

## Chapter 4

### Definitions and Exchange

Naming and its more complicated form, definition, constitute special moments of language where words themselves are given to satisfy the listener's meta linguistic needs (needs regarding language itself) of the listeners. By telling others the names of things, or giving definitions of words, we are giving them the means of production of linguistic communication. This situation is different from speech proper, because naming and definition are at least somewhat de-contextualized, and their internal processes are of a special kind. We step outside the flow of speech to a meta level, to provide the listener with something she does not already have, a 'new' term which satisfies some constant general communicative need.<sup>1</sup>

The need satisfied by the flow of speech, instead, is a need for a present and contingent relation to something(s), satisfied when the speaker gives the listener a verbal product, combining words (each of which, taken alone, would provide a constant relation) into sentences. In speech, the listener could, in principle, make the speaker's sentences herself, but has not (in that instance) recognized the need to make them. In the case of naming or definition, the listener needs, because she does not yet have and cannot use, the appropriate words. Her need is like a material need for the means of production in this case it is a need for the means of production of verbal gifts.

In the processes of naming and definition, the speaker performs a service for the listener, understanding what she needs to know and providing her with a word in a way that is fashioned so that she can learn it. If she is talking to a child or to someone who speaks a foreign language, she may say the word at the same time that the 'thing' is present as an experiential given. She may also point at it, pick it up, hold it out towards the other person, etc. However, if she thinks the listener already has some knowledge of the vocabulary of that language, the speaker can fashion a defining phrase<sup>2</sup> using terms she imagines the listener already knows.

In order to do this, she has to put herself in the place of the other person, thinking of her knowledge, 'mind reading' about the other person's vocabulary and life experience. The definition requires other-orientation on the part of the speaker. Her guess is informed by her having heard the words others used when they were speaking and she was listening. Even when she is defining something for the general public, the speaker or writer has to use terms she thinks the others already know. If a written definition is not clear, the reader has to supply the further linguistic knowledge from some other source--for instance a dictionary. However, even those seemingly impersonal dictionary definitions require that their definers use terms that others will understand. Definitions do not stand on their own, as philosophers (influenced by equations and exchange) seem to think. They are gifts of words from one person to another or to many others.

The *definiens* is a phrase which is the part of the definition which functions as a provisional substitute gift for the thing defined, allowing the thing's general social relation to its name to be brought forward. The name is the constant social gift-word,

which satisfies the general communicative need regarding that kind of thing in the society at large. The speaker provides an individual provisional gift, substitutes it for the given thing and for the social gift-word and makes it available to the listener. 'Furry friendly animal like Aunt Mary's pet' and 'domestic feline' are both provisional gifts that might be given to listeners to define the word 'cat.' Their selection, or the selection of other variations, depends upon the listener's vocabulary and experience (and her communicative need), as interpreted by the speaker. The definiendum is provided as the constant social communicative substitute gift (the name) for that kind of thing and for any number of other definiens regarding that kind of thing. (See Figure 3.)

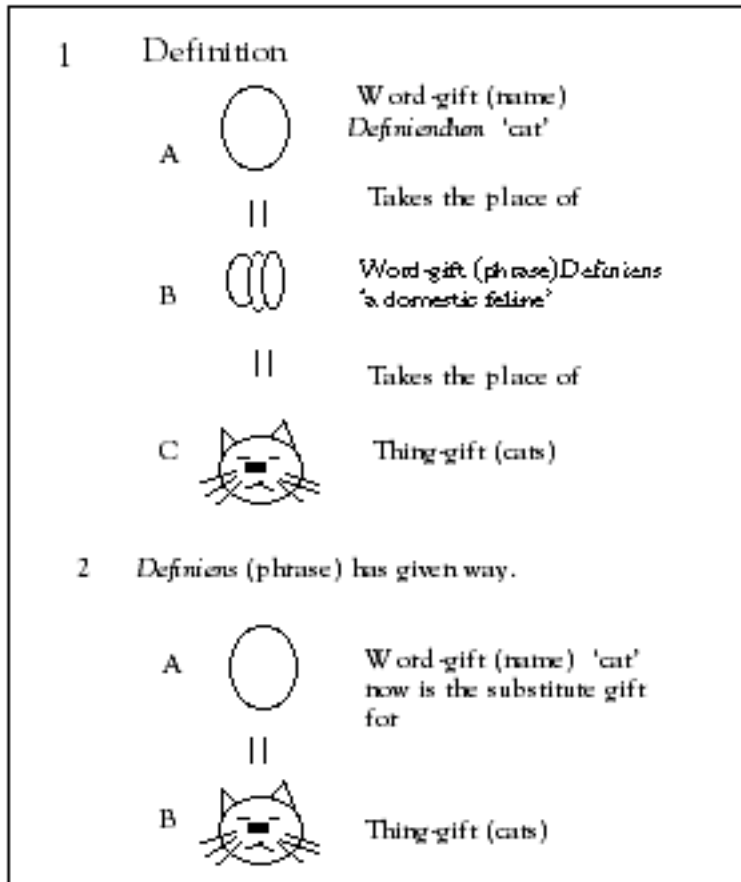


Figure 3. Gifts taking the place of gifts in the definition.

The implication is: What the definiens has done regarding the thing, the definiendum can do--and more. In our examples, 'furry friendly animal like Aunt Mary's pet' picks out a 'sample' cat, while 'domestic feline' locates the animal in a taxonomy, which requires a complex interrelated system of definiens and definienda to distinguish among similar categories. 'Cat,' the definiendum, is more general than any definiens (any defining phrase), and it takes the place of all possible defining phrases as the name of that kind of thing for the speakers of that language.

By providing a name through the process of substituting the definiendum for the definiens, the speaker is also passing on the gift, a word she has received from others.

This free process of giftgiving, receiving, and passing it on creates human subjectivities in relation to language, to each other and to an immense variety of qualitatively different things, events and ideas. In this linguistically mediated relation, we humans find ourselves to be a self-constituting species, able to bond with one another in almost as many ways as there are experiences. And we use gift processes and verbal gifts to bond with each other, also at a newly-created level of organization of experiences--the level of shareable topics which are linguistically given.

The definition can be seen as a 'package' containing several gifts at different levels. By creating a definiens, arranging terms the listener already has, the speaker performs a service for the listener. She relates something in the world and the definiens to the definiendum, providing the listener with the use of a new word. The 'things,' for example cats, are made to give way for the moment as co-communicative gifts, because now indeed there is a substitute gift phrase which is being given in their stead--the definiens, for example, 'domestic felines.' Then the combination of words, the phrase which constitutes the definiens, 'domestic felines,' is also made to give up its equivalent position in favor of the definiendum, 'cat,' which takes over. Both the experiential givens, 'cat,' and the definiens, 'domestic felines,' give way to the definiendum, 'cat,' as the verbal gift by means of which co-communication usually happens with regard to that kind of thing, for people in that co-munity.

The word 'cat' is used by people more often to talk about cats, and is therefore more general than the definiens, 'domestic feline,' or 'an animal like Aunt Mary's pet,' or 'a furry friendly animal with a long tail.' It is used by more people, more often, than are any of these definiens. However, they could be used if a contingent communicative need arose for talking about those animals in that way, at that level of specificity. 'Cat' is more constant and more general than 'a furry friendly animal with a long tail.' We give the name 'name' to 'cat,' not to phrases such as 'a furry friendly animal,' etc.

All these gifts are tied together by the meta linguistic communicative need of the listener and the need-satisfying service of the speaker. She does not keep her knowledge of the lexicon to herself (though some elites and in-groups do this), but gives it freely to the listener, taking it upon herself to create and provide a definiens the listener can understand.

In spite of its being a package of gifts, the definition does not function internally according to the giver-gift-receiver process the way we have been saying a transitive sentence does. Instead, it functions by an internal and an external substitution. Both a nonverbal given and a phrase give way to a general word, the name which takes their place as the constant co-communicative need-satisfying substitute gift.

Let me just mention that contained in the definition, the verb 'to be'<sup>3</sup> is the substitute for the acts of substitution which are the definiens and the definiendum, which also both give way to it, implying that these acts are the same because, as acts, they are substituted by the same word, thus bringing the whole operation neatly into the present. (See Figure 4.)

The relation of words to words and things to words in 'the girl hit the ball' is different from the relation of words to words and things to words in 'a ball is a round object used for games.'

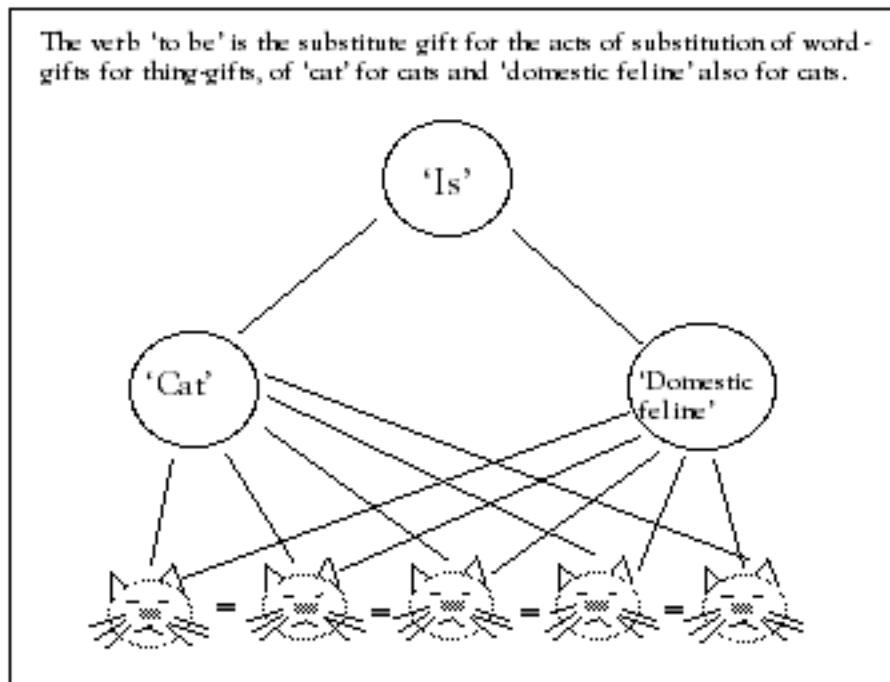


Figure 4. 'Is' substitutes for acts of substitution in the sentence.

In the former, the whole sentence is a gift, and within it there is a gift of a predicate given by subject to object. In the definition, someone is providing the gift of a word to someone who doesn't know it, through substitutions of something the listener does know--for example, 'a round object used for games' by something she doesn't know, the 'new' word 'ball.' The speaker is the giftgiving subject who gives the definiens and the definiendum to the listener, who is the receiver of the definiendum as a permanent acquisition. The definiens gives-way to the definiendum, which takes its place, much as the kind of thing 'gives-way' first to the definiens and then (in a permanent way) to the definiendum as its name.

The listener has an immediate meta linguistic need for a word she does not 'have.' The memory and understanding of that phonetic pattern constitute 'the means of production' of a word-gift speakers can give to satisfy others' communicative needs, and listeners can receive, creating bonds with them regarding that kind of thing. The speaker gives the new word to the listener, satisfying the listener's meta linguistic need.

### Origin of Exchange

I believe that the processes of substitution and giving way in the definition and in naming are the original processes from which exchange derived. They have been transferred back into nonverbal patterns of interaction and distorted to mediate the kind of co-communicative need that arises from the mutually exclusive human relationship of private property.

Statistics show that very little private property--perhaps 1% world wide--is owned by women (who nevertheless are well able to perform the processes of naming and definition). Moreover, private property is an institution of so-called 'developed' societies, not of so-called 'primitive' ones, which nevertheless must have naming and definition processes. Thus, mutually inclusive gift-based language precedes exchange and the mutually exclusive property relations which are mediated by it. The processes of naming and the definition, where substitution and giving-way are predominant, have been stretched and altered as they have been transferred onto the material plane. This is particularly visible in monetized exchange where because of its function as a substitute gift, money creates a self-similar image of the word at a different scale. Moreover, in the absence of giftgiving and without a process of exchange, the institution of mutually exclusive private property would become sclerotic and unmanageable, since each owner would have no peaceful access to the satisfaction of her needs by others.

The use of these linguistic processes to avoid giftgiving and maintain the isolation of each economic operator contradicts the fundamental giftgiving-and-receiving principle of life and language, and creates a misogynist and hostile environment to which human groups have had to adapt. In fact, we have adapted to it so well that it appears to be natural, while the kinds of aggressive and competitive behaviors that are made necessary for survival in it appear to be 'human nature' (which expresses itself 'his-torically').

The existence of the same processes on the verbal and the nonverbal planes creates many re-verberations. In our present capitalistic society, for example, there is a feedback loop between verbal definition and nonverbal exchange, whereby the one validates the other and takes on the function of the other. A person or a product is defined by the amount of money s/he or it is 'worth.' Names, categorizations, titles from 'policewoman' to 'doctor' have a monetary value.

Controlling people through salary, which is definition by money, backs up naming, labeling, and defining others as a way of controlling them. Product names and brand names justify higher prices. We look at definitional processes as giving meaning to our lives. If we have a title, a university degree, a married name, we 'are somebody.' However, all this naming is taking place in a society that does not recognize giftgiving as the underlying principle of meaning for language and life.

### **Restoring Gifts to the Definition**

Exchange reflects back on the idea we have of the definition, making it seem aseptic--an intellectual equation instead of a package made up of many gifts. Among the gifts we have already enumerated, we must also include the wider consideration that the definition sometimes serves to transmit words socially between generations, linguistic groups, etc. Moreover by finding a 'common language,' using the words which many others already have, both in speech and in performing the service of the definition, the speaker or writer is able to co-municate with people who are elsewhere in time and space. She must succeed in identifying, using and/or building upon the terms others already have--though of course the others may themselves have made the effort to acquire these terms through

education, developing a body of knowledge about some discipline or area of life (sometimes with its own specialized language).

Because the need for the definition of terms is common, since none of us was born knowing them, definitions abound in books, dictionaries, and treatises. The nature of things is explored as well, in discussions which seek to define kinds of things. If it is well-fashioned, using words others commonly have, the gift package of the definition can continue to function independently of its maker. Its gifts leap to the satisfaction of the reader's need, as soon as she opens the dictionary.

This ability to continue to satisfy (meta) communicative needs independently makes it appear that the definition's human source and the relation between giver and receiver are unimportant. In one sense, we might say that it is society itself, the collective, that gives us these verbal 'means of production,' establishing a bond with us. On the other hand, the definer's unconditionally generous service is easily forgotten when we use the words we have been given to establish relations with others.

