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Virtuous Giving: Philanthropy, Voluntary Service, and Caring

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VIRTUOUS GIVING

Philanthropy, Voluntary Service, and Caring

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For Shannon and for my mother,
and in memory of Theodore R. Martin,
Pearl Rector, and Martin C. Nalder

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Preface

To do philosophy is to explore one's own temperament, and yet at the same time to attempt to discover the truth.

—Iris Murdoch

Voluntary acts of compassion and acts of community are always needed, in all societies, and always will be.

—Robert L. Payton

IN THIS BOOK I explore some of the ways philanthropy contributes to morally desirable relationships when we give with care—with good will and good judgment, with responsible moral concern.[1] In doing so I discuss a variety of moral issues: the role of the virtues in philanthropy, responsibilities to help others, distortions in helping, mixed motives in giving, and how voluntary service contributes to self-fulfillment.

After providing an overview of the philosophy of philanthropy, Chapter 1 develops a definition of philanthropy as voluntary private giving for public purposes. This definition is value-neutral and draws together the enormous variety of voluntary service for study without normative blinkers. It avoids assumptions about whether philanthropy has good motives, aims, or results, and it leaves open the question of whether philanthropy can be a moral responsibility. Sometimes philanthropy has a bad name; more often it has no name at all or else the emotionally clouded name of "charity." While it is less commonly used in everyday discourse than it was in the nineteenth century, the word "philanthropy" is currently undergoing a rebirth as a general term referring to both volunteering and monetary giving, whether for humanitarian or cultural purposes. "Voluntary service" is a good two-word equivalent, and I use it as a synonym, mindful that service comes in the form of money as well as time.

Chapter 1 also develops a framework for connecting desirable forms of philanthropy with the virtues. Most philanthropic giving occurs as participation in social practices, such as donating blood, contributing to public television, sheltering the homeless, paying tithing, and volunteering in museums or hospitals. These are practices in the colloquial sense: patterns of conduct engaged in by many people and continuing over time. They are also practices in Alasdair MacIntyre's technical sense: complex cooperative human endeavors which, when pursued virtuously, promote the good of individuals and

communities. Philanthropy makes possible a variety of benefits to recipients and benefactors, especially the caring relationships it fosters.

Philanthropy is not itself a virtue; it is an activity which may be good or bad. Nor are any virtues unique to philanthropy. Instead, all major virtues play a role in philanthropic giving: obviously generosity and compassion, but also courage and conscientiousness, faith and fairness, gratitude and good judgment, honesty and humility, integrity and inspiration, love and loyalty, pride and perseverence, responsible authority and respect for others, self-knowledge and self-respect, wisdom and moral creativity. Chapter 2 discusses some thirty virtues relevant to philanthropy, sorting them into two general categories: participation virtues, which are especially important in motivating philanthropy, and enabling virtues, which tend to make philanthropy effective. Elucidating these virtues with examples helps sharpen our moral understanding of philanthropy and philanthropists.

Much philanthropy is morally optional—desirable or at least permissible, but not obligatory. In certain contexts there are also responsibilities to engage in philanthropy, as I argue in Chapter 3. Some of them derive from the obligation of mutual aid in assisting people in life-threatening situations. Others derive from the obligation of reciprocity to do our fair share in communities and practices from which we benefit. These two general obligations apply to everyone, though their precise requirements vary greatly according to circumstances. I also set forth a conception of "supererogatory responsibilities"—obligations transcending the call of duty incumbent on everyone, and whose origin lies in highly personal commitments to optional moral ideals. The responsibilities of professionals to engage in *pro bono publico* work (offering services at reduced or no fee) are often supererogatory but sometimes a professional requirement. All philanthropic responsibilities, both general and supererogatory ones, leave considerable room for discretion in deciding how to meet them. Whether optional or obligatory, philanthropy is primarily a forum for personal moral expression.

Philanthropy goes awry for many reasons besides bad luck. Attempts to help are self-defeating when they are based upon naiveté, stupidity, lack of imagination, insensitivity, arrogance, or any number of other character flaws. An especially egregious fault, one recurringly inveighed against in the history of philanthropy, is the failure to respect individual autonomy, that is, the right and the ability to competently pursue one's interests and values. In Chapter 4 I discuss several instances involving degrading attitudes toward recipients, abuses in fundraising, exploitation of volunteers, and harm to third parties. In a related vein, I examine circumstances in which incentives for volunteering are coercive, an issue that has surfaced in recent debates over tying financial aid for college students to volunteering for national service. Special attention is devoted to how sexism threatens the autonomy of women

volunteers. With this chapter, I attempt to provide balanced attention to the gloomy and morally ambiguous side of philanthropy without allowing it to eclipse the brighter side, as it so easily does.[2]

Motives for philanthropy interest us because they reveal what a person is genuinely committed to. Unfortunately, we are eager to criticize the motives of philanthropists (other than ourselves). The first whiff of self-interest evokes charges of hypocrisy. Indeed, cynicism about philanthropy is a fashionable sign of sophistication, as well as a rationalization for moral complacency. In Chapter 5 I argue that "mixed motives," which combine self-concern with altruism, are as typical in philanthropy as anywhere else in life. Philanthropy can be highly admirable without being purely selfless, and mixed motives can even be desirable when they intensify philanthrophic endeavors. A challenge to this tolerance of mixed motives is psychological egoism, the view that we are all exclusively self-seeking. Formulated by Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century, this outlook on human life has been endorsed by many social scientists, not to mention authors of self-help books. It is almost unanimously rejected by philosophers, and I present the reasons why. I also comment on cynicism, the view that our motives are generally selfish or unsavory in other ways. And I argue against consequentialism, the view that only results are morally important, not motives.

Philanthropy breeds paradoxes, several of which are discussed in Chapter 6. Thus, it is said that selflessness promotes self-fulfillment; in giving we receive; we find ourselves by losing ourselves (in service to others); self-surrender (to good causes) is liberating; the way to get happiness is to forget it (while promoting the happiness of other people); faith is self-fulfilling. These conundrums are easily abused when they become rationalizations for exploiting people on behalf of immoral causes. Yet they also convey important insights as they apply to morally concerned individuals. Philanthropy offers numerous avenues for self-fulfilling service, at least when a match is found between personal interests and philanthropic opportunities, and even though altruism takes many other directions as well.

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1

Giving with Care

The epithets *sociable, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent*, or their equivalents, are known in all languages, and universally express the highest merit, which *human nature* is capable of attaining.

—David Hume

When I give I give myself.

—Walt Whitman

WE ARE ALL philanthropists on some occasions. Each of us has contributed beyond our circle of family and friends and work. We have donated money, time, talent, energy, blood, or clothing. We have volunteered to help a community, church, political organization, social cause, sports team, or scout troop. Put simply, philanthropy is voluntary giving for public ends. More fully, philanthropy is voluntary private (nongovernment) giving for public purposes, whether gifts are large or small, money or time, local or international in scope, for purposes which are humanitarian, cultural, religious, civic, environmental, or of mutual aid.[1]

At its best, philanthropy unites individuals in caring relationships that enrich giver and receiver alike. Often it is heroic and inspiring: witness the lives of Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Susan B. Anthony, Jane Addams, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. But philanthropy can also be harmful.[2] At its worst, it is divisive and demeaning to everyone involved, as in contributing to hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Too often philanthropy squanders precious resources on misguided groups such as those promoting astrology and those more concerned with self-seeking than with helping others. In between the clearly good and the obviously bad, much philanthropy is morally ambiguous, combining good intentions with bad results, or bad intentions with good results, or good and bad motives with good and bad consequences.

Philanthropy, then, is morally complex, in theory as well as in practice. While luck plays a role, much turns on whether we give with care—with caring and carefulness, with good will and good judgment.

Philosophy of Philanthropy

Philanthropy raises important moral issues in at least four main areas. (1) Social and political philosophy is concerned with the overall impact of philanthropy on society, as well as with the role of government in regulating and supporting it, for example with tax deductions for gifts to charities. (2) Professional ethics studies the responsibilities of development officers (fundraisers), foundation officials, and other professionals involved in philanthropic organizations. (3) The ethics of recipients deals with the responsibilities of beneficiaries, such as honesty in writing grant proposals, fidelity to donors' intentions, and avoiding harmful forms of dependency (pauperism). (4) The ethics of philanthropic giving focuses on the ideals, virtues, and responsibilities of philanthropists.

In this book I focus on the ethics of philanthropic giving, only occasionally touching on the other areas. The topics discussed concern each of us as (actual or potential) donors and volunteers. Foundation and corporation philanthropy will be mentioned only as they bear on giving by individuals.

