FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Essays of Harold Lewis

Edited by

Michael Reisch

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2003 by Brunner-Routledge

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon 0X14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

First issued in paperback 2014

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Lewis, Harold.
For the common good : essays of Harold Lewis / edited by Michael Reisch.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-415-93549-4 (hbk)
ISBN 978-0-415-86097-0 (pbk)
1. Social service. 2. Social work education. I. Reisch, Michael, 1948– II. Title.
HV40 .L475 2002
361 .3—dc21

2002151909

ISBN 978-0-415-86097-0 (pbk)

Contents

Acknowledgments

The publication of this book would not have been possible without the assistance of numerous people and organizations. The late Samuel "Buddy" Silberman, a long-time colleague and friend of Dr. Lewis, originally conceived of the project and, through the Silberman Foundation, provided an initial grant for this work. Thanks go to the entire Silberman family, particularly Dr. Jayne Silberman, and to Lori Slutsky of the New York Community Trust for their ongoing support.

Dr. Lewis's wife, Celia, helped compile his many papers and made several important suggestions about the book's structure and focus. I appreciate her graciousness and encouragement throughout this project. The staff of the Evelyn Butler Archive at the University of Pennsylvania Library helped track down several previously unpublished works. At the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work, Dr. Ursula Bischoff was an invaluable research assistant and Laurie McAdams and Janet Heuman were indefatigable in their preparation of the first draft of the manuscript. At the University of Michigan School of Social Work, I am grateful for the technical assistance of Renee Heath, Diane Devlin, and Roxanne Loy in preparing the final manuscript. I am also grateful for the support and assistance of Emily Epstein, my editor at Brunner-Routledge, and Erin

Herlihy, my production editor. All errors and deficiencies in the final manuscript are mine alone.

I had two motives in undertaking this project. One was my belief that Dr. Lewis is an original thinker whose ideas are of great potential value to current and future generations of social work practitioners and scholars. His work serves as a vital link between the social work pioneers of the early and mid-twentieth century and those of the twenty-first century. It is important for today's students to know that the issues that inspire them and the concepts that guide them have deep and strong roots in the profession. On a personal level, this book is my way of saying "thank you," and paying a small but lasting tribute to Dr. Lewis, who is and was the only mentor I have ever had.

Foreword

When I became the 10th President of Hunter College in 1980, Harold Lewis had been Dean of the School of Social Work for ten years, and the School was flourishing under his leadership. Dr. Lewis had recruited a number of new faculty, who joined that already stellar group of social workers who had come to the School from health and social service agencies and institutions, other universities, and government. In those years, he had also established himself as a leader in the College. During the summer before I took office, my predecessor as President, Jacqueline G.Wexler, generously gave me briefings about the College. She sang the praises of Dean Lewis, whom she described as one of the most brilliant, erudite, articulate, ethical, and hard-working people she had ever known. “But, my,” President Wexler added, “he does talk fast!”

And later one of his colleagues who had gone to graduate school with him told me that the distinguished Professor Marian Hathway of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, one of Dr. Lewis's most admired mentors, had told him when he was a second year student that he would have to learn to speak more slowly. Other people, Professor Hathway said, could not follow the rapidity of his words (or the complexity, sometimes, of his thinking), and if he were to

become the intellectual leader of his profession, as Professor Hathway and others predicted, he would need to slow down and take the pace of others into consideration. Not everyone, Professor Hathway told Harold Lewis, was from Brooklyn as he was, and not everyone had a Brooklyn accent. Moreover, she added, not everyone thought and talked as fast as he did.

At Hunter, the School of Social Work, with Dr. Lewis as Dean and with the support of the philanthropist Samuel J.Silberman (Buddy to all of us who counted him as a friend), became a center of excellence in the College, the profession, New York City, the nation, and the international community. Dean Lewis encouraged faculty to do research, write, and take leadership in professional, social action, and civic organizations. The faculty was a diverse one, representing the various social work methods, fields of practice, and areas of expertise. Faculty meetings were often the forum for lively discussions of issues facing the profession, and there were consequential differences among the faculty. Never, however, in the years of my tenure as President of Hunter, did those differences become matters of personality or ideology: not with Harold Lewis, opinionated and ideological as he could be, as Dean and intellectual leader. He valued his colleagues, and he listened to what they had to say. How he loved good, substantive discussions! It was a golden time at Hunter and in the School during Dr. Lewis's twenty years as Dean.

This volume, so respectfully and intelligently edited by Professor Michael Reisch, PhD, a Hunter MSW, and now of the faculty of the University of Michigan, is a collection of Dr. Lewis's papers written between the years 1975 and *1991.* Wisely, I think, Dr. Reisch organized the book by subject matter, rather than chronologically. Dr. Lewis's respect for

social work practice and practitioners is manifest throughout the book, as is his lifelong preoccupation with the values and ethics that undergird the profession and inform the quotidian practice of social workers. The final section on social work education is a *must read* for classroom and field faculty in every school of social work in the nation. In particular, I recommend to the readers of this volume, "Teacher's Style and the Use of Professional Self in Social Work Education" (1991) and "Some Thoughts on My 40 Years in Social Work Education" (November, 1989).

In Chapter 2 in this volume, entitled, "The Cause in Function" (Winter, 1977), Dr. Lewis mounted an argument calling into question the formulation "Cause and Function," propounded by Porter Lee in his Presidential Address at the 1929 National Conference of Social Work. The distinction between Lewis's Cause *in* Function, and Lee's Cause *and* Function is an important one, but what interested me was Lee's belief that "...the dynamic leader of the cause and the efficient executive in charge of the function...not often appear at their best within one temperament." And Lewis adds, "Thus, while he (Lee) saw the need for both qualities, he doubted the possibility of both being in one person." I believe Harold Lewis was himself a magnificent example of the dynamic leader of the cause and the efficient executive in charge of the function in one person. He was passionate and dedicated in his struggle for the betterment of the human condition, and at the same time he was a first-rate dean and intellectual leader.

This volume is also a fitting tribute to the memory of Buddy Silberman, the extraordinary benefactor of the Hunter College School of Social Work. Hunter was lucky to have a

supporter whose sole interest was quality education and opportunity. The continuing support for quality of his widow, Lois, and daughter, Dr. Jayne Silberman, has made publication of this volume possible. Dr. Michael Reisch's editing of Dean Lewis's papers is a perfect reflection of the man. Most of all, I want to salute my friend and colleague, Harold Lewis, whose life and intellectual contributions were humane, ethical, and brilliant.