### **Equivalence**

When the service or gift aspect of language is ignored, we tend to look at the way words take the place of other words in the definition as the basic process of language, rather than need satisfaction. A kind of fetishization occurs in which 'meaning' seems to come from the relation of words to each other, rather than from the relation of people to each other using things or using words regarding things. Then since philosophers have concentrated on definitions to tell us about everything from mankind to God to Being itself, we investigate definitions to find out the relation of words to the world and we only see words taking the place of other words in closed systems. We do not look at nurturing as co-communication, nor do we look at linguistic communicative need as a socially relevant need, already necessarily arising from the world and from others, the satisfaction of which is an end motivating verbal and nonverbal interaction among individuals.<sup>4</sup>

Because of the magnetic template of the exchange logic, we see the need of the other only as functional to our own need. Her 'demand' must be 'effective;' she must have the proper amount of money equivalent to substitute for our product to satisfy our co-communicative need for money.<sup>5</sup> We do not see the 'service' side of the definition but only its so-called 'truth function,' whether its 'intension' (or meaning) corresponds to its 'extension' (the instances of that kind of thing in the world).

For example, 'A bachelor is an unmarried man' is an example which is often used because the 'definiens' and the 'definiendum' appear to completely correspond. Any man who is a bachelor is also an unmarried man. Definitions of this sort are gifts which satisfy the meta linguistic need for philosophical examples of definitions. The aspect of the meta linguistic gift of the word has become secondary. The other-orientation of the definer also seems to be irrelevant to the equivalence of 'extension' and 'intension.' It is therefore ignored while the definition appears independent and aseptic, untouched by human relations. The aseptic appearance might disappear if the listener were an unmarried

woman. Some questions could arise about a bachelor being an unmarried man. Why is she not also called 'bachelor?' Are her material and communicative needs being considered? Why presuppose an insensitive male definer?

In our thinking about language, we are being influenced by the priorities of exchange, the necessity for identification of goods, their measurement, and the assessment of their equivalence to the satisfaction of both parties (or of society as a whole). The correspondence between giving and receiving or selling and buying is the model for the correspondence between language and reality. The motivation towards the need of the other as an end is ignored both in exchange and in the study of language.

Since definitions are made with words substituting for other words, the relation of words to the world seems to come from the form of the definition, the form of substitution as an end in itself--and without seeing the creative activity of giving-way. The relation of words to the world appears to come from the form of the equation ( $x = y$ ), or from the words themselves, or from the will of the people who are saying them. By concentrating on substitution without the idea of giftgiving, it is difficult to get back to the world from language, and it appears only that "the sense of a sign is another sign,"<sup>6</sup> and so on in infinite (albeit systemic) regress as if words were not 'hooked on' to the world at all.

### **Giftgiving at Both Levels**

It seems that 're-present-ation' is the process without there being any prior 'present-ation' to back it up. Instead, 're-presentation' (taking-the-place-of) is only one moment in a giftgiving process which is both linguistic and non-linguistic. We can indeed substitute one gift for another, but the whole process from the identification of the need to the fashioning of the particular gift--words or sentences--which will satisfy it, involves much more than taking-the-place-of or substitution. It involves other-orientation, the ability to recognize others' needs in relation to the world, and things in the world as relevant to those needs. It involves recognizing oneself as a potential satisfier of other people's needs, using appropriate kinds of things, and the motivation to satisfy at least their communicative needs if not their material needs. It also involves recognizing others as the satisfiers of one's own needs. A patriarchal point of view would see the world as made up only of things for which we should compete, not things as having value as relevant to the satisfaction of others' needs.

Other-orientation is also necessary in order to be able to use words others will understand, put ourselves in their places and consider what they do not know as a need we can satisfy. Each need is a theme with many variations. The general need to communicate about cats--to form human relations regarding cats--comprehends all of the ways cats can be present or relevant to humans. We individually recognize those ways as needs arising from the extra linguistic or linguistic contexts, which others may have for a relation with us in regard to cats. The word 'cat' has been given to us socially as a means for satisfying any of those communicative needs, at least in part.

We have to have been able to receive from others materially and linguistically in the past, in order to be able to give to others in the present. That is, we must have been receivers of others' co-municative other-orientation. We must also be able to fashion new sentences according to transposed gift patterns--like matchmakers putting words in the position of giving to other words. Moreover, we have to seek and use the bonds that we create with others linguistically and with regard to the gifts of the world to develop our own, and their, social subjectivities. Giftgiving is the content of the form of substitution, which is the very reason for the existence of the form. It is what matters about the form; it is the (mothering) matrix.

Giving and giving-way have not been understood as fully human behavior. In patriarchy winning, power-over, and over-taking have been over-valued. However, giving-way is a necessary complement of taking-the-place-of. Being substituted is an active and necessary relational complement of substitution. Similarly receiving is the active creative complement of giving. In the definition the process of substitution and giving-way of gifts are the functional elements. In most sentences of speech in context, the substitution process is not in focus and gift processes at other levels create transparency.

Substitution and being substituted are the process at issue in the definition and naming because what is being given is a general word, a social gift for a kind of thing, given through a series of substitutions. The need which is being satisfied in this case is not primarily a contingent need for a mutually inclusive relation to the world, but a meta need of the other for the means of production of gifts regarding kinds of things. Perhaps because of the strength of the pattern of exchange (which is, as we said, the definition's descendent), the process of substitution and being substituted has been unilateralized, leaving aside the so-called 'passive' side of the relation. With one side lacking, the relation of substitution (and being substituted) or over-taking (and giving-way) has seemed to be no relation at all.<sup>7</sup> Language no longer appears to have anything to do with what has been substituted. Instead it appears to be a unilateral, purely verbal activity unrelated to the world, a self-sufficient system which uses arbitrary sounds in a rule governed way to 'convey' (give) a 'meaning' (which is not understood either).

To some philosophers who ignore giftgiving, the relation of 'cat' to cats seems abstract, a sui generis act on the part of the speaker (or the community), who somehow equates 'cat' with cats, or imposes 'cat' upon cats, keeping them separate from dogs and monkeys, perhaps through a genetically 'transmitted' (given) ability. It seems that, by naming something, we put it in a category, which appears to be the purpose of communication.

The question then arises, what does categorization have to do with understanding? We slip into a kind of reasoning akin to private property--asking what things belong to what categories. Then the most knowledgeable person is the one who 'has' the most categories. We arrange the categories in hierarchies of inclusiveness and function, 'transforming' particular phrases by substituting more general for more specific names, all the way up sentence trees, seeing their interaction as governed by laws or rules according to what is appropriate for their identities or kinds. Then we equate these hierarchies with 'understanding.'

## **The Sentence Tree (or Root) Diagram**

A kind is only a collection of things that is important enough to have a name because communicative needs arise regarding it. At a meta linguistic level, in fact, such names as Noun Phrase (NP) or Verb Phrase (VP) name kinds of phrases because linguistics professors need to talk about them. The rules of syntax show how words and phrases can 'give' to one another, while sentence tree diagrams visually express the gift relation as branches of dependency. The tree diagrams always looked upside down to me--until I realized they are not trees at all but root systems, with the flow of gifts going upwards (from the particular to the general) not downwards (from the general to the particular).

Linguistic creativity, the ability to generate ever-new sentences using a limited number of words, is accompanied and elicited by the ability to recognize the needs which those words and sentences satisfy. Collective human need-satisfying practice with things of a kind gives value to those things which in turn is partially transferred or given by implication to the word-gifts that substitute for them. It is not a top-down categorizing relation that makes language work, but a creative dynamic of need satisfaction that moves both language and life.

I believe that the gift relations within the sentence itself, not an interplay of categorizations, are the motors of its meaning. We have mistakenly taken the naming side of language as the key to the dynamic. It is not the 'application' of words to things that promotes the change of levels, causing the move 'up' from the level of nonverbal experience to the level of verbal practice; there is a different process going on that we are not seeing.

We give a group of things something that they can be related to as their substitute. Then we transfer to it something of their value, in the sense of their importance for humans, because needs become associated with them. The substitute gift receives a destination in the satisfaction of a communicative need, which may make it also be useful from a distance in the satisfaction of material needs, for example: 'the bread is in the cupboard' or 'the train is leaving from track 12.' There is an upward flow of meaning or value from the world of which we are a part, not just a top-down application or cutting-out of categories. A meta language is only a hierarchical collection of categorizing terms, a parasite upon the object language because it lacks its own gift dynamic.

The branching of a sentence tree should be seen instead as the coming together of elements which can give to each other, a cooperative assembly of terms. We can give 'the,' or 'the' can give itself to 'girl,' and we name this gift act 'noun phrase.' Then as a unit they can 'give' the verb 'hit' to the unit which is made when 'the' gives itself to 'ball.' We can diagram these units, giving them names such as 'determiner,' 'noun phrase,' 'verb,' 'sentence.' They tell us which are givers, gifts, receivers. We give some of the parts of the sentence, 'the girl hit the ball,' to such words as 'noun phrase,' to be substituted by them. We believe we know more when we can show the hierarchy. We know who controls who

and can get along ourselves better in it. But we do not notice the gifts of value percolating up from below.

The sentence tree is the one in the garden that grew from Adam's doing too much naming. It is not because they are categorized together or because they follow the rules that words stick together (bond) in sentences. Rather it is because they give to each other, combine, and then together give to another word or part of the phrase. They can do this because they have been 'given to' by things (and people). If we deny the flow upwards it appears that the only thing there is the top-down naming mechanism, and we are at a loss to see how it is attached to the world.

The question should not be, "Where does the (fractal) tree divide into branches?" but "Where does the root system come together carrying the gifts of value upward to the plant?" The question is, "Who is feeding whom?" and "Who is doing the nurturing?"--the naming mechanism or the giftgiving, value-conferring mechanism?"

### Masculation

Words themselves, ruled by syntax, may appear to contain the secret of their own relation to the world. I believe this is an illusion coming from the gender definition, which exacerbates the aspect of substitution.

What happens when a boy child learns he belongs to a different gender from his giftgiving mother? As with other instances of naming or definition, the name or definiendum 'boy' causes him (as a material thing) to 'give way' as the nonverbal gift. Before he understands what adults are saying, he considers himself to be like his mother. But when he begins to understand the implication of his gender term, he must realize he is not supposed to be like her. His being named or defined as a boy (with the social definition of 'male') contradictorily makes him give up the gift-giving character, in order to be different from his mother. (See Figure 5.) His gender name is thus much more harmful for him than we imagine.

Since his very life depends upon his mother's care, a change of category, to be like his father, would seem to be a very frightening thing. The boy becomes 'like' someone he usually does not know very well, who may appear to be (like the word which is 'taking over') just an abstract dominator. An aspect of language becomes grafted on to the gender behavior of the child. Substitution, part of the definition process, self-reflectingly takes the place of the process of the gift, which gives-way. Categorization becomes more powerful than co-munication. Words are no longer benign co-municative gifts, but magic wands that can change a child's identity.

The question "What is man?" really derives from this question: "What is man if he is not like his mother?" The answer is--this is a false question. He is like his mother, a nurturing being, but he is altered by the naming of gender, which becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Since it is only a word that spirits the boy away, words must appear to be very powerful. And since his fathers before him have had the same experience, males find

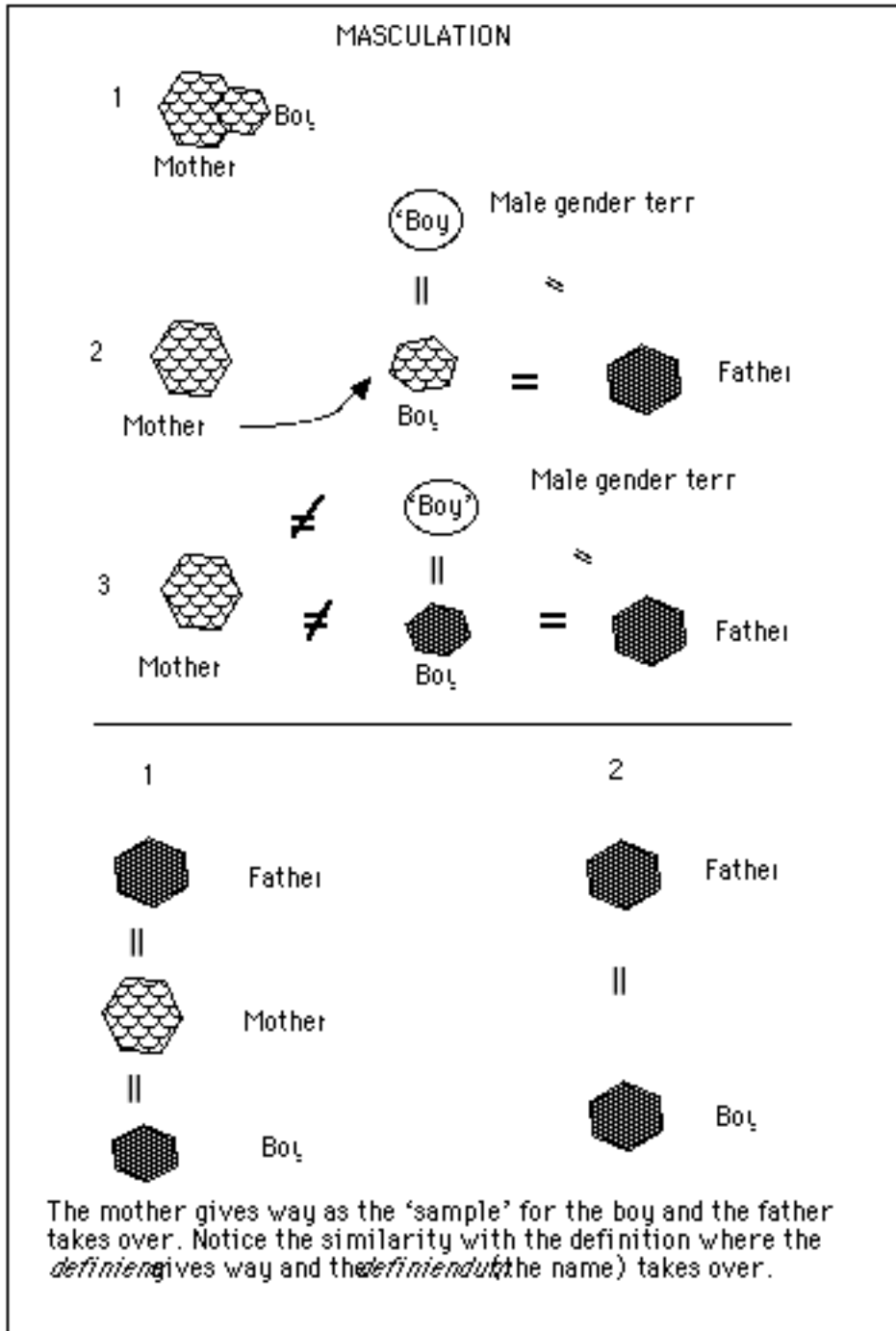


Figure 5. Masculation: forming the boy's gender.

commonality in that respect. It does not seem to the child or perhaps to anyone else in the society--that an arbitrary and false distinction is being made. Rather, the community bases the boy's difference from his mother upon his genitals--upon the biological fact that he has a penis like his father while she doesn't. But if nurturing is the basis of communication and community, there is really nothing, no content available for his oppositional category. In order to fill this void, substitution, definition, and categorization themselves become the content of the (masculine) identity of those who are told that they

are not nurturers. Words are cast socially in this case, not as gifts, but as powerful abstract categorizers which overtake and control a person's identity. According to the survival mechanism of imitating the oppressor, the children then become like the word--as did their fathers before them. Male gender identity imitates the naming or 'definitional' side of language and the process of taking-the-place-of--giving importance to equivalence with the other, the father who is taking the place of the mother (who gives-way) and of other males as well. The penis plays an important part in this because it is that physical characteristic which places the boy in the category with his father. Phallic symbols are everywhere, though we have learned to ignore them and to deny their importance. The equation itself, as a moment of similarity and of exchange, receives gifts of attention and value from the many. The equal marks (=) are perhaps originally two little phallic symbols. It is this characteristic (or property), which the boy has and the mother does not have, which takes him away from her nurturing category. The psycho-social effects of 'having' or 'not having' this physical characteristic have become immensely important, as we shall see. The boy receives many privileges. In fact, he is often given more nurturing because he is a male than he would have been given if he had been a female, like his mother. Often he is validated as superior, even to her. Like the word, he has the ability to take-the-place-of, which, in the absence of other-orientation and giftgiving, becomes over-taking and domination.