When ethicists have discussed philanthropy, typically under the name of charity, it has usually been in connection with particular topics such as giving to alleviate world hunger and volunteering to promote environmental causes. Yet some issues require more systematic reflection. When and why is philanthropy valuable? How does it contribute to meaningful life? What does it have to do with being a good person? In which ways does it promote desirable communities? What should be our priorities in choosing which of the innumerable good causes to support with our limited resources?

In addition to these general questions, or rather as my way of approaching them, I will ask six more focused questions, one in each of the chapters. (1) How should philanthropy be defined and understood for the purposes of moral inquiry? (2) Which virtues guide giving? (3) Are there any responsibilities to engage in philanthropy, and if so, how much should we give and to whom? (4) When is philanthropy morally damaging, and what does it mean for gifts to be coerced or coercive? (5) Should philanthropy be motivated by pure altruism, that is, unselfish concern for others, or is it all right for self-interest to be mixed with altruism? (6) How should we understand the paradox that selflessness contributes to self-fulfillment?

These are large topics. They can be approached from many perspectives and with the tools of many disciplines. While my research has been interdisciplinary, my framework is philosophical. I hope to show how philosophical ethics increases our moral understanding of philanthropy and to encourage others to do further work in this area.

Ethicists (moral philosophers, philosophers of morality) have neglected philanthropy, largely relinquishing the topic to social scientists. Philosophers' contributions have tended to be written for technical journals which are inaccessible to a wider audience, including a collection of essays which, remarkably, is the only contemporary philosophical book on philanthropy.[3] Apart from that collection, most philosophical essays have been narrowly focused on such special topics as world hunger, thereby missing the benefits of more systematic approaches. (Is it obvious, without argument, that world hunger should have priority over all other philanthropic giving?) Others are presented in the midst of developing an abstract ethical theory, more as illustrations than with an eye to practical implications.

This is a work in applied ethics, in three respects. First, the focus is on moral topics arising in a particular area of our lives, rather than on general issues in ethical theory. The topics are at once public and personal, delightful and disturbing, important and intriguing. They deserve to become an area of specialization in philosophy, alongside medical ethics, business ethics, engineering ethics, environmental ethics, and philosophy of women, to mention only a few areas of applied philosophy which have emerged in recent decades.

Second, this book is a philosophical response to practical moral needs. Rather than dwelling on abstruse intellectual puzzles, the book is rooted in practical interests. Nevertheless, those interests lead naturally into intellectually challenging tasks: to clarify the moral concepts used as tools in making philanthropic decisions, to explore philanthropy's contribution to community and character, and to develop a unifying perspective on philanthropic values.

Third, because I am convinced that the lifeblood of philosophy is its contribution to public discourse,[4] I have written for a wide audience of students, interdisciplinary scholars, social activists, and concerned citizens, as well as for professional philosophers. I have also tried to heed Molière's counsel to "humanize your talk, and speak to be understood."[5]

My approach is applied, then, in terms of focus, relevance, and audience. It is not, however, applied in the sense of embracing a general theory about the foundation of moral values and applying it to philanthropy (or other topics). The three theories which have been most influential in recent centuries have attempted to state the foundational principles of right (and wrong) action. Thus, according to Immanuel Kant's duty-ethics, right acts are those required by a set of duties which would be embraced by fully rational moral agents. According to John Locke's rights-ethics, right acts are those which respect human rights. And according to utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, right acts are those which produce the most good for the most people, or which fall under rules producing the most overall good.

Why not select one of these theories and simply apply it to philanthropy?

For one thing, it is not clear which theory to select. All the theories come in different versions, and all of them are highly controversial. Defending any one of them would immerse us in theoretical disputes, effectively suspending applied inquiry. For another thing, these theories focus on rules about right and wrong action; they devote little attention to questions about higher ideals of character and community which are crucial in thinking about philanthropy.

Most important, we should be more impressed by the similarities than by the differences among the three theories.[6] Each theory is an abstract framework which can be filled out in many directions. Each emerged as an attempt to provide a clear and comprehensive overview of morality, and hence each must remain in line with our most carefully considered moral convictions. Since defenders of all the theories struggle to make those alignments, it matters relatively little whether the final appeal is to duties or rights or overall good. What matters is how principles of duties are formulated and weighed, how rights are understood, and how good consequences are measured and tallied. To be sure, there are fundamental disagreements among reasonable people, even in the moral judgments they are most certain about. Those differences, however, are reflected in different versions of each type of ethical theory, as well as in disputes over which type is preferable.

Accordingly, I draw freely upon ideas from all the theories, acknowledging that the ideas will be developed in different ways within different theoretical frameworks. For example, I draw upon the concept of rights, knowing that rights-ethicists will take them as morally fundamental, duty-ethicists will derive them from duties, and utilitarians will construe them as benefits and liberties whose recognition produces the most good for the most people. I also rely on principles that virtually all the theories endorse: for example, that we should do our fair share when we benefit from cooperative practices, and that we should help people whose lives are endangered when we can do so at little risk to ourselves.

One other ethical theory, virtue-ethics, will play a more prominent role. Virtue-ethics emphasizes good and bad character more than principles of right and wrong conduct. This ancient theory, which has attracted renewed interest during the past decade, has sometimes been viewed as an alternative to theories about right and wrong conduct. That is a mistake. Good character and right conduct are complementary ideas, not competing ones. An adequate ethical theory will integrate them rather than attempt to derive one from the other. Hence I am not claiming that virtue-ethics is a sufficient theory of morality, or that virtues are more theoretically fundamental than right action.[7] As an applied ethicist, my interest is in exploring specific virtues and other aspects of character which contribute to understanding philanthropy. I explore good character in all its dimensions: responsible conduct, sensible reasoning, justifiable attitudes, praiseworthy motives, desirable relationships, worthy ideals.

Virtues are admirable traits of character, manifested in valuable patterns of emotions, attitudes, reasoning, desires, intentions, conduct, commitments, and relationships. They are linked to ideals which structure the shared or overlapping moral understanding we use in joining our lives with mutual respect and caring. Even in this age of moral uncertainty, as we debate endlessly over how to formulate moral principles and resolve moral dilemmas, can we doubt the importance of compassion and courage, of honesty and integrity?

"Virtuous giving" may have a somewhat old-fashioned ring. That is all right, assuming we see a point in putting new wine in old bottles, and assuming we renounce any images of stuffiness and self-righteousness the expression conjures up. Virtues are not private merit badges smugly gleaned from hypocritical exercises in character building. They are morally desirable ways of relating to people, practices, and communities. The virtues center on caring for others, as well as for oneself, and self-righteousness is merely one of the many distortions of caring. At the same time, I will explore how caring for others, for their sake, indirectly contributes to our own self-fulfillment.

My central thesis, or rather theme, is that virtuous philanthropy fosters valuable caring relationships. As a result, philanthropy is a vital dimension of most good lives. Not all good lives, however, for individuals may emphasize other avenues for caring, such as family, friendship, and professions. I am not claiming that philanthropy is the primary mark of all caring people, but instead that virtuous philanthropy adds meaning to the lives of morally concerned individuals. Philosophical inquiry should help make that contribution perspicuous.

Philosophy begins in wonder (Aristotle) and love (Plato), develops by confronting perplexity (Wittgenstein), and culminates by enhancing meaningful life (Socrates). To study ethics is to scrutinize our own moral values, in philanthropy as elsewhere. Such is the heritage of Socrates, that remarkable philanthropist who engaged in philosophy as a voluntary service to his community, as well as a search for self-understanding.

Philosophy integrates personal vision and public argument. Like science, it seeks truth; like art, it seeks to convey an individual perspective which makes contact with interpersonal values. As Wittgenstein aptly suggested, philosophy is much like architecture.[8] In both disciplines, structures stand or fall because of realities independent of us. In both, much of the work is done on oneself, on one's interpretation of the world, on one's way of seeing and living.

The overall tone of this book is positive. In part that is because my

primary interest is in how philanthropy contributes to valuable caring relationships. In part it reflects my conviction that philanthropy evokes some of our noblest impulses and does far more good than bad. Nevertheless, or rather because of this positive tone, three caveats are necessary.

First, my faith that philanthropy does far more good than bad is just that—a faith. Defending it would require a different kind of book.[9] In this book the focus is on the practical moral interests of individual givers. Defending claims about the overall effects of philanthropy would require a book that moved away from personal ethics and toward social and political philosophy centered on nonprofit organizations, foundations, governments, and the cumulative impact of philanthropy on society. For the purposes of this book, what matters is that *much* good is done through philanthropy, and that is not so much a faith as it is common knowledge.