Donna E.Shalala, PhD
Professor of Political Science
and President of the University of Miami

Editor's Introduction

Harold Lewis's writings and career reveal a great deal about the changes that have occurred in the social work profession during the past half century. The distance between the post-World War II optimism that inspired Charlotte Towle's *Common Human Needs* and the devolution, privatization, and budget cutbacks that shape the field today appears enormous. To most contemporary students and practitioners, the War on Poverty of the 1960s, let alone the New Deal, is ancient history. While the profession's rhetoric regarding social justice has become more explicit, the pursuit of social justice through social policies and social activism seem like mist-shrouded memory of a distant past. In our increasingly ahistorical culture, the political and ideological forces that

shaped the profession's development are rarely acknowledged.

Dr. Lewis not only wrote about these changes, he was shaped by and deeply involved in the struggles that occurred during his fifty year career. He was not a dispassionate observer but a participant-researcher in the best sense of the term. His frequent use of the metaphor of drama in his essays is apt, because he was both actor and critic of the dramas—political and professional—of his life and times.

Like many men of his generation, Dr. Lewis did not start out to become a social worker. Upon graduation from Brooklyn College in 1941 he worked as a research analyst for the federal government. He served in U.S. Army intelligence in India during World War II, where his experiences influenced his decision to enter the field of social work. The things he saw and heard in India left an indelible impression on him throughout his career.

After working as a caseworker in New York City, he earned his MSW from the University of Pittsburgh in 1948, majoring in group work and community organization. Here he studied with distinguished social work scholars and activists such as Marion Hathway and Grace Marcus and worked on behalf of nuclear disarmament. From 1948 to 1950, he served as Research Director of United Community Services in Omaha, Nebraska before taking a position on the faculty at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. In 1953, at the height of the McCarthy era, Lewis was forced to resign from the University because of his political activism, despite the courageous support of the School's Dean, Harleigh Trecker. He then took a position as Research Secretary of the Council of Community Services in Providence, Rhode Island.

Lewis received his DSW in 1959 from the University of Pennsylvania and, in the same year, joined the Penn faculty as Chair of its Research Sequence—a position he held for over ten years. He became Dean of Hunter College School of Social Work in 1970, where he remained until his retirement in 1990. As Dean, Lewis built Hunter into one of the premier schools of social work in the United States, while maintaining his distinguished record of scholarship and community service.

In 1969–1970, Dr. Lewis became the first social worker to be appointed a fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral and Social Sciences in Palo Alto, California. Here he met the philosophers John Rawls and Amelie Rorty, whose ideas influenced his writings for the next twenty years. In the 1970s, Lewis was the first social work researcher asked to serve on proposal review panels by the National Institute of Mental Health. He also held leadership positions in virtually every major social welfare organization in the United States.

In 1979, Lewis received the Distinguished Alumni Award from both the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pennsylvania. In 1985, he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Penn School of Social Work and, in 1994, he received the Council on Social Work Education's Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2000, he received an honorary doctorate from Hunter College of the City University of New York, which had given him the President's Medal for Excellence upon his retirement.

It is not surprising that few contemporary social worker possess a similar range of practice experience or scholarly

interests. The structure of education and practice today strongly discourages a career track like the one Lewis followed. At the same time, increased academic specialization and the priority given to methodological rigor over substantive breadth in most universities preclude the development of social work intellectuals like Lewis and his teachers.

Yet, Dr. Lewis's work belies several contemporary myths about practice and scholarship. His essays are enriched, not diminished, by the breadth of his experience. The case examples he draws upon from the United States and abroad — from child welfare settings to community organization to non-profit management to social planning and research— reflect a deep understanding and appreciation of the intricacies of practice. As a trained researcher and statistician, he brought to his writing an in-depth knowledge of the significance of method, without losing sight of the importance of context. His familiarity with philosophy, contemporary research in the natural and physical sciences, mathematics, history, and the arts enabled him to discuss complex ideas in innovative ways and provide new perspectives on oft-discussed concepts. His application of scholarship from other fields demonstrates how cross-disciplinary thinking can occur in a manner that expands, rather than contracts, the horizons of social work. Dr. Lewis's ongoing commitment to and involvement in social justice causes challenges the false dichotomies that often separate academics from activism, professionals from politics. Finally, his frequent use of humor and delight in storytelling demonstrate that intellectual rigor need not be arid and that the love of ideas and the love of people are complementary

sentiments.

In a career spanning over fifty years, Dr. Lewis published and presented widely in the fields of child welfare, social welfare administration, social work values and ethics, and the epistemology of social work practice. His book, *The Intellectual Base of Social Work Practice* (Haworth Press, 1982) and many of his articles are considered classics in the field and are still cited regularly in the United States and abroad, attesting to their ongoing currency. Long before the term "empowerment" was popularized in the social work literature, Dr. Lewis wrote of the "client's interest" and the "cause in function." Long before treatises on the ethical dimensions of practice were published in social work journals, he wrote about the value dilemmas of practice, research, and education. Long before the political legacy of the social work profession was "rediscovered," he was a scholar-activist who promoted the causes of peace, social justice, and human dignity, and mentored dozens of younger social work students and educators to follow a similar path. His life and work are a testimony to the most cherished characteristics of the social work profession and a vital link between the profession's past and future.

Part l

Essays on Social Work Practice and Policy

Editor's Introduction

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, social welfare and social work in the United States underwent profound transformations. Support for government intervention on behalf of vulnerable populations waned and attacks on the concept of entitlement culminated in 1996 legislation that "ended welfare as we know it." The advent of managed care jeopardized the ability of millions to access quality health and mental health services, and undermined the role of social work practitioners in both public and private agencies. Ironically, in this era of cutback, retrenchment, and devolution, social workers introduced such concepts as empowerment, multiculturalism, and a "strengths perspective" into the conceptual frameworks of their practice.

