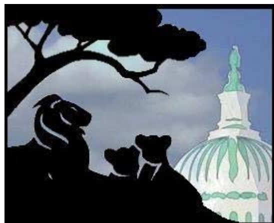
–EDITED TRANSCRIPT–



HUDSON INSTITUTE's

BRADLEY CENTER

FOR PHILANTHROPY AND CIVIC RENEWAL

presents a discussion of

Being Young and On the Front in the Nonprofit Sector

Wednesday, August 5, 2009 ▪ 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.
Hudson Institute ▪ Betsy and Walter Stern Conference Center ▪ 1015 15th Street, NW ▪ Suite 600

On August 5, 2009, Hudson Institute's Bradley Center launched a discussion for summer interns and young staff with a story: In Henri Barbusse's 1918 short story "The Eleventh," a young administrator at a luxurious high-end sanitarium is tasked with its most honored charitable tradition, admitting ten AND ONLY TEN "vagabonds" off the streets to enjoy its lavish accommodations for thirty days. He must turn the eleventh away. Is this task charitable at all, or is it part of some "evil deed," the young man asks himself.

So, what's it like to be young and on the front in the nonprofit sector? What should this young man do? These questions and more were the topic of the August 5 panel discussion, featuring **MINDY HERNANDEZ**, formerly of the Carnegie Corporation and currently with Ideas42; **EVAN SPARKS**, of the Philanthropy Roundtable; **MELISSA JOHNSON**, of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy; and the Bradley Center's own **KRISTA SHAFFER**. Hudson Institute Senior Fellow **AMY KASS** served as the discussion's moderator.

PROGRAM AND PANEL

11:45 a.m.	Registration, lunch buffet
12:00 p.m.	Welcome by Hudson Institute's **KRISTA SHAFFER**
12:10	Panel discussion
	KRISTA SHAFFER, Hudson Institute's Bradley Center
	MELISSA JOHNSON, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy
	MINDY HERNANDEZ, Ideas42
	EVAN SPARKS, The Philanthropy Roundtable
	AMY KASS (moderator), Hudson Institute
1:10	Question-and-answer session
2:00	Adjournment

FURTHER INFORMATION

This transcript was prepared from an audio recording and edited by Krista Shaffer. To request further information on this event or the Bradley Center, please visit our web site at http://pcr.hudson.org, contact Hudson Institute at (202) 974-2424, or send an e-mail to Krista Shaffer at Krista@hudson.org.

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Panelist Biographies

Mindy Hernandez is a senior research specialist for Princeton University and Ideas42 (Harvard University), and a 2009 Innovator-in-Residence for the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED). Prior to her work at Princeton, Mindy was the research director of the Aspen Institute's Education and Society Program. Prior to that, she was a program associate in the education division at Carnegie Corporation of New York. Hernandez also managed the literacy initiative of the Neighborhood Tutoring Program of For Love of Children (FLOC), an Washington DC-based organization that serves at-risk children in educational, family, and community matters. Hernandez' background includes work as a legislative correspondent and legislative assistant in the office of U.S. Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA), a stint in the AmeriCorps VISTA program, and a summer spent conducting research in Kolkata on the gap between sex trafficking legislation and its implementation. Hernandez holds an undergraduate degree in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University and a master's degree in Public Affairs-Domestic and Social Policy from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Melissa Johnson is the field director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy. Previously, she served as program officer at the Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro. She provided technical assistance to nonprofits on a statewide level at the North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits. Additionally, Melissa has seeded the development of several giving circles and worked with several national initiatives dedicated to grantmaking with a racial equity and social justice lens. A native North Carolinian, Melissa holds a B.A. in English and Sociology from Wake Forest University and a master's degree in social work from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is currently a member and former chair of the national board of EPIP (Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy), former board member of *ncyt* (North Carolina's Youth for Tomorrow), and a strong advocate for next generation leadership in the nonprofit sector.

Krista Shaffer is the research fellow of Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal. Prior to joining Hudson Institute in January 2003, she worked at the American Enterprise Institute as staff and research assistant to resident scholar Joshua Muravchik and the New Atlantic Initiative. Krista is a former Fulbright Scholar to Austria, where she studied Austrian attitudes and policy toward the European Union and the EU expansion debate. Krista did graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, and holds a B.A. in government and German from Franklin & Marshall College. Originally from northwestern Pennsylvania, Krista still helps out on her family's farm in Johnsonburg (Elk County).

Evan Sparks is the managing editor of *Philanthropy* magazine at the Philanthropy Roundtable. He was previously an associate editor at the American Enterprise Institute. Evan's articles and reviews have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes.com*, *The Weekly Standard*, *The American*, *TCS Daily*, and other outlets. He is a Washington Fellow at the National Review Institute and a writer for the National Geographic Bee. Prior to joining AEI, Evan coordinated Hurricane Katrina relief at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, where he received his B.A. in political science and history from Tulane University.

Proceedings

KRISTA SHAFFER: Good afternoon! I'm Krista Shaffer, and I'm a research fellow with Hudson Institute's Bradley Center for Philanthropy and Civic Renewal. Bill Schambra and I welcome you and thank you all for being here with us today for what we hope will be an interesting and thought-provoking discussion of the short story "The Eleventh" by Henri Barbusse, and the questions it raises for young people in our line of work.

For those of you who haven't been with us before or are unfamiliar with our work, the Bradley Center was founded here at Hudson Institute just over six years ago, and still has its original staff – namely, Bill Schambra and myself. We are a proud grantee of the Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation out in Milwaukee – they support us in our work. And our mission is this: We aim to encourage foundations and charitable donors to direct more resources toward small, local, often faith-based grassroots associations. The second part of our mission is, we critically examine the current giving practices of American foundations, which tend to be, we find, directed toward large, expert driven projects that often undercut, rather than support, small civic associations.

Today's discussion carries on our work in several ways. First of all, it's a discussion – we like to discuss. In this sector, we find that's not always the case. Second, we hope to hear from people who don't always have a say in things, but who are by no means without something to say. And in that regard, I want to thank Bill (Schambra) for encouraging me to do this, and thank Amy Kass for agreeing to moderate our discussion. And I also want to say that we hope to hear from you all around the table – I'm really glad to see so many friends and familiar faces, and I can't wait to hear what you have to say.

Now I'll introduce our panel and get things started.

In our work over the years, the Bradley Center has often come together with another organization, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP), to hold discussions on issues we both find are important to the sector. As a matter of fact, just a few months ago we held what turned out to be a very good discussion of NCRP's latest publication, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*—which may sound familiar because you have just found the executive summary of the document on your seat or on the table in front of you.[1]

It was out of that discussion that the idea for today's discussion emerged, and we're delighted to have Melissa Johnson, NCRP's field director, with us to consider the perspective the *Criteria* offer to us as we think about our work – although I must note that "young people" are not one of the marginalized communities to which NCRP seeks to draw support, maybe because we can fend for ourselves? But Melissa (Johnson) is, as her bio says, a strong advocate for the next generation leadership in the nonprofit sector.

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[1] The executive summary of *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* can be found on the NCRP's web site at http://www.ncrp.org/paib. A complete, edited transcript of the Bradley Center's discussion of *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*, held on May 28, 2009, is online at http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=hudson_upcoming_events&id=665

We also have with us Mindy Hernandez, who works as a senior research specialist for Princeton University and a project with Harvard University called Ideas42. Mindy previously worked with the Aspen Institute, and before that, with the Carnegie Corporation.