The social-political approach would ask, for example: Are social services best provided by the federal government, state governments, nonprofit organizations, or some combination thereof? Should the arts and humanities be heavily subsidized by tax revenues or left to philanthropic patronage? To what extent should government regulate the activities of philanthropic organizations? Which gifts ought to be tax deductible? How should philanthropic organizations be structured and managed? Do predominant patterns of philanthropy in the United States benefit the rich more than the poor, men more than women, the arts more than malnourished children? My study of virtuous giving complements, but cannot replace, inquiry into these questions.

Second, I am not writing as an apologist for the Nonprofit Sector. It has become fashionable, if not altogether illuminating, to divide the public economy into three sectors: business (for-profit companies), government, and nonprofits (not-for-profit organizations). The Nonprofit Sector is so diverse that general perceptions of it are much like responses to Rorschach tests: they reveal more about the perceiver than what is perceived. Virtue and vice, as well as altruistic service and corruption, are manifested in all economic areas—government, business, the professions, family, and philanthropy. Still, much that I say implies the vital significance of a vigorous Nonprofit Sector.

Third, and most important, I am not endorsing a political ideology that favors private philanthropy as a replacement for government welfare programs. Government bears the primary responsibility for meeting the basic needs of disadvantaged citizens by fairly distributing welfare costs through taxation.[10] There are four reasons for this.

(1) Scale. Homelessness, violence, and poverty (especially of children) have increased dramatically during the past decade. During the same time welfare services have been cut back. Support for disadvantaged people is best delivered through a partnership among government, nonprofit organizations, and the marketplace, but primary responsibility for funding for the desperately poor belongs to government with its authority to tax and regulate. As Martin Luther King, Jr., remarked with prescience, "philanthropy is [often] commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary."[11]

(2) Security. Human capacities for altruism are limited, and hence voluntary philanthropy cannot be relied upon as the mainstay in meeting fundamental needs. Government welfare programs provide assurances to the elderly and jobless that their minimal needs will be met. In an increasingly uncertain world, each of us needs that security.

(3) Fairness. Government provides a mechanism for fairly distributing both burdens on taxpayers and benefits for recipients. While that mechanism is not always used properly, nevertheless it tends to be more reliable than the piecemeal efforts of philanthropic organizations, even when those efforts become coordinated (as they usually are not). Concentrating on the weaknesses of government and the moral limitations of a competitive marketplace should not result in the hyperbole of calling philanthropy "the moral sector."[12]

(4) Symbolism. Government programs express the collective caring of an entire society, symbolically as well as in substance. "An official political concern with issues or problems," writes Robert Nozick, is "a way of marking their importance or urgency, and hence of expressing, intensifying, channeling, encouraging, and validating our private actions and concerns toward them."[13] Government programs are essential to establish the "solemn marking of our human solidarity" within caring communities.

Of course, philanthropy also carries symbolic meanings, as I will emphasize. Most often, however, its symbolism does not express the official view of an entire society. That is both a limit and a strength. Philanthropy enables individuals and groups to express their values, substantively and symbolically, without first having to persuade the majority in a democracy. That frees philanthropy to function as a catalyst for change. It makes possible focused and prompt responses to social problems and community aspirations, sometimes by reforming government. Above all, it contributes to caring relationships and communities in more personal ways than by voting and paying taxes.

Scope of Philanthropy

As children, my friends and I gave to the March of Dimes through our scout troup. We saved dimes in cardboard holders and then mailed them in together. We also sponsored fundraisers, staffed carnival booths, and served community dinners. Helping was a simple gesture, at once a natural impulse, a habit, and a group endeavor. It was clear to us there were other avenues for helping. Family and friends supported victims of polio in a more exten-

sive and intimate way, and scientists such as Jonas Salk helped through creative work in their professions.[14] I do not remember, however, using a word to distinguish our activities from these other forms of service; we simply lumped them all together under the heading of helping out or doing one's share. Today the best single term is "philanthropy"; the best two-word expression is "voluntary service." I use them interchangeably, with some preference for the brevity of the former, to refer to all forms of voluntary private giving for public purposes.

Alternative terms are misleading for one reason or another. Thus, the word "humanitarianism" is either too broad in covering all kinds of service, including work in the professions, or too narrow in referring to the alleviation of suffering but not to cultural patronage. "Charity" may be preferred by some people, but its meaning has become diffused into three specialized meanings: Christian love (in its honorific sense), condescending pity (in its pejorative sense), and the tax-deductible status of organizations (in its legal sense). "Voluntarism" and "volunteerism" suggest a particular ideology about how to deal with social problems, namely, through voluntary service rather than by government involvement.

The definition of philanthropy is somewhat vague. Each of its four interconnected elements needs to be clarified: voluntary, private, giving, for public purposes. It would be futile, however, to seek an absolutely precise definition. "Philanthropy" refers to many kinds of giving which are loosely related by overlapping similarities.[15] The following remarks are intended as signposts which roughly indicate the ground to be explored without setting rigid conceptual boundaries. Or rather, the remarks identify the features of paradigm (clear-cut) cases while also indicating areas of vagueness which for my purposes need not be removed.

(1) Philanthropy is *voluntary* in the sense of being intended and uncoerced. "Intended" means the act or activity is done with the purpose of making a gift. "Uncoerced" rules out legal penalties for not giving, as well as threats of harm and other morally objectionable forms of force, manipulation, and deception. Extortion, not philanthropy, occurs when a donation is made because of a threat of penalties, and abusive force is present when a person is constrained to make a political contribution in order to keep a job.

Voluntariness implies both the absence of coercion and the presence of intentional activity. When one of these elements is missing, nonstandard or borderline (doubtful) cases arise. Suppose I am deceived or otherwise coerced into giving money for a purpose I disapprove of. Perhaps a "charity racketeer" cons me into believing I am giving in order to help build a shelter for homeless people and then uses my money to support his lavish lifestyle. Did I engage in philanthropy? Yes and no. Yes: I acted intentionally for what I thought was a public purpose, even though my intention was subverted. No:

My giving was manipulated and coerced, even though I attempted to engage in philanthropy. Whatever we decide to say about such cases, they are not paradigms that would be used in explaining what philanthropy is.

"Voluntary" is not a synonym for "willingly," in the sense of acting as one wants or wishes to. Loyal citizens concerned with the public good might pay their taxes willingly, without feeling pressured to give. Nevertheless, taxes are not a form of voluntary service. The failure to pay them carries a severe penalty, and hence there is force present, even if some individuals do not "feel" forced. Conversely, some philanthropy is done reluctantly, rather than willingly. Individuals might voluntarily contribute to Amnesty International motivated by a stern sense of duty, all the time wishing they could spend their money in more self-indulgent ways. Perhaps the reluctance indicates an absence of perfect virtue, but it does not make the giving involuntary.

Furthermore, "voluntary" does not mean morally optional or nonobligatory. That is important. Our definition allows that some philanthropy might be a moral responsibility, as many people believe it is. I might give voluntarily, intentionally and without coercion, to help people in serious distress, while believing I have a responsibility to give. My belief, in turn, may be true depending on the circumstances and on justifiable principles of obligation. In general, issues concerning obligations should be left open for inquiry rather than closed by definitional fiat.

Voluntariness is a matter of degree and interpretation, as is coercion. Coercion is obvious when criminals are ordered to engage in community service as the penalty for their crime. A lesser degree of coercion occurs when they are given a choice between community service and spending time in jail. What should we say, however, about Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North's 1,200 hours of community service in working with inner-city youths? The service was not entirely voluntary, since it was court-ordered as part of the sentence for his conviction in the Iran-Contra scandal (a conviction that was later overturned). Nevertheless, he approached his service with an enthusiastic spirit, "attacking this public service with the energy and tenacity of a born Marine."[16] He developed innovative ideas, initiating a "Pied Piper Program" to scare children away from drugs by taking them to observe cocaine addicts. Rather than punching a clock, he put in longer hours and far more effort than was required. While his service is not a paradigm of philanthropy, surely it had a philanthropic dimension.

Sometimes we make donations because we are pressured by fundraisers, employers, friends, religious leaders, or a climate of social expectation. Are these pressures coercive, making giving more like extortion than voluntary service? Occasionally, peer pressure can become extreme so as to generate elements of coercion, and pressures within authority relationships easily be-

come coercive, as with pressures to contribute to an employer's favorite cause. However, most social pressures to give are moderate, of the kind ubiquitous in human affairs. We are free to resist them without penalty, other than the negative attitudes of others—which we must confront in all areas of life.

