

**Landscapes of welfare: concepts and
cultures of British women's philanthropy
1918-1939**

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Trinity 2011**

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A young woman holds the world in her arms. Illustration from Young Women's Christian Association publicity leaflet, 1923. Reproduced from Muriel Paget's archive, LRA MS 1405.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The thesis could not have been written without the funding of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Award and an award from the University of Oxford History Faculty's Bryce Research Fund. However, as in the philanthropic enterprise, this project has been sustained by much more than financial assistance, and my thanks and gratitude are owed to the friendship and kindness of many people.

Firstly to Jane Garnett, who as supervisor and friend has given me every intellectual encouragement, motivation and support. Jane's guidance and expertise predates this thesis, and her inspiration was pivotal to me undertaking it. Her professionalism and enthusiasm have yielded creative leads that I have wanted to follow but still allowed me to pursue my own paths. For all these reasons, and many more, I offer heartfelt thanks.

Others in Oxford have provided companionship, insight, and fun: thanks to Mark Adomanis, Aurelia Annat, Christina de Bellaigue, Lara Elder, Kathryn Gleadle, James Golden, Daniel Grey, Frances Flanagan, Erika Hanna, Janet Howarth, Matt Hollow, Matt Houlbrook, Sarah Newman, Liz Peretz, Teresa Smith, Laura Schwartz, Simeon Koole, Selina Todd, Will Van Reyk, and William Whyte. Huge thanks go to Kathryn Eccles, whose enthusiasm for my project from the beginning has been greatly valued and who read and commented so helpfully on a whole draft, to Charlotte Greenlough and Eloise Moss for being such sensitive proof-readers, and to Stella Moss for all her motivation, wisdom and final proof-reading.

I also owe sincere thanks to those who have sustained my studies outside Oxford. I am especially grateful to Robin and Pat Illbert, Athur and Ginnie Lindley and Tom Winnifurth who shared family papers and priceless memories, to Kerry, Tom, Kieran and Katie Carter who adopted me for two weeks and facilitated my American research, to Bill and Marian Whyte, who provided a welcome break from the city during my research visit in Leeds, and to Mary and Patrick Clark who did the same in Manchester.

Appreciative thanks go to the archivists and librarians that have facilitated access to materials used in this thesis. I am especially grateful to Catherine Carter at the Greater Manchester County Record Office, Richard Davies at the Leeds Russian Archive, Carol Jones at the Modern Records Centre (Warwick), Katharine Compton at the Oxford University Press archive, Gordon Taylor and Alex Von der Beckke at the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre (London), Susan Mitchem at the Salvation Army National Archives (Alexandria, Virginia), and librarians at the Women's Library (London). Thanks to Emily Baughan for facilitating access to material in the Save the Children Fund archive. Sincere thanks for help and kindness from the Bodleian library staff (especially the Upper Reading Room team), and History Faculty librarians.

Affectionate thanks go to two housemates, fellow historians and friends Gemma Clark and Alana Harris, who have tolerated interminable excitement about four interwar women! And to those who have provided happiness, hospitality and homes from home elsewhere: Scott Anthony, Sam Evans, Kate Hallett, Elin Leyshon, Lucy Oliver and Laura Percivall.

Finally, my deepest thanks and love to go to Rose (with extra thanks for IT expertise), Adam, Poppy and Mum, for limitless encouragement and support. Lastly to Dad, who began this journey with me, who remains my beacon of light, and in whose memory I wrote this thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

British Broadcasting Company	BBC
Charity Organisation Society	COS
Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship	Copec
<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>	<i>DNB</i>
Distressed British Subjects Fund	DBS
General Post Office	GPO
Imperial Defence Council	IDC
International Missionary Council	IMC
National Birthday Trust Fund	NBTF
National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child	NCUMC
National Federation of Women's Institutes	NFWI
Non-Governmental Organisation	NGO
National Institute of Industrial Psychology	NIIP
National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship	NUSEC
National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies	NUWSS
National Union of Women Workers	NUWW
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals	RSPCA
Save the Children Fund	SCF
Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act	SDRA
<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>	<i>TLS</i>
Voluntary Aid Detachment	VAD
Workers' Educational Association	WEA
Young Women's Christian Association	YWCA

SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a new conceptual framework for the study of women's philanthropy between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War. Contesting the dominant historiographical narrative which essentialises the association of women with philanthropy, it argues that interwar female philanthropy operated through an inherently creative and flexible methodology. By interrogating gender as a category of analysis alongside other definitional variables of generation, religion, informal and formal modes of influence, and professionalisation, it reveals female philanthropy as an intellectual, as much as a practical endeavour, through which women philanthropists sought to achieve and encourage self-development and societal improvement. Moving beyond a social history framework that concentrates on philanthropic activity in terms of its relationship to social policy, six thematic chapters argue for the critical significance of concepts of language, performance and space in the meanings and presentations of interwar female philanthropy. A central remit of the thesis is to relate the social and cultural processes that underpinned women's philanthropy between the wars to the subjective experiences of the individual women who engaged them.

The thesis examines the personal archives, published oeuvres and publicity materials (alongside presentations of philanthropy in public discourse) of four philanthropic women who achieved celebrity in the interwar period: Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget. It interrogates the contemporary meanings attached to female philanthropy in a period of transformations in mass transport, mass communication and mass democracy, and in women's position within society. An analysis of this process sheds new light on the historiography of work, civil society and citizenship. Problematizing the centrality placed on the national as a sphere of citizenship (embodied in the state), the thesis reveals the critical interconnections between the local and global domains in female philanthropists' visions. It also illuminates the hitherto underexplored connections between philanthropy, celebrity, the mass media and mass culture. Far from outmoded, female philanthropy lay at the heart of interwar cultural transformations. Female philanthropists contributed dynamically to debates about civil agency and sought to remap the contours of a good society.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to provide a new conceptual framework for the study of British women's philanthropy between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War. Whereas men's historical involvement in philanthropy has been seen as one of a wide variety of forms of public activity, women's philanthropic work has been understood as one of few spheres of legitimate 'feminine' activity outside the home in which they could engage. The twentieth century is argued to depart from this model in the sense that female philanthropy was in 'decline', but this very decline is premised on looking back to a previous 'golden age'. What typically underpins the literature on philanthropy, and what this thesis contests, is the essentialised association of women with philanthropy. In seeking to move beyond this paradigm, this thesis explores the gendered significances of women's philanthropy in relation to its methodology (the intellectual and physical geographies of philanthropy) and conceptualisations (categorisations, languages, and presentational frameworks). It does so through a close engagement with contemporary interwar confrontations of these issues. The thesis does not simply seek to reclaim the enduring vitality of female philanthropy between the wars, although this forms part of its story. Rather, it interrogates the ideological codes of gender that configured female philanthropists' projects alongside other definitional variables: generation; religion; the relationship between formal and informal status in women's lives; and professionalisation. It argues that there was not a singular model of female philanthropy in these decades. Interwar commentators such as social worker Elizabeth Macadam seemed to signal a change of direction, articulated in her 1934 work *The new philanthropy: a study of the relations between the statutory and voluntary social services* and there is evidence that contemporaries defined the philanthropic project alongside the developing values of community engagement and by use of new media such as the wireless radio and film. But in fact there was no definitive break in the forms and meanings of philanthropy before and after the First World War. Inherited inter-personal methods of care and compassion provided a continued and important part of the context within which female philanthropy re-positioned itself in response to changes in cultural behaviour and to new media. Re-articulation and creative adaptation marked women's philanthropy in the interwar years. And

this process of engagement with the meaning and significance of female philanthropy raised important broader questions about the nature of society, work, citizenship, and mass culture.

The thesis thus addresses several historiographical literatures, namely gendered histories of women's work and life patterns; social and political histories of early-twentieth-century civil society and the welfare state; cultural histories of interwar Britain; and histories of the Victorian and post-Victorian period. It cuts across the focus of historians of gender roles and relations between the wars on women's formal professional and political status (theoretically) encoded in the Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act (1919) and the Representation of the People Acts (1918 and 1928), through examining how such questions of formal status were often mediated by evolving calibrations of women's informal status. It argues that between the wars female philanthropy connected older models of women's cultural authority as a form of personal service with the developing organisational structures of voluntary expertise. It also reconsiders the gendered nature of civil society and its political implications in a period which has been characterised as the pre-history of the development of the welfare state. There are tensions within this literature between historians who conceptualise the state as masculine and those who configure the gendered contours in more fluid terms. This thesis also complicates the relationship drawn between gender and the state through revealing how female philanthropists both worked through and transcended domestic and national state imperatives in transnational projects. Moving away from an emphasis on the national, interwar female philanthropists understood their projects more significantly as linking the local to the global (both in intellectual and practical terms). This re-evaluation also situates female philanthropy within the context of cultural histories of interwar Britain which have underplayed the role of religion within mainstream society and the importance of Christian frameworks in advancing evolving forms of citizenship. In this literature both philanthropy and religion are implicitly decoupled from 'modernising' aspects of culture. In fact female philanthropy was closely interlinked with the 'modern' realms of commercialism, celebrity and the media, and found creative ways in which to confront any negative contemporary connotations of 'Victorian' civic activism.

The thesis pivots on four women whose stories challenge the idea that there was a single model of female philanthropy between the wars, and that it was in decline. Born between the 1850s and the 1870s, Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget became part of a generation of women whose philanthropic careers spanned the decades before and after the First World War. These women had different social backgrounds (on the spectrum of middle-, upper-middle, and upper-class); different political affiliations (ranging from Labour party membership to aristocratic Conservatism via educated Liberalism); and variously religious and secular perspectives (encompassing committed evangelicalism, nominal Anglicanism, and professed atheism). Building on their distinct educational backgrounds, they operated in different philanthropic contexts not only across Britain, but also in North America, Asia, and Europe. Because of the variations within and between their intellectual and cultural approaches, a study of these four women adds to historical understandings of women's philanthropy by looking beyond an essentialised framework in order to explore the shared and varied experiences that underpinned women's philanthropic projects between the wars. It also focuses attention on how women's philanthropic projects connected to personnel and spheres across cultural and intellectual terrains that were not necessarily gendered. Family formed one critical structure in forging these cross-gendered connections. Audience formed another. So, while Emily Kinnaird worked almost exclusively with and for women, Lettice Fisher worked both for and with women and men, and Evangeline Booth and Muriel Paget reached out to mixed gender audiences. The delineations in their engagements not only with men and women, but also with groups of different ages, classes and ethnicities, reveal how far removed they were from envisaging their philanthropy as an essentialised project.

This study of four women, then, is not simply a history about women. Rather, it is a history of the practical, philosophical and political resonances of interwar female philanthropy. Female philanthropy emerges through this focus not as a fixed or homogenous category, but as a dynamic and many-sided process. This thesis blends the approaches of cultural and intellectual historians who seek to explore respectively the processes through which social and cultural constructs were transmitted, and the symbolic meanings of public and personal discourses.

Bridging these approaches is not a straightforward endeavour but, as Casey Nelson Blake has recently argued in an American context, there is scope to develop an approach which brings together a focus on the moral, political and intellectual resources of texts and historical actors, and the production and reception of ideas more broadly conceived. This thesis engages in close readings of the languages within which philanthropists fashioned themselves and were presented by others. What emerges is the women's (and their publicists') strategic performances of philanthropy. Sometimes they drew on traditional vocabularies of women's charitable projects as an altruistic enterprise, and at other times positioned their work alongside and within contemporary psychological, political and social languages. Moreover, each of the four women inhabited a range of cultural and geographical spaces through their philanthropic commitments. They come into view through their charitable projects on the ground, which spanned imperial, inter-national and transnational terrains. They also emerge variously as journalists, lecturers, wireless broadcasters, and film stars. Indeed, Booth's, Fisher's, Kinnaird's and Paget's philanthropic projects were connected to debates as diverse as illegitimacy, international relations, the celebrity system, the value of new technologies, leisure and work, and the constituent parts of a well-spent Christian life.

A central goal of this thesis is to relate discussions about the social and cultural processes that underpinned women's philanthropy between the wars to the subjective experiences of the individual women who engaged them. This is both a methodological exercise – which seeks to incorporate biography into a thematic study – and one which emerges from these women's own reflexive examinations of their work. Female philanthropists were reluctant to be categorised, and this thesis seeks to analyse these women in the round. These concerns are addressed through an engagement with a wide range of textual and non-textual evidence. Booth's, Fisher's, Kinnaird's and Paget's personal and institutional archives are read alongside their various written and spoken outputs, and contemporary commentaries about them. The stories that emerge from these sources are read in turn against contemporary commentaries about women's voluntary activity in the daily press, popular and professional women's magazines, canonical and other literary texts, and sociological interventions. My focus has been more on the intellectual

references that underpinned the presentational frameworks of these accounts than on their readers' reception; more on the cultural registers through which the projected aims of female philanthropists were broadcast and translated into action than on their 'successes' or 'failures' in doing good. Female philanthropists themselves emerge as problematising the categories into which they saw that they might be, or sometimes were, put.

The thesis is structured around six chapters which map the ideas, spaces and structures of women's philanthropy between the wars, and the inter-generational assumptions that underpinned it. Chapter 1 builds on the insights of anthropologists into the 'culture of relatedness' and the academic interest in networks to explore how women's philanthropy functioned between the wars as a socially- and culturally-unifying activity. It analyses how female philanthropists developed older forms of sociability and social networking strategies and how they articulated a new resonance for domestic spaces (and home-based skills) as pushing forward new configurations of citizenship. It then explores the significance attached to the idea of friendship in the philanthropic project as a way both of transcending the self and mediating knowledge and love. These themes also surfaced in female philanthropists' configurations of their work as a sort of utopia, something functioning beyond the 'here and now'. Chapter 2 re-evaluates the history of gendered cultures of work and their connection to models of citizenship, through exploring its hitherto obscured ethical dimensions, and gendered measurements of success. Public discourses between the wars tended to frame women's public achievement in comparison with men's by essentialising their womanly qualities as wives and mothers. In contrast, discussions by and for women emphasised self-evaluation and comparisons between women. Women's advice literature encouraged their readers to stretch themselves through ambition and determination which would lead to cheerfulness, and also to reconceptualise the idea of duty to others as an activity which vitally brought personal pleasure. Happiness was not always easily achieved for philanthropic women, but their own self-examinations reveal the challenge which philanthropy posed within a striving for personal development relative to that of other women. Chapter 3 moves from an analysis of ideas to structures, to explore how female philanthropy was configured in the interwar years against and alongside gendered forms of

expertise. Class was a critical discriminating category. So while upper-class female philanthropists often claimed a rhetorical professionalisation, discussions by and for middle-class women assumed occupational organisational standards which led to more complex discussions about the relationship between professional and extra-professional expertise. Training became a reiterated framing device for women's philanthropy between the wars, through which notions of knowledge were re-articulated. Concurrently, voluntary expertise was established through committee work that could be understood both in mixed-gender terms and by means of older notions of 'ladies' committees'. These varied discussions reveal that while some interwar commentators articulated women's voluntary expertise with reference to professional structures, others reclaimed the value of amateurism. In this complex terrain, the cultural authority of an earlier generation of philanthropists, exemplified by Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale, was also re-invoked.

The remaining three chapters analyse interwar women philanthropists' engagement with a wide range of audiences, both at home and abroad. Chapter 4 re-examines the practice of fundraising. Constructing a community of donors involved women in negotiating both elite social territory and religious ideas of networks, as well as confronting the implications of the capitalist market. As fundraisers, women philanthropists drew on new psychological understandings of the self, and considered the role played by the dissemination of knowledge in forging a moral obligation. They adapted to new media and helped to construct a new sense of audience 'identification', particularly in their interventions in wireless and film broadcasting, and more broadly in ways which bridged divides between civic and commercial cultures. Chapter 5 looks beyond the philanthropist-donor-client relationship to explore how interwar female philanthropists reached out to broader publics in the roles of celebrity and public educationalist. It explores the political agendas and agency which were incorporated within their conscious roles as 'opinion-formers'. Literary and journalistic genres were critical to the successful dissemination of these messages, and female philanthropists emerge as mediating literary modes which were gendered female ('romance') and those which appealed to a wider audience (notably the burgeoning mode of human interest journalism). Philanthropy could also be part of a gendered

performance of celebrity, as a case-study of Evangeline Booth's cultural interventions reveals, and a performance of femininity that was encoded both in discussions about female philanthropists' (strong and sometimes infirm) bodies and the moral messages thought to be revealed in their clothing. Finally, chapter 6 situates female philanthropists in interwar discourses of international relations, and reveals them working to mediate cultural difference. These women were motivated to work across cultures through a consciousness of campaigning that built on intellectual networks and forms of public diplomacy which transcended national and imperialist activity. Projections of Christian universalism, in the projects of Evangeline Booth and Emily Kinnaird, rooted global endeavours within increasingly broadly-diffused notions of ecumenicalism. Whether or not they identified as religious, interwar women philanthropists consciously engaged in mediating differences of race.

Historians have tended to view interwar women philanthropists as conservative at best, religious at worst, and very often outmoded. Indeed, the 'do-gooder' remains a palpably negative stereotype. Not only do such narratives present female philanthropists through a distorting and anachronistic lens which obscures what these women actually were doing, they also close down new avenues of historical inquiry. The rich and nuanced picture of continuity and change which emerges from exploration of the practical, philosophical and psychological aspects of women's philanthropy between the wars, illuminates the methodological flexibility of their endeavours. Interwar female philanthropists were engaged in a form of inter-personal social action which was being rearticulated, and which was broadcast and translated into action in complex and sometimes competing terms. Female philanthropy lay at the heart of lively debates about civil agency and the contours of a good society.