He is 'compensated' with that ability and those privileges because he has given up the nurturing identity.

I have coined the word 'mascultation' for this process in which the boy is socialized into a false, non-nurturing identity, incarnating the word which alienates him. It seems to me that this is an essential moment in male development that is not recognized and that, therefore, spawns self-similar images in many different areas of life. By acting out this process on different social scales, the collective unconsciously hopes to rid itself of this self-created fatal flaw. At the same time, there are many fail-safes which keep it in place and keep us from clearly seeing what is happening.

**1** Ferdinand de Saussure, in *Course in General Linguistics*, Mc Graw Hill, New York, 1959, distinguished between what he called 'langue,' the lexicon, the collection of words taken out of context and related to one another purely differentially, and 'parole' or speech. Naming and definition may appear to be pre-requisites for the rest of speech (though we also learn words from simply hearing them in others' speech). My point is that the processes by which we acquire words and consider them on their own out of context, in their generality, are different from the processes in which we use them by putting them together. I believe that the definition's internal gift processes are different enough from speech that they are the hidden model for exchange. They are what Roman Jakobson called 'equational statements.' 'The Speech Event and the Function of Language' in *On Language*, edited by Linda Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1990.

2 I will use the term 'definiens' as the name for the phrase which allows the listener to identify what the 'new' word represents, and 'definiendum' for the word under definition, the 'new' word itself, or the name. In 'A cat is a domestic animal with a long tail and pointed ears,' 'Cat' is the 'definiendum,' and 'a domestic animal with a long tail and pointed ears' is the 'definiens.'

3 See Chapter 9 for a more complete discussion of the verb 'to be.'

4 Without altruism and other-orientation, we cannot justify society or culture. There is no group which can survive as a compendium of isolated egotists. Social cohesion is provided by the hidden giftgiving and other orientation of all, and especially of women.

5 Typically, we do not consider the listener's understanding as the satisfaction of her need, but have to see it expressed in other words, just as the need of the buyer has to be expressed in money as effective demand. Otherwise it does not 'exist' for the seller.

6 The approach of unlimited semiosis begun by Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1931-35, (1931, 2.230) has captured his (and Saussure's) deconstructionist descendants in an infinite regress, inside the definitional stance, far from the plane of material giftgiving co-munication. Chains of substitutes deny the importance of the 'present,' the need satisfying gift.

7 Gandhi's movement for non-violence demonstrated the political importance of 'giving-way,' allowing us to see what women had already been practicing personally. Using 'giving-way' as a response to 'over-taking' made the over-takers realize, among other things, that their action was relational. Gift giving and giving-way are the presents which underlie the relation of re-present-ation.

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## **Chapter 5**

### **The Concept of Man**

Like language, the capacity to form concepts can be allocated to biological hardware or to socialization. Much investigation is taking place of both possibilities. Some say our ability to recognize similar things must be a genetic endowment. Others believe that we form concepts by a process of comparison and generalization. For some, this process uses a prototype, possibly the image of the first thing of a kind a child has seen, or something of a kind, present in her immediate environment. Through repeated comparisons some common qualities are abstracted. An experiment which was conducted by Soviet psychologist Lev Vigotsky<sup>1</sup> in the 1920s originated the prototype theory and Vigotsky is identified with that current of psychology.

#### **One-Many**

Vigotsky described a number of stages of concept development, leading up to a final 'one-many' stage, where the prototype or 'sample' object acquired a stable 'one-many' relation with a number of objects which were compared to it, excluding objects which were different. The many objects also acquired a common relation to each other by being compared to the sample and found similar to it in the same ways. This generalized the sample, and the common quality of the similar objects was a reflection of that generality. The sample had a name, and the objects that had the common quality also had that name.

The description usually given of Vigotsky's experiment was provided by E. Hanfmann and J. Kasanin in their book *Conceptual Thinking and Schizophrenia*, 1942, pp. 9-10:

"The material used in the concept formation tests consists of 22 wooden blocks varying in color, shape, height and size. There are 5 different colors, 6 different shapes, 2 heights (the tall blocks and the flat blocks), and 2 sizes of the horizontal surface (large and small). On the underside of each figure, which is not seen by the subject, is written one of the four nonsense words: 'lag,' 'bik,' 'mur,' 'cev.' Regardless of color or shape, 'lag' is written on all tall large figures, 'bik' on all flat large figures, 'mur' on all tall small ones, and 'cev' on the flat small ones.

"At the beginning of the experiment, all blocks (well-mixed as to color, size and shape) are scattered on a table in front of the subject. The examiner turns up one of the blocks (the 'sample'), shows and reads its name to the subject, and asks him (sic) to pick out all the blocks which he thinks might belong to the same kind. After the subject has done so, the examiner turns up one of the 'wrongly' selected blocks, shows that this is a block of a different kind, and encourages the subject to continue trying. After each new attempt, another of the wrongly placed blocks is turned up. As the number of turned blocks increases, the subject by degrees obtains a basis for discovering to which characteristic of the blocks the nonsense words refer.

"As soon as he makes this discovery, the 'words' come to stand for definite kinds of objects (e.g. 'lag' for large tall blocks, 'bik' for large flat ones), and new concepts for which the language provides no names are thus built up. The subject is then able to complete the task of separating the four kinds of blocks indicated by the nonsense words. Thus the use of concepts has a definite functional value for the performance required by the test.

"Whether the subject actually uses conceptual thinking in trying to solve the problem can be inferred from the nature of the groups he builds and from his procedure in building them. Nearly every step in his reasoning is reflected in his manipulation of the blocks. The first attack on the problem, the handling of the sample, the response to correction, the finding of the solution--all these stages of the experiment provide data that can serve as indicators of the subject's level of thinking." (See Figures 6 and 7.)

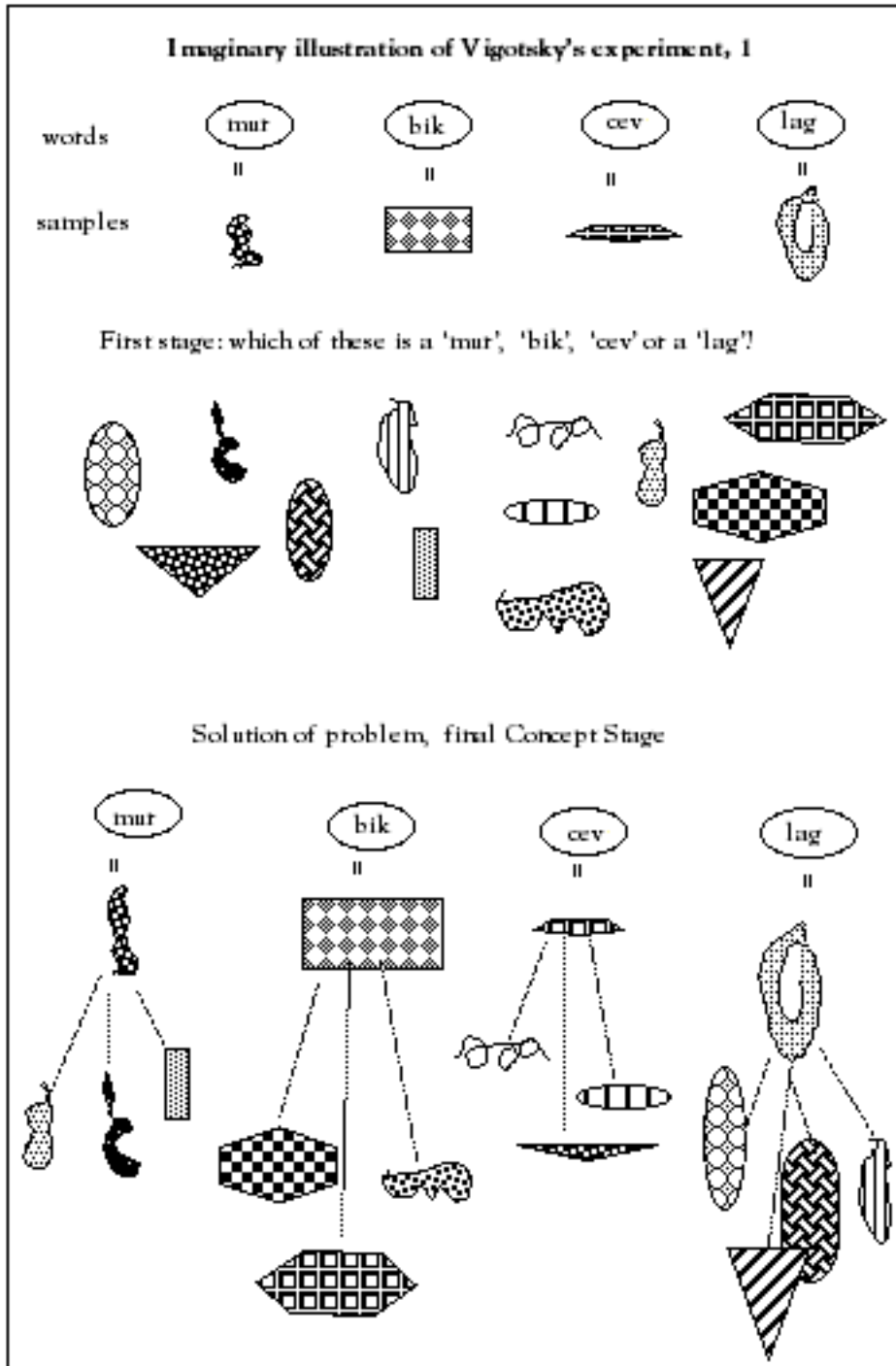


Figure 6. Visualizing Vygotsky's experiment.

The 'one-many' concept structure itself is important in cognitive psychology, while Vygotsky's experimental demonstration of possibilities of different ('wrong') kinds of uses of the sample lets us see what is not being done in one-many conceptual reasoning. Two of the possibilities of 'wrong' reasoning show this clearly: the 'family name' complex, in which the sample is held firm and the qualities by which the other objects are found similar to it vary; and the 'chain' complex, in which the one-many character is lost

because an object is found similar to the sample by one characteristic, and the next is found similar to the second object by a different characteristic, and so on. The 'wrong' strategies show the importance of keeping the sample firm and trying to develop generality by repeatedly comparing objects to it with regard to the same similarities. At the end of the experiment, the sample itself is no longer necessary because a type of thing has been recognized as having one of the names that were given to the different kinds of things in the experiment.

I thought about this for a long time, and it occurred to me that the word actually takes the place of the sample and takes over its generality. This gave me a second characterization of words, which I could add to that of words as co-communicative need-satisfying gifts. In fact, it was fitting that a word-gift could take the place of the sample, which could not itself always be given as such, and which could probably usually not remain stable for very long except as an image. The word, on the other hand, with its infinite repeatability, has the character of being 'the same thing,' even when every instance of it is actually a different event from every other instance. By taking over the one-many function of the sample, the word helps in the organization of the concept so that the concept's members were considered similar to each other because of their common relation to their name, as well as because of their common relation to the sample.

Once the relation of things to each other as similar according to the same qualities is established, the sample is no longer necessary and the word can bring them to mind as a kind by itself. The reason for this is that, in the 'one-to-many' relation, a



The sample or prototype must be kept firm with its qualities. If not, a consistent kind or category cannot be constructed, and our thoughts may wander from one association to the next. However, any thing of a kind may be chosen as the 'one' which will be held firm as the sample and, once the category has been constructed, the sample can be demoted from its 'one-many' position and become again just a member of that kind. I make a point of saying this because I think the one (or sample) position has been misunderstood as constituting part of the gender definition and, therefore, over-emphasized, invested with special privilege and projected into the structures of the society as self-similar patterns at many different levels.

The father and his family, the king and his subjects, the general and his army, the CEO and his business, etc., embody the one-to-many polar relation established in concept development. The relation between money and products<sup>2</sup> is also an embodiment of the concept, and we can use this polarized relation among objects to elucidate the one-many relation among persons. Even the relation between a person and her/his property can be seen as a one-many relation deriving from the (gender-invested) concept structure. (Though perhaps it is more like the 'family name' complex).