The chapters in this section, written between 1975 and 1991, confront the explicit and implicit dilemmas created by these contradictory trends. Against the backdrop of national developments (Watergate, Reaganomics, computerization) and international events (the end of the War in Southeast

Asia, the Chilean coup, civil war in Central America), Lewis both anticipates and reflects many of the major theoretical and practice trends that shaped U.S. social work in the late twentieth century. These range from the influence of the Latin American conscientization movement to the impact of chaos theory and postmodernism. Constantly seeking to link past, present, and future, Lewis draws upon his rich practice experience, and his personal contacts with such social work "giants" as Bertha Reynolds, Jessie Taft, Marion Hathway, and Kenneth Pray. In a sense, therefore, his work bridges what Andrews (1993) called the social workers of "The Second Generation" with their professional grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the twenty-first century.

These chapters reflect several consistent themes. One is the importance of social workers overcoming the destructive tendency to frame issues in terms of dichotomies: for example, means/ends, cause/function, knowledge/values, individual/collective needs. A second is the importance of incorporating a social justice perspective into all aspects of practice. Having met John Rawls at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral and Social Sciences in 1969, Lewis was the first social work scholar to apply Rawls's work, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), to social work practice. A third theme, reflecting the influence of Rankian ideas about the will and Lewis's own history of political engagement, is the emphasis on action ("the doing") A fourth is the use of analogical thinking as an essential tool of social work practice and research.

Finally, these chapters reveal not only the breadth of Lewis's vision, but also the range of influences on his thinking and his effective use of humor. He integrates concepts from

mathematics, art, psychology, biology, and history with equal facility. Anticipating postmodern thinking, he makes good use of personal narratives to illustrate complex ideas. These qualities are, perhaps, best illustrated in his reformulation of practice as a "drama" rather than a problem-solving process.

Chapter 1
Social Work and the Common Good

In this essay, Lewis discusses the implications of the conflicts between selfdetermination and the common good, between the fear of dependency and society's failure to enable people to become independent. He concludes that social welfare is "a civilized response to the collective pursuit of...common goods."

How much is a person worth? Who is to judge? Do we credit self-sacrifice and debit dependency? Does self-reliance earn more brownie points than community mindedness? If we could add up each individual's worth, would the result be a measure of the value of his life?

Ask those who have to allocate a scarce resource, such as a transplantable kidney, how they choose the most worthy from among those who are waiting. Ask those who have been charged with the responsibility to cut basic life-supporting resources in a piety verging on bankruptcy how they decide which are the least essential services, and for which population. When inflation squeezes the slim budgets of the aged living on fixed incomes, and unemployment depresses the living standards of white collar and collar-less unskilled workers, which of these evils is the lesser and which is to be

preferred? It might be reassuring to some to think that decisions in these matters are based on judgments of the comparable worth of persons affected. This rarely is the case.

When choices concerning the allocation of scarce resources are made, one infers that some lives are judged more precious than others. How do professions, committed to the belief that every life is precious, make choices that suggest that some lives are more precious than others? When a man condemned to death pleads to have the sentence implemented, thus exercising his right to self-determination, what about others to whom this man's life is precious? Have they no rights to be considered? The preciousness of even this tortured, criminal life is suddenly recognized through its connection with the lives of others. This man's death may, given our system of justice, hasten the death of others. Self-determination is not an unfettered right to be exercised without regard for its impact on the self-determining choices of others. Suddenly the cry "let me die" ceases to be a plea for one death and becomes a possible nail in the coffin of many. Even if this man's preferences prevailed and are given precedence over what many had decided would be for the common good, the choice is not an easy one. Clearly, we are compelled to a more critical appraisal of the meaning of the assumption that every life is precious.

Consider the juxtaposition of two goals of social policy and the alternatives they pose. The first asserts that the function of social welfare programs is to narrow the gap between the haves and have nots. While accepting the improbability of absolute equality in our present society, this view sees welfare programs as assisting the disadvantaged through reallocation of resources to achieve a standard of

living closer to that of the advantaged. The second asserts that the goal of social policy is to help individuals and families achieve independence based on self-reliance, to "stand on their own two feet." This latter view sees welfare programs as serving to strengthen the capacity of those in need to meet their needs through their own efforts. Is it possible to support both these goals concurrently, and design programs congenial to their mutual achievement? Not only should such mutuality be possible, but in fact it should appear to be essential to success in meeting either goal. As a collectivity, we certainly would support a social order in which differentials that did exist did not detract from efforts to alleviate the disadvantages suffered by those in greatest need. We would expect that such an order would provide the greatest opportunity for self-reliance on the part of the membership in the collectivity, recognizing that individual self-help efforts contribute to the collective resource shared by all. But how do these two goals work out in practice?

If you seek to narrow the gap, given a finite resource, you must take from the haves and give to the have nots. Up to a point—assuring subsistence—one can get considerable agreement on this redistribution. But above the subsistence level there is little agreement on whose resources are to be reallocated, and if, in fact, such allocation is likely to promote the general welfare.

If you seek to promote self-reliance, given finite resources, you must decide on a level of assistance that enhances self-help without creating dependency. In the opinion of many, the only way to achieve self-reliance is to compel self-support for even minimal needs. Every measure taken beyond such Social Darwinian limits is viewed as

bleeding-heart pampering, likely to defeat the need to promote independence.

It requires only that the reluctance to reallocate be joined to the fear of creating dependencies, to have policies proposed that would seek to achieve both goals by restricting all programs intended to do just that. We find those reluctant to reallocate and fearful of dependency justifying our doing as little as possible at a societal level to extend resources to deal with inequities and dependency needs. It is a peculiar twist of a moral stance that would achieve a social good by minimizing efforts on its behalf. The opposite view, that would use the tax structure and service allocation to narrow the gap, and that would promote self-reliance through client participation in efforts to maximize social resources for use on their own behalf, is in direct conflict with the former. As is common in value choices, the critical questions involve differences in means rather than ends, questions of ethics dealing with means rather than questions of values, dealing with ends.

It is not at all remarkable that people prefer health to illness, justice to unfair treatment, security to uncertain income, knowledge to ignorance, self-respect to indignity, aesthetic satisfaction to the unattractive. For each of us these preferences represent personal goods we would rather not do without. Because they are so central to our personal well-being, civil societies institutionalize systems to promote such goods. The health care, education, legal, economic, aesthetic, and religious institutions of our communities are intended to help each of us satisfy these basic human wants. Together they constitute a civilized response to the collective pursuit of these common goods. The scope of these collective efforts

is a measure of our cultural achievement.