Joining us is also Evan Sparks, the new managing editor of *Philanthropy* magazine for the Philanthropy Roundtable – thank you, Evan!

And finally, our moderator will be Amy Kass, Hudson Institute senior fellow and also a senior lecturer in the humanities at the University of Chicago. For the past several years, Amy has led many, many discussions such as the one we'll have today, and I hope it's as much fun for her as it will be for us. Amy has edited two anthologies on giving and philanthropy, both of which I highly recommend. Today's text can be found in her most recent volume, *Giving Well, Doing Good*. Both books are published by Indiana University Press.[2]

So, I'll turn the discussion over to Amy (Kass), who is going to provide a short introduction to the text and then launch right into a question for our panel, and into the discussion. Amy?

AMY KASS: Thank you very much. What you neglected to say, Krista, is that I represent in a different demographic! (Laughter.)

Okay, in line with Hudson Institute's mission, actually, using a story to launch a discussion is what we call thinking out of the box, and that is what we're really inviting you all to do.

For those of you who like a little biography with your literature, let me tell you a little bit about Henri Barbusse, our author. He was born in 1873, and died in 1935. He was an ardent anti-imperialist. His war experiences in Germany and Russia—he fought in the October Revolution—were in no small part responsible for his fame as a writer, as they both fuelled his imagination and loosened his pen, which he subsequently applied as an editor, journalist, and as a rather successful author. "The Eleventh" is one of the more provocative stories, I would think, to help us think together about being young and on the front in the nonprofit sector; it seems to be about people in your positions.

To refresh your memories about the story, which I hope you have read in full, let me give a very brief summary: On the first day of each month at exactly nine o'clock the doors of a luxurious house—sometimes it is called a palace; I imagine it is something like a super-well appointed retirement or convalescent home—are opened to the first ten poor people in line, people who "since the night before had been washed up against the wall of the house." No more, no less are admitted. No questions are asked. Only one rule obtains: the ten must leave when the month expires and never return. But during the month's stay they enjoy the life and the privileges of the super-wealthy, regular residents of the palace, really an earthly paradise.

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[2] Amy Kass, editor, *Giving Well, Doing Good: Readings for Thoughtful Philanthropists* (Indiana University Press, December 2007); Amy Kass, editor, *The Perfect Gift: The Philanthropic Imagination in Poetry and Prose* (Indiana University Press, July 2002)

A young employee, also the narrator of the story, was given the job of opening the door. He describes how this came about as well as his initial reaction to it thus—this is the beginning of the story I am quoting:

> The Master, who had a pale head with long marble-like hair, and whose spectacles shone in solemnity, came to a standstill on his morning round opposite my little table at the door of Room 28, and condescended to announce to me that I was henceforth appointed to let in the ten poor people who every month were admitted to the hospitality of the House. Then he went on, so tall and so white among the assiduous flock of students that they seemed to be carrying a famous statuette from room to room.
>
> I stammered the thanks which he did not hear. My 25-year-old heart felt a happy pride in reflecting that I had been chosen to preside in one of the noblest traditions of the House in which, a humble assistant, I was wandering lornly among wealthy invalids.

Gradually, however, our young employee begins to notice, eventually exclusively to notice, the unlucky eleventh person, the one – only a step behind the rest – in whose face he shuts the door each month. He says, "I glimpsed in a flash… all the effort he had made to get there, even if too late, and how much he too deserved to come in!" and "He seemed to me the most pitiable case." The young man then begins to see himself "smitten in the person of the one condemned."

Finally, after twelve such encounters, he concludes he is taking part in an "abominable injustice."

> Truly there was no sense in dividing all those poor folk like that into friends and enemies. There was only one arbitrary reason—abstract, not admissible; a matter of a figure, a sign. At bottom, this was neither just nor even logical.

So to avoid his own further complicity in evil he goes to the master and begs for another position.

That's the story.

There are three moral centers of gravity in this story. One is what happens to the young assistant; the second, the experience of those who are admitted and those who are locked out; and the third, of course, is the tradition of the house itself. We should and probably will talk about all of them. But let's begin closer to the dilemma that this young employee faced. For in fact, before he made his own final decision—and the final decision was his own—to go to the master of the house, he came to consult you, each one of you, a good friend and a confidant. Though you are a bit more broadly experienced than he, you, too, he knows very well, share his concern about the plight of the poor and disadvantaged.

So, the question is quite simple. We'll begin with our panelists, some of whom have prepared remarks, but the question is: what advice would you give him, and why, presumably?

MELISSA JOHNSON: Thank you, Amy (Kass)! I'm very happy to be here, and to see a lot of colleagues and friends, both from my own organization and from other local groups I know. I'm particularly excited that this conversation is structured around young people in the sector,

because that's something that I have been a strong advocate for both statewide in North Carolina, my home state, but also nationally.

To give you a little bit more insight into my perspective, which you will hear in my advice for the young narrator, let me say this: In the State of North Carolina, I was very active statewide for Youth for Tomorrow (NCYT), an advocacy organization for nonprofits across the state, and really built a voice for young people in the sector there while I was both working with social service agencies but also with foundations in two of the largest metropolitan areas there. Here in Washington DC, I work both locally and nationally; I am a board member of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy, whose mission it is to support the next generation of grantmakers—those working within grantmaking institutions—to advance effective social justice philanthropy. I have also done some consulting work with Resource Generation, a national organization that is targeted toward educating and providing tools for young people of inherited wealth; Resource Generation has a wealth of knowledge and a curriculum around the topic of the intersection of class, power, and privilege, and how that may affect both the task of giving away money and the viewpoint of those who have money to give away.

I jotted down a couple of brief observations about "The Eleventh" while I was reading it. First, I think it is fabulous that there is a young person, a twenty-five-year-old, who is given this really daunting task—both because it's an honored tradition in this organization but also because he is given it with only one rule. So, if you look at it in a more positive light, it is both a privilege and an opportunity that was not expected, but also a position with some autonomy, if you read between the lines about what to do with this task that he is given.

The second is, although the sanitarium is not technically an institutional grantmaker, which my organization focuses on, it is a charitable organization, and the act is one of philanthropy. So in what I have to share and the advice I give, the values of my organization will shine through.

Thirdly, I think that it is important to note that it is obvious, by both of the descriptors used in the short story, that this is a luxurious place. So of all sanitariums, this perhaps is the most elite, and we can make a clear distinction between haves and have-nots in this story.

Also, I found a little piece of trivia as I was reading through this story and thinking about a sanitarium, and folks getting it confused with a *sanatorium*, and what that means. One of the most well known sanitariums actually has direct connections to philanthropy—the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, founded in the late 1800s. As John Harvey Kellogg, his brother Will Keith Kellogg, and C.W. Post began to hone their brands of cereal and build the industry, they took over and built this sanitarium and made it into a health and wellness center. There were only three thousand people there at the time when it really started to flourish, but there is some direct connection—although far reaching—to the actual discussion that we are having in the philanthropic field today.