### **The Privileged One**

Privileging the sample position is particularly dangerous because the polarity and the concepts formed with its help are themselves originally innocent, useful ways of organizing our thoughts and perceptions. It is a very intimate and basic level of

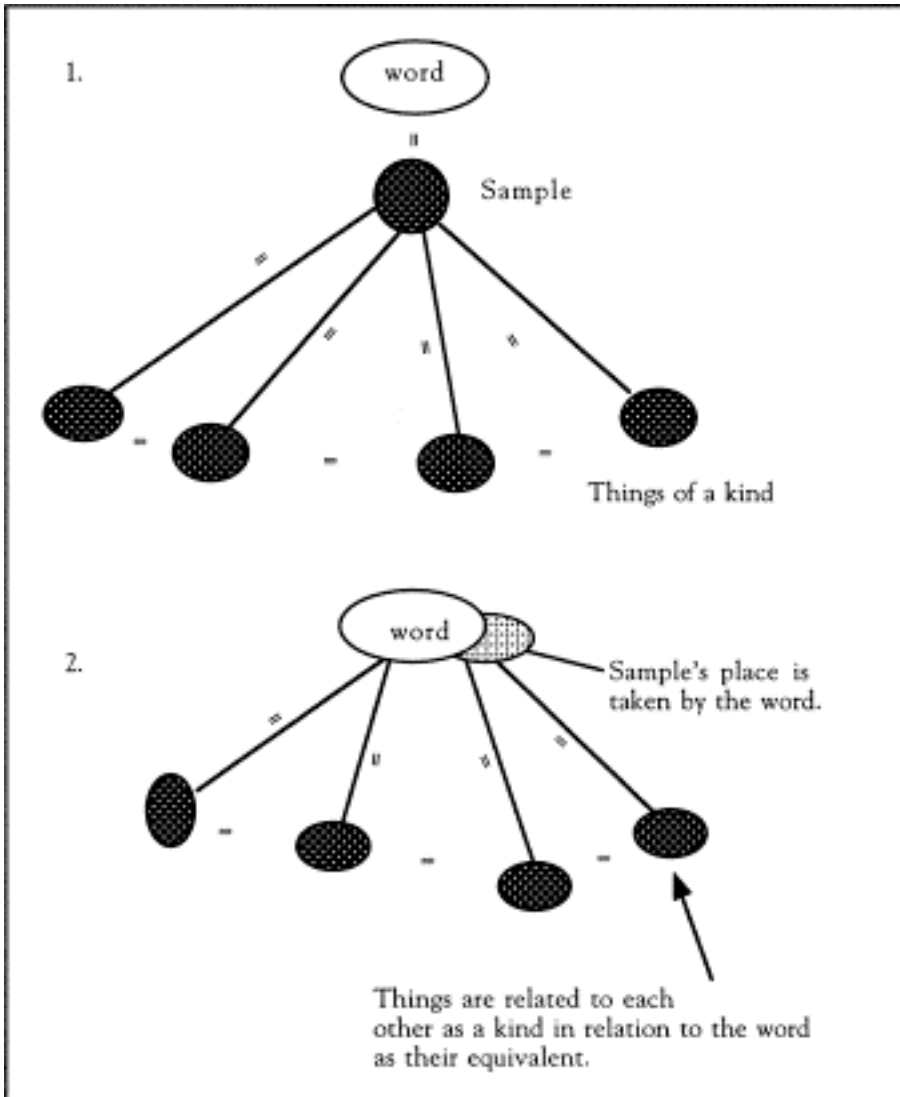


Figure 8. Schematized images of the stages of concept formation. (Continued on next page.) thinking that becomes invested with the pernicious privileging of the one position. Because it is so basic, this 'investment' is hard to investigate, and we project it outside ourselves so that we can deal with it. Since we never think of tracing the origin of our strange one-many behavior back to concept development, we continue to act out the process at many different levels of society, creating structures which then interact with each other, compete, support each other, arrange themselves in one-many hierarchies

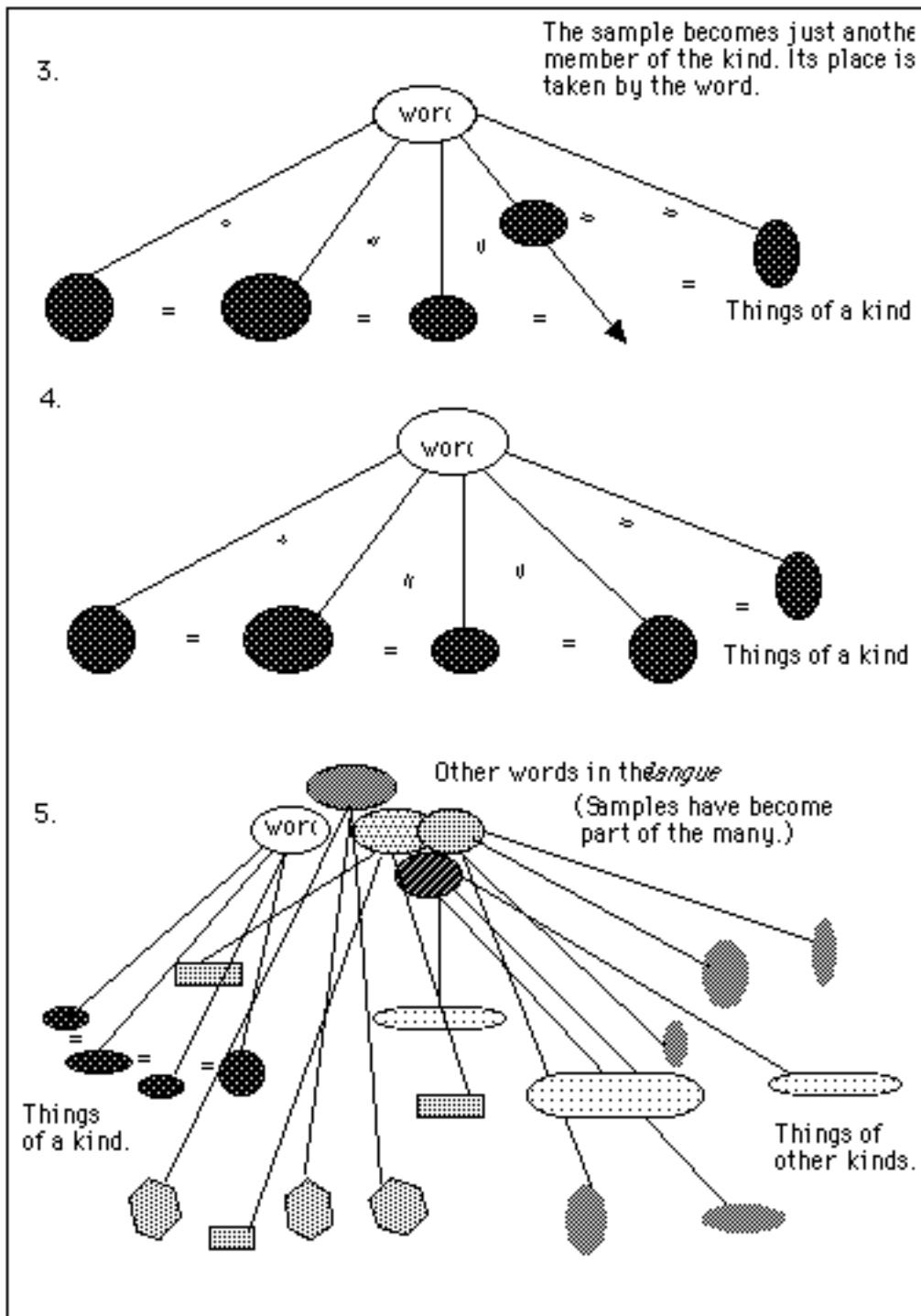


Figure 9. More schematized images of the stages of concept formation.

again. Together these structures form the self-propagating social systems which we call 'patriarchies.'<sup>3</sup> At the root of these systems lies, once again, the question of the male gender identity and masculation. Males have been taken as the samples for the category 'human.' Boys' categorial gender difference from their nurturing mothers has made males seem to have to be 'samples' (in the 'one' position) if they were to be included in

'humanity' at all. Women have nurtured them in this, giving way, not appearing as the ones to whom the many would be compared to find their human identity. Therefore, women have appeared to be lacking, deficient in the supposed human characteristics which men have. Abstract thinking, aggressiveness, individualism, leadership, independence (qualities having to do with competitively achieving the one position) appeared to be 'human,' and women seemed to be 'inferior humans' because that was not their focus.

In fact, the women continued practicing the gift paradigm whenever that was not made impossible by scarcity, war, and individual violence of various kinds. The concept 'human' was interrogated for centuries for its meaning, while philosophers considered women as 'inferior humans,' not appropriate samples for that concept. Meanwhile, the gift paradigm (which the women were practicing) was and continues to be the source of meaning, community, and even of life itself.

What we have considered to be the defining characteristics of the male gender are actually characteristics of the 'one' position patched together with the patterns of taking-the-place-of deriving from the role of the word in the definition and naming. They are taken up by boys in order to carry out the self-fulfilling prophecy of their gender concept, as different from their mothers. The 'one' position held by the father towards the family as many, appears to be what the boy must achieve if he is to be called a 'man.' The Oedipal injunction is thus not so much to kill the father as to overtake his position as the 'one.'

The simple logical consideration that not everyone can be the 'one' in a polar way, and that this is a relational not a permanent characteristic, may not be clear to children at an early age. The mandates of the male gender appear to say, "Be different from women and grow to be equal to or larger than the father, so as to be able to overtake his position and deserve the name man."

The boy appears to be related to the nurturing sample himself before he understands the implications of his gender name. Then the word 'boy' takes the boy out of the category of the mother. Thus the father's role of overtaking and dominance may seem to come from the word's ability to take the boy away from his identity with the mother. The ability to put things into categories appears to be a capacity of the father and an aspect of the role of the 'one.' The father is the standard (like money), and this standard has the capacity to speak and (because he takes the place of the mother sample) to be the word, which categorizes and divides. Every judgment resonates with the power he (or his gender name) seems to have had--to divide male from female.

The relation of a boy to his father becomes one of inferiority, of many to one, of property to owner, of things to a word or sample (a sample which is not giftgiving). Masculation is a kind of original de-humanization because the father model is objectified, like a non-human thing. Then women are defined as not (even) that, while the relation among male concept members is over-valued.

The Bible story of Joseph and his brothers deals with a situation in which the many brothers vie with each other for the one position to be inherited from the patriarch. Joseph's dreams about the many sheaves of corn and the sun, moon and stars bowing down to him express this relation symbolically. When a boy takes on the father as the sample for his own concept, he is part of the real or potential many with regard to the 'one.' His gender identity may appear to be that of striving competitively with others of the same gender for the 'one' position. His father may be doing this himself in his work life. 'Taking-the-place-of' may also seem to be a mandate of his gender role as males take-the-place-of females, and the male sample (and word) takes-the-place-of the female sample and its giftgiving way.

Thus, what little boys perceive as their gender role at an early age is the incarnation of the sample position itself and a partial incarnation of the word. Being equal to or like the sample and taking-the-place of others become important in the male identity, while other-orientation and giftgiving remain principles of the female identity. Making the male the sample for the concept of 'human' cancels the perceived importance of giftgiving. Females (and other males) nevertheless continue to give to the males whose identities are constructed in this way, over-privileging them and especially rewarding those who do achieve the one position. Thus giftgiving supports this identity-construction, even while being is canceled by it and judged by it as 'inferior' (even less than human) 'instinctive' behavior. Giftgiving permeates human activities and is still the way we transmit goods and messages, co-municate and form our co-munity. We have altered and distorted it, however, using it for the 'ones' and against the many. We are all taught from our earliest days to mis-recognize the giftgiving way, and we give it other names ('activity,' 'housework,' 'leisure,' 'surplus value,' 'profit'). As we begin to recognize the dynamics of the two paradigms, we can give the appropriate value and the appropriate names to giftgiving.

### **The Incarnate Word**

In masculation, males incarnate themselves as the substitute gift, taking-the-place-of the mother, taking the father as sample, and giving-up giving.<sup>4</sup> This is the moment of the Fall when the boy child realizes he cannot participate in the material giftgiving communicative way because of the definition of his gender.

Perhaps the greatest (and smallest) mistake humanity has made is to give our babies opposite gender names--such an innocent but terrible mistake, heavy as a second feather on the scale of Maat. Do we sometimes wonder why the Spirit of Good has not destroyed us, given all the horrors we commit--genocide, rape, genocidal rape, child rape and battery, the rape and pollution of land and sea, murder of species and of individuals, physical and mental torture? Perhaps it is because the origin of all this horror is such an innocent misinterpretation, so easy to make.

We have incarnated the word, the process of naming itself, and the word we have incarnated is 'male.' It was only a word, but we have let it dominate our psychology and

our social structures. We have used it to alienate half of humanity from the giftgiving norm.

After alienating our sons into the non-giving category, we (mothers and fathers) over-privilege and reward them, give more to them than to our daughters. Later, we try to teach them altruism through authoritarian morality or religious precepts coming from the Law. We wonder why this is so difficult to achieve and explain the difficulty by thinking that 'human nature' is cruel.

A communicative need has arisen now for all of humanity the need for a new term to mediate our human relations with regard to our babies. We need a new word-gift for all of those small creatures who are our greatest gifts to each other, to the future and to themselves. Using this new word-gift, one term for both genders, we could stop recreating the problems that are destroying our species, our mothers and our Mother Earth.

**1** See L. S. Vigotsky, *Thought and Language*, Edited and translated by Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1962.

**2** See Marx's discussion of money as the 'general equivalent' in the first book of *Capital*, (1890), translated by Eden and Cedar Paul, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd. London, 1962, Chapter 2.

**3** Vigotsky's experiment showed children being able to consciously identify concepts and use conceptual thinking strategies at puberty. More recent developmental psychology work has shown that children appear to be using the prototype relation from infancy. I believe that Vigotsky's experimental situation tested a certain conscious level of the concept's use. Interestingly, Carol Gilligan et al have written about the choice girls make at puberty between two modes, which appear to me much like the gift and the exchange modes. See *Making Connections: The Relational World of Adolescent Girls at Emma Willard School*, edited by Carol Gilligan, Nona P. Lyons and Trudy Hanmer, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1990. Perhaps both 'one-many' thinking and the privileging of the male arrive at a new level of emphasis at puberty.

**4** This transition itself looks a lot like exchange as we shall see in the chapter on "Market and Gender."

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## **Chapter 6**

### **'Marksist' Categories**

Co-munication creates the mutual inclusion of co-municators, regarding all the different parts of their world. The naming of gender divides the co-municators into two mutually exclusive, oppositional categories from the beginning, contradicting the mutual inclusion of co-munication. Like the opposed modes of giftgiving and exchange, the genders enter into a kind of complementarity, though they are not a perfect fit. The over-valuing of domination makes mutual inclusion and bonding according to creative giving and receiving difficult. Bizarre developments, like viewing dominance and submission as mutual inclusion, sometimes appear to be the resolution of this contradiction. Giving to the dominator can become a stable pattern--as occurs with so-called 'family values.'

What happens in the distinction of gender is that the aspects of language which involve giving and giving-way are identified as the behavior of biological females, while the aspects of substitution and categorization are assigned to males. These two roles eventually develop into dis-empowered nurturing on the one hand and domination/exchange on the other. The mutually exclusive aspect of gender comes from language itself,<sup>1</sup> where 'female' and 'male' are connected by direct opposition. In order to carry out behavior which is supposedly appropriate for a bearer of one's own gender term, one could conceivably look at the behavior of the other gender, and simply do the opposite.