INTRODUCTION

In the sphere of voluntary social work, Charles Loch, Octavia Hill, Bernard and Helen Bosanquet during the last twenty years of the nineteenth and early years of the present century, not only evolved methods of charity organisation, but formulated principles and ideas of social progress which have left a more permanent stamp on social thought than is generally realised. But much of their work is out of print and out of date. Where are their successors? Where are those who, inheriting from them ideas and standards which bear the test of time, can interpret them to a generation which speaks a different language and moves in a totally different environment?¹

Elizabeth Macadam

Unfortunately the terms used in connection with philanthropic activities have, with the passage of time, acquired somewhat derogatory meanings. This is true of the terms 'charity' and 'philanthropy', and it is probably becoming true of 'social service'. But, unless I invent a completely new terminology, which would be incomprehensible to the reader, I must use these terms: needless to say I use them free from any derogatory connotation.²

Constance Braithwaite

These opening words are taken from two books written in the 1930s by women social scientists. The first are those of sixty-three-year-old social worker and theorist Elizabeth Macadam, found in *The new philanthropy: a study of the relations between the statutory and voluntary social services* (1934). The second are social studies lecturer Constance Braithwaite's, from *The voluntary citizen: an enquiry into the place of philanthropy in the community* (1938). Braithwaite's and Macadam's books were important interventions in a wide-ranging discussion about the evolving landscape of British welfare provision in the two decades following the end of the First World War. Their significance resided partly in the fact that philanthropy, and what it meant to Britons, was a point of debate more readily taken up by broadcasters and journalists than academics in the period. More importantly, though, the above extracts reveal these women's reconfiguration of philanthropy as a concept. In *The new philanthropy* and *The voluntary citizen*, philanthropy emerges as an idea, the meanings and relevance of which were contingent upon the changing make-up of its audience. Within this complementary observation, however, there were significant differences in Macadam's and Braithwaite's definitional emphases. Macadam saw an inter-generational impasse in configuring philanthropy within and between the landscapes of late-Victorian social reform and those framed by the new sites and degrees of social need caused and highlighted by experiences of the First

¹ Elizabeth Macadam, *The new philanthropy: a study of the relations between the statutory and voluntary social services* (London: G. Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1934), p. 21.

² Constance Braithwaite, *The voluntary citizen: an enquiry into the place of philanthropy in the community* (London: Methuen and Co., 1938), p. 2.

World War. Braithwaite, too, perceived a discomfort surrounding the transmission of philanthropy as an idea, but she fundamentally asserted its central place in the social vocabulary of interwar Britons. These distinctions in emphasis rested on broader points of philosophical difference. While Macadam straightforwardly invoked the influence of Charles Loch, Octavia Hill, and the Bosanquets, who were all prominent figures within the late-Victorian Charity Organisation Society (COS), Braithwaite queried why ‘For a long period the COS have had the distinction of producing almost the only systematic body of philosophical thought on the subject of philanthropy’.³ The COS famously marketed itself from its foundation in 1869 as a modern philanthropic provision, framed around ‘scientific methods’.⁴ The distance between Macadam’s and Braithwaite’s perspectives on the COS points to the creative possibilities inherent within the intellectual frameworks of the discipline of early-twentieth-century social science.⁵ Philanthropy was not necessarily jettisoned by this discipline, but neither was it understood homogenously. Rather its evolving methodologies opened up new spaces to re-examine its meanings and significance.

The juxtaposition of Elizabeth Macadam’s and Constance Braithwaite’s words forms a pertinent starting-point for this thesis’ examination of the cultural and intellectual contours of British women’s philanthropy between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War. Macadam’s work has been characterised by numerous historians of charity and welfare as codifying a definitive break in early-twentieth-century thinking about welfare praxis, in which older models of personal philanthropy (notably the work done by women at the local level of parish work and district visiting) and corporate philanthropy were reconfigured

³ Ibid., p. 8. Although she did note influential dissenters from the intellectual position of the COS, notably Sidney and Beatrice Webb .

⁴ On the COS see Jane Lewis, *The voluntary sector, the state and social work in Britain: the Charity Organisation Society/Family Welfare Association since 1869* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995); Robert Humphreys, *Poor relief and charity, 1869-1945: the London Charity Organisation Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

⁵ Mike Savage, *Identities and social change in Britain since 1940: the politics of method* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 51; Eileen Yeo, *The contest for social science: relations and representations of gender and class* (London: Rivers Oram, 1996), x. This creativity developed the ‘heterogenous composition’ of Victorian social science: Lawrence Goldman, *Science, reform and politics in Victorian Britain: the Social Science Association, 1857-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 3.

alongside an expansion in state-instituted social welfare measures.⁶ Braithwaite's work has been relatively forgotten, although a recent account of the history of British social welfare has interpreted *The voluntary citizen* as encoding charity provision as relevant only until it was transferred to the administrative structures of the state.⁷ Exploring the relevance accorded to philanthropy in this context, as this historical narrative has observed, was an important interwar preoccupation, and one with which this thesis engages. But in reading Macadam's and Braithwaite's books as highlighting the existence of an interruption in philanthropic practice, scholars have too readily seen these women as moving in one direction, and they have followed that direction in only one way. They have downplayed the different rhetorical purposes of the books, which saw Macadam writing an 'introductory text', for experts, professionals, students and informed commentators studying the evolving system of social service, whilst Braithwaite constructed a more theoretically robust 'philosophical essay'.⁸ They have also overlooked the conceptual points of difference between and within the authors' configurations of philanthropy. 'Philanthropy' emerged in one of five baggy categories of voluntary social work which Elizabeth Macadam identified in *The new philanthropy*: 'Charitable or philanthropic organisations'; 'Voluntary work in the public services'; 'Institutions and self-help bodies'; 'Research and experiment'; and 'Propaganda'.⁹ This contrasted with Constance Braithwaite's thematic, and much more expansive, definitions of philanthropy: as 'supplementary', 'experimental', 'controversial' and

⁶ Bernard Harris defines Macadam's notion of 'new philanthropy' as a reformulation of social activism and a reorganisation of social capital, 'Health by association', *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 34, 2 (2005), p. 490. See also Jane Lewis, 'Reviewing the relationship between the voluntary sector and the state in Britain in the 1990s', *Voluntas: international journal of voluntary and nonprofit organizations*, 10, 3 (1999), p. 260; Rodney Lowe, 'Welfare's moving frontier', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6, 3, (1995), p. 372. Although Frank Prochaska argues that Macadam's views were not representative of interwar philanthropy, rather that they anticipated post Second World War developments: *The voluntary impulse: philanthropy in modern Britain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), p. 80.

⁷ Bernard Harris, 'Voluntary action and the state in historical perspective', *Voluntary sector review: an international journal of the third sector research, policy and practice*, 1, 1 (2010), p. 33. Braithwaite has been fleetingly mentioned in the contexts of her discussions of the COS and associational culture respectively, see Jane Lewis, 'The boundary between voluntary and statutory social service in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries', *The Historical Journal*, 39, 1 (1996), p. 158; Helen McCarthy, 'Parties, voluntary associations, and democratic politics in interwar Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 50, 4 (2007), p. 899.

⁸ Macadam, *New philanthropy*, preface. Braithwaite noted in her Introduction her debt to Macadam in *The new philanthropy* for 'absolv[ing] me from any obligation which I might otherwise have felt to make a general survey of the whole ground of philanthropic effort', *Voluntary citizen*, p. 1.

⁹ Macadam, *New philanthropy*, pp. 27-33.

‘international’.¹⁰ Academics have failed to observe that these women understood philanthropy itself as mediating between a variety of methodologies and temporalities: theory and practice; domestic and international concerns; past and present. Indeed, very few scholars have considered the significant factor that these discussions were written by women.¹¹ Why should it be that two of the few book-length studies of philanthropy published in the interwar period were written by women?¹² This thesis argues that it is important to focus on the gendered dimensions of authorship. Viewed through this lens the books suggest a different narrative about, and approach to, philanthropy than historians have traditionally observed.

A key aspect of Macadam’s and Braithwaite’s discussions was focused on calibrating the relationship between philanthropy and the state in the provision of social welfare. This relationship – discussed at length throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – has interested historians of charity and welfare in modern Britain in broad and varied terms, and is a subject which I will discuss further below.¹³ Here, it is important to focus on this theme as part of wider contemporary and historical understandings of civil society in the interwar period. In her survey of political thought and the welfare state between 1870 and 1940, José Harris wrote nearly twenty years ago that ‘What is striking...is the fact that virtually no major social theorist or writer on social policy of this period dissented from the view that the ultimate sphere of “welfare” in its widest sense was, or ought to be, the institutions of the state’.¹⁴ Harris’ discussion is helpful in the sense that it set up a periodisation which cut across the hiatus that had been

¹⁰ Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, ch. 2. Braithwaite in fact defined ‘philanthropy’ extremely broadly, ‘to include all that is included in both the terms “charity” and “voluntary social service”, where ‘charity includ[ed] all voluntary gifts of money (or its equivalent in goods) for purposes which are of no direct economic benefit to the donor or his immediate family dependents’. She defined ‘voluntary social service...[as] includ[ing] all voluntary unpaid personal service rendered by an individual to other individuals of groups except that rendered to his family and personal friends’, p. 2.

¹¹ Where this has been considered it has tended to be in Macadam’s case, and connected to discussions about the women-centred politics with which she was involved, principally through her friendship with politician and social reformer Eleanor Rathbone. See Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the politics of conscience* (New Haven, Conn; London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 4; ch. 9; ‘Macadam, Elizabeth (1871–1948)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/53582>, accessed 5 March 2011].

¹² The lack of contemporary studies on philanthropy was noted by Constance Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, pp. 7-8.

¹³ See below, pp. 10-13.

¹⁴ José Harris, ‘Political thought and the welfare state 1870-1940: an intellectual framework for British social policy’, *Past and Present*, 135, 1 (1992), p. 119.

claimed traditionally between the Victorian and Edwardian and the interwar periods.¹⁵ But her thesis nevertheless framed the period within a linear narrative of the dominance of state interventions, an argument which was largely premised on a discussion of male social thinkers.¹⁶ A very different construction of civil society to Harris' had emerged a year earlier in the work of Alison Light. Focusing on leisure and (generally) lower-middle-class discourse, Light argued that the 1920s and '30s were characterised by an idea of 'Englishness at once less imperial and more inward-looking, more domestic and more private, and by pre-war standards, more "feminine"'.¹⁷ Light's configuration of the interwar years as a period of 'conservative modernity' has been extremely influential amongst historians of interwar Britain, and it plots, *contra* to Harris, the oscillations of the period.¹⁸ But in its construction specifically of civil society, Light's discussion counterposes domesticity to the centralised workings of the state (when in fact they could be refashioned to model new ideas of community engagement that moved outwards from the local domain), and associates the former with a sub-set of middle-class women.¹⁹ From different angles, then, both Harris' and Light's analyses reduce interwar civil society to a homogenous 'national' model – whether oriented around the collective agency of state or individual agency – and fail to consider the dialectics which emerge when one considers the social thought of individuals who understood their work as operating outside these boundaries. When placed alongside the discussions of Elizabeth Macadam and Constance Braithwaite, Harris and Light downplay what were actually the fluid terms in which women theorists were discussing civil agency between the wars. Macadam's very definition of 'the new philanthropy' was 'a new technique of organisation, a close interrelation between private philanthropic effort and state control', and this itself involved the 'pertinacity' of an older 'habit of voluntary personal service'.²⁰ For Braithwaite, socialism provided a structure through which to discuss more

¹⁵ As codified in Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The long week-end: a social history of Great Britain, 1918-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1940).

¹⁶ Harris referenced very few women thinkers, although notably Elizabeth Macadam and Beatrice Webb, 'Political thought and the welfare state', pp. 122-3, 138; 119; 133.

¹⁷ Alison Light, *Forever England: femininity, literature and conservatism between the wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁹ For a consideration of how domesticity was reframed to encourage participation in the philanthropic act see below, pp. 52-7.

²⁰ Macadam, *New philanthropy*, pp. 17; 16.

visionary forms of philanthropy, which transcended the domestic and national boundaries of the state in cross-national activity, ‘one of the gems of a possible future international community’.²¹ There were both continuities as well as change in the cultural authority through which these women understood interwar civil society to operate, and suggestions of its interleaved temporalities. Their narratives mapped philanthropy upon overlapping lines of voluntary and state social welfare and an outward-facing civil agency.

Taking its lead from the philosophical discussions of contemporary commentators, this thesis seeks to provide a new conceptual framework for the study of British women’s philanthropy between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War. Whereas men’s historical involvement in philanthropy has been seen as one of a wide variety of forms of public activity, women’s philanthropic work is understood as one of few arenas of legitimate ‘feminine’ activity outside the home in which they could engage and gain influence before formal legal and political enfranchisement in the twentieth century.²² Since Frank Prochaska’s influential analysis, a vast amount of scholarship has been produced which claims essentialised associations of women with philanthropy.²³ This literature (usually implicitly) draws on historically-symbolic definitions of ‘femaleness’ and ‘maleness’ that juxtapose the abstract qualities of nature and reason, matter and form, and emotion and intellect.²⁴ This thesis challenges this historical narrative to argue that gender was a category invoked in different ways –

²¹ Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, pp. 48-9.

²² Frank Prochaska, ‘Women and English philanthropy, 1790-1830’, *International Review of Social History*, 19, 3 (1974), pp. 426-45; *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth century England* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press; Clarendon Press, 1980). An argument which relates to the influential ‘separate spheres’ school of gender history. For a helpful discussion about this concept and its methodological application (and problems) see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, ‘Introduction’, in Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (1987; repr. London: Routledge, 2002), xiii-l.

²³ E.g. Dorice Williams Elliot, *The angel out of the house: philanthropy and gender in nineteenth-century England* (Charlottesville, VA.; London: University Press of Virginia, 2002); Jane Lewis, *Women and social action in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1991); Steven King, *Women, welfare and local politics, 1880-1920: ‘we might be trusted’* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2006); Simon Morgan, *A Victorian woman’s place: public culture in the nineteenth century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007); Sybil Oldfield, *Women humanitarians: doers of the world: a biographical dictionary of British women active between 1900 and 1950* (London: Continuum, 2001); Maria Luddy, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ellen Ross (ed.), *Slum travelers: ladies and London poverty, 1860-1920* (Berkeley, CA.; London: University of California Press, 2007); Lillian Lewis Shiman, *Women and leadership in nineteenth-century England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); Anne Summers, *Angels and citizens: British women as military nurses, 1854-1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988). For an essentialised reading of gender and philanthropy see Seth Koven, *Slumming: sexual and social politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

²⁴ Genevieve Lloyd, *The man of reason: ‘male’ and ‘female’ in Western philosophy* (London: Methuen, 1984).

and sometimes with the ‘potential of inconsistency’ – at different times by female philanthropists, their publicists, and clients.²⁵ In making this argument it takes up the methodological insights of Joan Scott, who argued that we need ‘to interrogate the production of the category “woman” itself as a historical or political event whose circumstances and effects are the object of analysis’.²⁶ Between the wars female philanthropists were conscious of breaking out of categories, not only of gender, but also of various other binaries of social structures. One of the central goals of this thesis is to reveal contemporary challenges to straightforward associations of women and philanthropy, even at the time that some commentators were constructing them. In focusing attention on the ideological role of gender in women’s early-twentieth-century charitable activity, it makes an original intervention in the historiography of women’s philanthropy by analysing the varied and contingent relationships between women and philanthropy.

Moving beyond an essentialist paradigm, this thesis defines interwar women’s philanthropy through a number of key definitional variables. First, it adopts gender as a concept – to explore women’s philanthropy as a social and cultural construct within which multiple femininities could be encoded – and as a methodological tool, to examine how female philanthropy facilitated various routes to women’s power through which men and women were positioned differently, whilst negotiating various forms of social relationship. Secondly, it analyses the significance of generation, examining how between the wars female philanthropists related to clients of different age-groups, and how they used the concept to position themselves and their work in relation to (and sometimes consciously differentiated from) constructions of ‘Victorian’ and ‘Edwardian’ cultural politics. Thirdly, it excavates the place of religion within women’s philanthropic projects in this period, illuminating the variety of religious experiences that played through women’s philanthropic projects, and the relationship between religious and secular models. Lastly, it re-evaluates the significance of professionalisation in women’s lives in the interwar years. Historians have tended to assume that women’s philanthropy was at its highpoint a construct of amateur ‘Victorian’ intervention, and therefore that it was bound in the

²⁵ This conceptual point builds on Jane Garnett’s discussion in ‘Whose logic? Reflections on gender in the history of ideas’, *History of European Ideas*, 28, 1/2 (2002), p. 82.

²⁶ Joan Scott, *Gender and the politics of history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 206-7.

twentieth century to be taken over by professionalism. This thesis reveals instead its hitherto overlooked vibrancy between the wars in part because it was not bound by the occupational and rhetorical pressures of the professions. Rather it operated through a creative logic about the nature of work, expertise and status, and allowed for dynamic interrelations between formal and informal measures of women's status.

The thesis pivots on four women. Born between the 1850s and 1870s, Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget became part of a generation of women whose philanthropic careers spanned the decades before and after the First World War. These women had different social backgrounds (they occupied a spectrum of middle-, upper-middle, and upper-class milieus); different political affiliations (ranging from Labour party membership to aristocratic Conservatism via educated Liberalism); and different religious and secular perspectives (encompassing committed evangelicalism, nominal Anglicanism, and professed atheism). Building on their distinct educational backgrounds, they operated in a number of philanthropic contexts, ranging across Britain, North America, Asia, and Europe. Because of the variations in and between their intellectual animations, a study of these four women adds to historical understandings of women's philanthropy by looking beyond an essentialised framework, in order to explore the shared and varied experiences that underpinned women's charitable projects between the wars. It also focuses attention on the ways in which women philanthropists forged connections with a wide range of individuals (both men and women) and various strains of social and political thought. In doing so they operated in local, national and international domains, confronting cultural and intellectual terrains that could be, but were not necessarily, gendered. Family (both marital and hereditary) formed one critical structure in forging these cross-gendered connections. Audience formed another. So while Emily Kinnaird worked almost exclusively with and for women, Lettice Fisher worked both with and for women and men, and Evangeline Booth and Muriel Paget reached out to mixed gender audiences. Their various interactions – with men and women, and groups of different ages, classes, and ethnicities – reveal how far removed they were from envisaging their philanthropy as an essentialised project.