Let me turn to my advice to the narrator. First, I would advise this young man to think about why he is feeling so torn. What makes him feel empathy or compassion? What is it about turning away the eleventh that really creates the conflict? What makes it an "abominable injustice"? What is the series of errors—was it seeing the person's face? Was it knowing that there was

always going to be another person at the door? Was it just that there were only ten that he was able to let in?

As a young person in the field you are often found in places, especially in the first years of your career, where you have the opportunity to actually put what you've learned or studied or talked about into practice. It is often that you find questions such as these I'm posing. They can seem overwhelming. They can seem challenging to your moral compass as you knew it as a student or an intern. And I'm here to tell you that that never goes away. Even after twelve years of experience in the field, there are still those complex questions.

What we hope is that you develop a broader learning framework through which to gain clarity on both what your professional moral compass would be and how you would like to insert yourself as a change agent in your work or your field.

The second thing that I would suggest to the young man is that he consider staying in the post and exploring what avenues of change are possible. How can he identify small ways to introduce changes in the tradition as the new young person with this responsibility? Is there an option of talking to the master of the house, of building ways in which to make the program more meaningful for the ten that actually do get in the door? How can he make this experience more humane for the ten who are inside? Perhaps he could ask their names; in the story it says that the ten aren't asked anything, not even their name. What if he began having conversations with the ten—asking their names, their ages, where they come from, and what actually brought them to their current state and position?

Then, of course, you would have to actually talk to the master of the house to do this. And so, since the program is a really honored and obviously charitable tradition, there had to be an charitable impulse that led to its design in the first place. The young man can't necessarily assume what that was, but he could ask more about the history of the program, who designed it, and who provides the funds for it. Why was there a desire in the beginning to help the less fortunate?

Then, he should ask the master why he (the young man) was appointed to the post.

I was the only program officer for the community foundation in Greensboro, North Carolina, and my first official turn at representing the organization externally was a meeting at the chamber of commerce about a privately funded initiative our foundation had invested in. I had done some reading and had had brief conversations with our CEO and vice president about the beginnings of this program, but I really had no insight into why it was chosen.

At the meeting, I listened to the presentation and got very angry—because of how things were referred to, and how people were called or termed in the conversation. I didn't even ask a question, just because I wanted to calm myself down. After the meeting had ended, I went back to my organization and told our CEO that that meeting had made me angry, and I asked him why we were investing in such work. He replied, "Your thought process is the same as our organizations'—we have struggled for the last eighteen months with the development of that

program and how to really bring along our partners in understanding how to make it more of a just process."

So the CEO was actually testing me to see what buttons were going to be pushed for me, and also what I might come up with about how we could change things, with my fresher perspective. And I would advise the young man to ask the master why he appointed him in the first place, and to share his perspective on things.

To conclude, there are just a couple of other questions I have about the story. If the narrator decides to leave his post, what would his next post be inside the sanitarium? Will he build up more skills and then take what he is learning inside the institution and use it to create more change on the outside? How deep does his compassion for the eleventh go?

I would encourage the narrator to think about a quote that is currently attached to my e-mail signature; I think it points directly to the difference between equity and equality. It was Martin Luther King, Jr. who said that "philanthropy is commendable but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice that make the philanthropy necessary." I think that would be my best advice.

EVAN SPARKS: Thank you, Amy (Kass) and (Krista Shaffer), for inviting me to be here today. It's a real pleasure to join you all. I'm very new to the world of philanthropy; I started less than a month ago as managing editor of *Philanthropy* magazine. So I am looking forward to participating in discussions like this, because I have a lot to learn about the sector; and I'm very much looking forward to participating today. I should also add that I don't speak on behalf of the Philanthropy Roundtable or its member donors; I am speaking for myself.

I'd like to suggest in my remarks today that there is a reading of this story that is trying to get through the moral blocks that Barbusse puts on it. He presents us with a striking tale of an odious task: turning down requests for aid from exceedingly needy people. With a few exceptions, these supplicants have lost even their dignity as they implore the young man's aid. Moreover, the master's arbitrary rules—ten people only who can stay for one month only—are not exactly what most people would call philanthropic best practices. In fact, I don't think any organization or watchdog group would endorse this sort of giving. The young man who is compelled to close the door in the face of the old, crippled, weary, bedraggled, deformed, and sick is a sympathetic character, and on first reading, I am inclined to confirm the young man's sense that his work is an "abominable injustice" and applaud his request to be relieved of his assignment.

But on subsequent readings, a pertinent fact becomes clearer. The young man is not the philanthropist in the story. The young man argues that the eleventh person (and presumably all the other supplicants) "deserved" to come in as much as the first ten. While there is no reason to believe that the first ten supplicants had any more merit than the others, we must remember whose garden the young man thought they deserved to enter. It is the master's garden. Is it not the master's prerogative to determine its use? Who is this young man, and who am I, his counselor, to second-guess the master's intentions?

Look at it from the master's perspective: He operates a convalescence center for the wealthy. Perhaps more than ten "derelicts" would overwhelm the paying patients. Perhaps they would be too many for the sanitarium and its staff to handle. Perhaps the master can afford no more than ten, and decided that "first come, first served"—a long-established principle in providing services—is the fairest way to accommodate his quota.

The story is told with a focus on the eleventh. A more balanced assessment might include a closer look at the perspective of the ten, who enjoy the master's largesse, freely given. The young man acknowledges early in the story that the master's philanthropy is given with "no favors, no exceptions, no injustices; one rule only." Regardless of the master's intentions, they are *his* reasons, and the gift is *his* prerogative, not the young man's. Does the philanthropist not have freedom to exercise his intent on his own terms and subject to his own limitations?

Now, consider a new gloss on this story—an allegorical interpretation that is not unreasonable. Barbusse himself sets up this interpretation by describing the master as a tall, old man with long white hair, and by setting the scene in a glistening white palace with a garden. Admittance to his private garden is given without respect for merit or righteousness (or a lack thereof) but simply according to what seems—to those who are not the master—to be an entirely arbitrary criterion. So is the master an allegory for God?

It is perhaps worthwhile to quote John Calvin in this, the five hundredth year since his birth. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin argues for the doctrine of divine election. The source of election is in the entirely good judgments of an entirely good God. "The human mind, when it hears this doctrine, cannot restrain its petulance, but boils and rages as if aroused by the sound of a trumpet," Calvin wrote. This reminds me of our young friend's response in the story.

We can go back even further to see a defense of this divine prerogative in choice—to Augustine, who wrote, "Of course His purpose in acting is to heal all things; but He acts on His own judgment, and does not take His procedure in healing from the sick man."

Barbusse has given us a transparent allegory or analogy for God, and, in the superficial response to the story through the moral laws that Barbusse has written it in, a testament to God's arbitrariness and perhaps even cruelty. A second look, at an angle to Barbusse's tone, may put the master in a better light and shift the focus from those who are excluded to those who are let in. A second look would also lead me to say to the young man: "If you cannot continue in the 'series of errors,' so be it, but don't be so presumptuous as to declare the master's philanthropy 'evil.'"

I'm looking forward to the remainder of the discussion.

MINDY HERNANDEZ: Thank you for inviting me—it's great to be here. First, there's one thing I am curious about: Could have a show of hands—who here is "on the front" of the nonprofit world?

AUDIENCE (several voices): Define "on the front."

