dogs given to political leaders, souvenirs from travel, and common gifts given during special occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and holidays. The breadth of the provided examples aims to demonstrate how enormous the topic of the gift is. The many directions that one is able to take when considering the gift's impact, rhetorical, and philosophical import, bring it into relevance for almost anyone in any country.

The universality of the topic allows for a familiarity not only with a scholarly audience, but a lay audience as well. This is a very important part of my analysis, which is the idea that the gift can be discussed, philosophized, and theorized by anyone. The selected voices of theory, however, come together to show what the gift could be today and in the future. In order to discuss those possibilities, it was important to address a selected scope of the gift's literature in the philosophy discipline as well as justify a presence for it in rhetoric. Gift has a place in rhetoric, as argued in this project. Gift as communicative, semiotic, discursive, acknowledging, and telling all point the way to its application as highly rhetorical. Regarding the previously mentioned guiding research question of inquiry at hand, the response gleans insight for the field of rhetoric.

The question articulated, which is what the relationship between gift and rhetoric might be, garners a response by the discussions of hard and soft power, persuasion, *epideictic* quality,

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and communication that surrounds the event of the gift before, during, and after it is given. The *epideictic* nature of gift represents rituals, patterns, routines, codes, and other ways of giving, receiving, and thanking. All symbolic gestures are patterns of speech that are learned by ways of culture, practice, expectation, ethics, observation, and the intentional passing down of this information to subsequent generations. As they are *epideictic* in nature, the acts are all performative, relying on cues, codes, learned behaviors, polite expressions, comments of gratitude. In sum, the highly performative verbal and nonverbal communication. We learn what, how, and when to say things when we receive gifts. Gifts function rhetorically to influence positive, negative, or other kinds of feelings that we may hold about the giver as well.

To give with the expectation to benefit oneself through means of obtaining marked credit or other forms of trace that leads to the perception of a heroic deed cancels the gesture of the gift and other power that it could do for positive diplomatic relations. The giving, on this level and in this regard, would have to occur equally and simultaneously unless one country genuinely has much more to give. The idea is actually quite simple. Countries with more to give should look out for opportunities to give. Timing is key in determining the appropriateness to facilitate the gesture. Remaining open to potential opportunities to give beyond *epideictic* structures is part of our responsibility to the other and other countries. It is with great hope that this project contends the case for rhetoric and philosophy to join hands with international peace and conflict studies through an analysis of gift in this very historical moment of the year 2020. Through interdisciplinarity, countries could find that a rhetoric and philosophy of the gift as demonstrated by this project's selected scope of scholars could be one of use. Although the return of the gift may not be obvious, it returns in other ways. Gifts always come back to the giver.

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