(2) *Private* giving contrasts with government spending. Philanthropists give their own money and time, unlike government officials who disperse public money. Most philanthropic giving, about 80 percent of it, consists of gifts by individuals. The rest comes from nongovernment organizations, especially private foundations, not-for-profit corporations, and for-profit businesses.

In practice, philanthropy and government spending are interwoven. Many nonprofit philanthropic organizations are funded as much by government funds as by private support. America's welfare programs depend as much on nonprofit organizations as on government agencies to deliver services. The extent of this dependence became clear during Ronald Reagan's administration. Reagan praised nonprofit welfare organizations while severely cutting government funding for them. He also reduced tax incentives for individual gifts to charities.[17] The result was a sharp curtailment of social services.

It is tempting to refer to federal humanitarian aid to other countries as "government philanthropy." I will resist the temptation. It is true that much foreign aid amounts to indirect giving from the citizens of democracies to the citizens of other countries. The government serves as a vehicle for carrying out the humanitarian aims of its citizens, as well as the aims of political expediency, presumably based on their collective consent to be taxed for these purposes. Yet much the same can be said of government spending on welfare programs for its citizens. Even when voluntary giving and taxation promote the same ends, then, it is worthwhile to distinguish them by reserving the term "philanthropy" for nongovernment giving.

(3) *Giving* means donating one's resources without contracting to achieve comparable economic compensation. The resources may take the form of volunteered labor, expertise, money, or items having economic value. Giving differs from economic exchanges, such as selling a car, where there is an explicit contract between two parties who exchange goods or services. Nevertheless, sometimes philanthropy is engaged in to acquire economic benefits, as with most corporate philanthropy, which is tied to marketing and public relations.

Philanthropists often do seek economic benefits. Volunteers might want and need advertised benefits, such as the modest living stipend given to Peace Corps volunteers. Occasionally they even receive indirect economic rewards greater than their contributions, for example, lucrative employment opportunities based on their credentials as volunteers, or business advantages gained

from a reputation for community involvement. Since I want to leave open questions about motives, I will allow that self-interest is sometimes the primary or even exclusive motive for philanthropy.

Was Robin Hood a philanthropist? According to legend, he liberally distributed money to needy people without seeking compensation, motivated by compassion and a sense of justice.[18] Yet the money was stolen, hence not his to give. For clarity, let us agree that giving means transferring ownership of one's personal property, as well as volunteering one's time and talent.[19] Assuming Robin Hood was returning money to its rightful owners because the king's taxes were so excessive as to be immoral, Robin Hood qualifies as a philanthropist for his voluntary service on behalf of a public cause. Philanthropy does not occur, however, when one donates to a charity money gained fraudulently. Presumably that was involved in the charitable gifts of millions of dollars by Michael Milken, the junk-bond financier of corporate takeovers during the 1980s who was sent to jail on numerous counts of fraud.

Are foundation officers who distribute grants philanthropists? Probably not, assuming they are paid professionals and assuming they do not own the grant money. Yet suppose a particular officer chooses the job over far more lucrative offers, pursues the work from a desire to help others, and puts in far more time and effort than is normally expected? Our definition is sufficiently flexible to acknowledge a philanthropic dimension to this work.

There is also a philanthropic dimension to workers who serve the public beyond the compensation of a paycheck. For most jobs we can distinguish between (a) the required level of performance and (b) an exceptional (optimal, maximal) level of performance.[20] When workers perform at exceptional levels in order to help others well beyond what they are paid for, their work acquires a philanthropic dimension. For example, consider Wally Olson, the Los Angeles singing bus driver who leads his passengers in songs, each day accepting requests for favorite numbers.[21] He gets to know his regular customers and becomes involved with their problems. And he makes it his job to convey a cheerful, caring attitude that has helped to personalize an otherwise impersonal and occasionally violent work situation.

(4) *Public purposes* comprise virtually all social aims beyond helping one's family and friends. The aims might be civic: citizens' support for cities, counties, states, nations, political candidates and groups, and social movements. They might be religious: support for a church, synagogue, mosque, or religious movement. Some are cultural: gifts for the arts, humanities, science, museums, libraries, or historical monuments. Others are humanitarian: giving to emergency relief efforts, donating blood, contributing to medical research, volunteering in a center for the disabled, or finding shelter for the homeless. Still others are environmental: protecting animals, forests, ecosystems, and clean air and water.

Philanthropy and friendship overlap in many instances. Is philanthropy involved when individuals donate to a literary club or church whose members are their friends? Yes, because the group is open to future members and because there is a public purpose beyond friendship, namely, literary inquiry or religious worship. Even if donors' motives are largely self-interested, the organization may benefit other people and in that sense qualify as a public purpose.

The expression "public purpose" is ambiguous in a helpful way. It refers to either (i) the purposes of givers, that is, their intentions and aims, or (ii) the ends actually promoted by gifts. Thus, philanthropy may occur when donors try to promote what they believe to be a public good, even if they fail to produce the intended results. Philanthropy also occurs when donors successfully promote a public purpose, even though their primary intentions were for other things, such as gaining personal recognition.

To sum up, the definition of philanthropy as voluntary private giving for public purposes contains several areas of vagueness. Nevertheless, it has several clear benefits for exploring the ethics of philanthropy. It avoids building in preconceptions about good motives, admirable aims, desirable consequences, and whether philanthropy can be a moral responsibility. All these matters are left for moral inquiry. Hence the definition is value-neutral, unlike "persuasive definitions" which build in controversial attitudes or assumptions about philanthropy.[22]

Persuasive definitions of philanthropy abound, sometimes pointing in opposing directions. Here are eight persuasive definitions, each of which has some basis in ordinary language and may be useful in other contexts. Since they bias rather than facilitate moral inquiry, I note them in order to set them aside.

(1) Lavish, large-scale giving, whether by very rich individuals or by foundations.[23] (Philanthropy versus small gifts.) —This definition aids and abets the stereotype of philanthropy as the proper domain of the wealthy. Yet, about half the total dollar amounts of voluntary private giving for public purposes comes from lower- and middle-income people.[24] Refusing to regard philanthropy as the province of the upper class is a first move toward appreciating how it permeates all social classes.

(2) Giving motivated by humanitarian love. (Philanthropy versus giving from nonhumanitarian motives.) —This definition has its roots in etymology: *philanthropia* is the Greek word for "love of humanity," although for the Greeks "humanity" meant free citizens and ruled out women, slaves, and barbarians. Nevertheless, the definition is misleading in several respects. It builds in one motive for philanthropy rather than leave the question of motives open for moral inquiry. Moreover, the motive suggests universal concern for humans, whereas much voluntary giving has more focused intentions, such as to help artists or scientists, Mormons or Baptists, local communities or nations, or to honor a family name or a deceased relative. The definition also disregards philanthropy aimed at preventing cruelty to nonhuman animals.

(3) Morally optional giving.[25] (Philanthropy versus obligatory giving.) —Philanthropy, it might be said in defense of this definition, ought to be a matter of joy and generosity, not onerous duty. Yet many people engage in voluntary service motivated by a sense of responsibility, and that seems quite compatible with joyous giving. Surely these individuals are not confused, much less morally flawed. In any case, rather than separate obligation and philanthropy at the outset, we should leave open for inquiry whether philanthropy is sometimes morally required.

(4) Giving for cultural purposes, such as the arts and sciences, rather than charitable giving to alleviate suffering.[26] (Philanthropy as cultural patronage versus compassionate charity.) —This usage creates another misleading dichotomy. Giving to science and education is sometimes motivated by a desire to alleviate suffering by discovering long-term solutions to disease and suffering. Most important, for the purposes of moral inquiry we need a definition that brings together cultural patronage and relief of suffering in order to invite questions about their relative priority.

(5) Giving to prevent suffering by discovering long-term solutions, rather than short-term alleviation of suffering.[27] (Philanthropy as prevention versus palliation.) —This definition seems to embody an attitude about the desirable emphasis in giving. Yet surely both short-term and long-term solutions to suffering are important. Questions about relative priorities in allocating our resources should be left for investigation into particular situations rather than biased at the outset by a definition.