The role of language in the formulation and impact of ideas about philanthropy is crucial to this thesis. In her examination of the development of Irish women's philanthropy, Margaret Preston acknowledged its vital relationship to the 'language of charity'.²⁷ This was a critical observation to have made because it indicated a distinction between the practice, presentation and definition of philanthropy. But Preston's analytic framework is rooted in a social history approach which seeks to uncover the social fabric of women's philanthropic activity, rather than in an approach which interrogates philanthropy as a conceptual subject, and explores what it reveals about the complex construction of gender more broadly. Rather than seeking to reveal one or more models of female philanthropy in the interwar period, I address how Booth, Fisher, Kinnaird and Paget engaged in strikingly strategic (and often political) uses of language in the process of fashioning and translating their projects as both practical and philosophical. On one level, this illustrates how philanthropy was always related to other markers of women's identity, whether gendered, generational, political, religious or social. At a second level, it highlights the variety of ways in which each of the four women I examine presented her project(s). Being sensitive to the relationship between these presentational frameworks necessitates investigating not only the terms of these women's representation, but also the varied cultural registers and mechanisms through which these terms were mediated in public and private, to varied audiences. This thesis, then, examines how language was used to frame Booth's, Fisher's, Kinnaird's and Paget's interwar philanthropy, how that language was engaged with, and how it connected to what these women were actually doing and where they were doing it. It is not simply a women's history, nor only about women. Rather, it examines how the four women interacted with various individuals, groups and ideas. Re-articulation and creative adaptation marked these women's endeavours in the interwar years.²⁸ And this process of engagement with the meaning and significance of female philanthropy raised important broader questions about the nature of society, work and citizenship.

²⁷ Margaret Preston, *Charitable words: women, philanthropy and the language of charity in nineteenth-century Dublin* (Westport, Conn.; London: Praeger, 2004).

²⁸ An insight which complements a recent account of voluntary associational culture in the interwar period and the mid- to-late-twentieth century: Helen McCarthy and Pat Thane, 'The politics of association in industrial society', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, 2 (2011), pp. 217-29.

Rethinking the state, civil society and politics

It is now a commonplace amongst modern British historians to characterise the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as featuring a ‘mixed economy of welfare’.²⁹ Definitions of this economy usually sketch a landscape of welfare provision comprising state, voluntary and commercial sectors.³⁰ Because of the assumed overlaps between these categories, appropriating this model allows historians to claim a degree of intellectual hybridity, and the amalgamation of different sorts of collective and individual agency in the provision of social welfare. A familiar undercurrent in this literature, therefore, emphasises the philosophical inheritance and pre-welfare state activity of the welfare state’s key architects, especially William Beveridge, and the importance he continued to assign to voluntary action during the period when the welfare state was designed.³¹ However, historians’ recognition of the connections between these sectors tends only to go so far. The welfare state remains not only a potent focus within many cultural, political and social histories, but is all too typically centred in narratives which assume that other sectors (including the voluntary) were necessarily in its orbit.³² Re-articulations of the role of the state, and its changing relationship to citizens, are part of the story of interwar female philanthropy. Building on the pioneering reforms of the Edwardian Liberal governments, the interwar years

²⁹ Norman Johnson, *Mixed economies of welfare: a comparative perspective* (London: Prentice Hall Europe, 1998).

³⁰ Ibid.; John Stewart, ‘The mixed economy of welfare in historical perspective’, in Martin Powell (ed.), *Understanding the mixed economy of welfare* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2007), pp. 23-40. For historical applications of the model see Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state and social welfare in Britain 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Katharine Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state: charities and the working classes in London 1918-79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Pat Thane, *The foundations of the welfare state* (London: Longman, 1982); Lewis, *Voluntary sector, the state and social work in Britain*; Martin Daunt, *State and market in Victorian Britain: war, welfare and capitalism* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), chs. 11-12.

³¹ William Beveridge set out the importance of the non-state sector in *Voluntary action: a report on methods of social advance* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1948). Bradley’s work is a recent example that cites this, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state*, p. 1.

³² For recent examples see Edward Higgs, ‘Fingerprints and citizenship: the British state and the identification of pensioners in the interwar period’, *History Workshop Journal*, 69 (2010), pp. 52-67. Pat Thane centres the welfare state in relation to ‘mass society’, ‘The welfare state in mass society: twentieth-century Britain’, in Bob Moore and Henk van Nierop (eds), *Twentieth century mass society in Britain and the Netherlands* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 67-76. See also James Vernon, *Hunger: a modern history* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

saw increased central and local government intervention in social welfare.³³ These interventions were begun by David Lloyd George's Coalition Government (which extended the 1911 National Insurance provision in the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920), continued under Stanley Baldwin's Conservative government (for instance in pension reform in 1925), and developed under the National Governments of the 1930s which, in the face of unprecedented unemployment, further re-evaluated the relationship between state, market and citizen, instituting along the way new Unemployment Assistance Boards in 1934. Women philanthropists interacted with these developments and their effects on social problems, which they addressed. But they also constructed methodological distance between their own projects and those of the state, and in the process conceived of a gendered economy and geography of social action.

Building on work by feminist and gender theorists which critiques the symbolically 'masculine' bureaucratic state, and historians and social scientists who have suggested its relationship to more fluid constructions of gender, this thesis seeks to understand how female philanthropy was positioned within and alongside gendered frameworks of the state.³⁴ A key framework for discussing the gendered angles of women's relationship to the welfare state has been women-centred politics. Gisela Bock and Pat Thane wrote influentially about the 'visions of gender' that the development of welfare states in relation to the women's movements 'embodied and helped to construct'.³⁵ Complementing Bock's and Thane's focus on formal political and legal enfranchisement, a substantial literature has grown up with a central concern to reveal women's agency in campaigning for welfare and shaping social policies *in* welfare states.³⁶ This

³³ On Edwardian welfare provision see J. Roy Hay, *The origins of the Liberal welfare reforms, 1906-14* (London: Macmillan, 1983); E. P. Hennock, *The origin of the welfare state in England and Germany, 1850-1914: social policies compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁴ E.g. R. W. Connell, 'The state, gender and sexual politics', *Theory and society*, 19, 5 (1990), pp. 507-44; Mary Daly, *The gender division of welfare: the impact of the British and German welfare states* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Barbara Hobson, Jane Lewis and Birtie Siim (eds), *Contested concepts in gender and social politics* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002); Jane Lewis, 'Gender and welfare state change', *European societies*, 4, 4 (2002), pp. 331-57.

³⁵ Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, 'Editors' Introduction', in Bock and Thane (eds), *Maternity and gender policies: women and the rise of the European welfare states 1880s-1950s* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 1. See also Pat Thane, 'Visions of gender in the making of the British welfare state', in *Ibid*, pp. 93-118.

³⁶ On the British context see e.g. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (eds), *Mothers of a new world: maternalist politics and the origins of welfare states* (New York; London: Routledge, 1990); Jane Lewis, 'Gender, the family and women's agency in the building of "welfare states": the British case', *Social History*, 19, 1 (1994), pp. 37-55; Susan Pedersen, *Family, dependency and the origins of the welfare state in Britain and France 1914-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

thesis illuminates a more complex picture of politics emerging through female philanthropists' interactions with the state between the wars.³⁷ Female philanthropists worked through and with states, as in the diverse cases of Lettice Fisher whose charity for unmarried mothers worked in co-operation with the British government, and Muriel Paget who negotiated the idiosyncratic operations of various new state systems in Eastern Europe in the early 1920s. They also demonstrated flexibility in circumventing the geographical boundaries of nation states. It is revealing that when Constance Braithwaite wrote about international charities (alongside her discussion of socialism), she used the example of a female associate who 'has given a large part of her energies for most of her life to befriending the victims of war and revolution'.³⁸ Elizabeth Macadam similarly gendered 'the international spirit of social service' – both in terms of personnel and causes – by foregrounding the work of the Women's International League, British Committee for India Women's Welfare and the British Council of Social Hygiene and Association for Moral and Social Hygiene in her discussion.³⁹ The expansiveness of female philanthropists' ways of seeing was visually represented in an image used in the Young Women's Christian Association's 1923 publicity campaign. A young woman dressed in white held the world in her arms as she looked outwards, embodying purity (Frontispiece). Here a sense of fluidity and movement (in the transition across the world illustrated on the different faces of the globe) was part of a transcultural endeavour, symbolised by the varying skin tone of the young woman's arms. Articulated in sophisticated terms, the YWCA's publicity distilled a critical message of unity in difference, and it represented a cross-national purpose shared by many interwar female philanthropists who sought to transcend national priorities. In exploring the cultural and intellectual contexts underpinning female philanthropists' broad world vision, this thesis reveals philanthropic women critically linking local philosophies of charitable effort to global concerns. The state was not absent from their welfare landscape. Nevertheless, its formal

³⁷ This realisation of philanthropy's redrawing of the boundaries of political culture chimes with a recent discussion of twentieth-century voluntary action and NGOs: Stephen Brooke and Claire Langhamer (eds), 'Commentary: voluntary organisations, NGOs and twentieth-century political culture', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, 2 (2011), pp. 216-68.

³⁸ Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, p. 44. Braithwaite outlined the variety of this woman's international work in administering relief in countries that were the allies and 'ex-enemies' of Britain in the First World War, and for refugees in the aftermath of the war.

³⁹ Macadam, *New philanthropy*, pp. 270; 277.

structures could be mediated by informal traditions of personal models of welfare activity, compassion and care, and by a cosmic vision.

This study of interwar British women's philanthropy explores from new angles the contours of civil agency and a good society. In doing so, it builds on a large corpus of scholarship. Many historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have made the association of female philanthropy with women's developing civic consciousness.⁴⁰ More recently, a growing body of literature has considered how women's civic activity in the years following the First World War developed women's political sensibilities. Intersecting with the vast literature on suffragism and the enactment of the Representation of the People Acts of 1918 and 1928, historians have explored women's political activity and citizenship between the wars through a number of lenses.⁴¹ Anne Logan has considered the intersections between a post-suffrage inheritance and the 'professionalised' work of the first female MPs.⁴² Caitriona Beaumont distinguished between the concepts of citizenship and feminism in women's

⁴⁰ The literature is vast. For some key contributions see Kathryn Gleadle, *British women in the nineteenth century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 66 and her *Borderline citizens: women, gender and political culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2009), esp. pp. 136-46; 148-53; pp. 241-8; Luddy, *Women and philanthropy in nineteenth-century Ireland*; Lewis, *Women and social action*; Claire Midgley, 'Anti-slavery and feminism in nineteenth-century Britain', *Gender and History*, 5 (1993), pp. 343-62; Kim Reynolds, *Aristocratic women and political society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), ch. 3; Alison Twells, *The civilising mission and the English middle class, 1792-1850: the 'heathen' at home and overseas* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Anne Summers, 'A home from home – women's philanthropic work in the nineteenth century', in Sandra Burman (ed.), *Fit work for women* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 33-63.

⁴¹ On suffragism and its relationship to redefinitions of citizenship see Laura Mayhall, *The militant suffrage movement: citizenship and resistance in Britain 1860-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Martin Pugh, 'Suffrage and citizenship', in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (eds), *Twentieth-century Britain: economic, cultural and social change*, 2nd edn. (1994; London: Longman, 2007), pp. 97-110. On interwar feminism see Brian Harrison, *Prudent revolutionaries: portraits of British feminists between the wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making peace: the reconstruction of gender in interwar Britain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993); Martin Pugh, *Women and the women's movement in Britain 1914-59* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1992); Pat Thane, 'Women, liberalism and citizenship, 1918-1930', in Eugenio F. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and community: Liberals, radicals and collective identities in the British Isles, 1865-1931* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 66-92. For a consideration of the post-suffrage context as experienced by women see Pat Thane, 'What difference did the vote make? Women in public and private life in Britain since 1918', *Historical Research* 76, 192 (2003), pp. 268-85. On citizenship see e.g. Nicoletta F. Gullace, *The blood of our sons: men, women, and the renegotiation of British citizenship during the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Sonya O. Rose and Kathleen Canning (eds), *Gender, citizenship, and subjectivities* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 2002).

⁴² Anne Logan, 'Professionalism and the impact of England's first women justices, 1920-1950', *The Historical Journal*, 49, 3 (2006), pp. 833-50.

organisations in the period after the 1918 suffrage act.⁴³ Building on this work, Samantha Clements and Ruth Davidson have employed the methods of local study in order to shed light on the developments of women's citizenship within particular locales, while Helen McCarthy, Valerie Wright and Linda Perriton have explored the gendered nature of interwar citizenship organisations through the lenses of gender and educational history.⁴⁴ This thesis adds to historians' understandings of the process of associational culture and women's politics through considering how female philanthropists both configured civil society and put it into practice. The processes involved in the conceptualisation of civil society were complex, varying across time and space and through different intellectual frameworks.⁴⁵ In focusing on how they could improve the societies that they inhabited and make 'new and better worlds', female philanthropists contributed to drafting civil society in its broadest geographical and intellectual terms.⁴⁶ And in these varied senses, female philanthropists were reorienting ideas of individual agency – exercising skills and experience – in interacting with, and challenging the functions of, the state.

This re-evaluation also situates female philanthropy within the context of the wider historiography of twentieth-century Britain, which has largely underplayed the role of religion within mainstream society and the importance of Christian frameworks in advancing evolving forms of citizenship.⁴⁷ The lack of attention paid to the subject of religion is closely related to the

⁴³ Caitriona Beaumont, 'Citizens not feminists: the boundary negotiated between citizenship and feminism by mainstream women's organisations in England, 1928-1939', *Women's History Review*, 9, 2 (2000) pp. 411-29.

⁴⁴ Samantha Clements, 'Feminism, citizenship and social activity: the role and importance of local women's organisations, Nottingham 1918-1969' (Unpublished PhD. thesis, University of Nottingham, 2008); Ruth Davidson, 'Citizens at last: women's political culture and civil society, Croydon and East Surrey, 1914-39' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2010). Helen McCarthy, 'Service clubs, citizenship and equality: gender relations and middle-class associations in Britain between the wars', *Historical Research*, 81, 213 (2008), pp. 531-52; Linda Perriton, 'The education of women for citizenship: the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the British Federation of Business and Professional Women 1930-1959', *Gender and education*, 12, 1 (2008), pp. 81-95; Valerie Wright, 'Education for active citizenship: women's organisations in interwar Scotland', *History of education* 38, 3 (2009), pp. 419-36.

⁴⁵ Frank Trentmann, 'Introduction: paradoxes of civil society', in *Paradoxes of civil society: new perspectives on modern German and British history* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2000), pp. 3-46; José Harris (ed.), *Civil society in British history: ideas, identities, institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a sustained discussion of how a civil society actually might be conceived see Matthew Grimley, 'Civil society and the clerisy: Christian elites and national culture c.1930-1950', in Harris, *Civil society*, pp. 231-48.

⁴⁶ See below, esp. pp. 63-8; ch. 6.

⁴⁷ For histories which have considered these themes, see Sarah Williams, *Religious belief and popular culture in Southwark, c.1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, community, and the Church of England: liberal Anglican theories of the state between the wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004);

claim that women's philanthropy was in 'decline' in the twentieth century. Thus while Frank Prochaska stressed the importance of Christian social thought in *Female philanthropy in nineteenth century England*, in *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit* (2006) he wrote off the continued resonance of religion in women's voluntary activity in the twentieth century.⁴⁸ More broadly, the disavowal of the religious imperatives of women's civic action in this period is part of a paradigm used by many modern British historians to reconstruct the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within an overarching 'secularisation thesis'.⁴⁹ This thesis challenges this narrative, not simply with the aim of pushing back the chronology of women's religious philanthropic engagement from the nineteenth century into the mid twentieth century, by analogy with Callum Brown's deferral of the process of secularisation in *The death of Christian Britain*.⁵⁰ Rather, it contests the model of secularisation through revealing how religion was transmitted and re-articulated in new contexts and idioms in the process of positioning interwar female philanthropy as a model of civil agency.⁵¹

A key remit of this thesis, therefore, is to overcome straightforward oppositions between the 'religious' and the 'secular' in interwar women's philanthropy. Rather than segregating these categories, it stresses how these models worked in dialogue in the process of constructing gendered notions of a well-spent life and a well-functioning society.⁵² This focus reveals the

Jane Garnett, Matthew Grimley, Alana Harris, William Whyte and Sarah Williams (eds), *Redefining Christian Britain: post-1945 perspectives* (London: SCM Press, 2007).

⁴⁸ Prochaska *Women and philanthropy*, pp. 8-17; *Christianity and social service in modern Britain: the disinherited spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), esp. chs. 3-5. His most recent argument sits in tension with his 1988 work, in which he argued that 'the decline of philanthropy has been exaggerated', *Voluntary impulse*, p. 1.

⁴⁹ Callum Brown, *The death of Christian Britain: understanding secularisation, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001); Steve Bruce (ed.), *Religion and modernization: sociologists and historians debate the secularization thesis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Jeremy Morris, 'The strange death of Christian Britain: another look at the secularisation debate', *Historical Journal*, 46, 4 (2003), pp. 963-76.

⁵⁰ Which argued that rather than becoming secular in the nineteenth century, Britain continued to be a religious society into the twentieth century, before succumbing to secular culture c.1960, Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*.

⁵¹ A focus in part inspired by the insights in Garnett et. al., *Redefining Christian Britain*.

⁵² The distinction between secular and religious aspects of women's unpaid work is part of the mainstream revisionist narrative of twentieth-century women's history see e.g. Katherine Holden's distinction between 'Religion and philanthropic work' and 'Secular women's groups and unpaid work': 'Family, caring and unpaid work', in Ina Zweinger-Bargielowska (ed.), *Women in twentieth-century Britain* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), pp. 143-6.

importance of religious agency, as well as political agency, to philanthropic women's lives.⁵³ Essays in the recent edited volume, *Women, gender and religious cultures in Britain, 1880-1940* (2010) have begun to consider this point in the context of the early twentieth century. Susan Mumm's essay argues 'throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth religiously-organised philanthropy remained overwhelmingly popular [for women]'.⁵⁴ Julie Melynck agreed with this premise, observing in an essay on British women's contribution to the development of theological cultures, the significance of the 'para-ecclesiastical organisations' of mothers' meetings, mission societies and philanthropic groups, which could form 'separate women's cultures', a theme also recently explored by Cordelia Moyse in her history of the Mothers' Union.⁵⁵ The links between religious and secular models in the process of building women's spiritual agency, however, remain underexplored. Joy Dixon's essay in *Women, gender and religious cultures* argued for the 'dynamic relationship between secular and sacred, public and private, masculine and feminine', an observation endorsed by historians including Mark Knight, Emma Mason, and Harry Cocks.⁵⁶ This thesis contributes to this emerging literature by revealing the critical intersections between Christian and non-Christian models of belief in the methodologies of interwar women's philanthropy, both by women who defined themselves (in a variety of ways) as religious, and by those who did not. Religion was experienced and understood in various ways in these projects. But it was central to a broader and shared explanatory framework through which women philanthropists sought to locate their projects as part of a socially- and spiritually-meaningful life.