Difficulties arise when all persons do not have equal access to those collectively provided resources, some because of discriminatory restrictions and others because of personal limitations. Inevitably, self-help organizations develop among the deprived, to promote the availability of such resources to meet the particular needs of their members. Historically, this self-help tradition in human services has contributed to the consciousness raising efforts of have nots seeking to alter their own condition, to achieve reallocations on their own behalf. Success in such self-reliant efforts contributed to the hopes of many who would ordinarily be clients of programs to which they would have had to come as supplicants, seeking the help of others to deal with their own needs.

Obviously, self-help associations "...made up of persons who share a common problem and who band together to resolve the problem through their mutual efforts" combine, in an ideal way, reliance on one's own resources while seeking a more just reallocation of socially provided resources. Here, then, is an example of how both goals of social policy can exist in mutual support of each other. Such self-help associations have a long history, granting a definition that permits us to include among these associations those seeking to achieve for their members all the "common goods" through consciousness-raising, advocacy, and husbanding of personal knowledge for the collective well-being. The earliest charters of the national labor unions, the Knights of Labor, and the American Federation of Labor, reflect precisely this intention among workers joining together, seeking to deal with problems in managing personal income and family well-being. The ladies'

auxiliaries associated with synagogues and churches, the fraternal associations, and related ethnic *landsman* societies, are all of this self-help variety, dating back to the earliest years in our nation's brief history. In recent times, the conscientization movement in South America viewed such consciousness-raising and self-help as central to the objectives of all educational and social service efforts. This same thrust is reflected by the press for client participation in programs intended to benefit them. In self-help efforts that seek to utilize the personal knowledge of those experiencing a common problem, be it stuttering, alcoholism, emotional upset, etc., one can recognize in areas of psychological, physical, and social func tioning the same commitment to mutual support, sharing of experience, and expansion of resources as has been evident in all the self-help efforts identified.

This being the case, one would expect that those who have vociferously advocated minimal dependence on outside resources would applaud the growth of such self-help efforts. Unhappily, this is hardly our experience. In our nation's history unions have been fought, self-help associations have been starved for funds, and, in the recent takeover of Chile by the military junta, the conscientization movement in social welfare was an early target for repression. A key factor that accounts for such hostile responses is the fact that those in authority who may choose to help people in trouble, usually do not like them to make trouble about their trouble. The inevitable development of power to influence a policy and practice that accompanies self-help associations threatens the control of those who would contain the scope of reallocation efforts.

Professionals emerged within such self-help associations. They have become associated through invitation with self-help associations as experts or staff. They have joined as members to seek help in meeting a personal need. They have developed cooperative working relationships as participants in the network of community services that require interorganizational contacts and coordination. Resource allocation issues and conflicting views of what methods of helping are most effective have been sources of conflict between professionals and memberships of self-help groups. Overwhelmingly, professions seeking the same goals as such groups, find self-help efforts supportive and complementary to their own. The reason for this congeniality should be understood.

Let us consider an early period in the development of one profession—social work. In my research I found the term "social worker" first used in 1893, in the minutes of the Montefiore Ladies Auxiliary. The possibility of a professional social work service was probably first realized when workers, such as this friendly visitor, recognized the strengths residing in persons in need of help, and built service strategies on such strengths. The skill of what was to become a social work profession grew out of this understanding, although necessarily influenced by the organizational structures and administrative assignments such workers accepted as employed, bureaucratic functionaries. Promotion of self-reliance and support for the struggle to reallocate resources can evolve together as service goals in a framework that recognizes the strengths in those seeking help. These goals cannot live together where the focus is exclusively on the help-seekers' personal deficiencies and on maintaining their

powerlessness to affect their own lives.

To any person in need of help, life is precious. There can be no justification in this person's view of a policy and attendant procedures that would suggest otherwise. Where he or she encounters what appears to be a challenge to this view, he or she might justifiably become suspicious. Suspicion breeds distrust, and without trust, only compulsion can sustain a helping relationship. Trust begins in mutual respect. Respect, in turn, builds on recognition of the strengths that earn it, and the life that deserves it. Focusing on deficiencies breeds disrespect and substitutes coercion in place of shared power and free choice.

When confronted with ethical dilemmas, both the professional and the self-help group must plan on their shared social purposes to arrive at mutually acceptable choices. In relation to the goals of reallocation of resources, or distributive justice, the professional and self-help group find proposals that minimize resource reallocation and sustain current inequities in conflict with their shared intentions. Moreover, they find less than convincing those calls for self-reliance, which substitute sermons on virtues and duties for increased access to the common goods. In short, in relation to both goals, people in need see such policies as unfair and those promoting them as less than trustworthy. They view the inevitable injustice of such policies as promoting the well-being of the advantaged at the expense of the disadvantaged and see this as unethical behavior. They are not mistaken. Cut-backs in service burden the poor most. Among day care eligibles, dependent and ill elderly, child care recipients, health care and education programs, inequities beget further inequities. It always seems

that in our economy the poor and defenseless pay more. Clearly violated in these instances is the ethical imperative that advantages may be justified only when they raise the expectations and resources for the most disadvantaged.

But more is involved than the failure to adhere to an ethic of fairness in such inequitable decisions. These choices reflect the preferences of those in power. These judgments suggest some lives are more precious than others. One may ask what criteria were used in arriving at these differentiating judgments. However disguised in their presentations, when such evaluations are made human lives are viewed as commodities that can be priced; and those judging have criteria that weight the social value of lives.

We come now to the critical questions faced by those who consciously must choose who shall share in the common goods when not all can. Are there virtues that can be measured, weighed, and used to select beneficiaries? Are there duties to be performed, and are some better prepared than others to perform them? Do they, who are best prepared, earn a higher priority to share in the common good? Who is to decide, and how should the decision be arrived at?

Here, I believe, the functions of the professional and that of the self-help group may differ. In making such decisions, one ought to use the best available knowledge to make the nature, scope, and likely impact of alternative choices clear. For example, if knowledge has demonstrated beyond a doubt that access cannot assure use, then access may be denied without judging the life involved as less precious.

When I arrived in India in 1944,1 traveled across Bihar and Bengal by train. There was a tragic famine and cholera

epidemic cutting down children and adults alike along the path of our tracks. At one station, a friend and I left our car, and approached a group of children—swollen stomachs, spindly arms and legs— obviously starving. We chose the child we thought most far gone, and sought to give her some food. The other children raised their voices in protest, causing us to seek out an English-speaking native who could translate for us. We then learned what the protest was all about. The child we sought to feed was too far gone to be fed — she could no longer swallow. Our efforts would be wasted, whereas if we shared our food among those who still could swallow, we would be benefiting them. This happened thirty-two years ago, yet I recently recalled the experience in its full force as I considered problems in ethics and choice each of us must face.

