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Elise Berman's paper marks an important contribution to an emerging body of literature that reconsiders the importance of ideas of giving and sharing in anthropology. As she observes, ideas and practices of giving have attracted more attention in the discipline than their negation, despite the importance that refusing to give has in shaping social relations. Indeed, the very idea of giving as something that needs to be discussed necessarily suggests the logical and social importance of its potential refusal. This in turn suggests that ethnographic analysis might take as its starting point the description of the shifting interplay between giving and its refusal, rather than an attempt to prioritize one or the other as a paramount value.

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The debate in recent anthropology has been inspired by a partial rejection of the centrality of the Maussian gift and the associated importance of reciprocity as a structuring feature of social life. Berman's article attempts to avoid the intractable "is it reciprocity or not" debate, set in motion by Petersen's (1993) article on demand sharing, by focusing on giving as a general category that encompasses both gift exchange, which is described using Maussian idioms of reciprocity, and sharing, which, following Petersen, analyzes some forms of giving without recourse to such idioms. Berman's focus is instead on the ways that a lack of attention to nongiving skews our analysis, whether acts of giving are characterized as gifts or as demand sharing. This is a welcome move that, while building on recent attempts to decenter Maussian reciprocity (the paper was previously presented at a American Anthropological Association panel entitled "This is not a gift"), marks an important shift of focus. It helps to move us beyond the "is it reciprocity or not?" focus of current discussions and rightly draws our attention to the ways that refusing to give is as much a social act as giving and not (as might commonly be assumed), its antisocial negation.

The questions that become central as a result of this shift in focus are empirical and ethnographic in the best sense. We are forced to begin analysis with deceptively simple questions such as: Why does this person give here but not there? How do they manage to do so? And what social relations do they mobilize and strengthen or curtail in doing so? These debates, however, remain potentially entwined with our enduring discussions of reciprocity. Rather than debating whether a particular moment of giving is "gift" or "sharing," a better starting point for analysis might be to consider how this is not primarily a classificatory debate for professional ethnographers, but rather an important dilemma for many of the people that we work with, for whom contests over whether a particular moment of giving is reciprocation for a previous history of assistance or not might be central to their decision to give or not in future. In the second half of the paper, Berman discusses specific instances of the refusal to share, meaning here examples of one-way giving with no expectation of reciprocity, and she provides a number of potential explanations for the acceptance of a refusal to share in one instance and a rejection of that refusal in another. Berman goes on to observe that, while all having some truth, none of her explanations are ultimately satisfying, as sharing (or not) is "interactionally contingent and ultimately unpredictable." I would agree, and, at this point, the reintroduction of the debate around reciprocity that Berman's

article has moved away from might seem pertinent. If it is the case that whether one is able to characterize something as “reciprocation” for previous assistance or not is itself a part of how one is able to negotiate future requests to give, then perhaps we could add such contested characterizations to our list of partial explanations of the dynamics of giving and not giving. I take one example from the literature closer to my own field research, Rasmussen’s (2015) excellent ethnography of Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, *In the Absence of the Gift*. The book’s title clearly signals its location in the emerging “this is not a gift” tradition, and the author devotes great attention to demonstrating how demands to give and acquiescence to demands to give cannot always ultimately be seen as dependent upon the structuring power of “reciprocity.” Yet a careful examination of the book might also suggest an alternative reading, in which claims are sometimes based upon histories of kinship-based relationship that are themselves very often described in the region as fundamental aspects of relations of enduring reciprocal obligation. Is it really the case that when a wealthy relative sends back remittances that this should automatically be viewed as being one-way “demand sharing,” as they do not expect direct reciprocation? Or, might the poorer cousins see their requests as themselves a demand for reciprocation of kin-based histories of care, nurturance, and blood? And might it not be the case that how one characterizes this act of giving (reciprocal gift or act of sharing) might itself shape the contours of future acts of giving or not giving? Something of this is hinted at in Berman’s text when she observes that in the successful case of forcing an unwilling donor to share that perhaps she was “closer” to those making demands on her than in other cases, and that as one interlocutor informed her, “if they are your relatives you are not [ashamed]” to ask. If the “closeness” of kinship is itself in part based on contested idioms of enduring reciprocal care and nurture, then this suggests an understanding of Mauss’s deeper concern, namely, how to characterize and fix the limits of enduring moral obligation, and in particular being able to place particular acts as giving as reciprocation or one-way sharing, remains important. In drawing our attention to the ways that refusing to give is as important to sociality as Mauss’s famous obligation to give, Berman’s essay provides a valuable addition to the development of anthropological theorization of such issues.