

Philanthropy as a Vocation

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Philanthropy: Voluntary Action for the Public Good

He who dedicates himself to the duration of his life, to the house he builds, to the dignity of mankind, dedicates himself 'to the earth and reaps from it the harvest which sows its seed and sustains the world again and again.

Albert Camus

The Rebel

Vocation

The action on the part of God of calling a person to exercise some special function, especially of a spiritual nature, or to fill a certain position; divine influence or guidance towards a definite (esp. religious) career; the fact of being so called or directed towards a special work in life; natural tendency to, or fitness for, such work ... 1426, "by choice & by ellecioun And also by Vocation...." (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

Although Max Weber spoke of "*politics* as a vocation," he posed a question that we can ask of ourselves in thinking about "*philanthropy* as a vocation:"

Do you live *for* philanthropy, or do you live *off* philanthropy?

The religious origins of the term raise another interesting point: the church as an institution is said to be "called" to its work, as individuals are called to play a special role within it.

Are nonprofit organizations different from other kinds of organizations by virtue of the causes they serve? To borrow the wonderful title of Dennis Young's book, *If Not for Profit, for What?*

Are you "called" to your work? Is the organization you work for "called" in some way to serve the cause it has chosen?

Mark Cuseta is addicted to baseball. It takes up the majority of his free time and just about all of his concern from March to September. It is his hobby, his desire. His love. And, as a result, his baseball organization—the Bayside Yankees—is propelled by him. The people closest to me think I'm crazy," said Cuseta, who this year probably will spend more than \$8000 of his own money to finance the team. "But I'm not married and don't have any children. Some people like to go scuba diving... or take their money and buy a red Ferrari. Baseball is what I like...." (*Newsday*, August 8, 1984)

Mr. Cuseta lives "for" baseball; he does not live "off" it.

"The wave of the future isn't checkbook philanthropy," says Jerry C. Welsh, an American Express marketing executive, in a *Wall Street Journal* article (June 21, 1984) on changes in corporate philanthropy. "It's a marriage of corporate marketing and social responsibility."

Mr. Welsh seems to live neither for nor off philanthropy, but seems to derive satisfaction—and motivation—from the opportunity to serve his company's interests and the public interest at the same time.

Some people risk their health and their lives throughout their careers working in dangerous circumstances for low salaries and little recognition.

The Irish priest in the South Bronx and the relief worker in Rwanda run great risks routinely; unlike the daring engineers who fight oil fires in the North Sea, or even astronauts and test pilots, those doing charitable work as a career are usually paid little or nothing extra as "hardship" or "hazard pay."

The diversity of organizational purpose reflected in Independent Sector has been commented on frequently. Less comment has been made about the great diversity of people who represent the member organizations and institutions. Too little has been done to examine the differences in motivation and style of those who are volunteers and those who are paid professionals.

Professional philanthropy can be a good job, with all the economic benefits associated with mainstream, for-profit activity. Mine was such a job, and most of those who work in corporate contributions would say the same about their salaries and other benefits. Employees of some of the endowed, independent foundations would show roughly similar patterns of compensation. Executive compensation among the larger nonprofit organizations, though not comparable to the salaries of top executives of business corporations and professional firms, is still generous by most standards. College and university presidents and some other upper-echelon administrators are sometimes provided housing and other perquisites. Medical practitioners in some specialties are probably the best paid professionals in academic life, even though their professional base is not private practice but a teaching hospital.

For many others, working in philanthropy carries with it acceptance of lower pay and lesser benefits, very little firm economic security, and less attractive working conditions. (Less than what? Less than those of most

people working in for-profit and public sectors doing work of equivalent expertise and responsibility.)

Three editors fired by consumer advocate Ralph Nader's organization have filed charges of unfair labor practices against him, claiming he fired them primarily for trying to form a union.... Nader says he sees no reason for union activity within his or similar organizations. "I don't think there is a role for unions in small nonprofit 'cause' organizations any more than ... within a monastery...."