⁵³ A point made recently by Rosi Braidotti: 'In spite of the times: the postsecular turn in feminism', *Theory, Culture and Society* 25, 6 (2008), pp. 1-24.

⁵⁴ Susan Mumm, 'Women and philanthropic cultures', in Sue Morgan and Jacqueline de Vries (eds), *Women, gender and religious cultures in Britain, 1800-1940* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 54.

⁵⁵ Julie Melnyk, 'Women, writing and the reaction of theological cultures', in *Ibid.*, pp. 33; 37; Cordelia Moyse, *A history of the Mothers' Union: women, Anglicanism and globalisation, 1876-2008* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009).

⁵⁶ Joy Dixon, 'Modernity, heterodoxy and the transformation of religious cultures', in Morgan and de Vries, *Women, gender and religious cultures*, p. 212. Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-century religion and literature: an introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 179-80; H. G. Cocks, 'Religion and spirituality', in H. G. Cocks and Matt Houlbrook (eds), *Palgrave advances in the modern history of sexuality* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 158.

Beyond Bountiful: performance, periodisation, psychology

The day after Queen Alexandra died in late November 1925, a ‘Woman correspondent’ for the Liberal newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* wrote one of the many popular commemorations of her life. As Queen consort (1901-1910) and particularly as Queen Mother (from 1910), Alexandra focused her energies on philanthropic causes, famously instituting in the summer of 1912 the Alexandra Rose Day to fundraise for London charities, and taking a particularly active interest in nursing during the First World War.⁵⁷ The article underlined the Queen’s prolific charitable activity, observing that ‘She gave freely to innumerable charities...and the difficulty was always to prevent her giving beyond her means’. Alexandra’s giving was exceptional in its degree, but the newspaper’s discussion made her conform to what was identified as a type. She was, a subheading proclaimed, a ‘Lady Bountiful’.⁵⁸ The Lady Bountiful image was a familiar trope in discussions of elite women’s charity into the twentieth century. Less typical, however, was the correspondent’s use of the label in straightforwardly positive terms. Since the nineteenth century (and for some time before), the image had been used pejoratively, as Kim Reynolds argues, to satirise the benevolent and charitable activity of wealthy women as ‘supercilious and condescending...[with] little or no compassion, and [with] small consistency’.⁵⁹ These associations seemed to resonate ever more loudly in the late nineteenth century amongst critics of the ‘sporadic’ philanthropy assumed to be associated with the well-to-do.⁶⁰ By the mid- to-late interwar period, when *The Manchester Guardian* commentator was writing, this class-based critique was a favoured means of attack by feminists and the political left on well-off charitable (often politically Conservative) women.⁶¹ Writer Vera Brittain portrayed philanthropy as unorganised,

⁵⁷ Frank Prochaska claimed that Queen Alexandra, ‘capricious and feather-headed’, ‘pursued charity to the point of recklessness’, *Royal bounty: the making of a welfare monarchy* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 13.

⁵⁸ ‘Queen Alexandra and her people’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 November 1925, p. 16.

⁵⁹ Reynolds, *Aristocratic women*, pp. 101-2.

⁶⁰ This critique fitted into the context of the growing influence of the COS and its self-proclaimed ‘scientific methods’. For the continued relevance of this methodology into the mid-twentieth century in an Australian context see Mark Peel, ‘Charity, casework and the dramas of class in Melbourne, 1920-40: “feeling your position”’, *History Australia*, 2, 3 (2005), p. 83.1.

⁶¹ James Hinton argued that ‘there was a deep and abiding class resentment of Lady Bountiful and all her works’: ‘Voluntarism and the welfare/warfare state: women’s voluntary services in the 1940s’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 9, 2 (1998), p. 298. Hinton was drawing on socialist Richard Crossman’s polemic, ‘The role of the volunteer in the modern social service’, in A. H. Halsey (ed.), *Traditions of social policy. Essays in honour of Violet Butler* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), p. 264.

ad hoc and frequently a hindrance in her book *Women's work in modern England* (1928), claiming 'that unreliable service is usually worse than no service at all', the preserve of the elite voluntary 'helper', who was likely to get diverted by 'a party or an unexpected visitor'.⁶² Those politically on the left might appropriate the label in more structural terms to critique new forms of state intervention. So, as Ramsay MacDonald remarked in 1930, 'The State as Lady Bountiful may be a fatal extension of Toryism but it is not the beginning of Socialism'.⁶³ The political freightings of Brittain's and MacDonald's remarks were obvious. But in fact these varied applications of the Lady Bountiful image reveal the model to have differed as much in the contexts of its negative appropriations, as it did in comparison with other contemporary images in which female philanthropists were fashioned.⁶⁴ Discussion of the machinations of the state was a long way from a report about Queenly benevolence.

It is now over twenty years since Kathleen McCarthy introduced a collection of essays complicating the Lady Bountiful type by claiming the '[Lady Bountiful] image often obscures more than it explains'.⁶⁵ Historians, however, remain fascinated by the trope. This enduring focus reveals more about the terms within which historians have positioned women's philanthropy (and their sometimes uncritical application of its historic presentations) than its practice. Most obviously, the image of the Lady Bountiful has been appropriated as part of a class-based critique. Lady Bountifuls featured in earlier welfare histories framed around the narrative of 'social control', in terms that configured women's philanthropy as part of a socially-elite exercise of social dominance over the poor.⁶⁶ In recent years, historians have avoided the simplifications of the narrative of social control, and have observed episodes where the Lady Bountiful surfaced

⁶² Vera Brittain, *Women's work in modern England* (London: Douglas, 1928), p. 138.

⁶³ David Marquand, *Ramsay MacDonald* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), p. 525, quoted in Geoffrey Finlayson, 'A moving frontier: voluntarism and the State in British social welfare 1911–1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1, 2 (1990), p. 193.

⁶⁴ Historians have typically contrasted the Lady Bountiful with middle-class slum visitors, see e.g. Jessica Gerard, "'Lady Bountiful": women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy', *Victorian Studies*, 30, 2 (1987), pp. 183-210. Although female slum travellers were in fact characterised by their diversity, Ross, *Slum travelers*, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁵ K. D. McCarthy (ed.), *Lady Bountiful revisited: women, philanthropy and power* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1990), ix.

⁶⁶ Jessica Gerard, "'Lady Bountiful": women of the landed classes and rural philanthropy'; Melanie Oppenheimer, "'We all did voluntary work of some kind": voluntary work and Labour History', *Labour History*, 81 (2001), pp. 4-5; 8.

in social vocabularies about surveillance and discipline as late as the late twentieth century.⁶⁷ The central association with class emerges in Judith Rumgay's recent discussion of the elite women who ran the Griffins Society (1965-95) as an accommodation centre in North London for women offenders. Rumgay's discussion draws out not so much the pejorative associations of the discourse as what she sees as the apparent 'ambiguity' of an organisation run by Lady Bountifuls which became a pioneering example of 'gender specific programming' to rehabilitate female offenders.⁶⁸ Although in a different way to earlier class-based narratives, Rumgay's argument nevertheless adopts a reductionist paradigm for elite women's activity, based upon the assumption that by definition it would not be cutting edge. In doing so, it introduces a second theme in historians' discussions of the Lady Bountiful: female philanthropy and notions of expertise. Here, the dominant scholarly narrative has located the Lady Bountiful as an outgrowth of models of *noblesse oblige* which were 'modernised' in the twentieth century by 'professionalised' models of women's social work and 'democraticised' ideas of citizenship at grass-roots level.⁶⁹

This argument is itself tied to broader historical points about periodisation. The historical literature tends to assume that the Lady Bountiful was a product of 'Victorian' codes of behaviour and class, gender and social relations. But even at the supposed high-point of its application in mid-Victorian Britain, contemporaries were contesting the model. Writers such as Charlotte Yonge and George Eliot constructed educated elite heroines who looked past the Lady Bountiful role to a thirst for knowledge and idealism (we might think of Rachel Curtis in *The Clever Woman of the Family* (1865) or Dorothea Brooke (*Middlemarch* (1874))). Linear teleologies of the progress from 'amateur' to 'professional' are undermined when evidence such as this is

⁶⁷ Alex Mold discusses the legacy of this idea as it was applied to upper-class women voluntary workers in the 1970s in the drugs charity Release, "The welfare branch of the alternative society": the work of drug voluntary organisation Release, 1967-78', *Twentieth Century British History*, 17, 1 (2006), p. 62. For recollections of the activity of an elite woman working for Release in the 1970s see Diana Melly, *Take a girl like me* (London: Vintage Books, 2006), ch. 7.

⁶⁸ Judith Rumgay, 'Another look at Lady Bountiful: reform, gender and organisations', in Frances Heidensohn (ed.), *Gender and justice: new concepts and approaches* (Collumpton: Willan, 2006), pp. 280-1.

⁶⁹ On the shift from amateur to professional see Carrie Howse, 'From Lady Bountiful to lady administrator: women and the administration of rural district nursing in England, 1880-1925', *Women's History Review* 15, 3 (2006), pp. 423-41. On the idea of the 'Lady Bountiful' being replaced by the voluntary citizen see Jos Sheard, 'From Lady Bountiful to active citizen – volunteering and the voluntary sector', in Justin Davis Smith, Colin Rochester and Rodney Hedley (eds), *An introduction to the voluntary sector* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 114-27.

considered.⁷⁰ But challenges to the chronology of the ‘social type’ of the Lady Bountiful did not only come in the form of resistance to the trope. Lady Anne Tree, who in the 1960s founded a charity to teach prisoners needlework, refused to be categorised as a campaigner, arguing instead in the late twentieth century, ‘I am a Victorian do-gooder’.⁷¹

In examining the meanings and significance of female philanthropy in the interwar period, this thesis looks through and beyond the Lady Bountiful trope, and other stereotypes and ‘types’. Indeed, as we will see in relation to the continued and varied veneration of women like Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale, it could be strategic and purposeful for interwar philanthropists and their publicists to invoke the resonant auras of famous philanthropic women who had gone before. Focusing on the re-articulations of these identities is part of a methodology which is sensitive both to the rhetoric and to the cultural frameworks within which interwar female philanthropy was encoded. This thesis, then, blends the approaches of cultural and intellectual historians who seek to explore respectively the processes through which social and cultural constructs were transmitted, and the symbolic meanings of public and personal discourses. In a self-defined work of the ‘new cultural history’, Nicolette Gullace wrote that ‘It is my contention that systems of representation bear directly on historical change by establishing habits of thought crucial to rationalising particular actions. In this way culture and social practice are inextricably linked’.⁷² This approach is complementary to the history of concepts that this thesis builds on (via the insights of Reinhart Koselleck and the *Begriffsgeschichte*) to inquire into the politics of language, and the significance of imagery and metaphor.⁷³ Bridging the gaps between these historical methods is challenging but holds the potential for a constructive analysis of the relationship between the ideological, moral and political resources of texts and historical actors, and the production and reception of ideas more broadly conceived.⁷⁴ Social historians have been inclined to identify one or more representative models of female philanthropy, and to

⁷⁰ I discuss this subject at length in ch. 3.

⁷¹ ‘Lady Anne Tree’, *The Guardian*, 21 August 2010, p. 39.

⁷² Gullace, *Blood of our sons*, p. 10.

⁷³ Reinhart Koselleck, *The practice of conceptual history: timing history, spacing concepts*, translated by Todd Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

⁷⁴ Casey Nelson Blake makes this point with reference to the study of American cultural history, ‘Culturalist approaches to intellectual history’, in Karen Halttunen (ed.), *A companion to American cultural history* (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 383-95.

evaluate the ‘successes’ or ‘failure’ of women ‘doing good’. This thesis asks different questions, and seeks to tell a different story about the identities that were made (and remade) through women’s philanthropic projects between the wars. It reveals the intellectual dimensions that underpinned their projects, and situates them at the heart of discussions about the proper functioning of society which reached across classes, genders and geographies.⁷⁵

As philanthropy involved interaction with a wide range of audiences – clients, donors, sponsors, publicists and the wider public – it was always to some extent a performance. The women philanthropists I focus on recognised the varied demands of different constituencies and adjusted their messages and presentations accordingly. Altering their words, deportment and presentational styles, they were canny in negotiating the various class, ethnic, gender, and generational make-up of their audiences to the best effect, and in performing the most resonant roles.⁷⁶ Donna Guy discusses performance as an important aspect of women’s philanthropy in her recent study of feminist and female philanthropic work for child welfare provision in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Argentina.⁷⁷ Guy uses a famous example through which to explore the notion of performance in this context: Eva, the wife of former Argentinean president, Juan Peron. Guy reveals Eva Peron performing a brand of ‘emotive philanthropy’ through photographs and other visual media.⁷⁸ I have found it helpful to think about Guy’s discussion of the media helping to configure women’s philanthropic performances. However, I want to push the concept of philanthropic performance further than Guy did, in order to think critically about the gendered ideologies through which women philanthropists strategically conceived of the ‘performances’ of their work and reputations, and in processes which actively mediated their publicists and the media. Indeed, in negotiating conventional notions of celebrity, for example, interwar female philanthropists sometimes problematised the social and moral

⁷⁵ Seth Koven considers the functioning of some of these themes in Victorian slums through a methodological interest in ‘mobility’, *Slumming*, p. 9.

⁷⁶ Focusing on these aspects of the philanthropic project is in part a response to Natalie Zemon Davis’ call for historical analyses to be sensitive to the “look” of charity... The words, postures and gestures of giving and receiving’, Natalie Zemon Davis, ‘Conclusion’, in Michael Bonner, Mine Ener and Amy Singer (eds), *Poverty and charity in middle Eastern contexts* (Albany: State University of New York, 2003), p. 324.

⁷⁷ Donna J. Guy, *Women build the welfare state: performing charity and creating rights in Argentina, 1880-1955* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2009), ch. 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

messages that they were purportedly ‘performing’. This focus suggests that women philanthropists had a far greater degree of agency in presenting their projects than it has been typically assumed. Sometimes claiming, sometimes denying a ‘political’ role, these female philanthropists performed civil agency and the making of a good society in ways which were highly politicised.

In their strategic public presentations, the women philanthropists on whom I focus sought to mediate interwar social codes and modes of behaviour which were assumed to have been associated with previous generations. An awareness of inter-generational points of connection and tension was a critical part of their public identities. Lettice Fisher described herself rhetorically for a Liberal readership in 1928 as ‘belong[ing] to the pre-war period, and find[ing] it amazingly hard to think in terms of this puzzling new world’.⁷⁹ Emily Kinnaird wrote in her autobiography that she had been ‘born into the Victorian age, though not into a Victorian family’, thereby recognising the contemporary connotations of the label of ‘the Victorian’, and making distinctions within it.⁸⁰ These examples indicate that female philanthropists did not understand a straight (or straightforward) progression from the Victorian or Edwardian periods into the interwar years. This realisation fits into a consensus amongst revisionist scholars that there was no linear movement from the Victorian period into the interwar period and that supposedly ‘modern’ and or ‘Victorian’ social practices and morality were rooted in older cultural traditions.⁸¹ It is unsurprising that individuals who were brought up on mid-to-late-Victorian principles of a gift economy model predicated on the better-off donating time and energy to the less well-off retained aspects of this model in later life in their own philanthropic methodologies. But at the same time chronological distances between the Victorian and interwar worlds of philanthropy were clearly apparent in the mechanisms of communication through which female philanthropists related to their wider audiences. Adaptation to new and redeveloped modes of mass culture was a key part of the philanthropic project between the wars, and female

⁷⁹ Lettice Fisher, ‘The Liberal party’s woman power’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 February 1928, p. 20.

⁸⁰ Emily Kinnaird, *Reminiscences* (London: Murray, 1925), p. 18.

⁸¹ See e.g. Peter Mandler and Susan Pedersen (eds), *After the Victorians: private conscience and public duty in modern Britain (essays in memory of John Clive)* (London: Routledge, 1994); Michael Saler, *The avant-garde in interwar England: medieval modernism and the London Underground* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

philanthropy was closely interlinked with the ‘modern’ realms of commercialism, celebrity and the media. In engaging with these new forms of communications, female philanthropists found creative ways in which to confront any negative contemporary connotations of ‘Victorian’ civic activism.

To convey broader points about the place of philanthropy within constructions of a good society, women’s philanthropic projects between the wars converged with nineteenth-century and interwar thinking in psychology. A well-functioning society required the framing of its component parts as good citizens. Female philanthropy as a form of education of the self within society is therefore a recurring theme in this thesis.⁸² It emerges in discussions about the value of women’s unpaid work, in advice literature to clients, and in the languages through which philanthropists reached out to donors in this period.⁸³ Understanding the relationship between individual and collective agency in psychological terms developed older understandings of women’s philanthropy as a response to the emotion of ‘passion’.⁸⁴ By the late nineteenth century, philanthropic passion was a satirical behaviour that could be related to notions of women’s ‘unnatural’ femininity, as in Henry James’s portrait of upper-class female philanthropy in his 1886 novel *The Princess Casamassima*.⁸⁵ This critique continued into the post-First World War period in the works of eugenicists and sexologists such as Arabella Kenealy and Charlotte Haldane.⁸⁶ But in the interwar period, female philanthropists themselves evolved notions of philanthropic love in relation to their projects which were both visceral and cerebral. This was a psychological

⁸² For a classic work analysing the historical facets of psychology and selfhood see Nikolas Rose, *Governing the soul: the shaping of the private self* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁸³ See below, respectively in chs. 2 and 4.

⁸⁴ Eighteenth-century novelist and essayist Elizabeth Hamilton wrote that philanthropy was both the development of strong individual emotions and sought to ‘allay the fury of passions’, *Letters on the elementary principles of education* (London: J. and J. Robinson, 1803), p. 16. For a discussion of Hamilton’s philosophy more broadly in relation to individual behaviour see Penny Warburton, ‘Theorising public opinion: Elizabeth Hamilton’s model of self, sympathy and society’, in Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona Ó Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (eds), *Women, writing and the public sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 257-73.