In a founding text on the universals of language, Joseph Greenberg<sup>2</sup> discussed 'marked' and 'unmarked' linguistic categories, which are found at the phonological, grammatical, and lexical levels regarding terms in opposition. For example, terms like 'short' and 'tall,' or 'wide' and 'narrow,' 'up' and 'down' imply opposite ends of a continuum. One of these opposites is usually the linguistic norm.<sup>3</sup> We ask, 'How old is the girl?' not 'How young?' 'Old' is the norm, what linguists call the 'unmarked' term. According to Greenberg, 'man' is the 'unmarked' term, while 'woman' is 'marked.'

To me, the meta-linguistic expressions 'marked' and 'unmarked' seem to be backwards. It would seem that the more general, more inclusive term should be 'marked' (calling our attention to it) and the less inclusive, 'unmarked.' Instead, the term which is less important has an extra 'mark,' a prefix or suffix, while the more important term, which is called a 'zero sign,' is without additions. For example, in English we add an 's' to the singular to form the plural. The plural is the 'marked' category, the singular 'unmarked.' Even the two terms themselves have their meanings strangely crossed. 'Marked' is un-marked, while 'unmarked' is marked.

Greenberg cites Jakobson's article that defines the distinction: "The general meaning of a 'marked' category asserts the presence of a certain property 'A; the general meaning of the corresponding 'unmarked' category does not assert anything regarding the presence of 'A' and is used principally but not exclusively to indicate the absence of 'A.'" Then Greenberg goes on to say, "Thus in Jakobson's terms 'woman' asserts the presence of the 'marked' category 'feminine,' while 'man' is used principally but not exclusively to indicate the absence of 'feminine.'"

This analysis is counter-intuitive for women who have been taught by 'the school of hard knocks' that it is being a male that is the important property, the lack of which defines us as women. Greenberg continues, "'Man' therefore has two meanings, to indicate the explicit absence of 'feminine' in the meaning 'male human being,' but also to indicate 'human being in general.'" Thus, according to Greenberg, the term which indicates the absence of the feminine also includes the feminine when it is used in general. Women are included while the feminine is explicitly indicated as absent.

It occurs to me to fantasize that if men and women were words, men would be the 'marked' term, with the prefix of the phallus--so according to this theory, less important, different--while the women would be 'zero' signs, without a prefix, more important, the norm. If it is true that 'man' is defined according to the absence of the feminine property, what is this property? Women's property is just the absence of the distinctive property, the 'mark,' and (added to this) the absence of property in the sense of private property. Women are indeed the norm, as the lacking and unaccepted 'samples' of the human species.

It is on the basis of the absence of the female sample that men define themselves and define humanity. The phallus would be the double negative, the absence of the absence. (Jacques Lacan talks about the 'lack of the lack.')

It is not surprising that both children and linguists are confused. And the word 'wo-man' itself is 'man' marked with a prefix which perhaps hides the fact that the mother doesn't physically have one. The difference, her not having a 'mark,' is seen as her difference, a lack with regard to the norm to which the male child instead is similar. The word 'mankind' demonstrates the problem. By taking the phallus as the 'mark' of men, and men as samples of the species, women appear to be 'defective,' members (sic) of an inferior kind.

Being the norm has itself become a male gender characteristic, and the phallus has become, paradoxically, a 'mark' of the norm. The word 'male' and all other words which are used for domination through definition become phallically invested, because of the similarity of the male gender mandate and the definition (from which it derived). The word 'male' over-takes males, those who have a 'mark,' who become themselves over-takers, and who use their 'mark' to dominate or take over. Placed in positions of 'authority' by their 'marks,' they use their words to define and conquer.

Verbal communication among males and females thus must attempt to create mutual inclusion among those who are culturally defined as polar opposites, one pole being defined as 'superior' to the other, the marked norm and the sample for the species. The logical contradictions involved in this situation create damaging double binds which society has not yet resolved. In fact, many meta messages about gender are ego-oriented, constructed upon the exchange logic, and confirm the superiority of the male gender. This book is an attempt at an alternative giftgiving meta message about gender categories which would serve the need for abolishing them.

### **Over-Valuing Substitution**

Since more value is socially given to masculated males, more attention is socially given to the substitution side of language, which therefore holds sway over the gift-giving side, in our understanding. A number of self-reflecting patterns develop, which both express the contradictory character of language-based gender and perpetuate it. Substitution or taking-the-place-of becomes domination and repeats itself, taking the place of giftgiving, which nurtures it. The male takes the place of the female as model of the human, and women continue to give to males and to give value to the male model. Male behaviors of domination and competition take the place of noncompetition, of giftgiving and giving-way. These behaviors replay aspects of the service and substitution mechanisms which we saw in the definition. Giving value is an aspect of giving that continues to support substitution-domination in our society.

At the level of language, we give value to the substitute gifts which are words, while at the level of genders we give value to the substitute, the male who takes the place of women (and other men). Our attention becomes focused on the place-taker, and we no longer look at Mother Earth or the mother, or any gift-giver the one whose place is being taken. Giftgiving itself appears to be inferior (value is not given to it) when compared to substitution, which has usually been stripped of its gift aspects so as to appear more completely the opposite of giving. Then in economics, exchange--which is a mechanism of substitution and giving-way--self-similarly substitutes the whole giftgiving mode, which gives-way. (See Figure 10.)

Another expression of masculation is the use of the definition and naming to control the behavior of others through command and obedience (the giving-way of the will). After the members of one half of humanity have been given the mandate to be non-nurturing, it is difficult to convince them they should do it at appropriate moments and to a limited degree. Thus children may paradoxically be beaten (a physical over-taking) for not giving and giving-way, for being disobedient or disrespectful. Morality and the law are also structured according to command and obedience, domination by the word. Revenge and reprisal are the consequence of disobedience. 'Just' punishment is given in exchange for breaking the law. Giftgiving is made to seem unrealistic, while what is actually needed is not justice--based on the definition, masculation and exchange--but kindness, the restoration of the gift paradigm and the mothering model.

### **A Divided Community**

Virtually everyone in the co-munity takes turns in the roles of speaker and listener (linguistic giver and receiver). Co-munication takes place also among people of the same gender, of course, so that speakers and listeners (givers and receivers) can also be of the same sex. Each gender develops its own kind of co-munity of mutual inclusion with those of the same sex while attempting to bridge the mutual exclusion, by forming a co-munity with those of the opposite sex.

There are thus two different processes for each gender. If forming the co-munity also produces our individual identities at the same time, there will be two kinds of identities for each gender--an identity constructed by co-municating with the same sex and one

constructed by co-municating with the opposite sex. (The givers give to givers. They also give and give-in to those who are engaged in taking-the-place-of; the place-takers form a community of similars who also compete to take each other's place.) The basic functioning principles of co-munication--giftgiving and substitution are acted out in the two opposed gender roles.

The misuses of definition and naming--which would otherwise have been relatively neutral and collectively beneficial linguistic processes and mechanisms--are made possible by the invisibility of giftgiving in language and in life. These are both causes and results of masculation and the cancellation of the mothering model. Restoring giftgiving to our view of language and life (and restoring the idea of service and co-municative need-satisfaction to the definition and naming) can debilitate the patriarchal possession of a reified and de-humanized definition process, while taking away the phallic investment of the word.

### **Family Values**

In practice, the mothering model has been kept in the family and dis-empowered, not extended to the rest of society. It has been interpreted by the ideological Right as subservient to the dominant father model. Families built upon such oppressive 'family values' are the cornerstone of patriarchy. In them, the caretaker and giftgiver is captured in the (permanent) service of one who dominates her and usurps her position of model for her sons--a fact which at the same time makes her a model of weakness and subservience for her daughters. Instead, mothering could provide the reasonable, workable basis for our social institutions, and giftgiving could be liberated as the principle of a better social order.

I do not mean by this that the patriarchal state should co-opt nurturing, as has already been tried in many kinds of exchange dressed up as gift and welfare programs. In the US, aid to the 'Third World' at home and abroad is almost always a hidden exchange to the benefit of the 'givers' and to the detriment and humiliation of the 'receivers.' Nurturing from the male model, even the collective male model, has not worked, as many costly examples of communism (state capitalism) and bureaucracy have shown.<sup>4</sup>

Rather, governments should be re-organized to rid them of competition for dominance, so that individuals and relatively small groups could take part in nurturing one another. A transformation of this sort would also require the creation of abundance through the cessation of waste. Presently scarcity is being artificially created through waste-spending on products which do not nurture life--armaments, drugs, symbolic luxuries. These expenditures deplete the economy of the many in order to allow the continuation of patriarchal socio-economic systems of exploitation and the over-privileging and power of the few.

It is important to look at language for clues about how to organize society, because language has the characteristic of being both individual and social, both in our own minds and in those of our groups. As a major creative factor in the formation of our individual

and collective identities, it helps to bridge the gap between the single person and the multitude.

Exchange, constituted by a mechanism of substitution and giving-way as a derivative of the definition, is a very strong self-reflexive template which pulls us towards interpreting everything in its image, while at the same time hiding giftgiving. If we can point out, understand and de-mystify its mechanisms and restore the principle of giftgiving in abundance to our idea of language, we can then use language as a guide towards creating a Mothering Society at home here on Mother Earth. Giftgiving and its values are already available. We must only alter our perspective and take off our patriarchal glasses to see them.

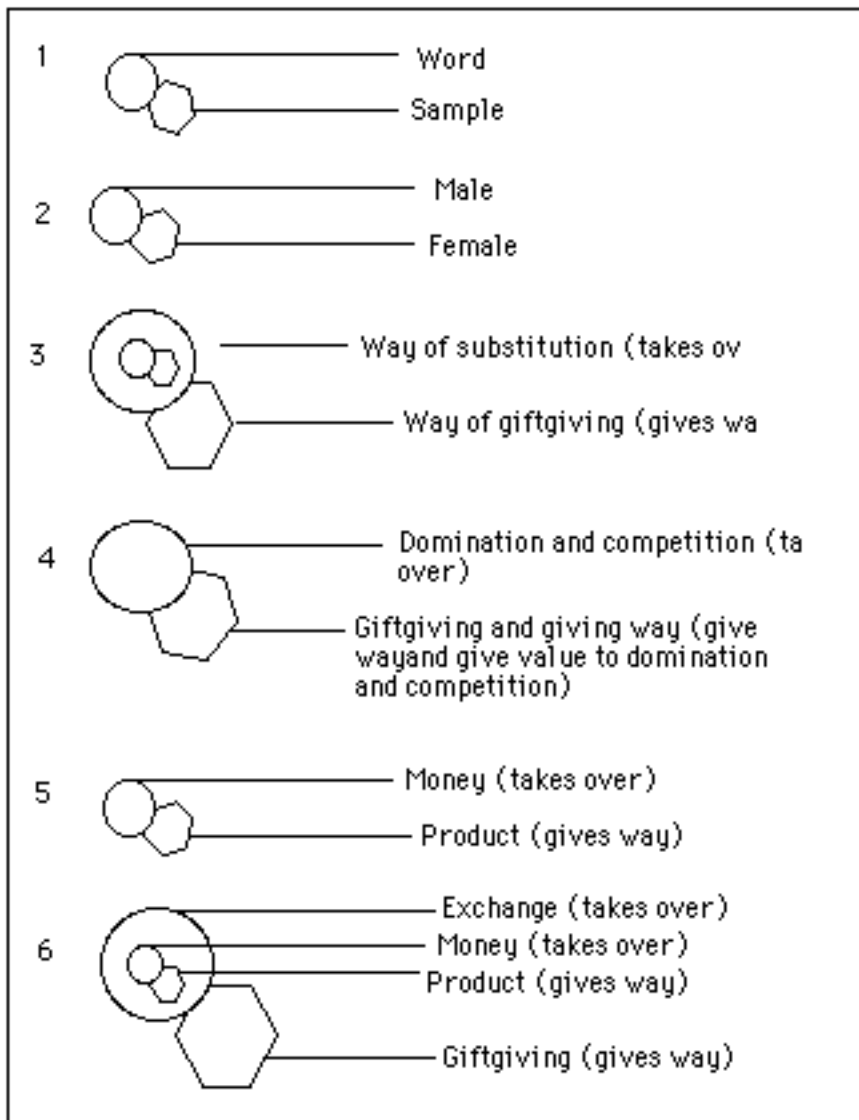


Figure 10. Taking-over and giving-way at different scales.

### Genderless Categories

Even when we talk about the 'Good' or 'Justice,' which seem like 'unmarked' and gender-neutral terms, we still have males as the unacknowledged models. The 'Good' is loaded with images of male God figures, while 'Justice' usually depends upon male judges and male law. The value given to equality, which is an important factor in the one-many concept form and a main principle of masculination and exchange, also perpetuates the male model. (Mothers nurture babies who are different from them, not equal.) The male images and actors bring with them the values they have been given socially, including the privilege of their 'mark.'

Moreover, the seemingly neutral categories are given a nobility as categories to which we should try to belong. They are a sort of artificial, 'unmarked' state of being, a broader norm to which little boys who had to leave the category of their mothers can as adults strive to return--without going through the terrors of the illusory need for castration. By behaving according to the laws, commandments, rules and regulations of the fathers, they can become similar to their father and brothers, who are not really different from their mothers in this, since the rules are valid for all, even though the males have more authority.

By this, boys as they become adults can partly divest themselves of the invented difference that ruined their primordial integrity, the wholeness and identification with their mothers--the original true experience they had to deny when they found out they belonged to the other category. Their mothers and other females are 'raised' to a level of equality with them, following the same rules and supposedly having the same privileges.

The neutral, objective ('unbiased') categories promise a sort of utopia to which children can aspire if they behave correctly, or if all people behave correctly. By acting in such a way that we can belong to the category of 'good' (or even 'Democrat' or 'American'), we seem to have a chance to overcome the original estrangement due to the 'mark' or lack of the 'mark,' the gender difference. I want to insist here that this sad journey is unnecessary, because the original estrangement is unnecessary. It is the social interpretation of gender that estranges the little boy from his mother because of his 'mark.' And we can change a social interpretation. The little boy really is still a member of the category of the human with the giftgiving mother as model, as is the little girl, and the 'mark' really is irrelevant to the category of the human from the beginning.

## **'Hum'**

Adults socialize children into these roles both by their own behavior and by actively telling the child he is a boy, pushing him towards his father's identity, away from the interactive giftgiving identity he experiences every day with his mother. (The problem is even worse if the father is not available at all, but the child only sees other men on the street or perhaps on television.) We adults divide his conceptual identity from his experience. He is just trying to use language with regard to himself as he uses it with regard to other things to understand what they are.