In addition to knowing who could not use the resource, it would be important to establish who could use it, but who would cause irreparable damage to themselves and others in so doing. For example, should an atomic heart be produced before we have developed a shield that would control the damage of its radioactive byproduct? We should also seek to establish if available amounts of the goods would be insufficient to affect the need it was intended to meet. We could go further in a similar vein to suggest a first step in making a choice. Clearly, we ought to use knowledge to determine those for whom the choice would be meaningful, and those for whom it would be of no practical value, even if it gave the appearance of a fair and just procedure. When knowledge has assured us of a cohort of eligibles, all of whom could benefit from the resource, then I would concur with those who argue that none of the virtues, duties, or other

idiosyncratic characteristics of members of the cohort ought to give them preference to the resource. The selection at this point should be in a random manner, approximating as closely as possible an equal probability for any to be chosen, and access then granted in the order in which selected. This procedure might have the added merit of sponsoring a widespread desire for more resources, and hopefully could press our national priorities in the direction of human service.

I would contrast this approach to equity in allocation of a scarce resource with a procedure now popular in the distribution of federal funds for welfare purposes. Perhaps a story out of the fourteenth century would illustrate this Nixoninitiated distribution mechanism. The story relates how the king of beggars, who accepted charity only when offered with respect for his dignity, was standing outside a house of worship frequented by the wealthiest members of the community. Close to a hundred hungry, crippled, ill, aged, orphaned beggars were also awaiting the end of services, when the emerging parishioners would distribute alms as they left to return home. The services ended, and the wealthiest of the wealthy was the first out. With obvious joy in what he was about, this philanthropist proceeded to draw from a large bag, handfuls of small packets of paper tied by string and threw them in all directions among the beggars.

Pandemonium broke loose, with the blind stumbling over the crippled, the aged struggling with children—cries of disappointment when a packet contained nothing—cries of joy when a gold piece was uncovered. The king of the beggars demanded of the philanthropist an explanation. What sort of charity was this that dehumanized the recipients by the

manner of its distribution? How could he descend to so mean a level? The philanthropist responded in disbelief: Didn't the beggar know that this was the latest method of distributing resources? Hadn't he heard about it? It is called revenue sharing!

I would assume that more reliance for the knowledge base would be put on professional judgments than on lay judgments, although by no means would the experiential knowledge of the lay person be excluded. I would assume that more reliance for the ethical imperative to be operationalized would be placed on the professional person than on the lay person whose participation in self-help groups is based on the need for which this resource is intended. This is not primarily an argument for objectivity, because I believe those in need and those seeking to meet a need suffer differentially, but equally, from prejudices and personal preferences. Rather, this would avoid further burdening the person with the need by placing his or her own need in competition with the needs of others in like circumstances and asking that a choice be made that could involve self-denial. These role differentials, I believe, would be entirely acceptable providing a condition of trust prevailed between the professionals and self-help groups. That no such trust can be expected for those whose ethic favors distributive injustice is obvious and requires no further comment.

In summary, I have suggested that we live in times of critical need and inadequate resources. Our society, while recognizing the need for the common goods, does not assure access or allocation on a fair and just basis. Self-reliance and the collective well-being must go hand in hand as we seek to achieve an ethically sound and just distribution of these

goods. Professional helpers and those engaged in self-help efforts have reason to work together to achieve this social goal because their origins are similar and their paths intertwine. They can jointly help us to a more civilized existence.

Keynote address, Minnesota State Welfare Conference, Minneapolis, March 1977.

Chapter 2
The Cause in Function

This essay is the best example of Lewis's concern with ending the dualities that have plagued the social work profession since its inception. It is also one of the first essays in which he introduces the concept of analogic thinking and its application to social work practice.

Traditionally, social work literature addresses issues of purpose in practice from a narrow perspective. Purpose includes the outcomes desired from professional interventions, and the intentions that motivate the professional act. Thus, it would satisfy the practitioner to know that a goal, for example, social justice— would be realized if the intervention was to prove successful, and, concurrently, if evidence of progress toward that goal was present in specific objectives achieved as a result of particular acts. Omitted from this perspective is the reformist tradition that has always served to inspire, not merely motivate, the social vision of social work professionals. Complementing the concept of purpose, and in part compensating for the omission resulting from this narrow perspective, our literature has promoted the term "cause" as an umbrella concept under which the reform efforts of the profession and

its practitioners have been subsumed.

From its earliest usage, "cause" has been linked to and contrasted with "function," in a dialectic whose contradictions are shaped by the interpretation of these polar opposites. "Cause" can include any socially significant ideal that social actions are intended to achieve. For example, adequate housing for low-income families; amendments to racial and sexual biases in the allocation of welfare resources; access to health care for all citizens; equity in access to higher education; full employment, etc., all represent causes to which, at one time or another, the profession has devoted some of its energies and financial resources. "Function," by way of contrast, refers to the sanctioned effort made by professional practitioners, to implement these hard won "causes" in the day-to-day provision of services.

Cause and function came to occupy an important niche in our professional literature when Porter Lee[1] used these concepts to argue for the view that sequenced social reform and social practice in a cyclical, recurring, and seemingly inevitable progression. Since Lee's arguments first appeared at the outset of the great depression of the 1930s, a number of authors have reviewed its assumptions and modified its global claims. In the main, the inevitable in the proposed cycle, and the sequence anticipated of Cause and Function, have been modified, with the relationship of cause and function being defined as one of parallel development, with no assurance of "Cause" being realized through "Function." In the discussion that follows, a more critical view of the relationship of cause and function is proposed, the essence of which is captured in the phrase Cause *In* Function. This break with past formulations is deemed crucial to an appreciation

of the ethical component in every act of practice, and the inseparability of means and ends. It is through such an integration of Cause *In* Function that a more encompassing view of purpose in practice can be realized.