(6) Giving money, rather than volunteering time and talent. (Philanthropy versus volunteering.) —In fact, volunteered time and talent usually do have economic value, and offering money is one way to volunteer help. That is why I will use "philanthropy" and "voluntary service" as rough synonyms, while using "volunteering" with its normal connotation of service through hands-on participation.[28]

(7) Good giving; giving which is wisely conceived, admirably motivated, and beneficial in its consequences. ("True philanthropy" versus flawed giving.) —This honorific usage has a place in inspirational writings and at ceremonies praising benefactors, but it is not useful in identifying an area of moral inquiry.

(8) The nonprofit (independent, third) sector.[29] (Philanthropy versus government and business.) —It is true that much voluntary giving for public purposes is directed toward such nonprofit organizations as museums, private schools, churches, and shelters for battered women. Nevertheless, it is mis-

leading to use the word "philanthropy" to refer to the not-for-profit sector. Some nonprofit organizations have no connection with voluntary giving, and some are established for tax purposes or other economic purposes, rather than for serving public purposes. Conversely, many profit-making corporations (such as for-profit hospitals) and government organizations (such as public schools and libraries) depend heavily on volunteers and private donations. Philanthropy functions in all economic sectors.

Practices and Virtues

I defined philanthropy as *acts* of voluntary private giving for public purposes.[30] These acts, however, are rarely eccentric gestures; usually they occur in the course of participating in social practices. Here are just a few examples of philanthropic practices: giving by alumni to their alma maters, donating blood, sheltering the homeless, contributing to public radio and television, patronage of the arts, volunteering in community organizations (schools, hospitals, museums, police programs), participating in service groups (Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, some sororities and fraternities), serving in community safety programs, taking part in social protest movements, joining a watchdog group to improve government, paying tithing, going on a mission, assisting in wildlife preservation, whistle-blowing to warn the public of dangers.

These are social practices in the colloquial sense: patterns of conduct engaged in by many people and continuing over time. They are also practices in Alasdair MacIntyre's technical sense: activities that contribute to human good when participants meet appropriate standards of excellence.[31] Philanthropy encompasses a large cluster of related practices, in the same way as the professions (medicine, teaching, engineering), sports (basketball, soccer, tennis), sciences (biology, physics, sociology), and the fine arts (portrait painting, sculpture, music), to cite some of MacIntyre's examples of practices.

More fully, a practice is

> [1] any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity [2] through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized [3] in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, [4] with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.[32]

I will clarify this definition as I apply each of its four parts to philanthropy.

(1) Practices, including philanthropic practices, are "socially established" in that they are made possible by structured societies and sustained by social traditions. Practices remain coherent and identifiable even when they take

remarkably different forms over time and across cultures. Think of the variations in sports from classical Athens to today's professional athletics, or the changes in science during the same time span. There have been astonishing variations in the goals and functions of these activities, in the techniques and equipment employed, in the organizations promoting them, and in the social functions they serve. Philanthropy has an equally rich history of varied forms, functions, purposes, styles, tactics, and institutional structuring.

For example, foundations have become essential to contemporary philanthropy, but they did not exist a few centuries ago. By contrast, settlement houses were once vitally important urban community centers prior to the development of government programs, but they have all but disappeared. Again, the practice of donating blood became possible with the emergence of suitable medical technology, and someday it may disappear as artificial blood sources are developed. And there are both striking similarities and differences in medieval church-controlled charity (in the religious sense) and today's government-regulated charity (in the legal sense). Increasingly, contemporary philanthropic practices are framed by a complex and ever-changing structure of laws concerning tax deductions, rules for political donations, accountability requirements for nonprofit corporations, and professional credentialing of development officers.

Philanthropy is a "cooperative human activity" in several respects. To begin with, it requires the active involvement of both givers and receivers. Obviously, philanthropy is impossible if no one is willing to offer help or respond to calls for aid; it is equally impossible if no one is willing to accept help. But there is more to be said. It is a misleading stereotype to regard recipients as passive. Often they assert their needs and invite the participation of volunteers and donors. Think, for example, of a person seeking funding from a foundation by writing a grant proposal. Think, too, of a group vigorously trying to get a member of a minority elected as a volunteer member of a community board.

Furthermore, givers and receivers are usually members of groups whose effectiveness depends on cooperation. Donors might belong to organizations such as service clubs, companies, or schools. Alternatively, they may be identifiable as a group only by reference to their philanthropic goal: for example, contributors to relief services for victims of the 1988 Armenia earthquake. Either way, large numbers of benefactors may be required in order to marshal adequate resources for tackling social problems. Beneficiaries, too, are typically members of groups: residents of a country served by a privately funded museum, Americans in need of a kidney transplant, starving people in Bangladesh or Somalia.

In addition, intermediary groups and institutions play important roles in connecting givers and receivers. Many of these organizations have complex

internal structures which enable them to exert social influence. Some organizations facilitate the activity of donors by collecting gifts and distributing them to beneficiaries. Others aid recipients, such as universities and community advisory groups which help grant writers to solicit foundation funds. Still others serve both constituencies, gathering and then disbursing funds; for example, the United Way, CARE, Amnesty International, Alliance for the Arts, Black United Fund, and various churches and synagogues.

Finally, shifting to a value judgment, philanthropy tends to work best when it is a two-way interaction between donors and recipients who regard each other as moral equals, rather than a one-way abandoning of resources from the rich to the poor.[33] The more both parties actively participate in what is viewed as a shared enterprise, the more both benefit from meaningful exchanges and relationships.

(2) The "internal goods" of a practice are those desirable things promoted by the practice in some singular (if not unique) manner that partly defines the practice itself.[34] They include worthwhile experiences and relationships, the exercise of valuable skills, and useful products and services created by practices. For example, each profession promotes particular social services: medicine promotes health, law protects rights and serves justice, education promotes learning, and engineering creates useful technological products. The fine arts promote several internal goods: artistic expression, aesthetic enjoyment, and the creation of cultural artifacts and symbols.

Given their enormous diversity, philanthropic practices promote a great variety of internal goods. They range from alleviating poverty to helping injured animals, from serving religious needs to improving government, from increasing literacy to promoting the arts. In general, philanthropic practices promote internal goods in numerous ways.

Many philanthropic practices directly serve basic needs. Offering shelter to the homeless, a practice important in nearly all societies, contributes to survival needs, whether the shelter is temporary or permanent as in Habitat for Humanity's program of building homes. Working in a soup kitchen sustains people who would otherwise be without food. Serving in a community security program promotes public safety. And animal rescue and rehabilitation programs respond to the needs of nonhuman animals.

Philanthropic practices may function as indirect or second-order ways to promote the internal goods of another, primary practice. For example, alumni giving promotes learning, which is also the internal good of education. Again, patronage of the arts furthers the same internal goods as the arts themselves. And philanthropic contributions to improve government, promote justice, and serve the public welfare share these internal goods with professionals working in government.

Sometimes philanthropic practices are embedded in other, primary practices, and hence directly promote their internal goods. Tithing, for example, is an important part of some religions; it is both a religious and a philanthropic activity. When lawyers engage in *pro bono publico* work, volunteering their services without fee or at reduced fees, they are simultaneously engaged in two practices, law and philanthropy. And unpaid sheriff's deputies in police reserve programs are engaged in both voluntary service and law enforcement.

Finally, and most important for my purposes, philanthropy promotes generic internal goods of its own, distinct from those of a primary practice to which it may be attached—generic in that they can be achieved through virtually all forms of philanthropy. In particular, successful philanthropy creates or sustains caring relationships between benefactors and beneficiaries. These relationships morally benefit giver and receiver alike, in ways I will explore throughout this book. Philanthropy also fosters caring relationships among givers who work together as donors or volunteers. And it can promote caring relationships among recipients who share resources used for public endeavors, for example, among members of a literacy education group which is supported by a foundation grant.

MacIntyre contrasts internal goods with "external goods"—such as income, influence, and fame—which do not define the practice and which can be acquired by engaging in many different social practices. Individuals participating in professions typically have some interest in both external and internal goods. They seek money and professional recognition (external goods), as well as the specific form of excellence or craftsmanship involved in the profession (an internal good). The same is true of organizations connected with practices, such as those serving the professions (for example, the American Association of University Professors), the sciences (the American Academy of Science), or the arts (the Actors Guild). Institutions also have significant interests in external, as well as internal, goods: "They are involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards. Nor could they do otherwise if they are to sustain not only themselves, but also the practices of which they are the bearers. For no practices can survive for any length of time unsustained by institutions."[35]

Much the same is true in philanthropy. Philanthropic organizations are legitimately interested in their own survival, growth, resources, and reputation, in order to meet their philanthropic aims. Individuals, too, are typically interested in self-esteem, recognition and appreciation, and personal development, in addition to their commitment to some public good. Within limits, the resulting mixture of purposes is morally acceptable, even desirable, insofar as it strengthens the overall pursuit of good ends (as is argued in Chapter 5). Beyond those limits, excessive concern for external goods, such as power

and prestige, distorts commitments to the internal goods of philanthropy in ways that cause harm (of the kind discussed in Chapter 4).

