

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES (CP)

Editorial

Gift-giving acts is a generous topic, allowing decoders to step into the world of cultural signs which cover, through the study of language, a semantic territory that could be circumscribed either within a hexadic semiotic model [Ioan, Petru, 1999] (*who* gives *what* to *whom*; *how* is that *what* given/taken/or stolen, *for what purpose* and in *what situational context* is a gift offered, taken, stolen or hidden), or within a semiotic square [Greimas, 1966 and 1983] (covering a range of oppositions varying from clear contrarities to clear contradictions).

In other words, the volume contains studies whose authors have embarked on the finding of that '*something* which stands to *somebody* for *something* in some respect or capacity [Peirce, Ch.S. apud Johansen and Larsen, 2002]. They are an invitation to embody the four verbs structuring the beginning of *The Old Testament*: to see (observing until apprehending truth), to say (thought put into word), to make/to do (making something be/exist in the world) and to separate (tracing the territory of cultural signs, in our case, of gifts requiring their own mapping, with limits, borders, thresholds). The semiosis of *giftness* discloses the way in which the nominal paradigm - *gift* - takes a creative form through an act of making something exist as a gift (an act which establishes itself as a relation between, at least, two persons) and, implicitly, through the existence of a mood, that of being in the mood of offering a gift.

Such moods of offering, accepting, refusing, hiding, taking or stealing gifts and such gift-giving/stealing acts may be analysed from different perspectives and may display a

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variety of cultural forms; but, perhaps, the strangest gift ever given to the human being - or stolen by a human being? - is that of creation, of the word through its manifestation from sign to the word 'breathed over dust'. Taking the shape of a 'breathing body', the uttered word partakes of divinity, of godhead, and yet, it contains within itself the power to multiply into myriads of other bodies.

The decoding of the gift of creation is, nevertheless, a subjective 'enterprise' which contains, in a higher or a lesser degree, an autobiographical dimension which limits any act of giving. The uttered word is singularity and uniqueness through the very act of embodying.

To paraphrase Wittgenstein, we can say that 'the limits of my world are the limits of the created word/language'.

Thus, every act of *giving something* is a way to unveil our limits and the desire to break them.

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