Porter Lee, initially, described what he viewed as a normal social process, the move from a cause sought and won to a function that realized in practice the intentions contained in the cause. He contrasted the zeal that inspired a cause with the intellect that assured the success of the function. Nevertheless, his analysis of his own hypothesis compelled him to conclude that the time had come when the cause must be incorporated into the function. In those threatening days of 1929, he believed the profession must not respond to the challenges confronted it by going back to a day when social work was exclusively or predominantly a cause. He argued that we must meet (the challenge) with the sober recognition that it is and must be both cause and function. Finally, he noted his belief that "the dynamic leader of the cause and the efficient executive in charge of the function...do not often appear at their best within one temperament." Thus, while he saw the need for both qualities, he doubted the possibility of both being in one person.

There are several assumptions contained in this view that have not been substantiated by experience. The sequencing as suggested in the hypothesis "from cause to function" and the separation as suggested by "cause and function," obviously did not satisfy Lee either, hence his seeking biological and personality justifications for the social processes he sought to explain.

In a provocative recent essay, Robert Rosen,[2] a leading theoretical biologist, sought to answer a question which most

of us accept as fact. Do we really need ends to justify the means? He contends... "that in some important sense we *need* to engage in these kinds of activities (i.e., politics, education, planning, economics, etc.) quite apart from attaining the goals we frame to justify them; and that we will go even more seriously astray if we do not recognize the real roots of our indulgence in these activities." Man, he believes "...has a biologically-rooted need to engage in complex activities,...and it is the activities themselves which are needful, not the ends which are supposed to be attained by them; these needs are the inessentialities and the byproducts." Finally, he concludes, "We need to extend this lesson to the whole of our experience; namely, that our happiness—in a real sense, the quality of our lives—lies in the doing and not in the done; in the doing is where our real goals lie. And these goals need require no rationalized ends to justify them."

While I am hardly equipped to affirm or deny Rosen's thesis, nor to accept the biological imperative it implies, it seems reasonable to assume that human activity is purposeful, and that experiencing the activity is one of its more significant purposes. There would appear to be ample evidence that thoughtful persons engage in intentional activities and are concerned to evolve satisfying procedures for achieving their ends. One need not attribute to purpose a motivating function, nor deny this function to a biological urge, to observe, as Rosen does, that much of the quality of life lies in the doing and not in the done.

Turning to the experience provided by our profession, one cannot help but wonder how ends and means, intentions and procedures, get expressed in professional helping activities. It is my contention that the Porter Lee hypothesis

did not anticipate the Rosen hypothesis. It failed to appreciate the ends in means, the social purpose in individualized helping, and the cause embedded in function. But what is more disconcerting is the experience of the past decade during which divisive formulations that dichotomized the profession, such as practice versus social action, social versus individual change, etc., purchased the same inadequate understanding of the means-ends issue, freezing the cause-function dichotomy into curriculum and separating faculties into ideologically nonproductive contending camps. Far from contributing to responsible social change, failure to understand the unified character of action has permitted socially irresponsible perspectives on practice to survive.

The helper is the focus of my concern, and his or her experience in activating both cause and function in his or her practice will be explored for what it may add to our understanding. I am not here interested in the nature of the problem being addressed by the helper, whether it be a social policy issue, a troubled personality, or a financial deprivation. I believe that whatever the problem it is in the helper's activity that he or she confronts the issues posed by the Porter Lee hypothesis. It is in the activity that the evidence of cause in function will appear.

Reforms generally are won through struggle on the part of their beneficiaries, who engage in direct conflict with those who must yield some privilege to pay for the costs involved. Reforms, resulting as they must from contending interests, are never given for all time. They must constantly be renegotiated, they can never cease to be a cause for those who benefit from the resources they make available. I'm reminded of the Director of Catholic Charities in a city in the

Midwest, who was presenting his agency's budget to the United Fund Budget Committee.[3] When asked if he has any useful measures whereby the effectiveness of his services might be evaluated, he listed some of those commonly cited, but hastened to add, that as a Catholic, he would deem his agency's services successful if they helped his community to a more Christian, caring, sharing way of life. Thus, for him, the offer of the resource was itself a major measure of success. As I understood his remarks, he argued that his church believed that the reformation of the human spirit, through charitable effort, was an ongoing cause, which his agency's services made possible. He could no more separate his cause from the agency function than Rank[4] could separate the will from the creative act.

The helper is always engaged in a political, economic, aesthetic, scientific, and self-realizing activity when he or she cooperates with a client in creating a service. When he or she arranges his or her own inner resources, as well as those provided by his or her agency, in some priority order, and allocates them on the basis of his or her preferences, he or she is engaging in a political act with serious implications for distributive justice. When he or she seeks the most efficient and effective utilization of these husbanded resources, he or she is engaging in a productive act with serious economic implications; when he or she disciplines his or her activity to reflect agency, professional and personal style, he or she is influencing the aesthetic quality of his or her service and the environment in which it occurs. When he or she informs his or her activity with what is known and understood, he or she both utilizes and provides information for improving on the science of human relationships, and when he or she engages

his or her whole self in these activities, as Rosen would suggest, he or she more fully realizes this self, and enhances the possibilities available to him or her to achieve personal happiness. In brief, the helper imparts to his or her helping relationship a culturally enriched dimension that marks his or her activity as civilized. It is for this reason one can speak of our helping profession as a civilizing profession, because its practitioners cannot help but act in a civilizing manner if their efforts are to prove truly helpful.

The view of the helper as a civilizing agent is hardly justified if in fact his or her activities by plan or oversight fail to address each of these dimensions of a civilized culture. Whether, as Rosen argues, each of us engage in all these activities because of our biological needs, or as others may contend, we do so because we are urged on by intentions that we freely and willfully formulate, when we fail to see the wholeness of the act we ought not construe such failure as proof that it lacks such wholeness. When Porter Lee sequences cause and function, or separates them as cause and function, he in effect destroys the wholeness of the act in order to analyze it. This requires, as a minimum, that we consider not only propositions of the "if this...then that" variety, but also propositions that allow for time and place to be included in derived generalizations. These take the propositional form "from this through time to that," a form frequently employed by process-oriented theoreticians. I would add the need to consider propositions of the form "this is to this as that is to that," reasoning by analogy, if we are to manage meaningful units of action in our understanding of practice. Reasoning by analogy is the manner in which imagination enters practice, and is the most frequent source

of creativity in practice.