MINDY HERNANDEZ: You are on the frontline; you interact with the people with whom your nonprofit works, doing direct service. (A few hands among the fifty people in attendance go up.) Okay. And I'm wondering who here identifies with the assistant's role? (A few hands go up.) There are some brave souls out there who feel that way. Okay.

One thing that I think Krista (Shaffer) left out of my bio is that I used to work more on the direct-service side. I started a tutoring program in Puerto Rico, and I worked on a literacy program in Washington DC. So I definitely identify with the assistant.

I should also say that I definitely speak for both Harvard and Princeton universities in all of my comments, and especially the Carnegie Corporation of New York…

I am totally kidding. (Laughter.)

I read "The Eleventh" as a story of disconnects. I'll just go through some of the obvious ones. There is this clear disconnect between the assistant and the master. The assistant doesn't completely understand the master's motivation; I think he thinks he does, and then he realizes that he doesn't, in fact. He thinks that the master's motivation might be evil.

There is this clear disconnect between the assistant and the population that he is letting in. He knows nothing about them, and yet he makes these attributions about them. They are so happy to spend this month in paradise, he thinks. Well, are they, or are they uncomfortable? The eleventh is so sad and distraught not to be there. Everyone is so desperate. He is making these attributions, and he actually knows very little about them.

Then there are disconnects that are less obvious. There is a disconnect between the smaller, petty, arbitrary kindness of letting these ten in, and the larger obvious injustice of the vast inequality that is happening. There is a disconnect between the gift giving and morality. Just because you have given a gift, or there is philanthropy involved, doesn't make it moral, doesn't make it good. Here I'm thinking about philanthropy that has spent a lot of time in trying to disprove that climate change is happening, for example.

There is a disconnect between the assistant's loyalties. I think Evan (Sparks) remarked on this. He doesn't work for the poor people that he is letting in; he works for the master. And there is a big disconnect between the assistant [inaudible] the people he is letting in, and there is also this layer of almost disgusted pity that's happening.

In my comments to him I would mostly try to talk about how to bridge some of these disconnects. I would also point out what he is slowly realizing, which is that he is in a bit of an unfair situation, and he has a choice at this point—to try to bridge that unfair situation, or to perpetuate it by leaving and have someone else do his job, until the next person does his job, and on and on and on.

I would also ask him if he can go to the master and ask about his motivations. He works for the master, after all. What is the motivation behind the program—what is it supposed to do? What's in it for the master? I think in philanthropy a lot of times there is an assumption that it's being

done for the good of all. But in fact, philanthropy is often lead by one person, or by a team of people, who have *their* idea of what good is—and that "good" might be to carry on their legacy. It might be to get good PR. It might be to further one particular goal that they have. It might be to do good in the world, and yet go about doing that good in a very wrong way. So, I would advise the young man to try to get a sense of what the master's motivation is, because only by understanding the master's motivation do I think that the assistant will have a chance of really changing the situation.

Second, it's important for the young assistant that he bridge the disconnect between the people and himself. He is making the assumption that it does harm to the eleventh person not to be let in. He also has this lovely phrase, the "mean miracle of the heart," to describe the fact that the eleventh person keeps showing up, keeps hoping. If you took away that hope, that "mean miracle of the heart" for the eleventh person may be they would be worse off. You don't know until you actually connect with that population, until you get a sense of what they want, what works for them, and what doesn't.

This is obviously a little out of context for the story, but wouldn't it be fascinating if there was a participatory action research project with these people? (Laughter.) What's going through their minds? What are they thinking? What can we find out and do on behalf of this organization that the master would also have some motivation to see through?

Finally, I would commend the young assistant on what he is seeing; what he is seeing is that there is an ugliness behind the sense that nonprofits do only good. That's a very real thing to see. Now the question is, what do you do with that information? Do you quit? Do you run away? Or do you face it? I would encourage him to be bold, to be thoughtful, and to get further involved.

KRISTA SHAFFER: One of the first things that struck me about this story is that the young narrator, "our guy," is "on the front," so to speak, of the nonprofit sector – and that's why I gave this event its title. Mindy (Hernandez), I'm really glad you asked that question about who is on the front—because it plagued me, after I came up with the title, that I didn't think *I* was on the front. I wasn't sure. I'll get into that a little bit here later.

In any case, this young man is meeting the poor and the needy face to face on behalf of his organization, and something about that interaction makes him suspect that he is taking part in some "evil deed." He has become a kind of conscientious objector.

But what is it that he objects to? This is something that kept going through my mind. It reminded me that when I was a few months into my first real, paying job in the nonprofit sector – at a public policy research organization, not Hudson Institute but like Hudson Institute – I had found a major thing to object to: people didn't seem focused on the organization's goals, but rather on petty office politics, and who got a raise and who didn't, and who got grant money and who didn't. From the perspective of someone just coming into the organization, I thought that no one was really talking about what it was we were doing, no one was talking about the goals. I didn't feel that I understood the organization's goals, and I kept wanting to ask and wanting to talk about what we were doing. Whom are we helping?

A few times a year my colleagues and I organized conferences, and it was at these events that we had contact with actual constituents, the people who were the consumers of the information we produced. Even though this seemed only a small fraction of what we did, it seemed to me that these interactions were central – they embodied what we did. Daily we worked at our desks, writing and reading and editing; that was the bulk of what we did in that job. But we were preparing for those times when people came to us for information. And maybe then we *were* on the front lines. And whatever we gave those people, maybe it helped and maybe it didn't, but the exchange itself seemed good and it was something I really drew from.

In any case, it took a long time before it dawned on me what the organization I worked for really did in a broad sense, and then it took longer for me to see the context in which it did its work, and it took even longer – and will take even longer – for me to understand fully this very important background information: someone dedicated a lot of his own money and his own personal legacy to the institution for which I now work, and for a reason that wasn't just arbitrary; these institutions form and shape in intentional ways the relationships between people in a society. And then as now, other people dedicate their lives and fortunes to organizations for different, almost competing reasons, and those organizations are also doing work. We are surrounded in the nonprofit sector by a great variety of ideas embodied in organizations. In these, there are legacies to be honored. There is the donor's intent. These aren't just faceless workplaces and meaningless logos; each organization started with a person and a life. And a good idea is a good idea, then and now.

Now, a lot of good comes out of having this great exchange of ideas, and in principle we can all be for everyone – we can all be on the same side in a very broad sense. And it's very important that we remember that in the nonprofit sector. At the same time, however, we can't get away from the fact that wherever we work, we are choosing a side. Ultimately, these institutions we work for are responsible to the individuals who make up society – our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our communities – for the way they look at them and think about them. And we as employees of those institutions must account – sometimes to those people we know and love directly – for those ideas. A lot of times my family asks me, "What do you do?" and sometimes even, "Why are you doing that?" These are times when I am confronted with it very directly. "That's a good question!" I say, and sometimes I can even get it, "Let me tell you why!" These ideas play out in real life – and *our* lives. We are not simply observers.

So, back to the narrator in Barbusse's story, our young man. It's not really fun to be young and on the front at a nonprofit organization – or any organization. There's a certain element of "paying your dues," wherever you are. You may have come into the organization with an idealistic view about what the organization does – and just because it looks a lot messier and not idealistic at all on the ground, that doesn't necessarily mean that that organization isn't advancing those ideals or values in a way that you can feel proud to be a part of.