(Washington Post National Weekly, July 9, 1984)

In 1983, there was a record-long strike of employees of nonprofit hospitals in New York, institutions that are presumably outside the category mentioned by Nader of "small, nonprofit 'cause' organizations." There have also been strikes of hospital workers in voluntary hospitals, including those assigned to emergency room duty.

What are the "worker rights" of those employed in the nonprofit, voluntary sector? Do some "causes" have special claim on employees that is greater than that expected of people in other areas and organizations within the sector?

The public assumption would seem to me to be that people who are employed in the independent sector—on the "donee" side, at least—are expected to "make some sacrifice" for their work. They are expected to be less well rewarded than people in the private sector because they are expected to live *for* philanthropy even if in some sense they live *off* it.

Such professionals are assumed to benefit in important if intangible ways. College professors are thought to derive important personal satisfaction

from the work itself, as artists and clergy are expected to do. There are also thought to be other benefits such as greater professional autonomy, and a more relaxed and pleasant way of life. There is the social esteem that comes from such careers, from being a bit different and implicitly a bit morally superior to others whose objectives and satisfactions are measured solely in material terms.

And there is the satisfaction that is assumed to come from service to the cause, from doing something important for others.

If there are discernible trends in all this, they include the rise of the importance of nonmaterial rewards in private and public sector work; this reflects to some extent the decline of public esteem for those in the independent sector. That factor, in turn, increases the importance of material rewards in the independent sector.

I believe the struggle for self-fulfillment in today's world is the leading edge of a genuine cultural revolution. It is moving our industrial civilization toward a new phase of human experience.... (p. xx)

On traditional demands for material well-being, seekers of self-fulfillment now impose new demands for intangibles—creativity, leisure, pleasure, participation, community, adventure, vitality, stimulation, tender loving care. To the efficiency of technological society they wish to add joy of living. They seek to satisfy both the body *and* the spirit, which is asking a great deal from the human condition. (p. 10)

Daniel Yankelovich, who wrote the lines just quoted in his book, *The New Rules*, proposes "an ethic of commitment." Max Weber, in *Politics as a Vocation*, spoke of "an ethic of ultimate ends" and "an ethic of responsibility."

"An ethic of ultimate ends" raises the question of using any means at all to achieve the goal; the "ethic of responsibility" raises the question of putting procedure before purpose. The "ethic of commitment" seems much closer to the ethic of responsibility: "The commitment may be to people, institutions, objects, beliefs, ideas, places, nature, projects, experiences, adventures and callings...." It moves toward "closer and deeper personal relationships" and toward "sacred/expressive" values before instrumental ones.

The well known longitudinal study of American "lifestyles" by Arnold Mitchell, published under the title *The Nine American Lifestyles*, suggests a modest change rather than a cultural revolution. It puts the bulk of the American people in two categories, "Belongers" and "Achievers," both of which are committed to the system as it is without radical change. Those most concerned with social issue—the Societally Conscious—are a small fraction (eight percent of the adult population), and the most mature, best balanced group, the "Integrateds," represent only two percent. Achievers seem to be those who set the national style, if it makes sense to say there is such a thing. This group represents "the driving and driven people who have 'built' the system and are now at the helm ... they are a diverse, gifted, hard-working, self reliant, successful, and happy group." Some of these people, along with the narrowly focused members of the Societally Conscious group, move toward the greater maturity of the so-called Integrateds. This group, small as it is, is growing, and in the author's opinion "a major surge in numbers is possible" in the 1990s "as impressive models of Integrated individuals surface, spurring the conscious

switch-over of many people on the brink of that critical psychological advance" (p. 221).

These samplings of the abundant literature on American values and habits are important to the independent sector. American lifestyles have much to say about the propensity to contribute money and service voluntarily in the public interest. Yankelovich concludes that our society has moved from an "ethic of self-denial" to something that combines a far greater tolerance of diversity and places a much higher value on personal expression and enjoyment.