I propose we recognize the *cause in function,* the *ends in means,* the unity of action. Further, that we recognize service as that which is created by the helping process, and the only real measure of the actualization of program and resource for social welfare purposes. That service be viewed in a dialectical fashion, as the evolving form and substance of the unity and conflict of cause in function, necessitates the constant addressing of both sides of this conflict if positive social change is to be achieved. I have argued that if the helper fulfills his or her civilizing function, he or she must approach his or her activity with an awareness of all its dimensions lest he or she fault his or her contribution through oversight and misunderstanding.

Chapter Notes

1. Porter Lee, Director of the New York School of Social Work (now Columbia University School of Social Work) was President of the National Conference of Social Work in 1929. This essay refers to his presidential address.
2. Robert Rosen (1970). *Dynamical system theory in biology.* New York: Wiley-Interscience.
3. Lewis is referring here to his experiences in Omaha, Nebraska, in the late 1940s.
4. Otto Rank's ideas strongly influenced the development of the Functional School at the University of Pennsylvania.

Originally published in the *Journal of the Otto Rank Association,* Winter 1977.

Chapter 3
The Client's Interest

Unlike most works that focus on issues of power in social work practice, this essay addresses often overlooked conflicts of interest inherent in the complexity of practice and the professionalization process themselves.

The revised NASW *Code of Ethics* asserts the primacy of the client's interests and states that the social worker's primary responsibility is to clients. Basing this guideline on clients' interests, rather than clients' rights or worth, is helpful because interests are more likely to reflect competing claims influenced by societal as well as personal needs and desires. But clients' interests may conflict with those of workers, agencies, and the community, and choices among interests are inevitable. Clearly, while responsibilities may be allocated to promote interests, not all interests can be satisfied, and there may be circumstances that would commend attending to workers' or agencies' interests, in order to better discharge responsibilities to clients' interests.

Clients' interests are often difficult to identify. It is not always clear who is the client, particularly in social work practice that is not treatment focused. Nor is it a simple matter to decide, in relation to practice involving families,

groups, and intergroups, which of the differing interests evidenced by participants in the helping situation are to be considered central and which peripheral. This essay suggests the need for a guiding principle to determine clients' interests, if adherence to the Code's ethical imperative is to be managed in everyday practice. It also suggests a possible approach to the adjudication of this and other imperatives included in the Code. The Code provides guidance for worker attitudes and behavior in seeking to adhere to the primacy of the clients' interests, noting what is to be encouraged or avoided in providing services to the client. It provides no guidance for determining what constitutes clients' interests.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN INTEREST?

In their normal state, persons seeking help do not differ markedly from the general population in the personal interests they wish to satisfy. While individuals may differ in their ordering and intensity of interests, they do not differ in their desire to experience security, health, justice, knowledge, self-fulfillment, and aesthetic satisfactions. If, by the clients' interests, we mean these fundamental human needs and desires, it is obvious that any help offered clients is likely to be related to the advancement of one or more of these interests. Nor would it be remarkable if we were to find that clients themselves indicate their priority choices among those interests for which they seek help. In the usual situation, the choice of agency or the choice of program or the request for a particular service will, to a large degree, designate such clients' preferences.

The difficulty one has with this global formulation of clients' interests is that it clarifies very little of what

constitutes the core problem for a worker seeking to act in a manner that gives primacy to such interests. The worker, too, shares these interests in common with the client. The agency and community usually have similar interests in mind in sponsoring the services they offer. Such a general perspective on interests does not clarify the difficulties the worker encounters in seeking to act in the clients' behalf. The need for a code provision based on the client's interests stem from the possibility that conflicting interests can arise, and that choices will have to be made in favor of one or another of the client's interests or the interests of others.

WHEN CLIENT AND WORKER PERCEPTIONS DIFFER

For example, the client's perception of the problem to be worked on, for which help is sought, may focus on a basic interest that the worker does not judge to be the central interest to be served. Confronted with this difference, workers may opt to accept the client's perception as the first order of business, on the grounds of the practice principle that commends the worker to "start where the client is." If they follow this option, the client's interests are, in fact, defined by the client and, in accepting them as a priority, workers would be giving primacy to them. But this may be a false positive if, in fact, workers have a different, more accurate, view of the client's needs more likely to further the client's interests.

Should workers choose to give primacy to their own definition of clients' needs, they must contend with another stumbling block to an objective appraisal of alternatives. Workers normally practice in relation to preconceived frameworks that are assumed to provide accurate and

relevant guidelines for appraising clients' needs. Models of practice, with their peculiar theoretical underpinnings, direct the worker, telling him or her where to look, and what to look for. Inevitably, such directives screen in some observations and omit others. More important, they provide workers with preferred explanations of what they are observing, and give acceptable meanings to otherwise disparate events. The worker's definition of clients' needs thus must inevitably reflect the worker's preferences as well. In these circumstances it is difficult to determine whose preferences, the worker's or the client's, are being given primacy. Add to this problematic situation the concurrent influence of agency and community interests that often determine whether service will be rendered, and it is obvious that without some guiding principle for determining clients' interests the first requisite for acting on this ethical imperative will be absent.

INTERESTS DETERMINED IN PROCESS

In the service transaction, clients' interests are always in flux, as the clients' needs and desires change. For this reason, sound practice requires the continuous exploration of a client's interests for the duration of the worker-client contact. This characteristic feature of the helping process provides the most reliable alternative for determining clients' interests. Clients' interests are most accurately identified through the mutual efforts of worker and client, as both seek to establish the objectives and goals their relationship aims to accomplish. Clients' interests, in other words, are the negotiated identification of clients' needs and desires, and are not a given, to be stated by clients or determined by workers. Through a process of helpful exchange, wherein clients'

needs and desires and available resource are considered, both parties, clients and workers, reach a practical and meaningful definition of clients' interests.

As noted earlier, this process starts with the initial request for service by clients and ends with the termination of the service transaction. Because the process entails judgments about needs, desires, and resources, it is likely to be complex, involve differences of perceptions, and will be influenced by agency requirements that condition the availability of service. It is in relation to these interacting factors that ethical dilemmas are likely to arise for workers seeking to adhere to the principle that gives primacy to clients' interests.

Granting a negotiated definition of clients' interests, the following principle is proposed as likely to minimize violations of the Code prescription. The worker must give primacy to those clients' interests that: (a) jointly encompass the futures the worker and those whose professional judgment he or she respects deem likely to satisfy client needs and desires; and (b) if realized, would be acceptable to both the worker and the client.