Maybe the disconnect is between what you believe the organization is doing, and how you understood it to do its work, and how it actually does its work, and what that looks like when it happens in society. But maybe it's not; maybe you discover that the organization isn't fulfilling its ideals after all. Maybe that's what our guy has discovered.

So I would ask the young man, are you sure that this organization's mission and your values are irreconcilably different? If the answer is yes, I'd tell him that he can't just quit that one narrow job and take another within the same organization. If he finds that he is so at odds with that work and that place, he must leave and take a job with an organization whose values better reflect his own.

But there's also the chance that he doesn't yet know quite what purpose the palace-hospital serves, really. In that case, he needs to answer that question. He needs to find out what that organization is doing, and how it is working, and how that is different from what he imagined when he took the job. And that could take a long time, even years. It's really not always so clear what an organization does, especially to the young and idealistic. So he might want to stick around and learn as much as he can.

But I would say, as a final note, that I think it's particularly important for the young man to look into the eyes of those whom the organization is helping, even try to talk to them, learn about them, learn their names. Someday when he is no longer on the front lines, whether at the palace-hospital or at another organization, our young man will find, I think, that those people are his most valuable teachers.

Thank you.

AMY KASS: There is far too much unanimity on this panel! Three of you, at least, are attempting to become almost Socratic in your approach to this young man—asking wonderful questions, getting him to figure out who he really is and what he really believes!

Evan, you're the only one, using theological or (inaudible), to say, "Look—it's not your place. Think about what the donor had in mind. It's not your philanthropy." Certainly there are lots of people working in foundations who mistake the philanthropist, who actually gives the money, for themselves. They are, as Evan (Sparks) rightly points out, not the philanthropists; they just work for the organization that such a person founded.

In any case, nobody says flat out—even those of you who seem to think there is a real injustice here—"Leave the place and do something else." Mindy (Hernandez) put her finger very nicely on the kind of education this young man has had over the past twelve months: Among a heap of people he suddenly begins to notice individuals, and he is sympathetic to an individual. But still, you stop short of saying to him, "Okay, now, having acquired that knowledge go out and do something else. Become an advocate or something else to help the poor."

Do all of you agree with this position—that what you want to say to this young man is, "Think harder about who you are. Ask questions of your master. Ask him why he founded this tradition of the house. Just think more deeply. Find out, really—ask yourself who you are, where this place is going, and so on." Do you agree—how about it? How about the rest of you (around the table and beyond)? Or do any of you who have spoken want to comment on each other's comments, or have a question for each other?

MINDY HERNANDEZ: I'm also curious to hear from the audience.

AMY KASS: Okay!

STEVE TELES, Johns Hopkins University and the New America Foundation: Just to try to juice things up a little bit, I'm not that impressed with this guy! In part I think my position is somewhere between that of Evan (Sparks) and Melissa (Johnson). First of all, we don't know exactly why this rule exists. But quitting won't get rid of the role. Someone is still going to be making this decision. So in some sense what he's saying – and this is where I think there is a kind of weakness here – he's saying that somebody else is going to have to perform this role; he doesn't want to have to do it. In some sense he is more worried about his own clean hands; there is a dirty-hand problem here, and simply wanting someone else to get their hands dirty is never going to be an appropriate moral position. I think that's one thing to say. Does he really have any way to understand how this role can simply cease to exist, or does he simply want someone else's hands to get dirty?

The other part is – I think this is where I come closer to Melissa (Johnson)'s position – the fact that there is a huge queue outside the sanitarium is an injustice, but I would say that it is not the injustice of the master. It's an injustice that is somehow shared much more broadly and isn't necessarily the responsibility or the product of the sanitarium. In fact, if you look at it, the guy who is running the sanitarium may be making much more of a contribution than anybody else who is running a sanitarium. After all, this guy is presumably running a business for wealthy people who need sanitariums, too. (Laughter.) And so the assumption that this is somehow an injustice may also be a kind of category problem.

There is a good argument that the master and everybody else like him ought to be taxed in order to deal with the fact that all of these people are outside—here I am referring to Melissa (Johnson)'s Martin Luther King, Jr. quote. But I think here the misunderstanding is between what's a matter of social justice and what's a matter of the responsibility of a particular individual or part of an organization that is not actually producing the injustice that they are being confronted with.

MELISSA JOHNSON: In most respects, I think you're right. We are talking about how you have to look at it really pragmatically. This is an institution; there is the work of the institution; and then, in the realm of social justice, there is also how that institution intersects with other institutions out there—which we don't get a glimpse of at all in this story. But you can use that as your three-tiered lens.

At the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP) we often talk about this notion of social inclusion—we all are better when no one is left too far behind. This is embedded in the broader text of *The Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best*. And it's an acknowledgment that in an ideal world we will always see some type of injustice, and that there is not necessarily an individual at direct fault, but there is an obligation that we all do our part.

Perhaps the master, way back when this program was developed, had thought that letting ten people was the institution doing its part. But there is always the need for reassessing what's your part, and what you can do. Time has passed, and perhaps now there is more that they can do.

There is a broader injustice here. And because the institution has developed a program and offered up help to those less fortunate, it is now firmly planted as a player in that broader realm. It is a part that the institution at some point *wanted to play*, and perhaps others will call upon it to play more of a part in the future.

MINDY HERNANDEZ: If you are involved in social justice at any level, you have this fundamental choice to make between making the best of flawed rules and fundamentally changing them.

There are structural inequalities in our system, and there are always going to be these masses of people coming. You can let ten of them in, you can let twenty of them in, you can make it smarter, but you are not changing the rules of the game; you can just figure out how to make the rules work as well as possible for the people who are on the losing end. For example in education, where I worked for a long time, it was all about making the rules work as best we could. We didn't move to get rid of school districting laws that systematize the fact that the wealthy just have access to opportunities that the not-wealthy are never going to have.

This is a generalization, but a job in philanthropy is the wrong place from which to make revolutionary structural changes. It just doesn't happen there, in my experience. They are not out to change the rules of the game; they are out to make those rules work as well as possible. And that makes a lot of sense, if you think about where the money in these foundations often came from—Carnegie, Rockefeller. These aren't people who worked to balance the playing field. Carnegie came down on the unions, if you think about unions as a way to really level the playing field, to share the power and the treasure of labor. He crushed them! But what he also did was build libraries, which is *wonderful*. I think that the biggest philanthropists, the people who donated the money, were ruthless capitalists who then shared their money so that the people they crushed could have a chance.

If the young man in the story wants to work to change structural inequalities, he shouldn't take our advice at all. He needs to leave and perhaps start an NGO dedicated to bringing this place *down*. (Laughter.) When you're on the front lines in philanthropy, you have to decide what you can take. Are you willing to work inside the systems and be patient and change things, or do you want to go the other, more revolutionary route?

AMY KASS: So your real question to this young man is, "Are you willing to be a real revolutionary or do you just want to find a better place for yourself in this little palace?"

MINDY HERNANDEZ: In terms of finding a better place at the sanitarium, there is a huge range of wonderful work that can be done there.

AMY KASS: Name one.

MINDY HERNANDEZ: I really do think that if you were to work with the master, find a way for him to get involved in changing the lives of ten people, and not just let them in as an arbitrary use of power, that's more than most people are doing—changing the lives of ten people.