Similarly, a little girl learns from society that the category to which she and her mother belong is 'inferior,' that it is often not even visible as a category, and that her mother, who is still her model, probably values the male with his 'mark' more than she does her daughter, herself or her gender.

Another effect of masculation is that privilege of one kind or another appears connected to a 'mark.' Money, cars, possessions function as 'marks' of class; skin color, height, and other physical differences function as 'marks' of racial or cultural categories, but all of these dynamics originate from the phallic 'mark,' and from defining the boy's difference from the mother as a physical difference. They promote the idea of a privileged 'deviant.' Then it may appear that we should behave in a masculated obsessive way because we are connected to (or own) a 'mark.'

Money for instance, like the phallus, is the 'mark' which appears to identify the norm. It disqualifies the (giftgiving) norm whose place it has taken, making those who do not have it 'inferior.' Other kinds of biological characteristics like white skin, can function as the culturally imposed 'mark' of the norm, interpreting other skin colors as 'lacking' or 'less normal' categories. We all act according to our definitions just as boys and girls do. We blindly follow the self-fulfilling prophecies of the names of our categories, which bring with them the erroneous social readings of our physical and non-physical differences. Or we have to grapple with the prophecies and contradict them. It would be much easier to change the definitions than it is to change the lives and social patterns that have already been distorted in their image.

Both women and men can learn (and many are already doing so) to speak to children from a meta level about gender, telling them something like "The words we use to talk about ourselves are not quite right; we are a little different from the way it sounds. Even though we say 'male' and 'female,' 'boy' and 'girl,' 'mommy' and 'daddy,' we are all human. We are really all part of the same category." In fact, when children are small, they have to also overlook some other major physical differences (such as size) in order to be able to grasp the category 'human' and themselves as part of it. Surely they are open-minded enough to overlook the difference in genitals for their definition if we don't impose it upon them.

Listen to how people with young children talk about gender. With clothes on, boy and girl babies look very much alike, and the gender is the first thing people ask about. "Is the baby a boy or a girl?" Even the practice of distinguishing babies according to the colors they are dressed in, pink and blue, is misleading.<sup>5</sup> We should not impose stereotypes upon our children, but rather allow them to grow up through giftgiving interactions, and to become conscious of what they are as they grow. Perhaps we should allow children to choose their gender at puberty according to sexual preference, enhancing their choices with rituals and celebrations.

We should not burden them with a self-fulfilling prophecy which alienates them from us and from themselves.

We may think children are not smart enough or logical enough to catch these distinctions. But if that is the case, it is probably because we have confused them from the beginning by loading the terms of their identities with such difficult and false differences. We are not doing this only individually; it is part and product of the whole misogynist social drift. Categorization itself has become a tool of oppression linked with the economic evaluation of everything according to its price. But giftgiving and need-satisfaction are more important than categorization for the well-being of humanity. Categorization has just been distorted and over-emphasized as a consequence of masculation.

We could also avoid masculation by abolishing gender terms altogether for children. We could call children 'hums,' for instance, short for 'humans.' We could say, "How's my little hum?" To the question, "Is your baby a boy or a girl?" we could reply, "E's a hum." Or perhaps we could just hum. Maybe adults could finally begin to refer to ourselves that way as well. This would solve the problem of separation-based masculated identity, of the definition of females as inferior and of the over-evaluation of the neuter or objective, by not imposing false distinctions in the first place. The penis is not a special gift or a 'mark' of a superior category. It is only a body part.

I do not mean by this to take the positive and life-enhancing character from sexual differences, but to liberate them from the stereotypes and especially from the obsession of masculation that is murdering us and our Mother Earth. Is it perhaps because we cannot hear Earth saying, "You are like me! You are in my giftgiving category," that we have done this? Or is it that we cannot hear her because we have the obsession? As a species, we have defined ourselves as something ('Man') that is 'other' than the Mother and have to act according to our self-fulfilling prophecy.

In other words, we have done the same thing regarding Mother Earth that we have done as little boys regarding our human mothers. We have denied our similarity and identified ourselves as 'something else,' but we don't quite know what it is (so we end up identifying with the word itself). Our sample seems to be a male god a lot like us, up in the sky and bigger and more important than the Mother. We try to act according to what he tells us to do, invent a hierarchical great chain of being, of over-taking and giving-way, and forget about the giftgiving impulses of our hearts.

Trusted and allowed to play according to their own lights, however, children become enormously intelligent and creative as Maria Montessori discovered. We need to let our definitions of ourselves grow up from our experiences of our free activities--play, creativity, interactions of giftgiving--filling our sensitive learning periods with living reality. We should not make our children have to try to become adequate to pre-existing oppositional adult gender categories. All this is easier where there is abundance and the experience of the child is not blighted by abuse or scarcity.

Maybe 'hum' could also stand for 'humus,' part of earth, the ground which we and our whole cultures are for one another, the foundation from which we grow and to which we return. Maybe we can finally act according to giftgiving, in a continuation of the original

mother-child situation, which we can finally allow to flower sanely and untwisted in the whole society.

### **A Personal Experiment**

It is really not difficult to change the language we teach to children. I tried it myself in the 1960s with my oldest child, Amelia. I avoided using the possessive pronoun with her, not teaching her 'my' or 'mine,' 'his,' 'hers.' Since the mother really is the original sample, a child learns from what she says better than from others. I did ask the other people who were with us to avoid these possessives also. Of course, Amelia heard them when we were with people we did not know well, on the radio, and so forth. I got around the difficulties in ideas by saying, "Daddy uses that," for example, instead of "that's Daddy's." It was interesting that she did not learn possessives until she was around three, though she was talking well by then.

I know how she learned. She wanted to play with some dishes and another person there told her, "Don't touch those; they're your mother's." I always felt that the illogical reason (actually she was not supposed to play with them because they would break--not because they were mine) coupled with the fact that the person who possessed the dishes was me, the mother, finally made my daughter start to use that category. It would be hard to say whether not learning the possessives made my daughter any more generous than she otherwise would have been, or whether it had any effect at all. In fact, the experiment ended too soon, there were too many variables, and doing it alone was not terribly effective.

On the other hand, it didn't hurt her either. Possession is not as basic as gender, and anyway, the fabric of life absorbed any negativity that might have been involved. Avoiding gender terms at an early age, however, could really have a far-reaching effect in children's self-concepts, at least if it was done in their most sensitive language-learning periods.

We could also use androgynous terms in nursery schools. We could talk to children about gender terms from a meta level on Sesame Street and Mr. Roger's Neighborhood. We could give TV examples of mothers and children (boys and girls) using genderless terms to define their categories as part of a common humanity. I believe that here, too, the fabric of life would correct any unknown negatives that might be involved in the experiment. Women have made such a difference in language in the last decades, eliminating sexist terminology.

Surely we could devise new ways of talking to and about our children which would let them continue to identify with us in an ongoing way outside of stereotypical gender concepts. Then perhaps all of us could recognize and acknowledge our kinship to each other, to our mothers and to Mother Earth, returning to the giftgiving norm.

1 For Saussure, *ibid*, Chapter IV, langue is a system of purely differential oppositional units. Each word is related to all the others by mutual exclusion. Each is identified as itself by not being the others. When signifier and signified are considered together, other associations and oppositions also apply, such as binary oppositions and regular paradigmatic variations.

2 Joseph Greenberg, *Language Universals*, The Hague, Mouton, 1966.

3 *Op. cit.*, *On Language*, Roman Jakobson, "The Concept of 'Mark,'" Chapter 8.

4 Though communism may be seen as an attempt to satisfy needs, it has been undermined, like capitalism, by patriarchal structures. Marx, and other male economists up to the present day, did not understand women's free labor as value-producing work. If women's work were counted (See Marilyn Waring, *If Women Counted, A New Feminist Economics*, Harper and Row, San Francisco, 1988), we would have to add on at least 40% to the GNP of most Western countries, more to Third World countries. Economists who leave aside such macroscopic elements must be skewing their analyses, as if a student of the solar system were to leave aside 40% of the planets. S/he would have to find other explanations for their effects/irregularities in orbits, for example, and would not be able to map an itinerary for successful space travel. Feminism is a more complete analysis, deeper and farther reaching, and a better basis for social planning than communism or capitalism, because unlike them it gives value to free labor.

5 Distinguishing sexes according to the color of their clothes is like distinguishing (and privileging) races according to the color of their skin.

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## Chapter 7

### The Collective Source

Through language, every individual weaves an answer to the deepest philosophical question of our time: "What is the relation of the one to the very many?" The relation of the individual to her culture and from thence to the five-and-a-half-billion other humans now living is very different from her relation to her village or social group in centuries past. The media brings us images and information about billions of people we will never see or meet, who are just as human as we are. Similarly, astronomy has brought us a view of our one planet Earth in the midst of millions of galaxies and billions of other stars and all their possible planets. As our knowledge of humanity and the universe has increased, our dimensions as individuals relative to the whole have shrunk incredibly. Yet each of us remains in the foreground for herself and thus appears very large, because she occupies her own view.

The answer to this question from the point of view of the gift paradigm goes something like this: Each human is a part of the collective because her/his identity is formed by

using the collective's material, cultural and linguistic gifts, which are given to each of us by others, and are given by each of us to others. Our physical and psychological subjectivities are made of that matter, that matrix (or mother) which we ourselves re-form and become again for others. Each of us is a point or locus, a stitch in the fabric made by the transmission of innumerable gifts. In this fabric, the collective process relates things to words, words to words, things to things and us to each other--to and through the gifts at all the different levels.

The reiteration of masculation at different scales has altered the configuration of this collective process, directing the flow towards a category of self-motivating dominant ones, who attempt to expand their individual importance by establishing relations of control over the collective and its gifts. These ones are often served by other ones who access a relation to the many indirectly through their relation to the one who dominates the many. While it is conceivable that the expanded ones could give their gifts back to the many, this is not in accord with the gender mandate towards over-taking. Unfortunately, the relation of dominance by the one over the many appears to have a possible outcome in the destruction of the many by the one. Recently, the ability to cause nuclear devastation has made that power available and some 'ones' have played with it. We must reveal the illusory character of the motivation to dominate and expand and re-create ourselves through the giving and receiving process, finding a way to relate as nurturers, ones among many and many among many.

### **Environmental Niches**

An environmental niche is a gift for which receivers evolve; creatures develop with needs that can receive that kind of nurturing. Language is a product and a by-product of the life of past generations, which present generations and individuals can receive and use. It is a collectively created cultural environmental niche.

We need to interact with each other in regard to things because they are valuable to us collectively and individually in various ways. And we have to be able to use things collectively and individually in various ways to bring their value to fruition. Others in the society have contributed a lot to the value of things, but the same is true of the value of words. Usually, the 'how to use it' side of our immediate environment at least, has been given to us free--just left there for us to pick up or handed down to us by our mothers. This, as well as the knowledge of what it would be appropriate for us to use, is transmitted to us by others in the society. But all of that, all of our material culture, happens to be there because others have been interacting with it through the centuries and mediating their interactions with language. Not only have women and things been left out of consideration, but the life processes of the multitudes of the past (and present) have often been ignored by philosophers who value words above things because they are viewing the world from a decontextualized, masculated point of view. The attitude of sexism is much broader than the issue of gender. It initiates denials and distortions of points of view which influence many other issues. It enters into the interactive dialectic between words and things, definer and defined, deeply altering the collective perspective and the world picture that is presented to its view.

Exchange has mis-taken some of the processes of language and, by transferring them onto the material plane, created a situation in which the gift is actually canceled by the requirement of an equivalent counter gift. This artificial situation is created by re-using the part of the pattern where the word takes the place of a thing, making the gift of the thing unnecessary for the creation of the human relation at the moment: I do not need to give you this flower to create a human relation of co-communication with you at the moment. I can simply say the word 'flower.' The word also serves as a sample-equivalent. In the description of the concept process, we discussed how the sample 'thing' is no longer necessary when the word takes its place as the equivalent for the category. On the material plane in exchange, when the counter gift is given, it also cancels the gift character of the first gift and expresses its value, re-presenting it. This is particularly clear when money is the counter gift.

Money takes the place of the product as the equivalent of other products (thus replacing and canceling that product as an equivalent). It measures and re-presents the value of the product in exchange as the substitute 'gift.' (Curiously, money, the arbiter of exchange, functions only by being given away.) Money also cancels both the qualitative value and the gift value (the inference that the other person is valuable), replacing them with quantitative value and exchange value so they are seen within the category of all the other products on the market.

The nurturing human transaction of giftgiving is altered, and part of the concept process is put in its place to mediate the mutually exclusive relation of private property. This material use of the concept (and transposed linguistic) process allows each exchanger in turn to act out the definition, to give and receive the substitute gift-word, money. The exchangers can thus give without depriving themselves. They give value to things and their substitute, money, rather than to one another. Money is the means of communication by which the product is defined, and the buyer gives it to the seller much as the definer gives the definiendum to a listener. The seller in turn has to give up the product--what for the definition process would be the thing defined. As it passes through the incarnated concept process, the product's gift value is canceled and transferred on to the money, which is exchanged for it and which we therefore call the exchange value of the product. As the product becomes the property of the buyer, it exits from the market process and becomes a use-value.

When it cancels the attribution of value to the receiver, the process of exchange cancels the gift value of the product in a way which has not usually been recognized. The use value is, as it were, wiped clean of previous experiences. Having bought it and paid its price, we no longer think of where it came from. We usually pay no attention to whether the source of the product we are using is underpaid 'Third World' workers, child labor, or US union members. The product is ready for our use, but gratitude and recognition are not given to its makers--nor is the product received from its makers as a nurturing gift, transmitting value to its receivers by implication. Instead, recognition and gratitude are given to the one who 'made' the money, or perhaps to the buyer, the seller, or the market process itself. For this reason, I believe there is an invisible, logical difference between

use values which have passed through the process of exchange and use values which are made by people directly for others and which transmit gift value. The person who uses the use values, preparing and adapting them for the satisfaction of the needs of people in her family, does add gift value to them, but the gift value given to them by their makers has been canceled (or diverted into others' profit) by the exchange process.

### **Starting with the World**

In his analysis of money and commodities (products in exchange), Marx took commodities as his starting point. He believed that previous thinkers had been wrong to begin with money. A similar consideration can be made about the relation between words and the world. In formulating our questions about that relation, we usually take words as our starting point, which sets us off on the wrong path to begin with. We need to start with the world, not with words--with material co-munication, not verbal communication. The answer, in either case, passes through the gift activity of human beings. However, by starting with words themselves, we cannot see the gift character of words or things. The gift character is also hidden because of the word's transparency, because the word position is burdened by masculation and because there is a motivation towards 'taking-the-place-of' in the definition, etc.