The "societally conscious lifestyle" comes closest to describing us and the people with whom we work. The Societally Conscious are more concerned with social issues than with themselves. They include conservationists and leaders of consumer movements. They are people who "try to lead lives that conserve, protect, heal," but they include those who have adopted single-issue strategies and are often "aggressively confrontational." Some are those who withdraw from confrontation "to lives of voluntary simplicity."

These are the "demographics" of the Societally Conscious group described by Arnold Mitchell, a profile you might hold up against the people you know in the independent sector:

- Excellent education: Fifty-eight percent have graduated from college or attended graduate school (sample average: 21 percent). Only 15 percent have not gone beyond high school (sample average: 52 percent).
- Liberal politics: Fifty-seven percent declared themselves Independents (sample: 35 percent) and 53 percent liberals (sample: 23 percent).
- Intellectual jobs: Fifty-nine percent are employed in professional or technical occupations (sample: 18 percent).

- Affluence: Half had household incomes of over \$25,000 in 1979 (sample: 36 percent), and their average income was \$27,200 (sample: \$18,000).
- Census regions: Almost a third of the group lives in New England or the Pacific states (sample: 21 percent). They shun the South (23 percent vs. 32 percent for sample). (p. 138)

These are the attitudes of this group, as Mitchell's surveys have revealed them:

- Believe woman's place is in the home: Societally Conscious (S.C.) 3 percent, sample 30 percent.
- Agree that women with small children can work and still be good mothers: S.C. 72 percent, sample 55 percent.
- Believe marijuana should be legalized: S.C. 39 percent, sample 28 percent.
- Think unmarried sex is wrong: S.C. 15 percent, sample 39 percent.
- Believe air pollution is a major worldwide danger: S.C. 91 percent, sample 81 percent.
- Agree too much is spent on protecting the environment: S.C. 13 percent, sample 34 percent.
- Believe industrial growth should be limited: S.C. 58 percent, sample 48 percent.
- Agree too much is spent on military armaments: S.C. 38 percent, sample 27 percent.
- Have a good deal of confidence in elected officials: S.C. 19 percent, sample 30 percent.
- Have a good deal of confidence in company leaders: S.C. 16 percent, sample 31 percent.
- Have a good deal of confidence in military leaders: S.C. 66 percent, sample 54 percent.

- Agree the energy crisis is real and not the concoction of interested groups: S.C. 66 percent, sample 54 percent. (pp. 139—40)

Mitchell comments:

Despite these differences from the norms, the Societally Conscious do not view themselves as rebelling against things. The rebellious groups are those that strikingly mistrust people and feel left out; the Societally Conscious, in contrast, apparently feel they have a say in things, although they may not agree with the majority. Everything suggests that the group is impassioned, knowledgeable, and effective.

Is Mitchell talking about us? I think he is. If that is the case, and those of us in the independent sector do fit the general picture of the "Societally Conscious" minority as presented in that summary, it should raise some disturbing questions for us.

To what extent, for example, are "Societally Conscious" liberals open to points of view held by "Societally Conscious" conservatives? (The SC liberal majority would, presumably, identify with People for the American Way in its challenge to Moral Majority; does this confrontation have the best qualities of public discourse or is it a "dialogue of the deaf?") Is one point of view more societally conscious than the other?

To what extent are these "impassioned, knowledgeable, effective" people—*us*, remember—imposing their values and attitudes on those less well-informed, less well-educated, less committed to particular solutions or points of view?

But the most difficult question, it seems to me, is certainly this one: To what extent are the professionals in the independent sector becoming alienated from the volunteers?

Alienation can take the form of the professional simply out-distancing the volunteers. The professional may well be better educated in his or her field, often has greater specialized knowledge. Mitchell's profile suggests that the professional may also be guided by values that are not widely shared within his or her own organization. In one case that can be conscious if unspoken: The volunteer in effect defers to the professional's grasp of the situation, even though he or she may not agree with it.