AMY KASS: So you'd advise him to go to the master, tell the master to have an improvement program or an educational program for these ten people who are here for thirty days, and that will make his life more interesting and the tradition much better?

MINDY HERNANDEZ: Well, obviously you would have to totally restructure the thirty days. You are not just letting people in, now. You're starting a new program through which you are attempting to change the lives of ten people—and then, exponentially, their families' lives, and then their families' lives, and their families' lives.

BETHANY STOTTS, Accuracy in Academia: I'm here speaking personally (not on behalf of my organization). It seems to me that the master and the student seem not to realize that they have quite a bit in common. The student is concerned about the eleventh. Would that not also be the motivation for changing the ten every month?

There seems to be little long term improvement by having ten reside there for a month and then return to their poverty. There are no skills added. There is only the consumption of goods during their time there. Perhaps the master was concerned about the eleventh, and said, "Well, if we give him another chance next month, then maybe he will make it in to the first ten then." So the student and the master are operating within the same paradigm.

AMY KASS: Would you all agree that there is no long-term improvement that one could foresee with this kind of tradition? Let me put it even more radically. Are all of you horrified by the tradition of this house? Is there anything to be said for it?

KRISTA SHAFFER: At one of these conferences I organized—I'll never forget it—a couple of the better known, higher-level participants hung around afterwards, hung out with the staff. One of them was a member of a royal family, and after a few hot toddies he turned to me and said, "You know, it's really hard to be a prince." I spent forever turning that over in my mind, just the fact that I was there to hear that. Organizing that conference and interacting with the people whom we invited and who came to the conferences—even just as a lowly staff member—gave me the opportunity to interact with this guy.

Another one of my colleagues later had the unfortunate experience of being with him in his motorcade at the site of our next meeting while the rest of us were far behind, in a chartered bus stuck in traffic. She got involved in a very long conversation with him about toilets in the Middle East. That was her interaction with him. My interaction was him saying, "It's very tough being a prince."

In any case, I can just imagine one of these very impoverished people in the sanitarium sitting down and talking to a duke, or a king, and having a discussion the poor man will remember for the rest of his life. I think maybe that could be said for this tradition.

AMY KASS: So what's to be said for the tradition is that it allows the super-haves to have some interaction with the super have-nots, and it might be a very meaningful interaction. Does anybody else have anything to say about this tradition?

MUZNA ANSARI, intern for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy: I would like to go back to what Mindy Hernandez said about philanthropy potentially not being the sector in which there are larger structural and systemic changes. I think some of what NCRP tries to advocate or to promote is the funding of the advocacy groups. I wonder how you would respond to that as the way of indirectly promoting these structural and larger systemic changes, even if the philanthropist is not involved in direct services but is promoting those groups.

MINDY HERNANDEZ: Great point. I should say that my comments were about the way foundations *generally* have worked; my experience has been with larger foundations and how they traditionally work. But I think there are really interesting things happening on the margins, the emerging work foundations are doing. That, to me, is where the advocacy comes in.

My understanding is that it is taking some encouragement to get foundations to act in that way (support advocacy); that's not the way that they traditionally have acted. That would certainly be a way, if it gains traction, for them to start to make some huge changes.

My experience has been that larger foundations—a generalization, again—traditionally are very wary of getting involved in anything like that, anything that hints of advocacy, anything that hints at a critique on the status quo. I mentioned this when I was on a panel here a couple of years ago.[3]

For example, one incident that has stuck in my head is the experience of a friend who worked at a foundation. This person gave a public speech on education and the structural problems of education, and said something like, "People working in education are very smart, and if this were simply a technical problem we would have figured it out. We have to look at the structural problems that have to do with race and class." This person was scolded by the highest levels of their organization and told that they were not to say the words "race" and "class" at that foundation. And I don't think that is a total anomaly; I think the world of foundations may be changing, but I think it is still a challenge that has to be overcome.

MELISSA JOHNSON: I want to disagree just a little bit in that I think that philanthropy as a field has moved further along. As I was driving down here I thought about large national foundations—I could think of five, the Marguerite Casey Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Atlantic Philanthropies, the Open Society Institute, and the Kellogg Foundation, which recently has been doing internal structural change and training and is now an anti-racist organization. Some of the larger foundations are stepping up, and clear progress is being made.

This is difficult work; it is new territory. For the first time we have distinction and delineation with regard to what's diversity, what's institutional racism, and what's structural racism; in the past we all thought they were the same thing.

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[3] The panel, "Grantmaking: The Lonely Profession," took place on July 19, 2007. A complete, edited transcript can be found online at http://www.hudson.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=hudson_upcoming_events&id=416.

This doesn't always come through and doesn't filter down to the smaller- and medium-sized foundations, which make up a large part of the total number of foundations in the country. NCRP has focused on talking about and trying to develop case studies and examples, and a lot of those foundations are finding that they do indeed meet many of the benchmarks in *The Criteria*. But as I said, it's the second, third and fourth tier foundations that most of the nonprofits in the field know the best, and it's just going to take more time to reach them.

AMY KASS: I take it you like the new trend; you like those organizations that are addressing this issue.

MELISSA JOHNSON: I think it is a good thing for the field. I definitely like how people have stayed with it and developed their own sense of what it means for their foundation's work and for their grantmaking. I think it's difficult to have a conversation about institutional racism or structural change or systemic change in a *field*. Some (inaudible) are more tangible than others, some more abstract. There are varying levels of individual, organizational, and then systemic thinking. There's how you can insert yourself as an individual to make a change. So, it is a good thing, but sometimes the conversation does fall short.

TAYLOR FOSHEE, intern for the Center for Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI): Our mission is to promote, protect, and support advocacy and lobbying in the nonprofit sector for today's nonprofits. When I was reading the story, the one thing that struck me was that the young assistant is focused on the eleventh man—but if he let the eleventh man in, wouldn't it then be the case of the twelfth or thirteenth or fourteenth? With direct service, isn't there always going to be that person who isn't reached, who isn't helped by an organization? There is only so much one can do and only so many resources available.

To echo what was said earlier, the next step for this person may not be to go to the master; it may in fact be to go in the direction of advocacy, to branch out and look at the bigger social injustices that are going on. Why are there so many poor people around the sanitarium? Why is there no other outreach program in this community? Is this the only place that these people can go for help and refuge?

What would you say about having a broader outlook, looking at advocacy and what can be done at the larger level—at a community level rather than at the level of an individual organization?

AMY KASS: Could I amend your question just a little bit? We have this young man before us. He has a dilemma. Maybe he doesn't want to get his hands really, really dirty. Let's assume that he really has noticed something, that he has somehow received a sympathetic or philanthropic education over the past year, and he is eager to do something. You would have him try to find out what advocacy organization he could work with, or leave this place and go to an advocacy organization, right? I think that's implicit in what you're saying.

TAYLOR FOSHEE: I think that the young man should be looking at the town as a whole, and ask whether there is something that the town can do rather than just the master. There is only so much that one organization can do, and yet it seems that the master in this story is the sole provider. Is there no other outlet? And if so, shouldn't he be looking into that? That is more the

question, rather than what he can do to change the master's mind. It's more the question of what the young man can do within his community to include more people in the process.

AMY KASS: Now we go back to where I think Melissa (Johnson) began!

