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Introduzione

Dall'essere nel mondo all'essere in debito, ovvero dall'esser-ci all'essere-in-schiavitù

Antonio Luigi Palmisano

p. 7

Introduction. From being in the world to being in debt, i.e. from being-there to being-in-slavery

Abstract

The analysis of the concept of the gift implies the analysis of the concept of debt. In the context of our post-global age, an age in which the *grands récits* which Jean François Lyotard spoke about in the '70's are anything but extinct and now simply hidden or inscribed in the language and order of our society, they work intensely to reify social relations, and it is debt that has taken on a primary role in the construction of the world. In this analytic perspective, the Author proposes some food for thought or critical reflections on the relation between debt in the context of society before the advent of financial economics and debt as a *conditio sine qua non* of the new world order, at the same time outlining the possible position of an anthropology which has been rescued from being limited to a *tekhne* and brought back as a living form of thought which can contribute to our dialogue with the Other.

Keywords: post-global anthropology, debt, gift, living thought, Other

La costruttività del dono e l'alienazione del debito

Leonardo Andriola

p. 21

Gift constructiveness and the alienation of debt

Abstract

Gift-“giving” is one of the human soul's virtues. This virtue is broken when the “condition humaine” is no longer such as to ensure a good expression of a person's life and the appropriation of good behaviour. So charity, generosity and forgiveness, essential prerequisites for a “buen vivir”, lose their immanent meaning in social relationships, and happiness, the main purpose of our life, remains just an utopia.

Debt - It has the task of supporting the capitalist economy and, in inverse proportion, it acts on the economy of the communities; everything is subdued by imperative principles of capital. That supremacy finds its strength in “social control”, in the subsumed acting of the community members but, after the difficulties of knowing a subordinate situation, the practice of insolvency of that part of the debt that has become “ineffective”, can shatter the global economic power which was previously established.

At one point, the gift and the debt meet where the one implies the other in the flow of social relations.

Keywords: gift, debt, alienation, insolvency, audit

Logica del racconto e logica del dono

Manfredi Bortoluzzi

p. 39

The logic of the story and the gift

Abstract

In the first part, this article aims to study the function and logic of the Gift in the narrative. Since the folktales studied by Propp until the most popular models of Hollywood scripts, the Gift has always played an important role in the plot. Moreover, the French narratologist Claude Bremond, with his logic of the “possible narratives”, supplies some interesting tools to the present research, using terms such as “creditor” and “debtor” associated with the narrative roles of the Donor and the Beneficiary. The logic of the Gift studied by Mauss and the logic of narrative studied by the semiotic of text presents similar points that permit to state that the Donor and the Gift play a fundamental role in every plot. In the second part of the article, the point of view comes out of the text to see the text itself like a Gift. Reading *The Immortal Story* by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen) through the work of Marshall Sahlins and Alain Caillé, about the spirit of the Gift and the Gift as Symbol, this paper comes to the conclusion that literature and Gift present the same logic.

Keywords: Gift, Narrative, Lack, Propp, Bremond

Cosa circola nel microcredito? La dimensione del dono nelle nuove pratiche di finanza solidale

Francesca Crivellaro

p. 53

What circulates in microcredit? The gift dimension in the new practices of social finance

Abstract

In its transposition from so called “developing countries” to “post-industrial” Italy, microcredit has become a means – rather than an end in itself – that the welfare arena has welcomed to foster socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable categories. Its “translation” into a contemporary social finance strategy and its implementation by not for profit organizations, have made it a financial tool that resists any affiliation to the market and commodities exchange. Is this enough to challenge Godbout’s (1993) assertion that we do not give back a gift, the way we give back money? Or does Italian microcredit’s specific reconfiguration allow us to (re)think about this financial strategy from the gift perspective? Moving from the question “What circulates in microcredit transactions?”, the paper explores the possibility of using the category of the gift to analyse microcredit practices. Grounding on both the presentation of Italian microfinance most relevant features and the description of a specific microcredit project carried out in Northern Italy, the paper specifically focuses on the peculiar shapes that the gift has taken in Italian microcredit transactions.