In another case there may be growing separation of values and only the professionals are aware of it—and yet they move ahead anyway. "I know that the membership doesn't think this way, but I know it's right and so that's the way we're going to proceed."

This is, I suspect, a different sort of problem for the administrator of a medical center or research foundation than it is for a public policy organization. The expectations of professionals and volunteers differ in different parts of the sector. Protocols of communication with members and habits of democracy vary greatly.

In thinking about the vital voluntary dimension of the independent sector, however, I worry most about the growing lack of mutual understanding and deep sense of common values between those of us who are professionals and those who are volunteers.

A hospital volunteer has given her Fridays for many years to the hospital thrift shop. She has become convinced that the development staff of the hospital are overpaid and excessively impressed by their own importance.

"The paid staff work for the volunteers," she says; "we don't work for them."

A volunteer who works at a botanical garden says that she resents being given the scut work, relegated to it by paid staff. "That isn't what I volunteered for," she says.

Right or wrong, accurate impression or misperception, those kinds of comments are warning signals.

More ominous, of course, are the comments that denigrate the competence, dedication, and value of the volunteers. "If it weren't for the alumni I'd love alumni work." A certain amount of that kind of talk—and I've spoken my share—is exasperation and not cynicism, and shouldn't be taken seriously. But all of us have also detected at times a different and more troubling tone of contempt in such remarks.

The "societally conscious" volunteers I have known are persistent and hard-working; most of them seek no special recognition for their voluntary efforts. They live *for* their cause. Well-educated, well-established, effective people expect to be treated accordingly. They will not accept arrogance on the part of professionals. The "societally conscious" professionals, on the other hand, are sometimes so committed to their cause that they disdain those of lesser commitment. Some are people guided by an ethic of ultimate ends, and they will cynically manipulate volunteers whenever they are persuaded it will advance their cause.

Professionals work with others' resources. They are surrogates or agents. Volunteers give their own resources, whether these be time, skill, or money. Volunteers act in an original, direct, first-order philanthropic way. To be an agent is to be engaged in second-order participation.

On the other hand, some volunteers minimize the importance of job security to professionals, and imply that those who live off philanthropy are less worthy than those who have other means on which to live. Some professionals let themselves become so dependent on their jobs—emotionally as well as financially—that they are unable to know when they are acting for the organization or for themselves.

In organizational relationships there is a "zone of indifference" (described in Barnard's wonderful book, *The Functions of the Executive*) in which routine things are kept routine, when instructions are carried out without challenge. Life goes smoothly when communication falls within the zone of indifference. Life becomes fractious when the zone of indifference narrows; calling attention to one's own importance in the system has the inevitable result of prompting others to reflect on theirs. Organizational life with a narrow zone of indifference can become intolerable. In my experience, *socially conscious people are people with a narrow zone of indifference.*

Another kind of hazard in the professional-volunteer relationship is a consequence of the very shared values and strong sense of community that most of us work hard to encourage. People working together closely, not for their own personal benefit but for a cause, are people who develop strong personal bonds. Yet in terms of organizational values, such ties are beneficial only up to a point. Good organization, especially in large organizations, requires what have been called "adequate minimal relationships." Family love (as Boulding remarked in *The Organizational Revolution*) is appropriate in families, and the "family" metaphor carried loosely into other kinds of human organizations can be harmful—to the members as well as to the organization. Professionals and volunteers are not brothers and sisters; there are more stringent limitations on organizational loyalties than there are on kinship.

The sociologist Philip Selznick (in *Leadership in Administration*) once contrasted "organizations" with "institutions." An organization is a group brought together to accomplish a particular task by common, coordinated effort; its members are recruited on the basis of the contribution they can make to the task; the members are, therefore, *expendable*: As other skills are needed, members can be replaced.

An institution, on the other hand, is an organization with a memory, with a past and a future; the relationship among the members has become "infused with value," and the members are not "expendable" in the same sense at all. The organization that calls upon its members for a total commitment and that attempts to build close, personal relationships and a common dedication will find it difficult to pass judgment on a member who falters, fails, or even disrupts the group in its work.