(3) "Standards of excellence" define better and worse ways of engaging in a practice and thereby partly define the practice itself. The standards of achievement in baseball, for example, define excellence in batting, fielding, and stealing bases, and partly define the nature and goals of the game. Similarly, philanthropic standards of excellence specify what it means to give well, and thereby partly define philanthropic practices. They specify how to help effectively, without waste and without making recipients feel degraded. They comprise all the norms, guidelines, virtues, and ideals that promote helping and caring relationships in philanthropy.

(4) As numerous individuals and groups pursue excellence in practices, "human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended." Talented engineers, for example, have extended conceptions of technological possibilities as they developed automobiles, computers, space shuttles. Similarly, creative philanthropists have widened the possibilities for caring within communities, as well as for achieving an array of other public goods. To a remarkable extent, the history of philanthropy is the history of social innovation.[36] Many components of modern contemporary society began as philanthropic experiments: public education, community hospitals and libraries, welfare services, and civil rights legislation, to name only a few.

Now that MacIntyre's definition of practices has been applied to philanthropy, consider an objection. I have suggested that philanthropy is largely a set of social practices in a normative or value-laden sense which introduces the ideas of internal goods and standards of excellence. Yet I began with a value-neutral definition of philanthropy as voluntary private giving for public purposes. Is this a contradiction, such that philanthropy is regarded in both neutral and normative terms?

In reply, we need to mark two distinctions. One is the difference between defining a *concept* and developing a normative *conception* of the things to which the concept applies. Defining how to operate a car is one thing; presenting a conception of safe driving is another. Similarly, defining philanthropic acts is one thing; conceiving of them as parts of good-promoting practices is another. The definition of philanthropy remains value-neutral in that it makes no assumptions about when philanthropy is good or bad. By contrast, the conception of philanthropic practices is normative in that it portrays much philanthropy as aimed at internal goods.

I am not claiming that all philanthropic activities are practices in MacIntyre's sense. Racist and violent activities which assault the public good are not social practices, with internal goods. If racists and terrorists disagree, we

can set forth reasons to show they are mistaken. Moreover, defining practices as value-laden does not imply that all practices are good on balance. A philanthropic practice might serve an internal good and yet also promote undesirable ends. Serving on a religious mission is a value-laden practice in that it is directed toward some aspect of the public good, but we might see more harm than good in particular forms of proselytizing.

The other distinction is between individual acts and the general practices they fall under. The definition of philanthropy focused on acts, whereas the normative conception applies to philanthropic practices as a whole. We can identify an act as falling under a practice without evaluating the act. To use an illustration from medicine, we can identify a heart operation as a physician's act which occurs within a practice whose internal good is health, and yet judge the act immoral because its ineptness killed the patient. Similarly, we can identify acts as falling under philanthropic practices without implying the acts are good. We can say, for example, that giving cash to a mendicant falls under the practice of alms giving, whose internal good is to meet basic needs of disadvantaged individuals. At the same time, we can criticize the gift as inappropriate if it is likely to be used for drugs and where a more effective gift would have been a donation to a hunger organization which would assure the money's proper use.

Our definition of philanthropy, then, remains value-neutral even though we are now beginning to develop a normative conception of desirable forms of philanthropy. The next step is to extend that conception by relating philanthropic practices to the virtues.

Virtues imply desirable patterns of action, but also much more. Most of them imply valuable patterns of emotions, attitudes, desires, utterances, reasoning, and relationships. For example, kindness is sensitive concern for the well-being of others as manifested in actions, words, reasoning, and feelings. Again, honesty is shown by avoiding cheating and stealing, motivated by respect for others; it is also shown by having respect for truth and evidence, contempt for shoddy thinking, and pride in communicating clearly. Virtues are not private merit badges. They are valuable ways of relating to people, practices, and communities. As such, they promote the good of both ourselves and others.

MacIntyre identifies three ways in which the virtues promote internal goods. First, they enable participants in practices to meet appropriate standards of excellence so as to achieve internal goods. MacIntyre makes this feature part of the definition of virtues: "a virtue is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods."[37] Standards of excellence differ

greatly among practices, which is not surprising since they partly define individual practices, but the virtues are important in all practices, albeit in somewhat different ways depending on the context. Such virtues as honesty and respect for people, for example, promote excellence in professions, parenting, playing sports—and philanthropy.

Some virtues motivate people to participate in philanthropy; for example, compassionateness, generosity, loyalty, and a sense of justice. Other virtues enable us to give effectively. Prudence and practical wisdom help us avoid wasting resources by inquiring carefully into which organizations are worthy of support. Kindness and humility enable us to avoid snobbery and condescending pity toward recipients. Courage and persistence are vital resources for volunteers seeking social reform. Honesty and integrity enable fundraisers to preserve public trust in organizations. And justice and fairness prevent corruption in organizations. As these examples suggest, the multiplicity of the virtues in philanthropy reflects the complexity of moral life.

Second, the virtues foster unity of character. Conflict and fragmentation permeate our lives. Some conflicts derive from threats to those long-term commitments which provide personal continuity and integrity. The virtues of self-discipline and self-knowledge enable us to confront temptation and weakness; courage enables us to meet danger; perseverence helps us to deal with discouragement. Other conflicts derive from tensions within our set of commitments. The virtues promote balance and integration among the various practices and relationships we commit ourselves to at any given time. For example, prudence and conscientiousness help us manage the competing demands of family, friends, education, work, political involvement, and philanthropic commitments. In general, the virtues provide guidance and coherence in the ongoing "narrative quest" (endeavor over time) to discover how to live well.[38]

Third, the virtues sustain moral traditions and communities.[39] A moral tradition is a valuable way of living which maintains an identifiable structure through time. Traditions are embedded in communities, including communities unified by geography, history, economics, religion, and involvement in common practices. By permeating communities, virtues sustain traditions through many generations.

Each of these roles for the virtues is important in understanding the moral status of philanthropy. Chapter 3 explores how virtues promote excellence in philanthropic practices. Chapter 6 explores how the virtues foster personal unity during the ongoing search for a fulfilling life. Chapter 4 discusses the harms done to individuals and communities in the absence of important virtues. And the following section in this chapter says more about the role of the virtues in sustaining communities. Before proceeding, however, we should note some additional ways in which the virtues enter into our lives, beyond the three MacIntyre discusses.

A fourth role of the virtues is to function as ideals for the kind of individuals we should aspire to become. Each virtue represents a partial ideal for character, and clusters of virtues define composite ideals. A composite ideal, for example, might be honesty and commitment to excellence combined with generosity toward others. In this way, ideals of virtue function as guides for our actions, commitments, and habit formation, even when they are not explicitly formulated.

Fifth, the virtues guide moral education. Of course, we also use simple rules of conduct in teaching morality: Be honest, Don't steal, Return favors with favors. But the point of citing these rules is largely to convey virtuous ideals of character and ways of relating to other people.

Sixth, as Edmund L. Pincoffs points out, the virtues "provide grounds for preference or for avoidance of persons," and shape the nuances of relationships.[40] Thus, we tend to seek out friendly and kind people and to avoid cruel and selfish people, and our relationships with trustworthy individuals are different from those with unreliable and dishonest individuals.

Seventh, as ideals, virtues guide organizations, as well as individuals.[41] Organizations, including philanthropic ones, can be said to act, assuming they have rules which authorize individuals to act for the organization as a whole. Those acts may or may not reflect patterns of social responsibility, justice, fairness, compassion, prudence, efficiency, collegiality, and fidelity to the group's mission.

One final distinction: If the virtues include all desirable traits of individuals and institutions, then we should differentiate between moral and nonmoral virtues.[42] Moral virtues such as honesty, compassionateness, and courage, involve direct concern for the interests of others (in addition to one's own). Other categories of virtue include aesthetic excellence (gracefulness, charm), intellectual excellence (intelligence, creativity, commitment to excellence), physical excellence (vigor, athletic skill), and religious sensitivity (a sense of the sacred). In what follows, "virtue" will refer to moral virtues, except when the context indicates otherwise.