Keywords: microcredit in Italy, social finance, credit/debt, gift, welfare and socio-economic inclusion policies

Nel labirinto degli specchi: il voto come dono

Michele F. Fontefrancesco

p. 73

Inside labyrinth: the political vote as a gift

Abstract

The article does not interpret the political vote as a clean democratic mechanism of legal representation. Instead, it considers it a social performance. In so doing, it investigates the ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007) that move political choice and mark the relationships citizen-candidate and citizen-elected civil servant. The analysis reads the vote as a tangible and intangible gift that the citizens give to the political subject they chose. The gift, though, creates an ambiguous debt the political subject has to confront. The paper suggests reading the phenomena of corruption from this particular perspective of tangible and intangible gift and debt.

Keywords: vote, exchange, gift, political process, political anthropology

Il debito e il dono nel capitalismo finanziario

Guglielmo Forges Davanzati, Nicolò Giangrande

p. 91

Debt and gift in financial capitalism

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyse the effects of increasing income inequality on public debt and social cohesion. It will be argued that the austerity measures, implemented to reduce the public debt, increase inequalities, which leave the tax burden on families with lower income. This reduces the rate of growth and produces an increase in unemployment. In a

context characterised by fiscal consolidation, especially in the Eurozone, policies devoted to the “legitimation” of the system are impossible via the conventional channel of increasing public spending and the welfare state. We consider that the private gift – mainly in the form of philanthropy – acts as a substitute for public intervention. Indeed, the space left by the State is fulfilled by some private actors, which play a key role with their own decisions such as the control of scientific research. We deem that in this historic phase there is a shift from the welfare state based on public services to a private welfare with monetary transfers based on gratuitousness.

Keywords: income inequality, public debt, gift and philanthropy

Tomato Sauce for the Winter: Symmetrical Exchange, Familiar Entrainment and Social Initiation into Italian Domestic Life

Lia Giancristofaro

p. 107

Abstract

In Italian domestic life, it is quite common to conserve tomatoes for the winter. This essay explores how this practice configures a generalized reciprocity and a type of ritual with familiar entrainment and social initiation. The home-made tomato jars are exchanged as gifts and are part of a generalized reciprocity between family and friends. This custom highlights many hidden meanings for food and its capacity to integrate the social interactions into a “solidarity context”. Following the interpretative methodology proposed by Antonio Gramsci, this folkloric practice can be viewed as a shift from a peasant society to an industrial society. This folkloric practice is extensive and submerged, and consolidates the meanings of the "Intangible Heritage" into an artificial society where the popular expressions of the cultural transitions are entrusted mostly to public folklore. So, a focus on this special food-lore implies a rethink of the official concept of "typical food": since by official and typical food, we mean a political use of tradition, the goal of which is the ethno-business. Conversely, in the unconscious meaning of the making and exchanging of the tomato jars, the economy is intimate and unofficial, in short it is "socially integrated".

Keywords: gift, tomato, family, food-lore, Intangible Heritage

La “finanziarizzazione del quotidiano”: per un’analisi situata del debito dopo la crisi

Zaira Tiziana Lofranco

p. 125

“The financialization of every day life”: for a situated analysis of debt after the crisis

Abstract

The economic crisis has revealed the deep interconnection between the economy and society, as well as the role of debt as an overwhelming force in people’s life. In the aftermath of the crisis anthropologists had tended to depict debt as the essence of past and present human relations. This article suggests that the role of debt in the contemporary post-crisis context, should be rather considered in relation to the so called “financialization of every day life” as a marking feature of the neoliberal economy. It will illustrate the main topics developed by the interdisciplinary approach to the financialization and “democratization of debt” and explore the empirical contribution of anthropology to this corpus of theoretical studies.