Bruce Mazlish's study of "revolutionary ascetics"—of Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin, and Mao—identifies a personality type of organizational leadership that has few "libidinal" ties of friendship and love. It is a commitment to purpose that excludes normal relationships. Everyone except the leader is expendable. The leader accepts his or her inextricability without reluctance; the cause will fail without him or her.

Such extremes of commitment to the ethic of ultimate ends are fortunately rare, but my guess is that the personality type is most likely to be found, whenever it shows up, among the societally conscious.

The threat from revolutionary asceticism is not great, but the biographies of many of the greatest figures in the philanthropic tradition make it clear that reform and change are most often associated with unwavering

commitment, persistence, dedication, and single-mindedness. John Howard, Dorothea Dix, and Martin Luther King are among the more admirable examples.

A more serious threat is "professionalism" itself. Those who live off philanthropy sometimes want to improve their standing in the community, if only to be taken more seriously by those whom they seek to persuade. Improved standing can come from title, but to be president or executive director of a small and impoverished organization seems to carry little weight. The quality of commitment, serious though it may be, often lacks the charismatic quality that makes a Gandhi or a Mother Theresa so powerfully attractive.

To be paid to work for a nonprofit, voluntary organization may carry no special status at all; in some cases it may be taken as a sign of inability to succeed in more challenging and competitive work.

To be a "professional," however, in the full sense of that word, is to lay claim to a place of some honor and distinction in our society, in spite of careless usage and in spite of the serious criticism of professional behavior, practice, and values. An important new book, *The Reflective Practitioner* by Donald Schön, deals with "how professionals think in action"—and opens with a chapter on "The Crisis of Confidence in Professional Knowledge." Schön questions whether knowledge—and especially technical knowledge approached analytically—is an appropriate base for the *professional*, in contrast with the *scientist*. The new model of professionalism is borrowed from science: "The systematic knowledge base of a profession is thought to have four essential properties. It is specialized, firmly bounded, scientific, and standardized," according to Schön's summary of the position (p. 23). In some professions, such as medicine, this emphasis on specialized, scientific knowledge marks a trend toward

"technical rationality," the domination of professional practice by scientific values.

In philanthropy this trend is most evident in efforts to make philanthropy a policy science and to apply such tools as cost-benefit analysis, quantification, and computer modeling. Most economists have approached philanthropic questions in this way for years. The concern that Schön and others express seems not only to result from a fear of "quantomania," but from the removal of other values from consideration. (It is significant, I think, that this thoughtful new book about "reflective practice" was recommended to me by the dean of a leading medical school.)

However, as Schön points out, philanthropy is not considered a "major profession" like medicine or a "near-major" profession like engineering; it is a "minor profession," along with those such as social work, education, librarianship, or town planning. The minor professions are said to lack intellectual rigor and depend almost entirely for their ideas on the academic disciplines of the arts and sciences. Most important, they pursue "*ambiguous ends*."

Philanthropy does not have clear and agreed-upon purposes, nor does it have firm intellectual foundations; it is susceptible to attack from political scientists about its purposes, and in the most fundamental way from economists of widely divergent ideological persuasions. Philanthropy is a tradition, first and foremost, and subject like all traditions to attenuation by neglect as well as to erosion by criticism. It is true of philanthropic as well as other traditions that they "are frequently embroiled in conflicts of values, goals, purposes, and interests" (Schön, p. 17). Such conflicts increase the vulnerability to as well as the likelihood of criticism.

The literature that deals with the philanthropic relationship emphasizes the priority of the giver and the receiver, the setting in which many of these conflicts arise. Very little attention is given to the role of the professional as agent or to the subtle but important changes in attitudes and values that occur when professionals speak and act for volunteers. Fund-raising professionals have studied more intensively than anyone else the motivations for giving, but most of us know precious little about the psychological changes that take place between an appeal made by a person in his or her own behalf, by a volunteer in behalf of that person, and by a professional in behalf of a volunteer in behalf of that person. We know even less about the psychological changes that take place when appeals are made by direct mail, sometimes "personalized," sometimes with the fullest bureaucratic anonymity.