⁸⁵ Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima* (1886; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 248.

⁸⁶ Arabella Kenealy, *Feminism and sex-extinction* (London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1920), pp. 101-2; Charlotte Haldane, *Motherhood and its enemies* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927), p. 156.

process not only of the mind, but also of body, spirit and ‘the social’ arena.⁸⁷ And it was aimed at reformulating the philanthropist herself as much as her clients.

The whole person

Female philanthropy was neither a fixed nor homogenous category between the wars. Expressed through and alongside social and political vocabularies, and via the media, it was a form of interpersonal social action which was being rearticulated, and which was broadcast and translated into action in complex and sometimes competing terms. A history of female philanthropy thus involves reading closely the various narratives through which women philanthropists were presented in this period, and in relation to life stories which spanned before and after these episodes. Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget have left behind a wide range of evidence about their lives. Between them they were the authors of letters, memoirs, books, articles, speeches, newspaper and magazine stories. They were also the subjects of a wide range of contemporary commentaries, which incorporated many different textual and visual representations. It is important to distinguish between presentations in which these women were author, referent, or speaker, and where the auditor was male or female. The politics of language underpinning these different modes of address need to be considered carefully. I examine this evidence against (and sometimes against the grain of) contemporary interwar commentaries about women’s voluntary work in the daily press, popular and professional women’s magazines, canonical texts, novels and sociological interventions. I interrogate the evidence through the insights of feminist and gender theorists who have highlighted the multiple models of masculinity and femininity that co-existed in cultural vocabularies at any one time.⁸⁸ Claire Langhamer’s study of women’s leisure provides an influential model of the historical application of these theories.

⁸⁷ An insight inspired by Mathew Thomson in his *Psychological subjects: identity, culture, and health in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 13.

⁸⁸ The idea of a multiplicity of femininities is informed by the concept of hegemonic masculinities and its variant forms, developed especially by R. W. Connell in *Gender and power* (Sydney, Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1987). Adrian Bingham has taken up this model in the context of interwar Britain in his discussion of the various models of womanhood that were promoted through the popular press: *Gender, modernity and the popular press in inter-war Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). See also his “‘An era of domesticity’? Histories of women and gender in inter-war Britain”, *Cultural and Social History*, 1, 2 (2004), pp. 225-33.

Langhamer's work posed a key challenge to the existing historiography of leisure (which was implicitly gendered 'male') through emphasising the meanings of the languages used to define women's leisure, the context in which that language was established, and the consistencies (and ambiguities) of its meaning within and across a (woman's) lifetime.⁸⁹ In adopting a complementary approach to the study of women's philanthropy (which has been typically gendered 'female'), I argue that the public and personal presentations of female philanthropists are revealing not only about the philanthropic enterprise, but also more broadly about the nature of society, work, and citizenship.⁹⁰ An examination of the multiple dimensions through which women philanthropists were presented is also a key methodological impetus of this study, which excavates the value of holism as a way of designating the relationship between the collective parts of philanthropists' reputations. This thesis is not about old wine in new bottles, nor new wine in old bottles. It is about smashing the bottle to see the female philanthropist as a whole person.

Holism is not simply used here to reveal female philanthropists in terms of the multiplicity of their status. I also use this perspective conceptually, in order to challenge broader paradigms through which women's philanthropy was compartmentalised in contemporary interwar discourse, and by historians since. At the broadest level, historians have positioned women's philanthropy on the practical end of a spectrum, the other end of which is labelled philosophical. James Hinton, Frank Prochaska, Jane Randall and Martha Vicinus have alleged female philanthropy's 'anti-intellectual ethos'.⁹¹ In claiming the binarism between the 'practical' and the 'intellectual' these scholars have too willingly reproduced symbolic definitions which coupled 'male' with reason and 'female' with nature, in readings that associated 'nature' with the visceral rather than cerebral. Social and women's historians, however, are not alone in replicating

⁸⁹ Claire Langhamer, *Women's leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), and her 'Towards a feminist framework for the history of women's leisure, 1920-60', in Ann-Marie Gallagher, Cathy Lubelska and Louise Ryan (eds), *Re-presenting the past: women and history* (London: Longman, 2001), pp. 198-215.

⁹⁰ Philanthropy could be, and in some cases still is, understood as a form of middle- or upper-class leisure.

⁹¹ Quoted in Hinton, 'Voluntarism and the welfare/warfare state', p. 283. See also Martha Vicinus, *Independent women: work and community for single women: 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985); p. 246; Prochaska, *Female philanthropy*, pp. 133-4; Jane Randall, *The origins of modern feminism: women in Britain, France and the United States, 1780-1860* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 74-5.

these historical models. Intellectual historians also typically remain constrained by them.⁹² Indeed, even historians who have argued for the need for a theoretical approach that is sensitive to the varying gendered models of intellectual engagement, all too often alight on exemplars who fit into established ‘canons’, and thus move the discussion little further on.⁹³ What is curious about the application of these models in the historiography of female philanthropy is that whilst they imply ‘male’ as ‘intellectual,’ they do not explore the traditional opposition of ‘female’ as ‘emotional’. This is a telling omission not, I suggest, because women philanthropists were innately emotional in a deterministically gendered sense. Rather because from at least the eighteenth century, publicly active women and their supporters often claimed cultural status based upon their *emotional intelligence* in the love of humanity. Contemporary commentators defined these attributes with different emphases; some more combatively than others. Critically, however, the authority which was derived through this model was used to frame women’s self-esteem in ways which were focused upon building forms of practical, emotional and cerebral intelligence. Indeed, discussions about this matrix of knowledge reached to the very centre of debates about civil agency and what constituted a good society. In the autumn of 1927, Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin observed in a talk to a ‘crowded meeting’ of the Union of Girls Schools at the Church House in Westminster, that the time had passed simply for women’s ‘emotional benevolence’. What was required was a philanthropic endeavour that employed ‘both heart and brain’.⁹⁴

Baldwin’s comments worked on one level rhetorically to re-mould an older juxtaposition between ‘hand’ and ‘brain’ workers.⁹⁵ But they also took up a creative blending of the emotional and the cerebral that was being constructed by female philanthropists themselves. Between the

⁹² Stefan Collini’s work is an obvious example in the scholarship of twentieth-century British intellectual history that largely fails to adopt a gendered logic. On the point that few women make it into his studies, see his *Public moralists: political thought and intellectual life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 3 and *Absent minds: intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 11.

⁹³ The most frequently endorsed example being Virginia Woolf. For a recent example see Barbara Caine, ‘Stefan Collini, Virginia Woolf, and the question of intellectuals in Britain’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 68, 3 (2007), pp. 369-73.

⁹⁴ ‘Woman’s heritage’, *The Scotsman*, 28 October 1927, p. 13.

⁹⁵ The terminology was used by eugenicist Karl Pearson from the 1880s to the early 1900s: S. R. S. Szepter, ‘The official representation of social classes in Britain, the United States, and France: the professional model and “les cadres”’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35 (1993), p. 290.

wars female philanthropists explicitly sought to reconceptualise separations between categories of activity through thinking of themselves and others as a ‘whole person’. A fascinating illustration emerged in an article in the *Times Literary Supplement* in the winter of 1927 which reviewed the publication of the latest addition to the *Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*), the 1912-21 supplement. Originally conceived in the Victorian period to record the lives of worthy subjects across history, the *DNB* had been sold in 1917 by the family of publishers Smith and Elder to Oxford University Press, a move which precipitated new commercial and ideological agendas.⁹⁶ Following the sale, the *DNB* was published each decade – the first being the 1912-21 volume (published in 1927) – and included entries on selected worthy subjects who had died in the previous decade. The *TLS* reviewer in 1927 was Lettice Fisher. Beginning with a reflection on the entry on former editor of the *DNB*, Sidney Lee (which opened the 1912-21 volume), Fisher went on to argue that the portraits of many subjects in the volume were insufficiently multi-dimensional. She felt that the omission of details such as industrialist and politician Joseph Chamberlain’s ‘puritanical self-examination’, army officer Horatio Kitchener’s ‘parsimony’, writer Elizabeth Braddon’s ‘exuberance’ and the contralto voice of philanthropist and socialite Lady Henry Somerset compromised the *DNB*’s ability to present a ‘true’ biographical picture. Fisher framed her argument within contemporary modes of literary criticism: she claimed that it should have been easier to produce a ‘true’ portrait within the new genre of ‘recent biography’ given that many life-writers had first-hand knowledge of their subjects (in the interwar *DNB* supplements, all subjects had died at the most only ten years before publication).⁹⁷ What cultural registers constituted knowledge of a subject is an important point: whilst it is possible that Fisher had met and knew all of these figures, it is perhaps more likely that she was drawing on knowledge of their public images disseminated via popular media. Indeed, her comments conjure a narrative device remarkably close to the notion of the celebrity back-story made familiar through newspaper formats such as the celebrity interview. We can also connect Fisher’s comments to

⁹⁶ H. C. G. Matthew, ‘Leslie Stephen and the *New Dictionary of National Biography*’, Leslie Stephen Lecture, 25 October 1995 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 7; Robert Faber and Brian Harrison, ‘The *Dictionary of National Biography*: a publishing history’, in Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote (eds), *Lives in print: biography and the book trade from the middle ages to the 21st century* (Newcastle; Boston Spa: Oak Knoll Press; British Library, 2002), p. 171.

⁹⁷ Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, ‘The D.N.B.’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 November 1927, p. 827.

public and family narratives of her own many-sidedness: she thought of herself as an unattractive woman who worked ‘for my own pleasure’ in the fields of academia, adult education, and committee work.⁹⁸ Practically and intellectually, female philanthropists between the wars were problematising the distinctions made within their public identities. They were rounded individuals, as the following pen portraits reveal.

Lettice Fisher (1875-1956) was the daughter of reformist Indian civil servant and clerk of the House of Commons Courtney Peregrine Ilbert, and his wife Jessie, who before her marriage had worked as a rent collector for Octavia Hill and trained as a nurse at St. Thomas’s Hospital in London (Fig. 1).⁹⁹ As a young girl Fisher was brought up both in London and India, before attending the private Francis Holland School for girls in London. She read Modern History at Somerville College, Oxford (1894-97), where she studied under Edward Armstrong, Arthur L. Smith and Herbert A. L. Fisher, who between them fostered her academic interests and her social activism for the education of women and the working classes. Having completed her studies at Oxford, Fisher took up a scholarship in 1898 for postgraduate study at the London School of Economics, researching urban housing.¹⁰⁰ Marrying her former tutor Herbert Fisher in July 1899, with whom she had one daughter Mary (born 1913), from 1902 to 1913 she taught economic history at the women’s college St. Hugh’s, Oxford before moving along with the career path of her husband to Sheffield, London and back to Oxford. Fisher has been best known to scholars as an economic historian. Robert Dimand observed her contributing in the 1890s to the Palgrave *Dictionary of Political Economy* (on old age pensions).¹⁰¹ In keeping with more recent

⁹⁸ Quoted in Mrs. H.A.L. Fisher, *An introductory history of England and Europe: from the earliest times to the present day* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1935), preface. Alongside writing history books for the Workers’ Educational Association, Fisher offered to proof read for philosopher Isaiah Berlin, Henry Hardy (ed.), *Isaiah Berlin: letters 1928-1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 265.

⁹⁹ On Courtenay Pergerine’s career see Mary Bennett, *The Ilberts in India, 1882-1886: an imperial miniature* (London: Basca, 1995) and R. C. J. Cocks, ‘Ilbert, Sir Courtenay Peregrine (1841–1924)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/34090>, accessed 6 March 2011]. Jessie Ilbert contributed to Indian nursing reform: Mrs. Courtenay Ilbert, *Six lectures on practical nursing* (Calcutta: Printed by the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1885).

¹⁰⁰ *The London School of Economics and Political Science Calendar for the Session 1902-1903* (London: The London School of Economics and Political Science: Clare Market), p. 29. It was still unusual at this time for women to take up these posts, see Maxine Berg, ‘The first women economic historians’, *Economic History Review*, 45, 2 (1992), pp. 317-20.

¹⁰¹ Robert W. Dimand, ‘Women economists in the 1890s: journals, books and the old Palgrave’, *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 21, 3 (1999), p. 273.

scholarly observations of Fisher's work in the voluntary sector, in a recent entry in the *Oxford DNB*, Cordelia Moyle labelled her a 'social worker'.¹⁰² In 1913 *The Suffrage Annual and Women's Who's Who* listed Fisher's activities in local suffrage organisations (for instance the Oxford Students' Suffrage Society), social work groups (Oxford Sanitary Aid Association, Health Society and Babies' Welcome Club (1902), Oxford Health and Housing Association (1912)), and as the author of articles in the *Economic Journal* and *Economic Review* (as well as her hobbies of gardening, music and walking).¹⁰³ Fisher has also appeared in historical studies of political lobbying movements.¹⁰⁴ Most recently, she has emerged in histories of single parent families and adoption in relation to her work in the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (NCUMC).¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Peretz observed the shifting trajectory of Fisher's voluntary work from its provincial to national orientation, hinging on her founding role in the NCUMC in February 1918.¹⁰⁶ Fisher developed a wide presence on the national stage in the 1920s and 1930s as an author, journalist and broadcaster, in association with the Workers' Education Association (WEA) and the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI). Politically Liberal, she was also a well-known figure in women's politics through her membership of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and its successor body, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC).

¹⁰² Cordelia Moyle, 'Fisher, Lettice (1875–1956)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2009 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/41132>, accessed 28 Feb 2011].

¹⁰³ A. J. R. (ed.), *The Suffrage annual and women's who's who* (London: Stanley, Paul and Co. 1913), p. 239. Lettice Ilbert, 'Pioneers in housing', *Economic Review*, 9 (1899), pp. 450-62; Lettice Fisher, 'Labourers' dwellings', *The Economic Journal*, 9, 36 (1899), pp. 605-11; 'Elements of the housing problem', *Economic Review*, 10 (1900), pp. 434-45; 'Local authorities and the housing problem in 1901', *The Economic Journal*, 12, 46 (1902), pp. 263-71; 'The town housing problem', *The Economic Journal*, 15, 57 (1905), pp. 23-36.

¹⁰⁴ P. Whitely and S. Winyard 'The origins of the "new poverty lobby"', *Political Studies*, 32, 1 (1984), pp. 41-2; 47.

¹⁰⁵ D. Rolf Long, *Learned helplessness: the 21st century affliction of single parents* (Central Milton Keynes: Author House, 2009); Jenny Keating, *A child for keeps: the history of adoption in England 1918-45* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 64, 72-4, 167, 184-5, 246. Fisher is referenced in footnotes in articles in *Women's History Review* special issue on 'Lone mothers' 20, 1 (2011): Pat Thane, 'Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England', footnotes 7, 31, 34, 39, pp. 27-9; Ginger Frost, "'Revolt to humanity": oversights, limitations and complications of the English Legitimacy Act of 1926', f.n. 1, p. 41.

¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth Peretz, 'Infant welfare in interwar Oxford', in Richard Whiting (ed.), *Oxford: studies in the history of a university town since 1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 135.

Evangeline Booth (1865-1950) is the best-known figure of this thesis, although she has received more attention from American than British scholars (Fig. 2).¹⁰⁷ The daughter of the founders of the Salvation Army William and Catherine Booth, she was a high-profile member of the Salvation Army from the 1880s until her death in 1950. There is a substantial amount of scholarship on the Salvation Army in Britain (and the empire) and America, exploring through the insights of revisionist religious history, gender theory, urban studies, and imperialist history the development of the evangelical Christian mission established in London in 1865, and its movement into an increasingly wide range of social service provision.¹⁰⁸ Booth (who throughout her life drew attention to the symmetry in the founding date of the Salvation Army and the year of her birth) has been the subject of a number of institutional biographies, most notably former American Salvation Army officer's Margaret Troutt's *The General was a lady* (1980).¹⁰⁹ Appointed to command Salvation Army work in London and the International Training Centre in 1888, Booth led the Salvation Army in Canada (1893-1904) and America (1904-34) before being elected World Leader in November 1934, a role which she occupied until 1939, and which no woman has since held.¹¹⁰ Booth developed a recognisable visual presence in the interwar world. In a newsreel broadcast in early September 1934 after her election as World Leader, British audiences saw a woman who looked younger than her seventy years, dressed in the Salvation Army's distinctive pencil skirt, long lined jacket and bonnet, and asserting deliberately and earnestly that she would work 'in sacrificial service to the peoples of every land'.¹¹¹ But this portrait also held in tension what many Britons by then knew to be Booth's indomitable reputation, evidenced in

¹⁰⁷ Sigmund A. Lavine, *Evangeline Booth: daughter of salvation* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1970); Diane Winston, *Red hot and righteous: the urban religion of the Salvation Army* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1999) and 'Evangeline Booth', in Robert T. Grimm (ed.), *Notable American philanthropists: biographies of giving and volunteering* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), pp. 40-2.

¹⁰⁸ Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling the Devil's kingdom down: the Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley, CA.; London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 2; Andrew Eason, *Women in God's army: gender and equality in the early Salvation Army* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2003); Winston, *Red hot and righteous*; Andrew Eason, "'Desperate fighting at the cape": the Salvation Army's arrival and earliest work in Cape Town', *Journal of Religious History*, 33, 3 (2009), pp. 265-84.

¹⁰⁹ Margaret Troutt, *The General was a lady: the story of Evangeline Booth* (Nashville: A.J. Holman, 1980).

¹¹⁰ Booth achieved the epithet of 'pioneer' in the British *Women's Who's Who* (London: Shaw Publishing Co., 1934-5), p. 19.