Keywords: debt, financialization, neoliberalism, subjectivity, households

Dal debito alla reciprocità: il cibo equosolidale come merce-dono

Giovanni Orlando

p. 151

From debt to reciprocity: fair trade food as commodity-gift

Abstract

In this article, the author examines the meanings attached to fair trade foods by people who buy them in the city of Palermo. In doing so, he highlights the analogies that such meanings present, especially a way of conceiving an ethical economy that stands opposed to the market and to conventional commercial exchanges. The meanings in question are grounded in two central ideas: the first one is the need that the process of globalization be guided by principles of justice; the second, that within this process the rights of workers be guaranteed instead of trampled upon. The right of workers to earn a fair remuneration has deeply connoted the debate on globalization among those consumers who are most sensitive to the injustices caused by it and to the ethical calling at the centre of fair trade. In the article, the author shows that the way in which some Palermitan consumers view these debates can be interpreted as an indication that fair trade goods are, for them, a hybrid between a commodity and a gift.

Keywords: fair trade, globalization, reciprocity, just price, food

Note dialettiche sul valore-libertà di Graeber come criterio archeologico del neo-liberismo: la Grecia classica e il duecento europeo

Andrea Pascali

p. 175

Dialectical notes about David Graeber's freedom-value as archeological parameter of neo-capitalism: the ancient Greece and European thirteenth Century

Abstract

This essay is almost entirely concerned with an admiring censure to the social presuppositions of a good life put on the ground of David Graeber's *Debt*. Despite our own feelings we have to contrast this American scholar anarchist anthropology with a *summa* of classical Marxian critical thought, with regards either to methodological or theoretical Graeber's approach. Graeber's portrait of classical Greece and the European Middle Ages relies on a typical anarchist theoretical assumption, that is the basic relations of productivity have to be submitted to superstructural human relations. We draw on the scientific results recently pointed out in the International Symposium on Marxian Theory, to produce a neo-dialectical censure over this lack of attention to material free-wage labour conflicts. This criticism is based on the classical Marxian theory of Value and the Adorno's *Neue Lektüre* School.

Keywords: debt, theory of value, Medieval knowledge, neo-liberism, anarchism

All'ombra del baobab. Rifugiati, emergenza e considerazioni sul dono alla periferia di Roma

Donatella Schmidt e Giovanna Palutan

p. 211

Under the shadow of baobab. Refugees, Emergency, and Considerations on the Gift on the outskirts of Rome

Abstract

Displaced people, fleeing conflicts and coming to Europe from the Balkan or from the Central Mediterranean routes in search of some sort of asylum, often face the impossibility to match the country of their dreams with the country of their permanence. This is partly due to the still in force Dublin III Treaty, which places severe limits on their movements. As a result of such a policy, many European capital cities are forced to house emergency camps – illegal, provisional and intra-territorial – which become at the same time the recipients of constant police clearance intervention and of bottom-up reception models. In the present essay, the authors lay their eyes on one of these camps located on the outskirts of Rome, following its vicissitudes during almost three years, and focusing specifically on the hospitality model, set forth by a group of volunteers, called Baobab Experience. A major question leads the research: what is the sense of food – which is collected, cooked, and distributed by volunteers – for who donates and for whom receives the donation? Ethnographic material – drawn from observation, participation, interviews and *photoeliciting* – prompts the authors to look at the Gift system, studied by Marcel Mauss and by other scholars, as a possible interpretative key.

Keywords: refugees, emergency camps, food, gift, Rome

Il dono della cultura: spiriti, geni, talenti

Francesco Spagna

p. 247

The gift of culture. Spirit, genius, talent

Abstract

Is the celebrated Maori notion of *Hau* – transcribed by anthropologist Elsdon Best and popularized in the famous *Essay on the Gift* by Marcel Mauss – the source of an original misunderstanding, that affected about half a century of anthropological exegesis? Could this misunderstanding be of a “philosophical” order more than “anthropological”, dealing with the concept of thirdness and otherness?

The discourse about gift will be re-considered beginning from a sort of tripartition: “conditional” gift, “unconditional” gift and “ineffable” gift. The tripartition offers three points of support: a metaphysical scheme rather archaic, if not “traditional”. Each of the three patterns, even if in vertical ordering, is anchored in the horizontal level of everyday life and cultural variation. Trying to cross these two levels – anthropological and metaphysical – is the aim of the present contribution.

Keywords: “conditional” gift, “unconditional” gift and “ineffable” gift, Mauss, Shakespeare