MELISSA JOHNSON: Absolutely! I think that's an option. Especially in these tough economic times, we at NCRP are hopeful that it will be easier for us to convey the message that you are sharing, which is that services alone do not create long-term change. There is always going to be a need for services; even if you grow and grow the capacity to provide services, there will still be more people at the door. We talk about funding or supporting services *combined with* advocacy. I think what Taylor Foshee is in essence saying—and it's what we at NCRP see, too—is that there is always going to be that dual need. If service organizations are able to be on the frontlines and have the capacity to serve those groups, adding an advocacy component will not only strengthen the folks these organizations are serving for the immediate future, but also strengthen the broader community in the long term.

AMY KASS: But with *this one* young man who is working at *this one* institution, are you saying you would advise him to go to the master and have a discussion with him—advocate with him, really—to improve the practice of this institution to make it more just? You would advise him to be an advocate within the institution itself?

MELISSA JOHNSON: Sure, that's an option. My personal motto when I was starting off in the nonprofit sector, which I adopted from a couple of my mentors, was to "educate internally and organize externally"—even when I was having difficulty within an organization. You have to understand the intention behind your organization's work and be able to educate from within, but also organize other people who think differently or who may think as strongly as you do on avenues that your organization would never take. I think that is a possibility, too. It depends on how that conversation goes.

AMY KASS: Let me ask the rest of you, again, these questions: Do you think that, first of all, the tradition really radically needs to be changed? Do you all agree that there is something wrong with the tradition of the house, regardless of whether it's your money or not? There is something simply wrong, and this man is in a unique position to at least open up that conversation—do we all agree with that?

PATRICE LEE, Philanthropy Roundtable: I don't agree that the tradition needs to change; I think the tradition is there for some sort of reason. I am going to echo some of Evan (Sparks)' comments—not because we are from the same organization, but because I think we have the same philosophy, which is that there is an element of private or personal action and decision making here. This is not his money, so he can't decide whether something needs to change or not. I also think there is also maybe another—

AMY KASS: Wait a second. Isn't it a cop-out to say, "It's not my money, so I have no responsibility?"

PATRICE LEE: Well, it's not his money, so, no, he should not decide how to change the program initially; it's just his job. He is on the front lines. I'd say that he could appeal to the next layer of management about maybe changing the rules—but this young man's best interest is really to make sure that his paycheck is coming into his pocket. By letting in the eleventh person, he may risk being fired and becoming the next person to be "washed up," looking for services. I think the point is – it may sound cold – but I think at the end of the day he has to decide what is best for himself.

AMY KASS: So you want to say that "self interest rightly understood" requires you to be quiet and put up with this tradition?

PATRICE LEE: It's not that it requires you, but you have to decide at the end of the day what interest is going to take precedent, whether it's your humanitarian interest or your own personal interest. I'm not saying that he should ignore the problem, but I am saying that's the interest that he needs to take into consideration.

AMY KASS: Okay, so there is a tension between what is in his self interest and what is in his interest as a humanitarian, and he has to make a decision.

PATRICE LEE nods.

AMY KASS: You are not giving any support for the tradition. What you are supporting, really, is the idea that this young man just has to decide what his priorities are—is he going to be a compassionate human being, or is he going to think about his own pocket book?

PATRICE LEE: Yes, but whatever decision he makes, he has to decide whether or not the tradition is right. I honestly think there is nothing wrong with the tradition. There is a reason that policy is in order.

AMY KASS: I would like to hear that argument. What's to be said for the tradition? Let's assume this man is a young humanitarian, and he has to make a choice. What's to be said for it? Kevin (Laskowski)?

KEVIN LASKOWSKI (speaking on his own behalf): If I had to say something about the tradition, I would say that if you look at the world of philanthropy, we set up very large, incredible positions to leverage social change, to create strategy that will move millions. When change is not necessarily possible or likely, if you think about all of the things that could have been done with that money, you start to wonder about what this young man could have done in the interim.

I don't think the master is necessarily the donor, by the way; the master strikes me as being actually the steward, and I think the tradition is much more ancient. In any case, they saw an obligation to heal the world—to do something great. But between all the good they can do and all the good they must do, choices have to be made.

There are always going to be those who are left out. If you took in ten, you would have the eleventh. If you took twenty, you have the twenty-first. If it were fifty, there would be a fifty-first person sitting out there who wasn't a part of it. Even with advocacy, there will always have to be another change; there will always have to be another law; there will always have to be more people to get involved. The world isn't perfect.

The young man is trying to get around something he can't get around. He has converted this simple decision about whether or not to help ten into this existential dilemma. That is where I think Evan (Sparks)' idea is actually very dangerous; Evan, you are very quick to leap to the conclusion that the tradition can't be second-guessed. In fact, the young man is a part of the organization; if he needs to understand something about his job—he is a stake holder—he should be able to ask for help in understanding.

At the same time, maybe the master has already said, "Look, there are the ten people right in front of me. I'm going to help them for thirty days, and that is going to have to be enough—because I can't do much more." Personally, I think it needs to be said that the institution *can* do more. Even if you can't perfect the world, you can make it better. But in defense of the tradition, it eschews the notion that we have to revolutionize the world to make it better. The sanitarium takes its ten. You can ask about the basis on which those ten were taken and what is actually done for them, but if you question the tradition, what is your alternative?

I really want to smack the kid upside the head, to be honest. (Laughter.) Yes, you can say that I want change because I want something more. I think there is something to be said for the tradition, but there is something to be said for something more. I'm hesitant to tell him to go back to the master and have a discussion because I don't think he is up for it—but that is what I want from him. He has this experience with all of the people who come; he starts to see them as human beings; he starts to see them, but he doesn't yet know their names.

What really bothers him at the end is the idea of him doing injustice. He is back to the intellectual again. If he is going to try to "abstract" his way out of having to do something good in this world, then he is never going to be up for a conversation with the authority figure I want him to challenge.

EVAN SPARKS: I wasn't trying to say that the young man has no place in second-guessing the work of the sanitarium. I think that it is very presumptuous of him to say that it is "evil," that it is an "abominable injustice." I actually have a big problem with the way the people who have been helped experience the sanitarium; in the first page it is written that they

> busied themselves only with doing nothing, only worked when they ate, and were no longer afraid of the unknown or of the coming day…. There was not in all the House, by order of the Master, a mirror in which they would have found their bad dream again. At the day's end came the dormitory, peaceful as a cemetery, a nice cemetery, where one is not dead, where one waits—where one lives, but without knowing it.

These people, the ten who are being helped, are basically being made numb to the experience. This is a little outside of our discussion, but if I were the young man I would say *that's* the

problem here—not having to turn away the eleventh, but the kind of people are we making inside the sanitarium.

At the same time, though, I don't think it is the young man's place to impose on the master his own moral judgment about how the master has chosen to exercise his philanthropy.

TAMAR CLOYD: I'm speaking for myself (and not on behalf of an organization) here today—as I usually do! (Laughter.) I want to make a comment about the assumption that because you are already in power, you know best. That's the problem with this.

If we think about the history of this country – I'm going to go on a tangent, here; this country was founded by people who were escaping from another country to bring about a new way of being. The young man in the story is another young person with another idea about how to do things better. There is nothing wrong with having a different idea. Nobody should force his or her ideas or beliefs on anybody else. We should all be able to get along and share ideas.

