

Free the phenomena of gift giving essay sample

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Making gifts is considered to be only as an act of respect. However, in modern world gifting can be explained through sociological and cultural approaches. Interest to a gift as a research subject was first raised in the anthropology. Other social sciences have traditionally concentrated on the elements of the macrostructure (political and economic system, class structure, international relations). The main content of their research was a political struggle, the war, the general development of the economy.

However, anthropologists since XIX century actively studied the life of traditional communities, tribes in the wilds of Africa or on remote islands from all over the world. As a result, they faced with a completely different scale of societies. This fact shifts the focus of research in the direction of microscopic processes. Among the socio-cultural phenomena of this level was a gift.

The most outstanding work in this area is considered to be the work of a representative of the French school of anthropology Marcel Mauss. He was one of the first scientists, who analyzed gift not only as economic, but also as a universal phenomena that covers various aspects of social relationships. On a huge factual material he showed the specificity of the exchange in societies where there were missed or underdeveloped goods-money transaction relationships. Mauss explored the religious, legal and economic systems of Aboriginal Oceania, Australia, and North America. He noted that before the advent of money, the universal means of exchange in archaic societies was a gift. Material and moral life, as well as the exchange in these societies operate in unselfish and, at the same time, obligatory form. Gift exchange in these societies was a form of social contract, which initially

assumes the mutual commitment to share. The subject of the transfer may be not only movable and immovable property. It can be signs of attentions, feasts, rituals, women, children, dancing, holidays. To indicate this form of archaic treaty he used the term ' potlatch'. The main feature of the potlatch is that the gift necessarily involves compensating the mutual gift in one form or another, but unlike normal transaction, both of these act most often separated from each other in time. A further feature of gift exchange, in terms of Moss, is that it consists of three closely related duties that are carried out strictly in archaic societies: to give, to take, and to compensate. This position is opposed to the view of Claude Levi-Strauss, who said that the gift does not have a special separate metaphysical essence and power, but serves as a form of social relations and make society. However, other authors such as Maurice Godelier shows that archaic gift exchange can be effective only when the cost for exchange items not included in the direct exchange of samples of sacred things and objects. The specifics of gift manifested in the fact that its social value (included in the broader network of relationships) should be invisible to the participants. Invisibility will allow him to be selfless and assume return within the framework of a larger system. Gift offered sincere, but at the same time it establishes the link support structure which includes participants of the gift exchange. In fact, their mutual commitments postponed into the indefinite future.

Among the various forms of giving are distinguished: the exchange of gifts (ie giving in exchange for a gift or other types of goods and services: job, praise, good wishes, support) distribution (separation) of certain items between many people and actually transfer of a Gift to the recipient. With

functional and semantic point of view the value of the gift may mean sacrifices, compensation (food, fees or redemption), can be magical means of endowments and multiplication of wealth or a certain relationship to a particular person.

However, it is needed to say, that gift plays a huge role even in a modern society. " Although we tend not to recognized it as such, the ethic of reciprocal gift giving manifests itself throughout our own society, as well" (Cronk 3)

There is a gift, which can be an indicator of man's belonging to a certain social, professional, age group, kindred, family, friendship social network. The process gift giving is firmly in our culture. Without Gift giving one cannot imagine our life. An individual from birth involved in such relationships. Firstly, child receives toys, books and so on, and then he begins to give gifts. One can say that the process of gift giving is an important part of human socialization. The process of gift giving shows the extent of human sociability. For example, the sociable person gives presents apropos and without him, because gift is a major component of the strengthening of social networks between people.

The traditions to present gifts to each other on solemn occasions are widely spread throughout the world. " Gift giving is everywhere - inextricably and formally entwined in ritual occasions found in all cultures (wedding ceremonies, for example) or expressed in everyday life through smaller spontaneous acts (such as giving a friend a loaf of homemade bread)" (Otnes and Beltramini 61). However, every culture has its own idea about a gift giving. The role of the gift is quite high nowadays, no matter what

culture we consider. Always people wanted to do something nice for another person, whether it's a friend, colleague or relative. Etiquette and traditions of giving gift is much different around the world.

Even modern person did not escape the impact of this ritual. This is evidenced by at least the fact that today the gifts are a huge industry. In all modern cultures gifts in the family budget contain from 2 to 10%. For example, in Russia the figure is about 5%, in Mexico annually spend on gifts to 10% of the family budget, and in the US - about 2. 5%.

Small spending on gifts in the family budget residents of the US and many European countries is not a sign of stinginess. Rather, it is the influence of postmodern culture with its characteristic principles of individualism and independence, ethics stubbornness. In the context of the culture any act of giving is estimated as an attempt to exert pressure on bestow.

In the private sphere of ethics the rituals of giving appears in the value of a gift. Even to the closest people it is usually decided to give purely symbolic gifts. The motive of such an action are delicacy, unwillingness to put the other person in an awkward position, forcing him to make a return gift, that is, an act that he may not planned. Moreover, it is normal in our culture to add a check to a gift. Apparently, it serves two purposes. Firstly, if thing did not like it can be returned back to the shop. Secondly, it becomes clear on how much you have to buy a gift in return.

In this case, one can say, that in American and European culture gift giving has an economic form. However, it is turns different in our culture. Most of the gifts in our culture is made among small social groups. Gift giving has material as well as and immaterial side. The object of giving as a material

props situation of giving has a dual nature: on the one hand, it's the goods, purchased with money to impersonal exchange, and on the other - it is a gift, called to express feelings in personal relationships. Consequently, a gift connects two kinds of relationships, emphasizing conventionally divided their faces.

Thus, with regard to material goods is observed peculiar interweaving of commodity-money relations and the relations of giving, the core of which is the family. Family is the social network that connects and harmonizes the commodity-money relations in the community of giving in the family relationships. Therefore, the family acts as a mechanism of conservation relations of giving in a society with a market economy. Partially suffering the destruction of commodity-money relations, the family continues to be the unit of selfless giving and altruistic values.

In conclusion one can say that the gift is a social and cultural phenomenon.

In middle east culture the gift has three stages: accept, use and give.

However, the action of giving a gift has different cultural meanings and expectations. However, above all, the gift should be viewed as an economic and social event.

Works Cited

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