As we moved from the simplicity of the direct face-to-face relationship to the characteristic behavior of large organizations and mass communication, the qualities of professionalism changed drastically. In what way can the philanthropic professional be said to have "clients"? Who is the client? If the client is the ultimate recipient, then what is the professional's relationship to the prospective contributor? In what way do professionals in large organizations have "autonomy" as the traditional professional is thought to have it? The medical practitioner's professional opinion presumably does not change whether the professional is teaching in a classroom; or working in a professional clinic, hospital, or MASH unit. There is no question who the client is, and there is usually little question of what the professional's responsibility is in the relationship.

"Clientage" (there is such a word) is presumably the relationship seen from the vantage point of the client rather than from the perspective of the professional. The professional offers knowledge of a special and esoteric kind with certain implied guarantees of trustworthiness. The quality of the

service is also expected to be the same regardless of the social standing, ethnic background, or ability to pay. Professionalism has fallen under attack because of lapses from that high standard. Is that, too, a problem for us?

Professionals in philanthropy face other problems. What is the place of *ambition* in our work? It seems to be rarely spoken of. Our ambition is assumed to be directed primarily to the cause we serve, rather than primarily to ourselves. Some comment has been made about the relative lack of opportunity for people on the contributions side to rise professionally; the career ladder is very short. Grantmaking foundations with very large endowments sometimes have very small professional staffs. Corporate contributions professionals are by definition working outside the mainstream of their companies' business interests; if they win promotion, they are often promoted out of the contributions area, back into the corporate mainstream.

Those employed in volunteer-based organizations are often in small professional staffs with not more than a step or two between the lowest and highest ranks. There is some lateral movement from one organization to another, but few organizations offer much opportunity for advancement.

How, then, does ambition manifest itself in the independent sector? Presumably the energies are turned toward program goals, and professional satisfaction is to be found and ambition rewarded in the progress made toward those goals.

Do we now begin to talk about the differences among work in this sector, work in the private sector, and work for government? The conventions of behavior are different; they must be, if the goals of power, wealth, and recognition that are expected to motivate people to further effort and

achievement in the other two sectors are thought not to apply in the same way here.

That, it seems to me, is the root issue of Ralph Nader's labor union and of the question of strikes and slowdowns in hospitals. The line between managerial/professional/technical and office/secretarial/clerical and their expectations of treatment becomes unclear in the independent sector. Some people welcome such ambiguity; it often seems to lead to discord and unhappiness. Who within the paid staff of a nonprofit, voluntary organization is living *for* the cause and who may be said to be living *off* it?

The "revolutionary ascetic" mentioned earlier is a person who believes his or her personal ambition to be exactly congruent with the advancement of his or her cause. The two proceed together; separated, neither will survive.

The "philanthropic ascetic" rejects those things that appear to detract from or to demean the cause. There is a single-mindedness about the importance of the cause itself; only lip-service is paid to competing causes. Some philanthropic professionals appear to have fashioned their lives in such a shape, denying themselves income that they might be able to use—without challenge or criticism—for their own comfort or convenience, in order to apply even more available resources to the work that must be done.

We are dealing with a force that does not fit well with the narrower versions of self-interest, especially when selfinterest is expected to reveal itself as desire for material benefit. This is, I think, an example of "rational noneconomic behavior," behavior of an almost garden-variety familiarity in the independent sector. Clean air, metaphysics, or adoption services can be even more powerful than an extra week of vacation, a new car, or even a personal computer (or a rock concert, suntan, or advanced degree).

The search for self-fulfillment may lead ever more people toward work that combines material reward and spiritual satisfaction. If so, the boundary between work in the marketplace and government and work in the independent sector may become even more blurred.