¹¹¹ Salvation Army General – Elect video newsreel film, 5 September 1934, <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=5051> [accessed 20 February 2011].

daily press coverage of the campaign surrounding her election as World Leader.¹¹² By contrast, bowing to American audiences' demands for a personal perspective on their favourite stars, Booth's official biographer, journalist Paul Wilson, claimed to offer a multi-dimensional portrait of his subject. Introducing his revised edition of the biography, he wrote that 'We shall meet her in these pages, not only in her [Salvation Army] uniform, but as she was herself.'¹¹³ The 'self-fashioned in Wilson's biography was both at times overdrawn, and heavily edited by Booth, who wanted to keep control of her own and the Salvation Army's institutional images.¹¹⁴ Booth never married – though the story of her 'many suitors' was a well-known narrative – but like many unmarried women of this period she worried as a young woman about the potential of a lonely life.¹¹⁵ Perhaps for this reason in the late 1880s she adopted four children.¹¹⁶ Booth was awarded honours for her public activity in America and beyond.¹¹⁷ She had dual British and American citizenship and retired in December 1939 to America, where she died in 1950.

In contrast to Booth, another evangelical philanthropist, Emily Kinnaird (1855–1947) has been almost completely overlooked by historians (Fig. 3). Like Booth, she never married and she was brought up within a Christian philanthropic family, the daughter of Liberal MP Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird and his wife Mary-Jane Kinnaird, co-founder of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Established in England in 1877, the YWCA was the sister organisation of the Young Men's Christian Association (founded in 1844 in London by George Williams), which together provided a range of social facilities for young men and women working away from home.¹¹⁸ Growing from national beginnings, on its eightieth anniversary in 1935 the

¹¹² 'Evangeline Booth: woman of 68 chief of Salvation Army', *Daily Mirror*, 15 February 1938, p. 17.

¹¹³ Paul P. Wilson, *General Evangeline Booth of the Salvation Army* (1935; New York: Scribner, 1948), p. 2.

¹¹⁴ Alexandria, Virginia, International Heritage Centre of Salvation Army (hereafter SAA), Evangeline Booth Papers, Miscellaneous files, 297/11-12, Letters from Paul Wilson to Evangeline Booth, 16 March 1940 and 9 April 1940.

¹¹⁵ SAA, Evangeline Booth Papers, 30/2, Letter from Evangeline Booth to William Booth, 29 August 1901. On Booth and multiple suitors see Dale Carnegie, *Five minute biographies* (Surrey: Windmill Press, 1946), p. 97.

¹¹⁶ Troutt, *General was a lady*, pp. 192-3.

¹¹⁷ Arthur E. Anderson, *From slums to kingdom: the world service of Evangeline Booth* (Illinois: Strombeck Press, 1951), p. 31.

¹¹⁸ On the YMCA see Clive Binfield, *George Williams and the YMCA: a study in Victorian social attitudes* (London: Heinemann, 1973).

YWCA was established in fifty-six countries with a membership in excess of one million.¹¹⁹ Attesting to its strong international dimension, historians of Australia and New Zealand have taken more interest in the YWCA than British historians.¹²⁰ The most developed consideration of Emily Kinnaird in British historiography remains Jane Garnett's entry in the *Oxford DNB*, which discusses Kinnaird alongside her mothers and sisters.¹²¹ Kinnaird appeared fleetingly in Catriona Parratt's article-length discussion of female recreations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though her interventions in debates about young women's leisure in the post-First World War period have not been traced.¹²² Home-educated, in 1881 Kinnaird was appointed honorary secretary of the London division of the YWCA, and she became honorary finance secretary of the British organisation as a whole in 1906. She was appointed an OBE in 1918 and a CBE in 1920 for this work. Kinnaird was a Presbyterian, a member of the Labour Party and a disciple of progressive nationalist thought, in particular that promoted by Indian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore.¹²³ Kinnaird joined this theology to a social vision which was grounded in a palpable and practical sense of a changing world and the need to foster in the young women for and with whom she worked the new confidence and skills that they needed. This commitment saw her helping to establish and sitting on the committee of the Council of Women Workers (renamed the National Council of Women in 1895). But her understanding of the philanthropic project went further than reformist socio-political systems, as was illustrated in an article that she wrote for the socially-aspirational illustrated newspaper *The Gentlewoman* in early 1905, in which she discussed the YWCA's 'fourfold method' – 'physical' (food and lodgings), 'intellectual' (lectures etc), 'social' (in place of family), and 'spiritual' (the 'development of the

¹¹⁹ Warwick, Modern Records Centre (hereafter MRC), Young Women's Christian Association (hereafter YWCA), MSS. 243/15/4, *Our eighty years: historical sketches of the YWCA of Great Britain* (London: YWCA, 1935).

¹²⁰ Susan Mumm, 'Women and philanthropic cultures', in Morgan and de Vries, *Women, gender and religious cultures in Britain*; Angela Woollacott, 'From moral to professional authority: secularism, social work, and middle-class women's self-construction in World War I Britain', *Journal of Women's History*, 10, 2 (1998), pp. 85-111.

¹²¹ Jane Garnett, 'Kinnaird, Mary Jane, Lady Kinnaird (1816–1888)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2006 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/15636, accessed 28 Feb 2011].

¹²² Catriona M. Parratt, 'Making leisure work: women's rational recreation in late-Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Sport History* (1999), p. 481.

¹²³ Emily Kinnaird, *My adopted country* (Lucknow: E. Kinnaird, 1944), p. 23.

spiritual as a protest against the materialis[m] of the time').¹²⁴ Female philanthropists like Kinnaird thought about themselves as multi-dimensional beings, and they also regarded their clients in the round.

Muriel Paget (1876-1938) was an altogether different figure (Fig. 4). Described in 1996 in an obituary of her eldest daughter as 'a Mrs Jellyby on a grand scale', she was in fact a much more complex character than this reproduction of Dickensian satire suggests, both spearheading high-profile humanitarian interventions and fashioning a glamorous persona.¹²⁵ Born in London, the only daughter of the twelfth earl of Winchilsea and his wife Edith, Paget was brought up as a devout Christian and educated by governesses at home. Following a continental tour and participation in the social circuit of a young aristocratic woman, she married barrister, diplomat and scientific engineer Sir Richard Paget in May 1897.¹²⁶ They had five children. Having fallen out of discussion in the two decades following her death, Paget was reclaimed in the 1960s in a biography by Wilfrid Blunt which positioned her reputation in relation to war work (he structured his book under the sections 'Pre-War', 'War', 'Post-War' and 'The Final Task'), an association which also emerged in David Mitchell's treatment of Paget in his 1966 *Women on the warpath*.¹²⁷ The image of Paget as a war heroine had been promulgated in her lifetime. She contributed a descriptive account of her work at the Anglo-Russian hospital for the Women's Work Subcommittee which was founded in April 1917 as part of the new Imperial War Museum, and in 1930 the woman's magazine *Britannia and Eve* cast her role during the war as one of England's 'venturesome nursing spirits'.¹²⁸ Blunt's biography revealed Paget to have been an indefatigable philanthropist, both in Britain and internationally. Her first foray into philanthropy occurred in 1905 when she was appointed honorary secretary of her aunt Lady Templetown's

¹²⁴ Emily Kinnaird, 'Fifty years of Christian work', *The Gentlewoman*, 4 February 1905, p. 160.

¹²⁵ John Grigg, 'Lady Chancellor', *Independent*, 31 October 1996, p. 16.

¹²⁶ Wilfrid Blunt, *Lady Muriel: Lady Muriel Paget, her husband, and her philanthropic work in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Methuen, 1962), ch. 1.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; David Mitchell, *Women on the warpath: The story of the women of the First World War* (London: Cape, 1966), pp. 90-9, here pp. 90-1.

¹²⁸ Mitchell's book uses Paget's (and her contemporaries') reports for the Women's Work Subcommittee; Ferdinand Twohy, 'They also served: women of the Great War who will rank as heroines of history', *Britannia and Eve*, 2, 5, (1930), p. 172.

charity, the London Invalid Kitchens.¹²⁹ In 1915 she was appointed honorary organising secretary of the Anglo-Russian Hospital, St. Petersburg. In December 1919 she founded the Women and Children of Russia Relief Fund to support a hospital in the Crimea, after which she established various missions to administer relief and welfare in Eastern Europe, often in association with Save the Children Fund (SCF) initiatives, and in 1924 a charity to help British citizens who were marooned in Soviet Russia.¹³⁰ Within the growing scholarship on post-First World War humanitarianism, Paget has been the focus of some attention, noted for her connections with the Red Cross (she joined the British Red Cross society in 1910) and the SCF.¹³¹ The relationship between this activity and her cosmopolitan celebrity, however, remains unexplored. In the interwar period, Paget featured regularly in the pages of society news (including the new gossip column), as well as being promoted through the practices and modes of a new fashionable celebrity and in air-transport magazines, which featured articles about her in the path of headline-making flights.¹³² Her achievements were acclaimed in Britain in presentations of the OBE in 1918 and CBE in 1938, as well as in numerous decorations awarded by the countries in which she worked.

Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget form the core of this thesis. But they are not viewed in isolation. Their stories open doors onto the lives of other female philanthropists and social workers of their generation (including the Countess of Aberdeen and Margery Fry), the generation before (Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale), and generations after (Violet Butler and Geraldine Aves), and women engaged in other contemporary public activity (from writer Virginia Woolf to Anglican feminist Maude Royden via the daughter

¹²⁹ Blunt, *Lady Muriel*, pp. 42-3.

¹³⁰ Dorothy Buxton and Edward Fuller, *The white flame: the story of the Save the Children Fund* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1931), pp.43-5; Sybil Oldfield, 'Paget, Lady Muriel Evelyn Vernon (1876–1938)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2006 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/35357, accessed 28 Feb 2011].

¹³¹ Oldfield, *Women humanitarians*, pp. 160-3; Caroline Moorehead, *Dunant's dream: war, Switzerland and the history of the Red Cross* (London: HarperCollins, 1998), ch. 9; James Muckle, 'Saving the Russian children: materials in the archive of the Save the Children Fund relating to Eastern Europe in 1920-23', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, 68, 3 (1990), pp. 508-10.

¹³² Paget was the 'first lady passenger' to fly from Paris to London on the Arico 4A in August 1919, *Flight: The Aircraft Engineer*, 4 September 1919, p. 1188. See also 'Air travel and transport', *Aeroplane*, 30 August 1933, pp. 375-6.

of the first President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia Alice Masaryk). They also focus attention on the connections which female philanthropists forged with men – notably family members and political supporters – and the varying gendered constituencies of their clients. At their broadest, the four women’s stories focus attention on the changing intellectual and cultural premises of women’s public activity from the late nineteenth century into the mid-to-late twentieth century, and the complex negotiations of gender contained therein.

Overview

The thesis is structured around six chapters which map the ideas, spaces and structures of women’s philanthropy between the wars, and the inter-generational assumptions that underpinned it. It begins by situating interwar British women’s philanthropy within the context of an evolving methodology of inter-personal activity. Chapter 1 builds on the insights of anthropologists into the ‘culture of relatedness’ and the academic interest in networks in order to explore how female philanthropy functioned as a socially- and culturally-unifying activity between the wars, and as a horizontally-conceived project. In the interwar years, female philanthropists developed forms of sociability and social networking strategies which women had been practising since the eighteenth century to advance the Salon as a critical site for socio-political activity and new configurations of citizenship. They also articulated a new shared identity of their own and their female clients’ domesticity, emphasising how the skills of managing the home were also vital to the functioning of a good society in ways which transcended associations of men’s and women’s rightful arenas of activity. Friendship helped inter-personal models transcend traditional gender and social boundaries, and female philanthropists developed relationships with a wide range of clients and associates as part of a dual strategy through which they moved beyond the self to think about ‘the other’, and through which they mediated ideas of knowledge and love. This theme of looking beyond the self was part of a wider transcendence of time and space within the philanthropic project, through which women philanthropists conceived of their work both within and beyond the ‘here and now’, and as part of an agenda to improve society in broadly social and spiritual senses.

Chapter 2, 'Happiness and usefulness', takes a fresh look at the subject of the gendered cultures of work. Rather than separating a discussion of women's unpaid work from paid employment, it offers a new framework of analysis that explores the connections between these different sorts of activity and languages of citizenship that emerge from a consideration of the underlying ethical and subjective dimensions of women's paid and unpaid work. Public discourse, which this chapter explores through the example of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, tended to frame women's successes against men's through stressing essentialised 'womanly' traits of good motherhood and wifehood. Yet this cross-gender comparison was not supported by literature written by and for women, which stressed self-evaluation and comparisons between women. Women's advice literature reveals that in the aftermath of the First World War, female commentators sought to build women's self-esteem to undertake new forms of paid and unpaid work through stressing their subjects' cheerfulness and optimism. Notions of cheerfulness also framed a new idiom of female 'duty' in this period, as one which moved away from supposedly 'Victorian' notions of subordinating the self to stress duty as connoting individual and social 'pleasure'. Nevertheless, despite contemporary commentators' emphasis on models of personal satisfaction, between the wars educated women often evaluated their own senses of happiness and utility in work against rigorous expectations of themselves and in comparison with the public examples set by other women in an increasingly diverse occupational landscape.

While Chapter 2 explores women's philanthropic endeavour in the context of the meanings of women's work, Chapter 3 investigates the structures through which women's philanthropy was configured as forms of amateur and professional expertise. The goal in this chapter is not to quantify the relative use of one model of expertise against the other, but rather to explore how both models held positive associations in discussions about and between women philanthropists in the interwar period. Class was a critical discriminating category. So while upper-class female philanthropists often claimed a rhetorical professionalisation (to get away from the model of the 'do-gooding' amateur), discussions about and among middle-class women assumed occupational organisational standards, which led to more complex conversations about the relationship between professional and extra-professional expertise. Notions of training were

developed in discussions about women's philanthropy between the wars, which enjoined ideals about formal educational qualities to understandings of the value of goodwill to the voluntary project. At the same time, voluntary expertise was established through committee work that could be understood both in mixed-gender terms and by means of older models of 'ladies' committees'. These varied emphases reveal that while some interwar commentators articulated women's voluntary expertise with reference to professional structures, others reclaimed the value of amateurism. In this fluid context, the cultural authority of an earlier generation of philanthropists, exemplified by Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale, was invoked and re-made.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 analyse interwar women philanthropists' engagement with a wide range of audiences, both at home and abroad. Chapter 4 re-examines the practice of fundraising. It explores how female philanthropists took up new technologies and appropriated new psychological thinking about cultural behaviour in order to mediate commercial and altruistic values. Constructing social coherence between themselves and a community of donors involved women philanthropists in calibrating the ethics of giving through drawing on older discursive frameworks of religious and elite cultures. However, close readings of the texts of women's philanthropic appeals show how they mediated this image strategically through choice of media and forms of presentation which emphasised objective knowledge of a social problem as obligating the donor in a moral responsibility. Of course, there remained reluctance amongst some men and women to donate to charity, but between the wars women philanthropists were innovative in seeking ways to overcome this problem, drawing on celebrity status (their own and others') and the media to forge a relationship of 'identification' between themselves, client and donor. They also appropriated and redefined new advertising techniques that had been developed in the growing sales sectors (both in American and in Britain), and in so doing contributed to bridging the gaps between civic and commercial cultures.

Chapter 5 looks beyond the philanthropist-donor-client triumvirate to explore how female philanthropists established cultural authority within a broader set of audiences through the roles of celebrity and public educationalist. Female philanthropists were canny in re-

negotiating established images (both of women and philanthropists); relating to different audiences; and appropriating various political bandwagons. Chapter 5 begins by showing them engaging with new systems of public persuasion (notably public relations) in their role as ‘opinion-formers’. Women’s agency in framing their images in the press was a contested point. Sometimes press reports reconfigured images that they themselves had cultivated; at other times the commercial value of agents and intermediaries determined how their public identities were structured. The consciousness of the process of public fashioning was never lost on these women, however. Indeed, philanthropy could also function through a dramatic mode, as a case-study of Evangeline Booth’s public interventions reveal. Moreover, gendered notions of the public educationalist and the broader importance of visibility emerged in the discussions of women philanthropists’ bodies as a critical site for new forms of citizenship, which could both mediate the ageing process and the potential challenges that their work posed to traditional forms of femininity.

Chapter 6, ‘Beyond borders and beliefs’ adopts a wider perspective still, to consider British female philanthropists as part of a global community of socially-reformist activists, and to explore the values and meanings of their interactions across cultures. Against the background of increasingly sophisticated post-war thinking in international relations (framed by the League of Nations), a key goal of interwar female philanthropists’ work was the mediation of cultural difference. The link between crossing physical and philosophical boundaries and a consciousness of campaigning was drawn in public presentations of female philanthropists in language similar to that of more overtly political contemporary women. However, through engaging in intellectual networks and via forms of diplomacy, they understood their own work as operating through a logic that was both part of and more than the purely political. Projections of Christian universalism, in the projects of Booth and Kinnaird, rooted the extension of global endeavours within increasingly broadly-diffused notions of ecumenicalism. Indeed, whether conceived of as religious or secular, female philanthropists’ projects engaged in mediating differences of race. Tropes of both cultural difference and universalism thus emerged in the projected goals of the

four protagonists. But critically, I argue that female philanthropy shows that between the wars cultural difference could be mediated constructively through a non-nationalistic world vision.

Historians have tended to view interwar women philanthropists as conservative at best, religious at worst, and very often outmoded. Indeed, the ‘do-gooder’ remains a palpably negative stereotype both in academic scholarship and popular parlance. Not only do these narratives present female philanthropists through a distorting and anachronistic lens that often obscures what these women actually were doing, they also close down new avenues of historical inquiry, which reveal female philanthropy as something more than simply ‘woman’s mission’.¹³³ An examination of the conceptual and cultural meanings through which philanthropy was discussed illuminates the ideological role played by gender in constructing civil agency, and its relationship to a number of contingent factors. The rich and nuanced picture of continuity and change which emerges from this exploration of the various ideas, structures and spaces of women’s philanthropic engagement between the wars illustrates the methodological flexibility of their enterprises. There was no *tabula rasa* in the interwar years, no severing of established philanthropic models at their roots. Rather, women’s philanthropy in the interwar period was a creative, elastic and outward-looking endeavour.

¹³³ The term was heavily used in the nineteenth century as an assumption of women’s domestic and caring roles. For an example of its re-orientation in the context of women’s philanthropy see Angela Burdett-Coutts (ed.), *Woman’s mission. a series of congress papers on the philanthropic work of women* (London: William Clowes and sons Ltd., 1893).