To say that this young man has no place to even have that thought process or engage in conversation with the older man is imposing something on the situation that might not even be there. Perhaps the older man is a cool dude. (Laughter.) Maybe he wants somebody to come to him with new ideas. Let's not assume that he is not of that mind frame – the older man, but also the younger man.

God forbid if I ever get to the point where I think that they way I think is the best way to think. Nothing would ever change!

BYRON JACKSON (speaking on his own behalf): I love the young man in this story! In my previous post with another organization, I dabbled with the idea that I'm not really helping people but rather just pushing them into a system. I was doing direct service at that time; I was in homes with families, and I was speaking to the families. So I spoke with the master of that organization, you might say. (Laughter.) I expressed my concerns, expressed my feelings. And the master politely said, "Well that's how we do it, and that's the way it's going to be."

I've always worked in the nonprofit sector, and a lot of times just because something is tradition or something has been done for a long time, that doesn't necessarily make it right. You have to change this system. If you provide ten people a month of luxury and then send them back into the streets without giving them any skills or anything that is going to allow them to go back onto the streets and take what they have learned from spending this time with you and all the wealthy people, it's not going to improve their condition.

I now find myself in this unique position, because with the Alliance for Children and Families, I don't do direct service; we are a membership organization of 250 human service organizations, and I work with the staff of those organizations. I don't work directly with the community. And so now I'm learning a little bit – that isn't to say that I'm the master, now. But my mind frame is changing now that I've been with the process a little longer.

So we were going through our grant cycle, and I had a pile of grants, and every idea sounded like a good idea. It's like, you want to empower the disenfranchised? That's wonderful—that's what I believe in, too. But then I had to choose which group had the *best* idea among all of the good ideas, and also which group might be a little more impoverished and might need a little more assistance.

The one thing I like about setting the (inaudible) is that it changes. Our goal is to change the system. We want to change the culture of the nonprofits. So when I read the story, I saw myself from last year to this year, moving into this unique position. And it's like, okay, what's my direction; where do I go from here?

AMY KASS: You would have the young man leave?

BYRON JACKSON: I would have the young man leave.

AMY KASS: As you did.

BYRON JACKSON: Yes.

AMY KASS: I have not heard in the room any real support for the tradition as such. And I believe we're out of time, are we not?

KRISTA SHAFFER: We have some time pressure here; I believe one of our panelists needs to leave. So I would suggest that we conclude the formal part of the discussion, and anyone who needs to leave can leave. But we can continue informally, and anyone who wants to stick around a bit longer can stay and continue the discussion—if that's all right with you, Amy.

AMY KASS: Okay, formally the session is over, informally you are welcome to stay for a few more minutes.

KRISTA SHAFFER: Formally, I just want to thank everyone—and especially to thank our panelists. It was a fascinating discussion. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

NOTE: Shortly after the conclusion of the discussion, NCRP's Kevin Laskowski posted online (at http://epipdc.blogspot.com/2009/08/eleventh.html) the comments below as a follow-up to his remarks:

KEVIN LASKOWSKI: It's a wonder to me sometimes why we call them grantmakers. A colleague once described the incredible amount of proposals her foundation receives. In a given grant period, the foundation might see several thousand requests. Many will be rejected outright. The program may not fit the fund's mission. The organization may not be a 501(c)(3). Many will be more extensively reviewed. A comparatively lucky few will be funded. I thought about this, and realized that the foundation will always decline more proposals than it accepts, so

foundations are as much or more grant-deniers than they are grantmakers. The protagonist of "The Eleventh" is so uncomfortable with turning people away that he finds himself unable to continue in his post.

The story is a terrific choice for young professionals in the sector because it's about the struggle for authenticity amid an idealistic young professional's (first?) encounter with a world that is not only unfair but makes him complicit in its cruelties. Like the protagonist, I find my sympathies pulled in a number of different directions and fumblingly try to find a way to honor them in action.

On the one hand, I'm surprised at how much, on successive readings, I actually like what this palace-hospital does. They admit the first ten vagabonds that come to them. They don't pretend to be picking the best supplicants, the most deserving, or the most effective. There's no grant process, no monitoring, no reporting, and no evaluation. In the time it often takes us to find out if we're really effecting social change, the opportunity to do a tremendous amount of good for the people right in front of us passes by. Comfort, solace, rest, these things matter. Participants in today's discussion pointed out how palace-hospital doesn't provide opportunities for long-term change. By the same principle, we'd dispense with the fine arts.

Even as I look to become a greater advocate for the causes I believe in, I wonder sometimes how much social change might be effected if we all just actually took care of the first ten that came our way. And I wonder how much of our bleating about strategy, theories of change, and logic models is a futile attempt to rationalize what this young man finds himself unable to explain - why some people get money and others don't. Better then, the Master may have reasoned, to help those who come to our door as best we can. On some level, that's no more arbitrary than the "strategic" alternative.

But this approach has its own dangers. The choice to admit the first ten is itself a strategy, another pretension that the Master and his staff can easily hide behind. Why ten? Why not eleven? Why does the house never lack for ten? Is there something that can be done for the eleventh? Are we doing enough for the ten? Most of today's panelists agreed that more could be done, and that they would advise the assistant to investigate the values of the institution and see what could be done.

I don't find anything wrong in what the hospital does, but a great deal more good can, indeed, be done. They could campaign for a change in house policy. They could fundraise among their richer patients to double the number of vagabonds they can take in every month. They could start another sanitarium in a neighboring town and help the next ten. The assistant could just admit the eleventh and the twelfth next month, and see what the Master does. He could even start organizing the vagabonds!

There are endless possibilities, but I have a feeling that none of them will satisfy the assistant. He doesn't want to be the one who turns another away. Despite having seen and been haunted by the faces of those he cannot help, it's still the "idea" of injustice and his part in it that bothers him the most. This is to turn the moral and professional problem of "how do I help more people?" into a self-absorbed existential drama about God, the universe, and human limits. There is

always going to be an eleventh, in some sense. If it wasn't the eleventh, it'd be the hundredth. To want to help everybody is to be philanthropic. To help somebody is to be a philanthropist.

That means making choices, sometimes awful, sometimes arbitrary. That certainly doesn't excuse our choices. It merely gives us the agenda for tomorrow: to try and make things better.

We can't lean on tradition, authority, and the unseen wisdom of the Master's plan either. Traditions can evolve. High-minded defenses of one's duty and one's place are too often excuses for protecting only those like us, for doing what comes naturally and easily, for the path of least resistance, for doing the minimum the way we've always done it, and for our own baseless choices and preferences. Young leaders should be ready to spot these instances and to stand up, where possible, for a better alternative.

The assistant in the story isn't prepared for that. If he can't provide comfort and solace to some and look the eleventh in the eye and maybe do better tomorrow, then how is he ever going to be capable of the great systemic changes that are necessary and face the 11 million still to be helped?

Everybody at some point learns that the world isn't fair. Those of us concerned with social justice know that there are a lot of things in this world that aren't fair. That injustice isn't a permanent feature of our universe but the creation of thousands of individual human decisions. However awful or arbitrary our choices, our organizations, our jobs, our world may seem today, that may change for the better tomorrow. The lesson for the assistant is this: if we're brave, and a little lucky, we can be a part of that. Is he up for it?