Having drawn this distinction, we should appreciate that nonmoral virtues may take on moral significance in certain circumstances. As will become clear in the next chapter, the nonmoral virtues of reverence for the sacred, appreciation of beauty, and commitment to excellence in the professions all have moral significance when they motivate morally desirable forms of philanthropy. Moreover, just as moral and nonmoral virtues interact in philanthropy, so do moral and nonmoral purposes. Even when a philanthropic purpose is not moral per se, giving may have moral significance. Giving to

the arts, humanities, and sciences has clear moral implications, both in benefiting artists, humanists, and scientists and in promoting the well-being of everyone affected by their achievements.

Caring within Communities

Between 1940 and 1944, the 3,500 French villagers at Le Chambon rescued 6,000 Jews, most of them children, by sheltering them from the Nazis and smuggling many to Switzerland. They took enormous risks. Even though they gained the indulgence of a sympathetic Nazi officer, the entire village could have been massacred if even one citizen betrayed their efforts. No one did.

The community at Le Chambon was unified by ties of religion, geography, history, and local traditions. Most villagers were descendants of the Huguenots, a Protestant minority persecuted in Catholic France from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. The community was also united by ideals of benevolence, courage, perseverence, and integrity. As Philip Hallie writes, their "caring had to do in part with Saint John's commandment to love one another, but it also had to do with stubbornness, if you will, fortitude, a refusal to abjure . . . [their] commitment" to sheltering people whose pain they shared through empathy and with compassion.[43]

Many of the villagers did not regard their actions as heroic or even exceptionally virtuous. In their eyes they were simply responding to the plight of others: "How can you call us 'good'? We were doing what had to be done. Who else could help them? And what has all this to do with goodness? Things had to be done, that's all, and we happened to be there to do them. You must understand that it was the most natural thing in the world to help these people."[44] Whether or not they were religious, members of the community acknowledged a sense of responsibility to help strangers fleeing for their lives. But the felt responsibility was not experienced as an onerous burden. It was a spontaneous and natural response to need, and as such a paradigm of virtue.

André Trocmé was the local pastor who led the villagers' nonviolent resistance to the Nazis. During the years before the war, Trocmé had articulated an ethic of service centered on a distinction between giving oneself and merely giving things. Hallie explains:

> [W]hen you give somebody a thing without giving yourself, you degrade both parties by making the receiver utterly passive and by making yourself a benefactor standing there to receive thanks—and even sometimes obedience—as repayment. But when you give yourself, nobody is degraded—in fact, both parties are elevated by a shared joy. What you give creates new, vigorous life, instead of arrogance on the one hand and passivity on the other.[45]

The distinction between giving oneself and merely giving things is not the distinction between volunteering time and donating money; the villagers gave themselves in both ways. Instead, it is the distinction between giving with care and giving impersonally. However good its consequences, impersonal giving threatens relationships based on moral equality. By contrast, giving with care—with good will and good judgment—enables us to bring our lives into creative relationships based on a sense of shared humanity.

Philanthropy at Chambon expressed existing ties of community and also widened community by creating new caring relationships. A pre-existing sense of community became focused in doing something of moral consequence together. Existing community organizations were transformed in order to help people fleeing for their lives, as well as to protect the villagers. The Boy Scouts, for example, together with some thirteen Bible study groups, were transformed into a communications network which enabled the community to respond quickly to Nazi raids.

As Le Chambon illustrates, philanthropic caring within communities unites people in relationships that strengthen, enlarge, and partly define community.[46] Precisely what is meant by "caring" and "community"?

"Caring" can refer to several things: an attitude, the specific virtue of benevolence, a more generic virtue of moral concern manifested in all the virtues, or relationships based on mutual moral concern. After briefly distinguishing these, I will rely on context to indicate which is meant.

As an attitude, caring is positive regard for the good of someone or something. To care "about" persons (or animals) is to desire their well-being for their sake, rather than solely for benefits to us. To care "for" individuals is actively to promote their well-being or to be prepared to. Their well-being is by itself a reason to act on their behalf, without having to look further for some gain to us.

As the Chambonnais remind us, caring is a sympathetic response to the needs of others. It implies understanding their situation, desires, and beliefs. It also implies a readiness to help if needed. It is shown in a variety of emotions: sympathy, compassion, solicitude, fear for people who are in danger, worry when they are in trouble, hope for success in their endeavors, delight when they succeed, joy when they return our love, and remorse when we fail to offer needed help. And it is shown in beneficent acts, that is, acts motivated by the desire to help and which actually succeed in helping others.[47]

Caring, then, is more than conduct, even though conduct is often its decisive indicator. Caring involves sensitivity, understanding, emotions, and good judgment—aspects of character that are not reducible to obeying simple rules of Do and Do Not. All aspects of the personality are evoked in connecting our lives with others. That is why giving with care is giving oneself.

As the specific virtue of benevolence, caring is the virtue of manifesting the attitude of caring in morally desirable ways. It implies attending to the needs and desires of others, showing compassion for their misfortune, delighting in their good fortune, being kind and generous. In a wide-scoped form, it is a general attitude of active good will toward humanity; in its focused form, it is directed toward particular individuals or groups.

As a generic virtue, caring is moral concern for persons and animals. This is the thematic sense used in the title of this book and that of the present chapter. Beyond just wishing others well, it is a disposition to help when one can, together with a tendency to help effectively. Giving with care means giving in a concerned and careful manner, with good will and intelligence. As such, it is an umbrella virtue which alludes to the full spectrum of philanthropic virtues explored in Chapter 2.

Caring relationships are between two or more people who care (in the generic sense) for each other. Caring is not always reciprocated with complete parity. Parents caring for their newborn baby constitute one paradigm of a caring relationship, even though of necessity it is an unequal relationship. Normally, however, the caring person hopes that the caring will eventually be reciprocated, even when the hope is not fulfilled: regrettably, a beneficiary turns a cold eye toward a benefactor; tragically, an infant dies before it can return its parents' love.

Can philanthropy involve caring relationships? Isn't it more a matter of helping strangers based on one-way positive attitudes, by contrast with family and friendships where talk of relationships is straightforward?

To begin with, much philanthropy is connected with family, friends, and other face-to-face interactions. Much philanthropy is engaged in to honor a family member, living or dead, or offered on behalf of an entire family. Moreover, many philanthropic interactions in local communities are a direct extension of family relationships; for example, participating in the Parent Teachers Association, church groups, and amateur sports. In these and other ways, philanthropy provides ways to express in a public forum the caring relationships rooted in private life.

In addition, philanthropy creates new personal relationships. On the one hand, there are new friendships to be made with people we help. Mary MacAnena, who for years has served meals to homeless people at a community park near my college, makes a point of seeking friendship with the people she helps. Again, in serving in a Big Brother or Big Sister program, volunteers become surrogate parents and siblings. On the other hand, volunteers working on behalf of common causes tend to develop ties of friendship. Mary is a friend (and inspiration) to hundreds of students who over the years have volunteered to help with her work.

Admittedly, when direct interactions are not possible, prospects for intimate caring relationships diminish. That may create problems. The increasingly impersonal nature of large organizations and mass movements in philanthropy, as elsewhere, is a cause for genuine concern. United Way, for example, has responded by allowing donors to specify which programs their money is used for, thereby strengthening personal identification with causes. Nevertheless, even when we do not know beneficiaries or other contributors, giving can connect our lives in caring ways with others. Why do we contribute to a particular political party or social cause? Because we share its goals with many other individuals, givers and receivers alike, with whom we identify. In contributing to *our* country, state, or city, we sustain ties to people we care about, even though we do not know them personally.

What about giving to strangers with whom we have no particular affiliation? Is there a caring relationship when we mail a check to help victims of an earthquake or tornado? There is a relationship of shared humanity grounded in faith that our efforts will be appreciated, and in that sense our caring is reciprocated. In giving, we connect our lives with theirs in ways that express and affirm human kinship. A gift shows they matter to us. Our capacity to care for strangers is limited, but it exists and it is important. It can also be cultivated, and one way is through philanthropy.

Some gifts to strangers have an intimacy all their own. Donations of blood resonate with symbolic meaning.[48] So do gifts of body organs. At the same time, the scope of these gifts—their range of possible recipients—is enormous. The donor does not know who will receive the blood, or even whether it will be sold or discarded before it can be used. Even when the gift is not used, however, there is a symbolic relationship: donors hope their gift will help, and they naturally hope the gift will be appreciated; they also express a kinship with people in need of life-saving resources.