CHAPTER 1: 'CULTURES OF RELATEDNESS' AND INTERWAR WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY¹

Elizabeth Macadam's *The new philanthropy* begins in a revealing way. Even before reaching the short preface (in which Macadam stated that a successful book about the relationship between statutory and voluntary social welfare provision 'would require a writer who is at once a historian, a philosopher, and an experienced administrator'), the reader is alerted to the notion that *The new philanthropy* connects to a broad intellectual landscape, in which a 1930s social scientific model intersects with the older disciplines of philosophy and physical sciences.² In her epigraph, Macadam quoted French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur on the science of 'observation' and poet laureate Robert Bridges' portrait of the 'alliance of living entities', painted in his book *The testament of beauty* (1929).³ The epigraph can be read as signposting what many historians since have interpreted as Macadam's codification in the interwar period of the 'professionalisation' of social service (promoted quintessentially, they propose, in her *The equipment of the social worker* (1925)) as part of a move towards an increasingly integrated landscape of state and voluntary social welfare provision.⁴ But what is more illuminating, I suggest, is what it revealed (particularly in the allusion to *The testament of beauty*), about her understanding of the culture of philanthropy. *The testament of beauty* was a long philosophical poem (although it reads as prose), which presented a system of attitudes, thought, and conduct that men and women should follow to find the path to full salvation. Following an introductory section, the poem explored this theme in sections on individualism ('Selfhood') and love ('Breed'), before concluding in a final section ('Ethik'), from which Macadam selected her reference.⁵ The 'alliance of living entities' exemplified the organic and sensory language that Bridges used throughout his book to

¹ Janet Carsten (ed.), *Cultures of relatedness: new approaches to the study of kinship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

² Macadam, *New philanthropy*, p. 9. Roger Smith argues that twentieth-century British history rarely considers the importance of natural science to historical social thought, 'Biology and values in interwar Britain: C. S. Sherrington, Julian Huxley and the vision of progress', *Past and Present*, 178, 1 (2003), p. 210.

³ Macadam, *New philanthropy*, front page.

⁴ On Macadam and the professionalisation of social work see Ronald Walton, *Women in social work* (London: Routledge, 1975), pp. 158-60. On her encoding of an integrated welfare landscape see e.g. Harris, 'Voluntary action and the state', p. 30; Lowe, 'Welfare's moving frontier', p. 372.

⁵ Robert Bridges, *The testament of beauty: a poem in four books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929).

frame a philosophy about the holistic nature of human life.⁶ In relating to his work, Macadam conceptualised philanthropy as a series of social and spiritual interconnections. This was a notion that went deeper than merely symbolic representation of the interactions between the state and voluntary sectors. It constructed philanthropy as connecting with life in the broadest terms.

Macadam's allusion to Bridges' philosophy introduces the central theme of this chapter: the connections that sustained interwar women's philanthropy, or to use a phrase from a recent anthropological study of kinship, its 'cultures of relatedness'.⁷ Within kinship studies, 'cultures of relatedness' is a phrase used to emphasise the need to focus attention both on genealogical structures and the broader socially- and culturally-constructed models of human interactions (the ties of 'affection, shared substance and nurturance').⁸ The emphasis on this second set of relational cultures is particularly useful for my purposes here, because it looks beyond biological markers of identity to the ways in which individuals modelled themselves in response to various forms of social relations. The concept of the 'relational' has been of critical importance amongst feminist theorists and gender historians, whose concern has been to stress how the category of gender denotes the ways in which men's and women's position within societies have been constructed in relation to each other.⁹ In recent years, it has emerged as a conceptual device in histories of the cultures of philanthropy in narratives which associate 'relational' qualities with women.¹⁰ In part this has been to challenge the notion of 'separate spheres' (as it has been formulated especially with respect to the Victorian period) but it has also worked to essentialise a relational philanthropic project in gendered terms.¹¹ Seth Koven argues that by the late

⁶ Gordon S. Wakefield described *The testament of beauty* as 'theocentric rather than christocentric', 'God and some English poets: 5. Robert Bridges', *The Expository Times*, 105, 68 (1993), p. 71.

⁷ Carsten (ed.), *Cultures of relatedness*.

⁸ Carsten, 'Introduction: cultures of relatedness', in *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹ For works on feminist relational theory see Carol Gilligan, Nona P. Lyons, and Trudy J. Hanmer (eds), *Making connections: the relational worlds of adolescent girls at Emma Willard school* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1990); Nancy Chodorow, *The power of feelings: personal meaning in psychoanalysis, gender and culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). For a classic discussion of the concept of the relational within gender history see Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91, 5 (1986), pp. 1053-75.

¹⁰ Koven, *Slumming*, p. 240.

¹¹ Philanthropy is now understood to contest this concept. See Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes*, xxiv; Amanda Vickery, 'Introduction', in Vickery (ed.), *Women, privilege and power: British politics 1750 to the present and power* (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 26. For a recent recasting of the terms of the debate in relation to women's philanthropic and local political activity see Megan Smitley, *The feminine public*

nineteenth century a style of philanthropy particularly associated with women, emphasising personal ties, love and sympathy had grown up, notably espoused by Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, founders of the Toynbee Hall settlement in East London.¹² The inter-personal qualities of compassion that Koven identifies as underpinning the Edwardian settlement movement remained a critical framing device of interwar women's philanthropy, and in some contexts female philanthropists themselves defined these qualities through claims to notionally 'feminine' qualities. But this rhetoric was not used by female philanthropists or their publicists to construct women's philanthropy in gender-exclusive (or gender-essentialist) terms, and philanthropy could be gendered 'female' not only when it was articulated by women. The social connections and currents that animated female philanthropy between the wars enabled these women to cross various boundaries of gender, class, generation and belief, which in turn circumvented notions of men's and women's right or proper 'spheres' of action and inhabitation.

Examining the emotional, intellectual and psychological ties that female philanthropists constructed – with clients, donors, each other and spiritual sources – requires sensitivity towards the mechanisms through which these women forged links with different individuals and ideas, and how they moved between them. A useful model for thinking about these allied processes of connection and movement is the social network. Scholarship on networks within the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and cultural studies has been a growth area in recent years, as academic interest has turned to the question of how informal organisations enable actors to cross political and cultural boundaries.¹³ Research now examines the network as a historical model within subjects as diverse as intellectual communities, media and migration.¹⁴ Histories of the

sphere: middle-class women and civic life in Scotland, c. 1870-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

¹² Koven, *Slumming*, p. 240.

¹³ As noted by Robert Holton, 'Foreword', in Karen Fricker and Ronit Lentin (eds), *Performing global networks* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), viii. See also Hannah Knox, Mike Savage and Penny Harvey, 'Social networks and the study of relations: networks as method, metaphor and form', *Economy and Society*, 35, 1 (2006), pp. 113-40.

¹⁴ E.g. Tamson Pietsch, 'A Commonwealth of learning? Academic networks and the British world, 1890-1940' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2009); Louise Ryan, 'How women use family networks to facilitate migration: a comparative study of Irish and Polish women in Britain', *The History of the Family*, 14, 2 (2009), pp. 217-31; Roland Wenzlhuemer, 'London in the global telecommunication network of the nineteenth century', *New Global Studies*, 3, 1 (2009), <http://www.bepress.com/ngs/vol3/iss1/art2> [accessed 3 March 2011].

social-networking strategies of female social and political activists have also begun to emerge through a social history interest in policy formation. Anne Logan and Daniel Grey have discussed the operation in post-1920 Britain of women's 'policy networks' of voters and activists within the criminal justice system, often, but not exclusively, working through feminist traditions.¹⁵ Focusing on the operation of networks within the religious life of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain, Sandra Stanley Holton has traced how intersections between faith, politics and sociability endured and were transformed in the sociability of Quaker women from the late eighteenth century up to 1930.¹⁶ This chapter explores the *idea* of the social network that underpinned the projects of interwar female philanthropists. It focuses particularly on how the network was conceived as a way to cross social boundaries and to link the social to the spatial domains of these women's activity. Female philanthropists forged networks for at least three reasons: in order to bring together social activists in the project of widening support-bases; to direct further participation in the philanthropic act; and to construct explanatory frameworks for the ways in which their activity crossed over worldly and spiritual domains. Rather than analysing their activity through a gender-exclusive model or 'separation', this focus illuminates how women's philanthropic projects were premised on the concepts of belonging and inclusivity, and how they built upon the structures of bonding, bridging and linking to forge connections that could transcend established social and spiritual markers.¹⁷ It reveals how female philanthropists moved between formal and informal realms in the course of their enterprise.

The mechanism of the social network, then, offers a way into a second important theme of this chapter, the spatial dimensions of interwar women's philanthropy. The network can be usefully understood as a series of concentric circles, through which different levels of activity were intertwined. What I mean to focus on through this interpretation are the ways in which

¹⁵ Anne Logan, 'Policy networks and the juvenile court: the reform of youth justice, c.1905-50', *Crimes and Misdemeanours: Deviance and the Law in Historical Perspective*, 3, 2 (2009), pp. 18-36. Daniel J. R. Grey, 'Women's policy networks and the Infanticide Act 1922', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21, 4 (2010), pp. 441-63.

¹⁶ Sandra Stanley Holton, *Quaker women: personal life, memory and radicalism in the lives of women Friends, 1780-1930* (London: Routledge, 2007) and her 'Kinship and friendship: Quaker women's networks and the women's movement', *Women's History Review*, 14, 3 (2005), pp. 365-84.

¹⁷ The terms are Alison Gilchrist's: *The well-connected community: a networking approach to community development* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2004), p. 6.

networking devices enabled female philanthropists to operate flexibly and simultaneously across the boundaries of the personal and the public and the local and the global, as a critical aspect of mediating the social and the spiritual. This emphasis contests a dominant narrative in the historiographies of both female philanthropy and interwar culture, which in different ways have stressed the national as the critical paradigm for understanding British women's public activity. Frank Prochaska's thesis of the 'decline' in the twentieth century of the earlier localised models of female philanthropy, and Alison Light's notion of the interwar years as being 'inward-looking', 'domestic' and 'feminine', counterpose the 'feminised' respectively negatively and positively to the 'national'.¹⁸ In both studies this argument is located within the broader paradigms of secularisation and modernity. And in both cases the assumption delimits the scale of operation of socially-active women and women's citizenship. There is a striking lack of connection in these narratives to arguments which stress the continued importance of local domains to women's social activism in the twentieth century, notably in the work of Patricia Hollis, who emphasises how the feminised arena of local government had potential for feminist political mobilisations beyond the local by the early twentieth century.¹⁹ Female philanthropists used the languages of the local and the personal to signal both the particular methodology of their projects and their deep and wide significance. Interwar female philanthropists understood their work as both a socially- and spiritually-transformative project.

This chapter examines the images and languages through which women philanthropists and their publicists constructed their activity as both linking individuals and penetrating different social and spatial domains. It begins by analysing the codes and projected behaviours of female philanthropists' hospitality as a model of securing a widened support base. Often presented by contemporaries as part of a 'womanly' set of social skills, hospitality was not always undertaken in these stereotypical terms. I explore how between the wars female philanthropists conceived of hospitality to transcend boundaries of gender identity and to link individual and collective aspects of their identity formation. The chapter looks secondly at the ways in which female

¹⁸ Prochaska, *Christianity and social service*, chs. 3-5; Light, *Forever England*, p. 8.

¹⁹ Patricia Hollis, *Ladies elect: women in English local government 1865-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

philanthropists encouraged participation in the philanthropic act amongst female audiences. Focusing on the vocabularies of housewifery and home-making, this section reveals female philanthropists drawing connections across different classes of women through figuring domesticity as expanding local community action within a global significance. The third section explores the importance which female philanthropists attached to friendship as a vehicle for a social activism that could transcend social boundaries of class, ethnicity, gender and generation. Between the wars, philanthropic women fashioned forms of friendship which related ideas of knowledge of the charitable client to a sincere sense of love for mankind. Finally, the chapter interrogates the ways in which female philanthropists configured philanthropy as a spiritual project which transcended time and space. This focus reveals how these women understood their projects as impacting upon society in the present, and beyond. Female philanthropy was an attempt to work out within the socially-bound 'here and now' the spiritual life to come.

Hospitality

In December 1916 the Oxford historian Edward Armstrong wrote to his former university student Lettice Fisher, sending his congratulations to the family on her husband's appointment as Minister of Education in David Lloyd George's coalition cabinet. Armstrong envisaged the appointment as a triumph for career educationalists like himself, and an opportunity for Fisher to extend her public profile, writing that she '[would] make a splendid Queen of Salon'.²⁰ In appropriating the image of the Salon, Armstrong identified the continued resonance in the second decade of the twentieth century of a model of upper-class, urban domestic sociability, centred around a culture of conversation through which both men and women could gain political and social influence.²¹ An elite and outward-facing model, hospitality was a form of inter-personal networking that could facilitate the widening of support-bases for the philanthropic project upon a cosmopolitan stage of action. In part, Armstrong's portrait envisaged a family trajectory. By imagining Fisher as a salonnière, he returned her to the elite

²⁰ Oxford, Bodleian Library (hereafter Bodleian), MS Fisher 219, fols. 263-4, letter from Edward Armstrong to Lettice Fisher, 22 December 1916.

²¹ On the salon as a culture of European women's intellectual engagement, see Deborah Simonton, *Women in European culture and society: gender, skill and identity from 1700* (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 88-90.

socio-political environments in which she had been brought up in the imperial (India), intellectual (Oxford) and especially metropolitan homes of her parents (he wrote that she was 'really a Londoner').²² But, at root, Armstrong's image conceived her in explicitly gendered terms. Certainly, his observation assumed a model of how an intellectually-astute woman could derive a sense of self- and social-worth. In claiming this model, he was picking up on a long-established discourse in which, from their emergence in Revolutionary France, salons were constructed as providing women with a particular sphere of social and political agency and influence. The salon continued to be represented into the twentieth century as a forum for the inception and development of socially-transformative projects in which women were understood to take a central role. But it was not a gender-exclusive forum. Salons were complex social and spatial institutions, which provided opportunities both for bringing men and women together and transgressing boundary lines of the public and the personal. As Seyla Benhabib has observed, the salon was 'space', 'social event' and 'social process' all at once.²³

For philanthropists, the culture of hospitality worked to facilitate forms of sustenance for their projects at financial, intellectual and practical levels. Constructed within the model of a domestic unit, it functioned on the faultlines of public and private life. Recent cultural, gender and intellectual historical perspectives on the family have moved outwards from a traditional focus on the nuclear family, to reveal new insights into the wider emotional and structural frameworks through which the family could operate in relationship with extended family members and with non-biological relatives (such as servants).²⁴ Models of hospitality reveal the fluidity of this culture, because they offer a specific example of the movement between family and non-family members. They also illustrate how inter- (and intra-) familial behaviours were not necessarily or straightforwardly fixed according to gender. Despite Edward Armstrong's comments, Lettice Fisher emerges from the historical record as a somewhat awkward hostess.

²² Letter from Edward Armstrong to Lettice Fisher, 22 December 1916. On family life see Olive Heseltine, *Lost contents* (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne and Co. 1953); Mary Bennett, *The Ilberts in India, 1882-1886: an imperial miniature* (London: BACSA, 1995), ch. 6.

²³ Seyla Benhabib, *The reluctant modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA.; London: Sage, 1996), p. 16.

²⁴ Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink and Katherine Holden, *The family story: blood, contract and intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longman, 1999).

Having lived in the 1890s in east Oxford with her family, and at the turn of the twentieth century in north Oxford in the first years of married life, she moved to central Oxford in 1925, when her husband was appointed Warden of New College.²⁵ As Warden's wife, Fisher refined her skills in the varied demands of institutionalised sociability; hosting student tea parties, alumni dinners, and College receptions.²⁶ There could be an intellectual cosmopolitanism at work here, through which Fisher and her guests were brought into contact with, if not necessarily always moving across, different philosophical terrains. The Visitors' Book of the Warden's Lodgings during Herbert Fisher's incumbency reveals the number of high profile names who passed through the Fishers' world at this time, ranging from fellow academics (Cyril Bailey, George Macaulay Trevelyan, Isaiah Berlin), via politicians (Herbert Asquith, William Beveridge), to those interested in women's causes (writer Ray Strachey or actress Lillian Baylis).²⁷ Fisher actively encouraged her guests to open their horizons in the shape of support for her philanthropic causes. Indeed, as Isaiah Berlin, philosopher, historian of ideas and friend of the Fishers observed, Fisher exploited the opportunity to blur the lines between work and leisure, using her supper parties to publicise forthcoming fundraising events for the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (NCUMC).²⁸ But Fisher herself did not undertake this process straightforwardly, nor out of an assumed sense of a 'womanly' role. She wrote honestly in correspondence with her friend Frances Stevenson about the challenges of successful hospitality.²⁹ 'We have the Hammonds [the historians, Lawrence and Barbara] and Halévys [philosopher Elie and wife Florence] and the Bishop of Winchester [Cyril Garbett, who went on to become a Vice-President of the NCUMC]',

²⁵ A post which Herbert Fisher held until his sudden death in 1940.

²⁶ Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), FCG2/7, Letter from Lettice Fisher to Frances Stevenson, 3 June n.d.

²⁷ Bodleian, MS Eng d. 3779, Visitors' Book New College Warden's Lodgings, 1925-43.

²⁸ Hardy, *Isaiah Berlin: letters*, pp. 70; 380. For former New College student Michael Crum's reminiscences about the light-hearted pressure that Fisher placed on undergraduates to attend NCUMC garden sales see Women's Library, London (hereafter WL), 8 SUF/B/027, Oral Evidence on the Suffragette and Suffragist Movements: the Brian Harrison Interviews, Interview by Brian Harrison of Michael Crum, 30 November 1974.

²⁹ Stevenson at this time was private secretary to David Lloyd George. She would marry him in 1943. Kenneth O. Morgan, 'George, Frances Louise Lloyd, Countess Lloyd-George of Dwyfor (1888-1972)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/31373>, accessed 8 May 2011]. Fisher socialised with Stevenson regularly in Thursley, Surrey, where they both had weekend family houses.

she revealed, ‘an odd mixture but I expect it will work’.³⁰ It was a test both of social etiquette and ethics to bring together these varied intellectual positions, and Fisher did not know quite how it would work out. Her comments reveal that far from assuming their status as hostesses, women might have to work hard at developing social and emotional intelligence. It was not necessarily an innately feminine skill.