RESPONSIBILITIES: CONFLICTING INTERESTS AND OBLIGATIONS

When the Code declares that the worker's primary responsibility is to clients, it gives tacit recognition to the fact that the worker has other responsibilities as well. These can be roughly categorized as responsibilities to colleagues, to the agency, to the wider community, and him- or herself. The Code does not rank these responsibilities, but merely gives precedence to clients' interests over these others. Nor does

the Code anticipate a situation arising wherein a combination of responsibilities in these other areas might displace clients' interests as primary.

Obviously, situations do arise where the need of many have to be given precedence over the needs of a few, where all may be clients. Faced with clients whose interests are in conflict, which clients are to be given preference in commanding the worker's attention and the program's resources? On this the Code remains silent, but we need not.

In situations where different clients have interests that can not be fully satisfied, the choice is likely to be made on the basis of interests held by one or more of the other categories of persons having a stake in service transactions. Thus, the benefits to the agency and/or the community may be cited to justify the choice of one set of clients' interests over another. Similarly, the self-interest of the worker and/or colleagues may determine the choice. Thus, inevitably, we are led to make choices among other interests than those of the client's in situations where all clients' interests cannot be satisfied. Given the usual service situation where resources are insufficient to meet identified needs and desires, this Code requirement will, with rare exception, call for priority judgments not provided for in the guidance it offers.

Nevertheless, these competing interests cannot be ignored, especially as one considers the duties and obligations this Code requirement imparts to the various parties in the service transaction. A social worker's responsibility to a client can hardly be met without the client's accepting and acting on the obligations incurred in the client's role. Thus, the client who refuses to keep

assume that the less adequately prepared worker may be less likely to recognize when the knowledge he or she has is deficient, this Code safeguard is a weak one at best.

JUDGING AVIOLATION

Given the concerns and problems associated with an effort to determine clients' interests, and the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of the parties involved in a service transaction, how ought one evaluate a situation where the worker's adherence to the Code is questioned? The prior discussion provides us with basic guidelines.

We must assume that, within acceptable boundaries, workers will maintain some running record of the client's interests being pursued. The absence of such a record is usually an indication of inadequate performance, suggesting termination of the worker in the particular assignment, rather than a breach in ethical behavior. We must also assume that gross violations of this Code item, such as physical or psychological abuse or misuse of the client; exploiting the client for personal gain; subjecting the client to unusual and uncalled for stress to further the worker's or organization's ends, etc. will surface in a form and manner that permits relatively clear identification of questionable behavior, with the worker having to disprove, rather than the challenging parties establish, possible violation of the client's interests.

Of far greater significance for the profession are the ordinary situations that arise in practice for the average practitioner, where question is raised in the mind of the worker him- or herself, or others, as to the possibility that a violation of this ethical imperative is occurring in the

societal context of social work practice, but much has not changed enough. I'll elaborate on this historical encapsulation, briefly, from an economic, political, and social perspective.

In the 1930s and 1940s the profession extended its practice domain into a number of fields, developing specialties based on unique skills required in each field. In the early 1950s these specialties merged into one association—NASW— committing the profession to a generic, as well as specific, skill base in practice. At the same time, graduate and undergraduate programs of social work education merged to form the Council of Social Work Education. These two mergers paved the way for a rapid expansion in graduate and undergraduate professional degree programs.

In a recent work, two social work scholars reviewed the history of these developments—treating social services as a commodity subject to a market economy. They argue that our profession's development is best understood as an occupational entrepreneurial effort to attain a monopolistic control over a specialized competence. The authors conclude that the strains within the ranks of social workers—between those who emphasize "social treatment" and those who stress "social justice"—can, to a large extent, be attributed to the pressure to establish occupational control over a particular sphere of "helping activities." In their view, the economic factor operates to affect every level of practice, influencing all helping activities.[2]

Extending this economic perspective to encompass the goals of the profession confronts us with the significant failings of a market economy. The spread between the haves and have nots widens, even as the social services seek to

narrow the gap. Efforts to achieve equality of opportunity fail because inequality of condition prevails.

During the past half century, a number of practice paradigms evolved and served practitioners, administrators, researchers, and faculties well. These paradigms helped to organize, partialize, implement, and assess a variety of social work functions. One such paradigm, a problem-solving model, will serve to illustrate how the context of practice influences its choice of methods. I assume that this paradigm has much merit, serves us well, but generates many difficulties identified by its critics. In seeking to examine this influence, we must consider that the techniques of the profession are not empty schemata; they are comprised of functional culture-bound, value-laden skills.

How can we explain the rapid rise and dissemination of the problem-solving paradigm in social work after World War II? In the postwar period that witnessed a widespread acceptance of this model within the profession, the inhouse polarization of practice theoreticians into two warring camps reached an uncompromising stalemate. The diagnostic school contended for a treatment model, and the functional school for an educational frame of reference. As Perlman demonstrated in her very insightful text, by using a problem-solving paradigm, one could capitalize on the strengths of both approaches for the benefit of practice.[3]

In the wider arena of intellectual contention, the problem-solving paradigm fitted the demand for a further intellectualization of the profession, as it moved to become a more integrated academic discipline within the university. Moreover, in the postwar period, an end to ideology was proclaimed as the path of the future.[4] The value-free

as well may believe that their interests take precedence in allocating the organization's resources, this is only the case where their interests coincide with the organization's commitment to the common good. Where the consumers' interests, or those of the organization's participants, do not coincide with the common good the organization is committed to serve, it is expected by the sanctioning bodies that precedence will be given to the common good. For-profit organizations are expected to give precedence to the financial gain of their sponsors, although this need not be detrimental to the common good. Similarly, consumer interests, evidenced by a willingness to pay for the service, may also take precedence over the common good in for-profit organizations because for-profits will depend on such a willingness to pay. In part, the payment of taxes on profits earned may be viewed as contributing to a pool of public monies that may then be allowed to promote a common good, but not necessarily one of benefit to those whose needs the organization is seeking to meet. Thus, in a fundamental way, the altruism that sponsors a non-profit organization, as well as the philanthropic and tax supports that fund it, also serve to promote an expectation of socially responsible behavior on the part of the organization and those who participate in its operations.

From this overriding ethical commitment, there flow certain obligations and duties that the actors in the non-profit drama are expected to assume:

1. Distributive decisions should be based on ethical imperatives that give precedence to the common good—for example, unequal benefits would be justified if they

Index