material flows and social relations is reciprocal. A specific social relation may constrain a given movement of goods, but a specific transaction . . . suggests a particular social relation [pp. 186–87]

so that "if friends make gifts, gifts make friends." The first and second rules are then applied to an analysis of forms of reciprocity from "general" ("putatively altruistic," p. 193) through "balanced" ("striking of equivalence," p. 220) to "negative" ("something for nothing with impunity," p. 195). Generalized reciprocity sustains the interdependence of the group (whether domestic or political) by laying a diffuse obligation on recipients (p. 194). It also serves "as a starting mechanism of rank distinction and . . . as a mediator of relations between persons of different communities" (p. 219).

Balanced reciprocity, which might strike us as being identical with market exchange, is seen rather as "the classic vehicle of peace and alliance contracts, substance-as-symbol of the transformation from separate to harmonious interests" (p. 220). The equivalence, while often (not always) having utilitarian consequences, is more important as a renunciation of self-interest and hostility between groups otherwise subject to no higher authority.

From this interpretation of reciprocal exchange there follows a schema to account for the short-run stability of rates of exchange between goods in balanced reciprocity and the longer-run variability in these rates (in response to what Sahlins calls "supply and demand"). It is not competition among bidders for the increasingly scarce good (or better offers by suppliers of the increasingly plentiful good) that is the market mechanism that changes prices but the need in intergroup transactions to be generous to avoid "a translation from trading goods to trading blows" (p. 302); and such untoward events, argues Sahlins, are likely to occur if one of the trading partners comes to feel that the other is putting considerably less effort into providing gifts than he himself is. Generosity—which is to say, fear of the consequences of perceived stinginess—creates "equilibrium" without the competition of alternative sources of supply and without alternative outlets for the supplier.

The entire argument is buttressed (not, as Sahlins recognizes, proven) by evidence from a wide variety of cultures, and the evidence is in turn explained by his rules, postulates, and corollaries.

Sahlins's book is in spirit (and substance) representative of the substantive as opposed to the formalist school in economic anthropology. (The formalists hold that economic theory provides good explanations of economic activity everywhere, the substantivists that one should tell it like it is—but then this reviewer is a substantivist.) Sahlins's ingenious schema "equating supply and demand" does not constitute evidence that production in Stone Age economies responds to relative costs and productivities of inputs. In economic theory the "laws of supply and demand" are rubrics for feedback mechanisms which lead to a general equilibrium of all prices and quantities, of all inputs as well as all outputs. As Sahlins uses "supply"—and as do many anthropologists—the term refers to some quantity which happens to be around. It does not, as it does in economic theory, refer to the processes of costing and choosing alternative outputs by which the quantity around is determined, but appears to be independent of price.

Sahlins's phrasings and references may arouse the ire of, or at least put off, non-Marxist readers, and this would be unfortunate. His Marxism appears to be totally unnecessary to his argument: I have, I think correctly, summarized his argument without his Marxism ("superstructures" in the passage quoted above could as easily have been "structures," "institutions," or even "substructures"). The book provides numerous similar phrasings and several extended references to Marx, all of which appear to be deletable without loss. (Why are citations of Marx, or Marshall, necessary to social sciences? *Science* publishes reports on moon rocks and Mars pictures without mentioning Brahe or Kepler.)

Actually, Sahlins's arguments are not Marxist but 20th-century and operational. For instance, he has an appealingly straightforward interpretation of the much disputed *hau* (Ranapiri) passage in Mauss's *The Gift*. In the passage A gives B a gift, B gives that gift to C, C gives a reciprocal gift to B, and B feels obligated to give that reciprocal gift to A because it is the *hau* of A's original gift. Sahlins argues that the *hau* of an article (or jungle) in Maoriland is neither "unconscious necessity" (Lévi-Strauss) nor magic (Johansen) but simply "return on," "product of," or even, one could add, "consequence of" (pp. 149–62). It is curious that Sahlins goes on to say that when Mauss asks "What is there in the thing that makes the beneficiary reciprocate?" and Marx asks "What is in these things [a quarter of corn and X hundredweight of iron], so obviously different, that yet is equal?" the two "share the supreme merit . . . of taking exchange as it is historically presented" (pp. 180–81). Sahlins's interpretation is certainly taking exchange as it is historically presented, but Mauss's and Marx's concepts of something "in the things" are unhistorical and metaphysical.

Last, one notes the absence of any mention of Pearson's "The Economy Has No Surplus" (in K. Polanyi, C. M. Arensberg, and H. W. Pearson, Eds., *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, Free Press, 1957), which presented Sahlins's first rule about "economic intensification" in a book which Sahlins cites elsewhere. Why? Because Pearson's phrasing of the same point was anti-Marxist?

No matter, *Stone Age Economics*, while not a survey of the economic anthropology, is as of now the most sophisticated, extensive presentation of, and argument in and about, the field.

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(Continued on page 408)

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