Gifts of blood, organs, and emergency funds have strong symbolic meaning precisely because they are offered to strangers. They express our desire to help people because they are people, rather than because they stand in any particular relationship to us. This meaning is not sentimental fluff; it is as palpable as the gifts in which it is embedded.

Philanthropic caring is not always aimed directly at persons. The immediate target may be an ideal, cause, practice, organization, animals, or the environment. There is still concern for the well-being of what we care about, though the type of well-being differs according to the object. The well-being

of persons is self-fulfillment. The well-being of animals is their flourishing in the life appropriate to them. The well-being of a community, cause, institution, or practice is its continuance and improvement. And the well-being of ideals means their widespread acceptance and implementation.

Even in these cases, caring relationships with persons are often indirectly involved. To care for a cause or an organization typically implies caring about people affected by them. A gift to a hospital or a medical research foundation is more than impersonal support to promote scientific knowledge. It is an expression of concern for people who will benefit from those organizations. In addition, there are the relationships among individuals who share a commitment to practices and institutions. Commitments to music or historical preservation, for example, link people together in shared endeavors and mutual care. There are also relationships, however formal, with people who represent organizations and groups. Even an acknowledgment letter from a representative of an organization to which we mailed a donation is a minimum form of reciprocity, which explains why its absence prompts resentment.

Turn now to the idea of community, which is a value-laden concept. A community is any group of people joined by shared caring, both reciprocal caring in which they care about the well-being of members of the group and confluent caring in which they participate together in practices on the basis of caring for the same activities, goals, or ideals.[49] For example, religious communities are identified by confluent commitments to religious ideals as well as by reciprocal caring among church members. Professional communities unite people with shared goals and also evoke reciprocal caring among colleagues. Neighborhood communities combine shared interests (such as interest in neighborhood safety and beauty) with mutual concern for the well-being of the members. Many philanthropic organizations are themselves communities which serve wider communities. Widest of all is the "moral community" that includes all morally concerned humans, past, present, and future. Next in scope is the "global community" comprising all people presently alive. Then come societies and the smaller communities they integrate: intimate small groups (families, a circle of friends), more impersonal large-scale structures (such as governments), and a variety of intermediate groups serving special needs. Philanthropic organizations generally function as intermediate or "mediating groups" which link individuals and families with larger social structures.[50]

Communities, including philanthropic ones, provide a variety of contexts for fostering virtues. Churches, scouts, amateur athletics, educational facilities, and service organizations are examples of groups that help in developing virtues and promoting caring relationships which sustain communities. Obviously not all communities are equally effective in this regard, just as not all are good overall.[51] Fully desirable communities—the ones in which the virtues are most successfully developed in individuals and organizations—have six features.[52]

First, fully desirable communities generate extensive networks of reciprocal caring relationships. Typically, individuals have some awareness that others return their caring. This makes it rational to give to strangers with the hope that our caring will be reciprocated even when we are unable to determine whether it is.

Second, fully desirable communities are just, in that they do not unfairly discriminate. They may set eligibility requirements that restrict membership, but those requirements cannot be based on prejudice. They recognize all people as having equal rights to participate in and benefit from the wider society in which the community is embedded. With respect to political societies, justice forbids gross economic inequalities unless the minimal needs of all members are met.

Third, a desirable community is characterized by widespread appreciation of the community. That means valuing its practices, institutions, traditions, ideals, and norms. It implies cherishing the community's heritage, hoping for its future, and desiring to promote its present possibilities. These attitudes need not be universal, but they must be widespread.

Fourth, in desirable communities there are numerous valuable activities and few undesirable ones. The activities may be political, economic, professional, vocational—or philanthropic, as in giving together. Cooperation, together with awareness of the importance of that cooperation, is essential.

Fifth, there is widespread faith and trust in the prospects for the community which evoke full participation of community members. Without these, all forms of social cooperation are at risk.[53] In particular, without trust in communities philanthropic giving loses its hope and its point. At the same time, when philanthropic giving is value-centered and virtue-guided, it is a major forum for strengthening social trust.[54]

Sixth, there is extensive rational public discourse and shared reflection about the goals and activities of a group. Moral discourse and reasoning are especially important. Philanthropic organizations improve their chances of contributing to the public good insofar as they maintain open dialogue with their constituencies and the public. Insofar as they contribute to public discourse about moral issues, they strengthen the conceptual framework essential for maintaining caring within communities. A vocabulary of the virtues is a large part of that framework.

Moral discourse has eroded in American society, in the view of Robert Bellah and his co-authors of the sociology-based study *Habits of the Heart*. The book's title was borrowed from a phrase used by Alexis de Tocqueville to refer to the mental and moral dispositions which unify a society. One such habit of the heart, observed by Tocqueville during his famous visit to the United States in 1831, is the tendency to form and participate in voluntary

organizations. According to Tocqueville, this tendency counterbalances the danger of excessive individualism in isolating people from the wider community. According to Bellah, this danger threatens the very community which makes individual freedom possible.

Bellah occasionally portrays Americans as behaving selfishly: "We have put our own good, as individuals, as groups, as a nation, ahead of the common good."[55] His main thesis, however, is that Americans suffer from a kind of conceptual selfishness: "If there are vast numbers of a selfish, narcissistic 'me generation' in America, we did not find them, but we certainly did find that the language of individualism, the primary American language of self-understanding, limits the ways in which people think."[56] During their study of some two hundred individuals, Bellah and his colleagues repeatedly heard descriptions of family, work, and community involvement cast in self-centered terms. Americans' primary language in thinking about values is the language of personal success through material rewards ("utilitarian individualism"), together with personal pleasures through satisfying preferences ("expressive individualism"). Even in portraying their moral commitments, they emphasized individual choices rather than responsibility. Their conceptual world centers in "lifestyle enclaves" of private consumption rather than in public community.

Bellah urges us to rethink individualism. Its valuable aspects, especially personal initiative, self-reliance, and respect for individual dignity and freedom, should be retained. Personal initiative, however, needs to be understood as exercised in and through community. That understanding can be fostered by returning to two traditions deeply embedded in American culture. One is the republican tradition of active democratic citizenship. The other is the biblical tradition which has kept alive the ideal of a compassionate and just society. Reclaiming the moral languages of these two traditions will enable us to reconceive individualism as a product of communities and in turn be fulfilled by giving back to communities.

I have some sympathy for Bellah's recommendations (even though the moral language he proposes is not altogether clear). At the same time, given our increasingly pluralistic culture, it would be parochial to recommend a biblical emphasis to the neglect of Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist scriptures and the rich literature of nonsectarian humanism. If we are to communicate across religious boundaries, as well as reconcile individualism and community, we need to emphasize what is common or at least overlapping among our moral languages, and do so within a pluralistic world view which is tolerant of alternative religious and moral perspectives. A first step in that direction is to become more fully acquainted with the language of the virtues.

2

Virtues in Giving

> Actions expressing virtue are noble, and aim at what is noble. Hence the generous person . . . will aim at what is noble in his giving and will give correctly; for he will give to the right people, the right amounts, at the right time, and all the other things that are implied by correct giving. He will do this, moreover, with pleasure or [at any rate] without pain. . . .
>
> —Aristotle

> [V]irtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is.
>
> —Iris Murdoch

ARISTOTLE CONCEIVED OF the virtues as tendencies to hit the mean, that is, the reasonable middle ground between the vices of too much (excess) and too little (deficiency). He classified the virtues according to the kinds of emotions, desires, and actions they govern. Thus, courage is the mean between cowardice and foolhardiness when confronting danger and experiencing fear; temperance is the mean between overindulgence and apathy in satisfying the appetites; pride is the mean between vanity and a sense of inferiority when making self-appraisals or feeling self-esteem. According to Aristotle, there are two virtues in giving wealth, depending on one's economic resources. *Eleutheriotes*, sometimes translated as "liberality," is the virtue of openhanded givers who have modest resources. *Megaloprepeia*, translated as "magnificence," is the corresponding virtue of wealthy individuals who are able to make lavish gifts. For liberality the extremes are wastefulness and stinginess, whereas for magnificence the extremes are vainglory and pettiness.

Liberality and magnificence are usually understood as two dimensions of the virtue of generosity. Yet the word "generosity" is not a perfect translation of Aristotle's terms. In its ordinary sense, "generosity" means benevolent giving beyond what is required or customary. By contrast, Aristotle had in mind the far more robust idea of *correct giving*, whether on modest or on lavish scales. He meant voluntary giving to worthy recipients, in fitting amounts, on suitable occasions, for apt reasons, with appropriate attitudes and emo-