Placed in an 'inferior' giftgiving stance towards masculated men, the position of women is similar to the position of things in relation to words. Thus, it is easier for women to understand language starting from the point of view of things, while men usually take the point of view of words. Of course, all humans are also 'things related to words' when we are being talked about: 'that person over there,' 'the next one in line,' 'Janie's friend.' However, because the word has been incarnated in the male gender, women analogously take on the role of things in relation to that 'word.' We have known what it is to be spoken about rather than to speak, to give way to the one who takes our place, stands for us, represents us in public, while we continue our giftgiving at home.

But women actively put ourselves in relation, do the work of maintenance, caregiving and child rearing--all the myriad tasks that women have had--continually giving gift value to others in many ways. Things do not do this in first person as we do. They do not put themselves into a relationship with people. What accounts for their active side? It is the activity and creative receptivity of the collective--beyond the focus of the individual, the background of the many, in which women have also been anonymously standing for centuries. Our unacknowledged giving, providing for others directly and indirectly, is the process and result of an ongoing collective interactive dialectic with things. Not only do humans practice giving but, in the process, we leave a considerable amount of by-products available for the taking. Sometimes, it has seemed that women (and other excluded people) were only a few men's by-products, and like things, had only the value given by the collective, not value coming from themselves as givers in interaction. Things are also like women in that they give-way to words, letting them take their place.

The treatment of women as 'things' which nurture and give way in a 'many-to-one' relation to those men who take over and own or control them, repeats the relation between things and words that has always been so hard for philosophers to understand. The male philosophers were starting from their own point of view, the point of view of the over-takers, the owners, and controllers, the 'ones' as opposed to the 'manies.' Women, treated as things, can take the point of view of things, the many, those that give and give-way.

Someone might ask, "Do things really give and give way to words, like women give way to men?" In the fabric of innumerable gifts that make up the process of life of the collective, are things enlivened by our magic hands to become Pinocchios obedient to their Fathers' words at last? Or is it all a projection? Leaving aside Geppetto's words, witches (and the Blue Fairy) feel the life of inanimate things, perhaps because, as women, we know we are like them, under a spell of objectification. Anyway, our words are different, less empty than masculated men's, because we also speak things.

### **Starting with Words**

Starting with words, relating words to things causes the investigator to concentrate on words but divides the idea of words into at least two parts: the 'vehicle' (sound, signifier, sign, writing, gesture of sign-language) and the 'meaning' ('idea,' 'signified,' 'referent,' 'designatum,' etc.). I believe we are actually packing some of the value of the characteristics of things into what we see as the 'meaning' of the word. Things are then split off from the word, rendered bereft of their value for communication because neither things' or words' for-others aspects are recognized--or given value. We should look at words, not so much as having their own value, but as substitute gifts that carry the value of things in and for communication. This value contributes to forming the community in all its variety by letting each of us bond with other people in specific ways regarding all the parts of the world. It is the general existence of things for others.

In the community distorted by masculation, the genders act out the relation between things and words (which they do not understand.) We have gotten ourselves into this problem because, of course, humans are better able to respond to definitions as self-fulfilling prophecies than things are, however animated things may seem. Men act out the role of the word, women of things. Men, taking the place of women, are women's (for-others) substitute gifts, bearing women's value in communication for the kind of community that we call patriarchy. Women help to create the specific kinds of bonds that form and maintain this community. Men are the communitary substitute gifts of these individual hidden gifts who are gift-givers. Things, too, have a hidden gift side that is attributed to the words that take their places. Words and men are self-referential, while things and women seem not to be. All this confusion comes from dividing the community of self-and-other-creating mutually inclusive speakers and listeners (and givers and receivers) into two original inescapable and opposite categories of gender.

### **'Meaning'**

If we start with things instead of words, we can locate 'meaning' in things in all their varieties of appearances and uses,

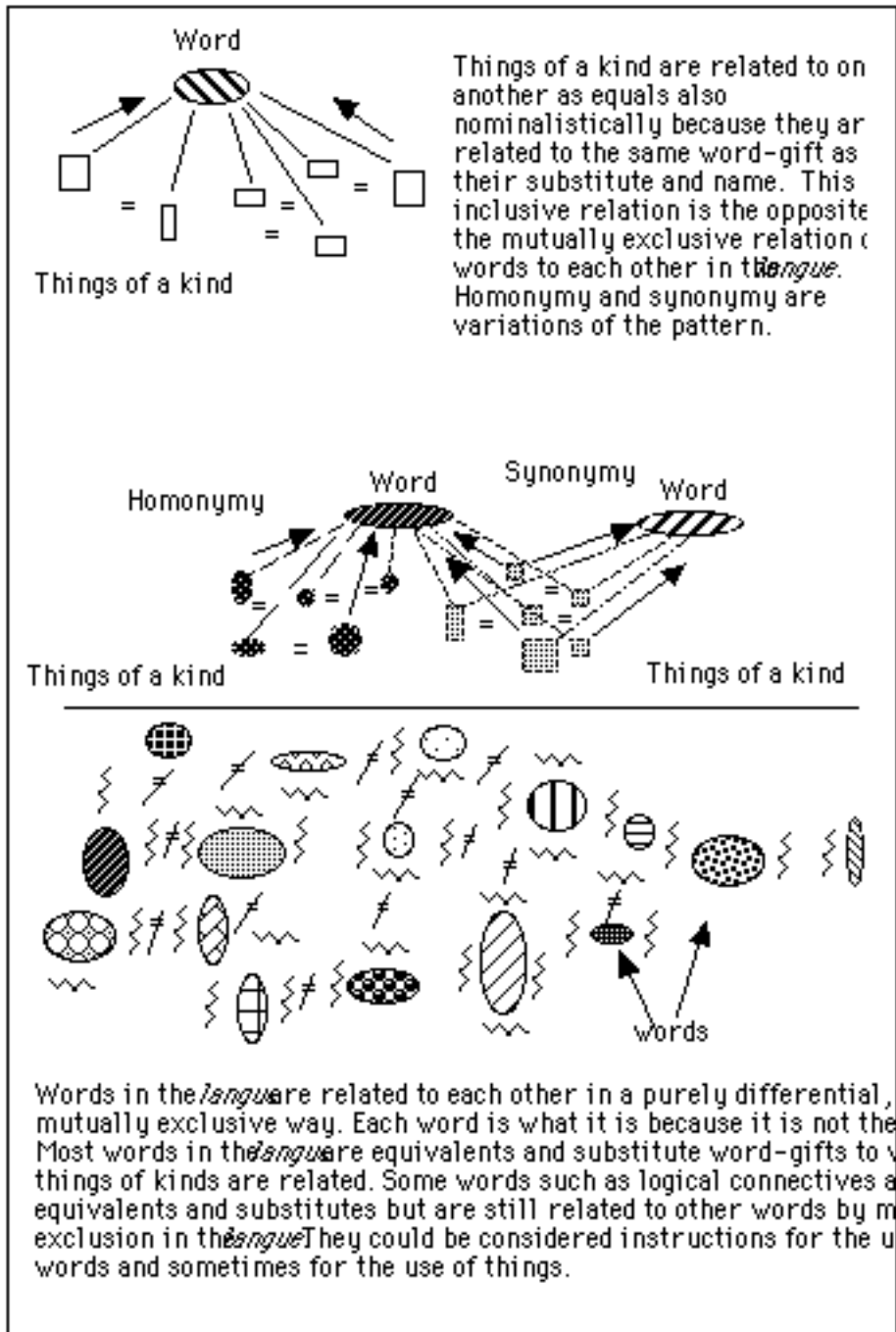


Figure 11. Things related to words, words related to each other.

with their relation to words as their relation to their substitute gift for human beings. Different kinds of things that are related to a word (what we usually call the different 'meanings' of the word) can also be similar to each other. For example, the word 'sweet' can convey a taste of honey, or cakes having that taste, or a person with a pleasing

attitude. The honey, or the cakes, or the attitude themselves have relevance for human beings. If they were not related to the same word, they would be related to different words. If they were not related to any words as their names, they could nevertheless be related to sentences composed of words to which some of their aspects are related. The fact that things are related to a word implies that they (or things like them) have been used to satisfy the needs of the many. They have a certain amount of generality. It is not just the words themselves that are general, but the things that are related to them through human use. In the formation of the concept, the capacity of things to be repeatably for others as things of the same kind is brought forward by the generalization of the sample with regard to the many and the final assumption of the polarity by a general word. The fact that there is a word for that kind of thing expresses the generality of those things--not just of the word. In fact, the word by itself is nothing; it is dependent on the relation of things to it.

'Meaning'1 is the top-down word-based term for the relation between things and words. This relation is established by human beings in an on-going way for each other collectively and individually. We usually believe only in a word-to-thing relation, but it is the thing-to-thing and thing-to-word relation that gives value to words for human beings. Without it, words would not have any utility for us. The thing-to-word relation is also

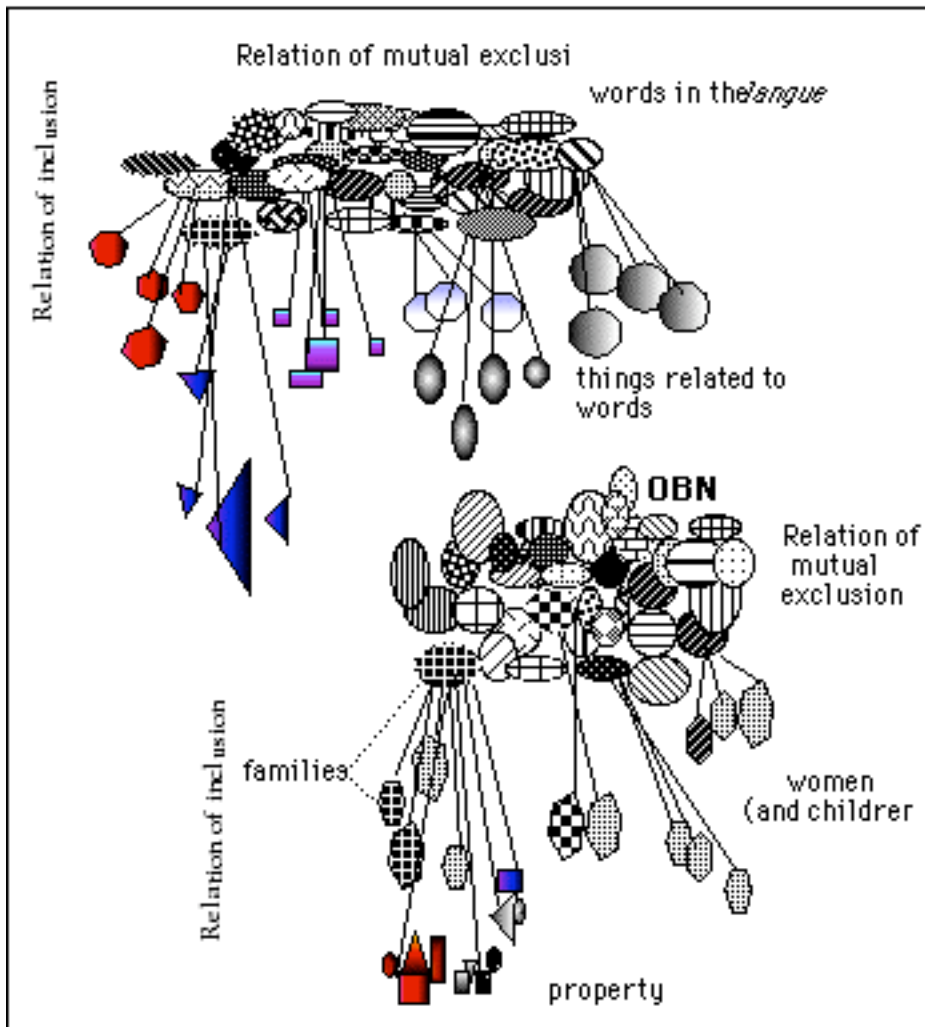


Figure 12. Similar relations of things to words in the langue, traditional wives and children to husbands and property to property owners. (Please disregard color areas; entire graphic should be black and white.)

functional in the making of our identities for several other reasons: humans are also 'things related to words' for each other (we talk about each other); we nurture one another at many levels materially and linguistically; and as we have been saying, many of us are modeling ourselves on some linguistic processes.

We have projected these linguistic processes into the organization of the collective, economically, politically and in the structure of the family. The projections confirm and reward some types of behavior and discount others, 'training' us, influencing our identities. They make up the contexts in which we live, imposing the parameters of the 'reality' in which our self-made artificial identities operate (which we call 'patriarchy'). (See Figures 11 and 12.)

Not only do women in the US take the names of our husbands but, in traditional roles here and elsewhere, men take our place in the public sphere, speak for us and often make

decisions for us. We are known by who it is we are in relation to. In order to know about the relation between things and words, we need to start with things--just as, in order to know about the relation between women and men, we have learned in feminism that we need to start with women. Men have reasoned from words to things for centuries, just as they have reasoned starting with themselves when trying to understand women (and children and 'things'). It seems to me that those who are looking for the meaning of life are, like those who are looking for the meaning of words, starting from a top-down, word-based approach. Instead, we all need to start with material giftgiving rather than linguistic, substitute, re-presentational giftgiving. We need to be giving things, not words, satisfying material needs of others, to create abundance and the satisfaction of the material needs of all, co-municating to form the physical subjectivities (the bodies) not just the linguistic or psychological subjectivities of the co-munity. We need to create the systemic changes that will make generalized material co-munication possible for everyone at all levels.

### **Parasitic Relations**

Altruism may sometimes seem fake, but that is because the artificial masculated exchange ego has learned how to do altruism, but not in a mothering way. Paternalistic charities give small amounts, just enough to take the pressure off a few individuals without changing the big picture. They maintain control of their gifts and of the receivers through 'due diligence' with the idea that the receivers have to earn their trust. Then women (even mothers), overvaluing these 'charitable' procedures, take them as the norm of how to be altruistic. If women continue to discredit the model (concept sample) of mothering, to look at it only from the self-reflecting and self-validating point of view of masculation and exchange--whether this is due to our own success in the system or to our taking the point of view of the over-valued male 'other' who degrades us--we will lose the revolutionary (the re-evolutionary) potential that now inflames the heart of the worldwide women's movement.

Having for centuries accepted the male bill of goods that we were inferior, and now accepting the bill of goods that we are or should be 'equal' to their model, we risk relinquishing our alignment with Mother Earth, our possibility of saving her, our mothers, ourselves, our daughters and our sons from the hungry mirror of the exchange paradigm. This is a species that is eating itself alive, because it cannot value the concept sample of the abundantly giving mother, or even see her.<sup>2</sup> We have made giftgiving, which is the source of life and joy, a slave to the artificial masculated ego and its expressions at the economic, political, and ideological levels. This drains the gifts of humanity into the coffers of the few, whose priapic excesses are kept from the needs and transformed into phallic armaments, deadly 'marks,' by which one group can demonstrate its 'superiority' (occupation of the privileged concept sample position) over another, which is forced to give way.

