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# Two Types of Reciprocity

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The purpose of this paper is to argue that reciprocity may be of two types: prestations of things and prestations of actions or, expressed in another way, gift exchanges and cooperation. Evidence from two societies will be used to show that each of these two types of reciprocity is appropriate to a different type of society or social situation.

As examples of these two kinds of society I have chosen the Konso of Ethiopia (described in my monograph<sup>1</sup>) and the Tauade of the Goilala Sub-District of Papua, among whom I recently carried out two years' field work.<sup>2</sup>

The Konso live in densely settled walled towns which are in most cases of many centuries' antiquity. Their population averages about 1500 souls, the total Konso population being about 55,000. The population density is about 250 per square mile. The principal crops are millet, maize, wheat and barley, grown on terraced and manured land which is in constant production, yielding two harvests a year. The Konso have large numbers of cattle, sheep and goats but these are kept primarily for their manure, without which the agricultural system would collapse, and are only secondarily used as a supply of meat. The terrain is densely cultivated, with little vacant land, so that the capacity for expanding production in the manner of New Guinea peoples when preparing for a large feast scarcely exists. Rainfall is also small, averaging about 26 inches per annum. It is unlikely that many people accumulate enough grain reserves to see them beyond the next harvest. Ownership of land is on an individual basis, and plots may be bought or sold. There is a despised group of craftsmen who traditionally do not own land, but earn their living by selling their products in local markets.

Towns are divided into wards, which have clearly defined boundaries;

I am grateful to my colleague Dr. J. Barkow for reading a draft of this paper and making some helpful comments upon it.

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Hallpike, *The Konso of Ethiopia. A Study of the Values of a Cushitic People*. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> This expedition began on March 25, 1970, and ended on June 30, 1972. It was sponsored by the Canada Council.

