

Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money (Vol 1)

Jacques Derrida



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Is *giving* possible? Is it possible to give without immediately entering into a circle of exchange that turns the gift into a debt to be returned? This question leads Jacques Derrida to make out an irresolvable paradox at what seems the most fundamental level of the gift's meaning: for the gift to be received as a gift, it must not appear as such, since its mere appearance as gift puts it in the cycle of repayment and debt.

Derrida reads the relation of time to gift through a number of texts: Heidegger's *Time and Being*, Mauss's *The Gift*, as well as essays by Benveniste and Levi-Strauss that assume Mauss's legacy. It is, however, a short tale by Baudelaire, "Counterfeit Money," that guides Derrida's analyses throughout. At stake in his reading of the tale, to which the second half of this book is devoted, are the conditions of gift and forgiveness as essentially bound up with the movement of dissemination, a concept that Derrida has been working out for many years.

For both readers of Baudelaire and students of literary theory, this work will prove indispensable.



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