In this way, the constrained gifts of the many are wasted on non-nurturing expenditures of destruction, not to mention the immolation of millions of giftgiving hearts, minds and bodies. By un-making the bodies of the community, co-munication turns against itself, in

the image of the concept sample. Meanwhile, this same process, supplying the needs of war (nurturing a phallic exchange), conveniently destroys (through spending wealth on armaments) the abundance which would have facilitated giftgiving in parts of the world not directly affected by the war. We have created a many-tiered relation in which a relatively small number of people act as a parasite on the rest, recreating a situation of privilege which is originally created by transferring half of all our babies into a linguistically mediated non-nurturing 'superior' category. This category is over-valued and given to by the nurturers, because of its mandate to achieve the concept sample position. (The sample position is only a conceptual mechanism functional for organizing our perceptions, not a way of 'deserving' love or abundance). The host must re-educate and convince the parasite (which is anyway part of itself). We must not allow the parasite to continue to convince the host.

The parasite is made of mirrors--exchanges, definitions, judgments--and it has to receive energy, money, food, time, nurturing from somewhere else in order to grow big enough to become a privileged 'one' by overcoming many others. But this aberrant state of affairs is not anybody's fault. In fact, blame and guilt are part of the exchange paradigm, ways of making the other 'pay back.' We cannot fix the exchange paradigm by re-applying it again and again to itself. Our prisons and electric chairs are overflowing with people 'paying' for their mistakes. We do not need justice; we need kindness. Justice is really an attempt to define the crime so that it will not happen again. We try to perform this definition through a kind of exchange because exchange derives from the definition. The 'payment' involves a forced material co-munication whereby the criminal is required to give up something, and give way. Perhaps we believe that, by returning to the material level requiring goods, time, or even life in an 'equal' exchange, we will have more effect upon the wrongdoer. An attempt is made to evaluate the gravity of the crime with respect to other crimes (a kind of quantification). The criminal is masculated again, physically distanced (de-contextualized) and put into a category of 'other' with a 'term' or a 'sentence.'

### **Many 'One-Manies'**

Thinking about all this, I saw I had three areas of similar relations to work with: 1. commodities were to money as; 2. things were to words as; 3. women were to men. I could use each to clarify the others.

For example, all of these areas have many to one relations as part of their make-up. All commodities are many, related to money as their equivalent. They are also many in relation to a particular price as one. Things are related to words in various ways as many to one: as many with regard to language as one kind of thing; as many with regard to a single word (for example, the word 'things'); and as many as kinds of things with regard to the word, which 'means' that kind, or re-presents it. As the 'inferior' gender, all women are related to every man as many to one. Each of these relations also involves potential one-to-one relations. The human couple is a one-to-one relation like the more fleeting relation of the exchange of a product for money, and like Saussure's concept of the sign. Variations and changes in the one-to-one relation take place in the on-going relation of

women to men with the family's relation to the father. The mother herself figures as one with regard to whom her children are potentially many, but she is replaced by the father as the 'head' of the family. Such examples of the double standard as the Don Juan syndrome or polygamy also involve many-to-one relations. Another many-to-one relation is that of property to its owner, which has often combined with the relation of family as chattel to the father.<sup>3</sup> Then, of course, there are subjects to a king, constituencies to their elected representatives, nations to their presidents, employees to their bosses. There are successive many to one stages, for example: Catholics to their priests, priests to their bishops, bishops to their cardinals, cardinals to their popes. Armies are related in the same stairsteps to their officers and finally to their generals, etc. The overlapping of one-many structures creates a giant mechanism. Perhaps, when some of its pieces are missing, it can be more benign, but the re-enforcement which occurs among the structures in First World patriarchy has made it more deadly and priapic than ever before--with its nuclear weapons ready to obliterate the many, its phallic mushroom cloud evidence that it has achieved the one (1) position. We have been reasoning and acting from the point of view of words in relation to things, money to commodities, men to women. It seems to me that the explanation for this is that the exchange economy provides a focus on the individual ego and gives value and importance mainly to the one, the abstract isolated consciousness. The importance (and the ways of using) the collective consciousness, group consciousness and other-tending gift experience have been ignored, because we have only known how to start from ourselves as isolated individuals--and only those who have succeeded as isolated individuals have been given credence and the authority to speak. This self-focus is due to masculation, to the self-reflecting logic of exchange and to the top-down hierarchical model. It is consistent with capitalism, especially with the 'independent producer' or entrepreneur cultural hero. Academics are no more free from this syndrome than others, though perhaps they would like to be. The competition, in terms of a certain type of creativity and acumen (the reward of which is ego validation, authority and prestige), influences the world views of academics just as much as if the rewards were only economic ones. Language has become an instrument of power, and those who study it are usually not free from the ego-validating patterns which make this power possible.

### **Light and Shadow**

Women can also develop a self-focused ego, but we often remain to some extent other-oriented because we continue to be required to be the nurturers of our children. Inside or outside academia, our world views are likely to be broader than men's, especially when we are not intellectually subservient to the patriarchal way. With one foot in each camp, it is easier to see the contradictions. In fact, what we see is that we are standing half in the shadow, half in the light. Even while we compete and succeed in the exchange economy, as individuals we often view ourselves as belonging to the masses of women who are unseen and unrecognized.

Our place in the shadow also lets us look at the others who are in the dark, the masses of people, cultures, women, children, and men, who are placed in the background by the masculated ego. Along with these are all the things, animals, creatures, plants, inventions,

art and household effects which have been the objects of our care, use and maintenance throughout the centuries. Here in the dark lie all the tables we have polished, corn we have ground, fields we have planted, horses, cows and chickens we have fed, snow we have shoveled, roofs we have thatched, assembly lines we have worked in, sinks we have unstopped, dances we have danced, children we have raised. In all this variety of activity, we have conferred value upon things and imbued them with the stuff of life freely, which others may freely use. Even when our activity has cost us a lot, humanly or economically, the results of our acting according to nurturing principles still remain as a free legacy for others. The legacy consists of material reality--the house that was lived in and taken care of has survived to this day, the one that was abandoned has decayed and gone--caring ways and unmasculated value-giving hearts and minds.

The male ego notoriously fears death and loves what it fears, because by shifting its vision away from others, it denies what it has received from them--and their existence and importance for it, as well. Thus, it is likely to see itself as the lonely source of what instead has been given to it by others, from the masses of humanity that preceded it, to the workers in its factories and fields, to its mother, wife, sister, child, and (even at times) brother. This is a bit rarer, because the Old Boys Network and male bonding serve to increase the sense of power and autonomy of the isolated male ego as such. Men learn to recognize the self-reflecting image and validate each other. The 'one' position works particularly well within the denial of the fact that it has received from others. The ego sees everything in the framework of taking--or at least of deserving what it gets. (Deserving is another transposition of exchange, requiring an equivalence between past actions and present rewards.) The emphasis that we have put on the monetization of labor in capitalism has concentrated attention only on that area of our activity and on the kind of human relation which is 'making money.' Since the ego thinks of its perceptions, its world, and its abilities as all coming from itself, its own social artificial character is concealed from it, and it runs the risk of solipsism.

Looking at language from the point of view of the gift paradigm is a good cure for solipsism. If we consider each word as a by-product of the linguistically-mediated life processes of the multitudes of people before us, by which they satisfied each others' communicative needs and which is also freely given to us, we find ourselves in contact with millions of other giftgiving and communicating people, because we have received our words (and our culture and our material goods) from them. Actually, solipsism is not so much a philosophical position in our society as a psychological and a political one. It allows cruelty without responsibility, blissing out in our own well-being in the face of others' pain. Our compassion withers and dries up and our souls become prisoners of our egos. We allow our governments to make innumerable decisions which kill other people or let them die, perpetrating economic and military genocide while we stay safely at home wondering whether those other people really existed in the first place.

People who talk about creating our own reality are perhaps unknowingly inspired by the limitless creativity and magical quality of the gift of language, without however acknowledging the source of the gift as others-in-general. Some religious attitudes, both New Age and Fundamentalist, are prone to weaseling out of the human race, so as not to

feel powerless among the multitude, and instead to belong only to the privileged 'one' position. When we begin to relate only to God (who is often also seen as a masculated 'one,' and therefore similar to each of us as an isolated individual) and not to the human race and the planet, our attitude tends to become megalomaniacal and paranoid. Then we act in singularly discompassionate ways, ignoring those people outside our immediate focus--whose spirituality, after all, is just as great or as small as our own. If we can re-conceptualize ourselves as having received from the people of the past and present, beginning with our own mothers, we are no longer separate and disempowered. In fact, seeing oneself as a masculated ego (as not receiving from others except through 'deserving') does really make us powerless. Then we overcompensate.

At any rate, solipsism is disproved by the fact that we think in language, which we have gotten from others. There used to be a creationist theory that God had buried those dinosaur bones out there to 'test our faith' in the Bible story of Genesis. Similarly, for solipsists, S/He would have to have implanted language in our minds to test our faith by making us suspect there were other people out there. Actually, our earth is so vast and varied we could never begin to live on it as individuals. We need the common perceptions of the many to give any kind of real context to our individual lives. Society is a sort of enormous fly's eye which, by putting together its many facets into a collective vision, is able to see the big picture. This picture is facilitated by and transcribed into language in order to mediate our social relations with each other. And the transcription, in turn, provides a sort of enormous collective eardrum, which reverberates in response to everything that is important at a certain threshold of intensity beyond the individual level. Through collective elaboration, the cultural values of the things the co-munity responds to are stored in words, kept alive as gifts available for all, constantly in use.<sup>4</sup>

Still, the patriarchal ego looks only at the things which are within its own focus, shining its own light upon them. It is because people, in first place in the so-called 'First World,' are in this mode that we are able to ignore the flow of goods, money and value from the so-called 'Third World' at home and abroad to US. When the CIA is not directly destabilizing Third World governments or the US funding fascist tyrants against the interests of the many poor, 'First World' patriarchy takes over economically. While our media and our therapy focus on the here and now, our government uses our money, their influence and their armaments to devastate the people in the dark. Big businesses relocate in the Third World, causing economic and environmental disaster, while some of us at home reap the profits and others lose their jobs. When the businesses are unable to hide, they cover up with lies, re-defining what they do as 'development.' Under the appearance of helping people, they bring the gift mode into focus, though falsely, to cover the bitter exchange-mode, exploitative things that they are really doing. This has the effect of portraying the gift-mode as something other than it is, and of identifying it with the men, especially in the government and big business, who are farthest away from the truth. Often, as individuals these men have never nurtured anybody, having themselves always functioned within the exchange mechanism.

Our 'First World' needs are actually being satisfied free or at very low cost to us by 'Third World' people. An equivalent of their work does not go back to them. The difference in

the economies allows the business people to pocket most of the price we pay them, put it in our banks, transferring that value one more time from the have-nots to the haves, from the dark to the light, the invisible to the visible. Like a lock in a river, the flow of value is blocked and maintained at a 'higher' level. The 'First World' economies, as a whole, have received an enormous amount from the 'Third World' economies. Individually, it may be hard to see this, or we may not feel the benefit directly. But the much larger amount of value circulating here than there is due to the unequal exchange, an exchange which in practice ends up as a free gift from 'Third World' people to US.

Our short-term profit motive, which fits so well with the privileged ego mode, lets the people in the dark (those of the past, those of the present in the 'Third World' at home or abroad, and those of the future, all our children) be damaged or destroyed by poverty, pollution and war to pay for what is in the 'light,' our own continued well-being. The problem is not moral depravity and a psychological penchant towards greed but a 'normal' world view, an ego structure, and an economic way which fit and function together to the detriment of all. Individually, I do not think we know we are doing this, or we would stop, make each other stop. Collectively, our consciousness is in denial--which makes it hard to come to individual consciousness. That is why we so desperately need a paradigm shift.

The mandate towards over-taking and being 'one' by having and domination is broadcast at every level in our society. The scarcity that is artificially created by the powers that be, in order to maintain the system of exchange, intensifies the penalties for not succeeding in the mandate. We do not realize that it is logically impossible for everyone to be a 'one' related to the many and that no other life agenda is available to most males beyond masculation per se. Meaningful work, education and entertainment are offered almost exclusively to economic 'haves,' and all of those areas are anyway part of the exchange economy. Gangs and criminal behavior are the only chance many people have to carry out the masculated life agenda, though violence against women continues to be an option for males needing to act as dominant 'ones.' While all of these activities need to be defined as 'wrong,' it is only through a re-vision and re-definition of society itself that the problem can be solved.

We have to shift paradigms and educate everyone into the nurturing way, not masculate our boy babies into an ego structure that requires dominance and privilege to feel it is carrying out its gender identity mandate. We have to restore the mothering model for all, educate our boys to be giftgivers too, from the beginning. After they have had to give up the mother and learn how not to nurture, how can they at a later date learn to be 'good' by following the rules, the behavioral syntax deriving from the naming of gender, the overtaking Law of the Father?

**1** We should ask, "Which others is it for?" We attribute qualities of things to words and of words to things. In the linguists' example: 'man' = + adult + male, 'man' does not have the quality of adulthood, or maleness, because 'man' is a word, while a man is not. We

cover up the relation of things to words with the idea of a word-based concept, to which qualities can be attributed (given). We transcribe the qualities of men in a notation based on addition and subtraction, which are the quantificatory translation of giving and taking, creating un-kind 'mean-ing' activity without giving. Whom does this attribution serve? If we restored the gift paradigm, perhaps we could call mean-ing 'kind-ing.'

**2** I find it fascinating that breasts have been both degraded and sexually objectified in our society. Until recently, our baby bottles were phallicanother symptom of our malady, of replacing the mother with the father model.

**3** Children may participate in many of these relations at different levels. The property relation looks something like Vigotsky's complexes. It is 'one-many' but does not depend upon similarity. The child may also be an owner, of toys, for example, at an early age while s/he is 'owned' by the father in the family relation. Associative complexes or their incarnations in property or the family may be held together also by a 'feeling tone' as Carl Jung said about word association and about psychological complexes. The feeling tone of concepts would be influenced by masculation. Carl Jung, 1973 [1906] "A psychological diagnosis of evidence" *Experimental Researches, Collected Works of C.G. Jung 2*, Leopold Stein and Diana Riviere eds. London, Routledge and Keegan Paul, pp. 318-332.

**4** Though most of us arrive at an effective linguistic competence, the lack of access to experiences of cultural variety, and to the positive aspects of education, sometimes deprives economically disadvantaged people of many of these gifts.