John D. Rockefeller presented a philosophy of business philanthropy that asserted the creation of honorable and honest work for people to be the highest sort of contribution a person could make. That aspiration for business has not been shared by many people in business; many if not most people outside business would not accept Rockefeller's philosophy as representative of the thinking of business leaders generally—and perhaps not even representative of Rockefeller's own views.

Economic work is necessary, and self-interest is said to be what motivates and guides it. It isn't necessary for other values to enter in. Take it from the horse's mouth:

By preferring the support of domestic to that of foreign industry, [every individual] intends his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of the greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. Nor is it always the worse for society that it was no part of it. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it. I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from

it. (Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter 2)

Smith believed that the businessman was better qualified to judge his interests than any government could be. In his other book, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, he makes this view universal:

Every man, as the Stoics used to say, is first and principally recommended to his own care; and every man is certainly, in every respect, fitter and abler to take care of himself than of any other person. (Part VI, Section II, Chapter 1)

The reason for asking the question is to turn it around:

To what extent is any man better able to take care of another than that person is able to take care of himself?

On a scale emerging from such questions, people in the tobacco industry would tend to fall at one end and people in philanthropy would tend to be at the other. The social esteem accorded to those in the philanthropic activity would compensate for lower salaries, perhaps; those in the tobacco industry would assuage their lower self-esteem with higher salaries.

Do such thoughts lead us into the trap of thinking that people who create wealth are somehow morally less worthy of our esteem than those who dispense it?

Or do we believe that the work we do is morally "cleaner" than the work of most other people? Mine may not be much of a job and I may not do it very well, but I'm closer to heaven than they are with their efficiency and their profits because the *goal* of my work reflects a higher aspiration than

theirs. They're serving themselves; I'm serving humankind. ("Writers can be guilty of every kind of human conceit but one, the conceit of social workers: 'We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for, I don't know.'" (W. H. Auden, quoted by Noel Timms in *Social Work Values*).

If that is the case, helping people to help themselves is the best goal at which to aim, and creating jobs for people can claim a high place in the social order.

Not all jobs are alike, however, and certainly not in any moral sense: Producing wheat for sale to the public is not the same as producing cigarettes for sale to the public. An "externality" of producing and selling cigarettes is the unintended effect that some customers may develop cancer because they have been persuaded to smoke cigarettes. The advocates of "safe energy" (one of the demands of the "economic bill of rights" reprinted elsewhere in this essay) seek to reduce to the minimum possible the externalities associated with all commercial sources of energy.

To what extent do the unintended harmful consequences of economic activity bring moral discredit to the people engaged in it?

Or, to shift direction once more, to what extent does the structure of the philanthropic relationship result in abuses of power by the professional who wields it?

There is the power implicit in making grant judgments, and there is an overtone of arbitrariness about the grantmaker's discretion. The more discretion, the more personal judgment, the more possibility for abuse. There is an implicit understanding that applicants for grants are sincere in their intentions to carry out the work they propose to do; there is an

implicit understanding that the grantmaker will be guided by his or her own guidelines and will act fairly within them. Doubts and anxieties about the discretionary power lead to calls by not-for-profit organizations' spokespersons for more precise constraints upon it. Grantmakers, on the other hand, tend to narrow their guidelines and to make them ever more precise: Artfully designed guidelines will protect grantmakers from ever having to make a decision on their own.

J. Irwin Miller, a gentle person, and Irving Kristol, an acerbic one, each spoke to meetings of philanthropic professionals about what Kristol called "the sin of pride." It is virtue by association. It is not simply the arrogance so often criticized among grantmakers; it is the self-righteousness and sanctimoniousness that is common if not rampant throughout the sector, on both sides of the table. It tends to inflate the moral worth of those engaged in philanthropy and to deflate the moral worth of those engaged in other forms of work, especially work that is explicitly self-interested.

If we are to examine our own motives and understand their complexity more clearly, we should ponder long and hard Weber's distinction between living *for* what we do and living *off* it.