In fact, rather than claiming the role of hostess as a gendered model, Fisher herself was keen to position it within a broader collective family identity. This was a model through which the public and the personal domains of life could be blended. Portrait photographs conceive of these conjoined narratives.³¹ One photograph presents Fisher, her husband and her daughter in a common endeavour of outward-looking academia (Fig. 5). It is significant that this image was taken *outside* New College, as opposed to inside its historic buildings; it portrayed the outward-facingness that the Fishers’ performed in their public reputation. This was a reputation claimed by Fisher’s husband in his autobiography in the remark, ‘learning and scholarship and the lettered life can bring content only if combined with some more practical form of active service to the community’.³² There was a hint in Edward Armstrong’s letter that Lettice Fisher enacted the role since categorised by anthropologists as ‘incorporated wife’, representing ‘the social character ascribed to a woman [as] an intimate function of her husband’s occupational identity and culture’.³³ But Herbert Fisher’s comment suggested that he and his wife shared an outlook of more equal purpose and on more equal terms, and that their self- and collective identities might consequently have been mutually constitutive. Some interwar commentators critiqued this collective identity formation.

Writing in her diary in the autumn of 1934 about her recent visit to the Fishers at New College, Virginia Woolf pigeon-holed her hosts as part of an ‘urbane aristocracy’, ‘upstanding’

³⁰ NLW, FCG2/7, Letter from Lettice Fisher to Frances Stevenson, 3 June n.d.

³¹ As Patricia Holland argued, ‘Introduction’, in Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (eds.), *Family snaps: the meaning of domestic photography* (London: Virago, 1991), p. 3.

³² H. A. L. Fisher, *An unfinished autobiography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), pp. 86-7. The autobiography was published posthumously, and included an Introduction written by Lettice Fisher.

³³ Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener (eds.), *The incorporated wife* (London: Croom Helm in association with the Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women, 1984), p. 1. They identified ‘Oxford academics’ wives’ as one example of this model, ch. 2.

but ultimately dull and ‘dilut[ing]’ examples of the public-spirited academic.³⁴ Woolf’s denigration of the Fishers’ sincere urbanity was a very different portrait to that proposed by Armstrong in the letter of 1916. It might be more usefully read against her fashioning of the politics of party-giving in the guise of Clarissa Dalloway in *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and in an essay which critiqued the ‘passiv[ity]’ of the aristocratic salonnière, or against the notion of the Bloomsbury ‘social conscience’, a thought process that Raymond Williams distinguished from notions of ‘solidarity’ or ‘affiliation’.³⁵ Other commentators looked outwards to interpret these interconnections more positively. Writing in August 1918 to Fisher in her role as a member of the executive committee of the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies, suffragist leader Millicent Fawcett discussed the passing of the latest Education Act (known subsequently as the Fisher Act in honour of Herbert Fisher’s key role), which now ‘safe in harbour must be an unmixed pleasure to you both to look back upon the perils of the voyage’.³⁶ Implicit within Fawcett’s remark was an understanding of Fisher’s and her husband’s shared socio-political purpose, most obviously embodied in the complementary relationship between Fisher’s work for babies and young children in the NCMUC and the Education Act’s provision for nursery schools.³⁷ What Fawcett implied here was that common networks and shared intellectual parameters linked Fisher’s and her husband’s work. And the Salon was a critical space for this development.

The blurred social and political boundaries made possible by hospitality linked to a different set of themes in interwar discussions about Muriel Paget’s international philanthropy. Having focused on medical relief work for Russian nationals and the population of the new Baltic States in the aftermath of the First World War, in 1924 Paget turned her attention to providing support for British nationals in Soviet Russia through her charity for Distressed British

³⁴ Anne Olivier Bell (ed.), *The diary of Virginia Woolf* (5 vols, London: The Hogarth Press, 1982), iv, p. 250 [9 October 1934].

³⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1925; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000); ‘A modern Salon’, 1909, reprinted in David Bradshaw (ed.), *Carlyle’s house and other sketches* (London: Hesperus, 2003), pp. 12-3. Raymond Williams, *Problems in materialism and culture: selected essays* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 155-7.

³⁶ Bodleian, MS Fisher 219 fol. 292, Letter from Millicent Fawcett to Lettice Fisher, 10 August 1918.

³⁷ G. E. Sherington, ‘The 1918 Education Act: origins, aims and development’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 24, 1 (1976), pp. 71; 77.

Subjects (DBS).³⁸ Her work on the ground in the mid-1920s was limited to the few occasions in which the political authorities permitted her to enter Russia, when she supplied clothing and food to elderly and infirm British subjects who were in need. But, able to return to Russia in the early 1930s, she set up a temporary headquarters for the charity in a flat in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). In an obituary of Paget in *The Times*, British travel writer Robert Byron, who had visited Russia early in 1932, described ‘her flat in Leningrad [as] the nearest approach to a *Salon* that Russia had seen since the Revolution, particularly during the big international congresses’.³⁹ Five years later in the summer and autumn of 1937, another British writer Una Pope-Hennessy, recorded a trip she made to Russia with the travel company Intourist.⁴⁰ Pope-Hennessy recalled the domestic-based culture in which Paget operated in very similar terms to Byron’s. Describing aspects of Paget’s philanthropy for the DBS in her book *The closed city: impressions of a visit to Leningrad* (1938), she recalled ‘the easy comfort’ of the flat’s sitting-room and Paget’s philosophy of keeping ‘open house’ for British nationals.⁴¹ Pope-Hennessy’s contrasting of Paget’s ‘open[ness]’ and the ‘closed[ness]’ of Leningrad symbolised an important point about national differences in constructions of citizenship and democracy, and about the ethic of international philanthropy. Publicity for Paget’s work for the DBS in the 1930s visualised her bridging these two cultures. This emerged most clearly in press coverage of the home for the DBS that Paget had sponsored to be built in Sosnovka (south east of Leningrad), which opened in 1933. Photographs of life at the home which appeared in a full-page feature in the Conservative tabloid *Daily Sketch* in October 1936 – including images of Paget surrounded by vegetables grown in the garden and sitting around the dinner-table with residents – conveyed the overlapping notions of citizenship that she brought together in her philanthropy (Fig. 6). They situated her work within a romantic idea of Soviet Russia and notions of collective living in a pastoral mode, to which Pope-Hennessy similarly alluded in her discussion of the ‘communal estate’, and ‘communal tea-party’,

³⁸ There were roughly a hundred British citizens marooned at this time in Soviet Russia, Leeds Russian Archive (hereafter LRA), MS 1405, Muriel Paget collection, Box 26, Letter from T. Preston [of the Commercial Mission to England] to Lady Muriel Paget, 3 March 1924.

³⁹ Robert Byron, ‘Muriel Paget: further tributes’, *The Times*, 21 June 1938, p. 18. James Knox, *Robert Byron: a biography* (London: John Murray, 2003), pp. 241-51.

⁴⁰ Una Pope-Hennessy, *The closed city: impressions of a visit to Leningrad* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1938), p.7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

where ‘Everyone from the working gardener to ourselves was entertained’.⁴² The images sentimentalised for British audiences communist styles of living from which the DBS were officially excluded, even whilst they celebrated the altruistic code of British citizenship which Paget herself represented.

As well as integrating various political cultures, Paget’s hospitality also facilitated mediation between different models of femininity. Whilst publicity showcased Paget manifesting notionally ‘feminine’ inter-personal qualities as head of house, Pope-Hennessy picked up on the more complex terms of Paget’s gendered image, as presented variously to her clients and employees. Pope-Hennessy observed that while Paget performed emotional engagement for the British visitors (displayed through her benedictory smile) she was cold (like ‘the Iron Duke’) to her staff.⁴³ In observing these various manifestations, Pope-Hennessy captured a tension within Paget’s performance as hostess, in which the image of home-maker was aligned with a more detached air in her role as employer. The performances of Paget’s multiple personae here resonate with Karen Chase and Michael Levenson’s study of ‘the spectacle of intimacy’ which considers how in the nineteenth century the ‘public extension of normative domesticity’ resulted in contradictions and contestations of the ideal.⁴⁴ Indeed, Paget’s behaviour highlighted her understanding that the performance of intimacy was conditional on her audience. Her public personae were actually regarded as part of a wider incongruity, if not a tension, which Pope-Hennessy observed at play in Paget’s frequent appearance in the flat in a military-inspired uniform (Fig. 4).⁴⁵ The uniform, which Paget often wore for publicity shots, suggests Paget’s desire to move her image away from a straightforward association with feminine qualities of compassion, and her intention to promote a more forceful image. In these portraits, Paget’s hospitality incorporated more than one cultural position; it showed that the role of head of house had both homely and combative connotations. The hostess, then, did not function as a gender-essentialist model amongst women philanthropists. Indeed, female philanthropists undertook the

⁴² ‘Home for needy Britons in Russia: woman who works for their comfort in a forest glade’, *Daily Sketch*, 12 October 1936, p.12; Hennessy, *Closed city*, pp. 58-62.

⁴³ Hennessy, *Closed city*, pp. 43-4.

⁴⁴ Karen Chase and Michael Levenson, *The spectacle of intimacy: a public life of the Victorian family* (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 5-6.

⁴⁵ Hennessy, *Closed city*, pp. 43-4.

role in ways that did not necessarily perform it, nor signal the need to perform it, through gendered stereotypes about women's natural compassion.

Within and outside the home

Building and sustaining relationships of support by means of the culture of hospitality was one aspect of philanthropy through which women were able to cut across traditional social boundaries. Vertical social hierarchies did of course continue to operate in women's philanthropic projects. At the home for the Distressed British Subjects in Sosnovka Paget, while sitting around the table with other householders, nevertheless sat at its 'head'.⁴⁶ However, when looking to encourage participation in (as opposed to support for) the philanthropic project, other women were motivated by a desire to fashion personal bonds with their clients that operated across established social categories. When appealing to women clients, this typically involved women philanthropists seeking to develop conversations which dissolved boundaries of social class. Discourses of the home assumed a critical significance in these dialogues. It is now a commonplace in histories of women's philanthropy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to stress the association of female charitable activity with ideas of domesticity.⁴⁷ However, the last quarter of the nineteenth century has been seen typically to represent a shift in figurations of women's philanthropy from domestic to 'business-like' and 'professional' models.⁴⁸ This trajectory presents an over-determined teleology, and it fails to recognise the ways in which the language of domesticity continued to be used with different definitional emphases well into the twentieth century as part of the evolving politicised construction of the philanthropic project. Between the wars, middle- and upper-class women philanthropists appropriated the discourse of domesticity as a way of constructing their newly shared political identity with their working-class female clients. Appropriated within new debates about the effects and meanings of the

⁴⁶ As noted in 'Home for needy Britons', p. 12.

⁴⁷ E.g. Williams-Elliot, *Angel out of the house*; Gerard, 'Lady Bountiful'; Luddy, *Women and philanthropy*; Prochaska, *Women and philanthropy*; Summers, 'A home from home'; Alison Twells, 'Missionary domesticity, global reform and "woman's sphere" in early-nineteenth-century England', *Gender and History* 18, 2 (2006), pp. 266-84.

⁴⁸ Williams-Elliot, *Angel out of the house*, pp. 30-1.

Representation of the People Act of 1928, the home, in this application, was conceived of as both a localised and an outward-facing domain, which framed broader understandings of women's and men's community responsibilities. This argument connects to Caitriona Beaumont's thesis that interwar women's groups were motivated at a grass-roots level by the language of citizenship, rather than a necessarily 'feminist' discourse, with many mainstream women's groups disclaiming the identity of 'feminist' altogether.⁴⁹ Between the wars, female philanthropists used the language of domesticity as a trope through which they could engage in new forms of cross-class dialogues and encourage their female audiences to embrace new spheres of social action within the model of participatory democracy. In articulating this message, they engaged in a horizontally-conceived project, through which they refashioned the relationship between themselves and their working- and middle-class clients not in terms of a social hierarchy, but rather within the image of what Leonore Davidoff calls a sibling relationship through which social position could be 'levell[ed]'.⁵⁰

Focusing on the ways in which female philanthropists took up the gendered implications of domestic imagery is not to say that all women philanthropists did so. Instead, my purpose is to draw attention to the strategic devices through which these women conceptualised and related to a particular 'public'. Unlike the process of constructing support-bases – when women philanthropists remained within a class sector to appeal to a mixed gender audience – in directing participation in the philanthropic effort, some philanthropists focused their attention on a specifically female audience. In seeking to mobilise this group in participation, philanthropists understood the need to bridge the class divide through emphasising common gendered experiences.⁵¹ Lettice Fisher appeared cognisant of the need to construct a shared identity between herself and her female audience when broadcasting a series of British Broadcasting Company (BBC) wireless talks about the domestic economy and local government in the early-to-mid 1930s for the NFWI. The talks, which were later published as *The housewife and the townhall*

⁴⁹ Beaumont, 'Citizens not feminists', pp. 415.

⁵⁰ Leonore Davidoff discussed 'fictive sibling' relationships as one mode of civic action: *Worlds between: historical perspectives on gender and class* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 218.

⁵¹ Eileen Yeo observed the 'thorny class problem', which created difficulties in the last decade of the nineteenth century and first of the twentieth 'for the growth of a woman's culture of a new kind of family of sisterhood among women across the class divide', *The contest for social science*, p. 271.

(1934), laid claim to a shared identity between herself and the listener through a new argument about the scope and significance of women's domestic authority. Fisher stated that 'What mattered for housewives', was 'getting *our* money's worth'. It was 'not spending, but wise spending, that is the heart of the problem' [my italics].⁵² An emphasis on prudent household management was a long-established feature of elite women's socially-reformist rhetoric, and in using it here Fisher built on her own earlier experiences of rent collecting in east Oxford at the turn of the century and leading local women's thrift meetings.⁵³ Still, her discussion was also part of a contemporary interwar argument, in which the model of the citizen housewife was disseminated through various arenas of public discourse, ranging from mainstream political discussions (for example the secretary of the London Charity Organisation Society John Christian Pringle's publication *The nation's appeal to the housewife and her response* (1933)) to middlebrow literature and popular magazines which focused on the middle-class housewife struggling to adjust to the realities of keeping home without servants.⁵⁴ Judy Giles argues that the debate about the 'professional' housewife running a 'modern home' was a critical aspect of the history of gender relations in the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁵ Fisher's slogan, 'practical housewives', underlines an attempt to speak to the housewife in the guise of running a home, but her message also aimed to impart a broader sense of social action. In emphasising women's skills within the domestic economy, she was mobilising her listeners for a broad community-spirited activity.⁵⁶

⁵² Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, *The housewife and the townball* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson Ltd., 1934), p. 109.

⁵³ She was leading thrift meetings in Oxford during the First World War: Bodleian, MS Fisher 202, fol. 167, Letter from Herbert Fisher to Lettice Fisher, November 1915. On a nineteenth-century tradition for this social reform see Ross McKibbin, 'Social class and social observation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 28 (1978), pp. 175-99.

⁵⁴ John Christian Pringle, *The nation's appeal to the housewife and her response* (London; New York: Longmans, Green and Co. and [London] Charity Organisation Society, 1933). On middlebrow culture see Nicola Humble, *The feminine middlebrow novel 1920s to 1950s: class, domesticity and bohemianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 116.

⁵⁵ Judy Giles, *The parlour and the suburb: domestic identities, class, femininity and modernity* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 101. See also Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in twentieth-century Britain: the search for a historical movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), ch. 6.

⁵⁶ Fisher, *Housewife*, p. 109. Talks based upon the broadcasts happened in local Women's Guilds, Mothers' Unions, and other women's associations: L. Hill, 'Advertising local government in England', *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1, 2 (1937), p. 65. For a skeptical reading of *The nation's appeal to the housewife* see Macadam, *New philanthropy*, pp. 18-9.

In *The housewife and the townhall*, Fisher aimed to encourage NFWI members to partake in philanthropic acts through constructing a relationship between knowledge of the local environment and a wider engagement in the processes of social improvement. The rhetorical purpose of her intervention, then, was a political one, which addressed women's still controversial place within a participatory democracy through repositioning them in a central role within community life and local government.⁵⁷ Partly, this agenda was to challenge prevailing male constructions of civic identity, which focused on the theatres of work and state (but not on the home and family) and to encourage the confidence and political awareness that working-class women required to negotiate their way through male-dominated administrative environments. This was a confidence that Fisher had gained through the benefits of her social class, but she framed her talk strategically so as to stress the commonality of her position *vis à vis* her listeners. Thus, in a statement which resonated with elements of the pre-war suffragist critique of men, she claimed that 'As a practical housewife, I have an instinctive distrust of the man who wants to get on to the local council simply in order to cut down the rates, and of the other one who tries to get on by lavish promises of spending other people's money'.⁵⁸ In making this combative argument, Fisher also configured women's agency in local-based activity within the contemporary vogue for rural culture.⁵⁹ She emphasised the value of a pastoral model of civic activity, speaking about the enjoyments of everyday life in the country gained through bee, pig, poultry and other animal keeping, and fruit-growing.⁶⁰ This claim was designed to appeal to the country women of the NFWI. But Fisher also configured it to stress the global purpose of local social action, arguing that it was up to housewives 'to enforce the existing laws about pollution, to do what we can at home...to keep public opinion alive on what we think matters, whether it is the cinema, or

⁵⁷ On the centrality of local government to interwar visions of good citizenship see Claire Griffiths, 'The dramas of local government: personal ethics and public service in Winifred Holtby's *South Riding*', in James Moore and John Smith (eds.), *Corruption in urban politics and society, Britain 1780-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) pp. 131-53.

⁵⁸ Fisher, *Housewife*, p. 108.

⁵⁹ Paul Brassley, Jeremy Burchardt and Lynne Thompson (eds.), *The English countryside between the wars: regeneration or decline?* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006). On the idealised version of rural society as part of an 'organic movement' in interwar and Second World War Britain, and interwar rural reconstruction see Jeremy Burchardt, *Paradise lost: rural idyll and social change in England since 1800* (London: Tauris, 2002), chs. 11-12.

⁶⁰ Fisher, *Housewife*, p. 100.

unclean food or unclean smoke'.⁶¹ Fisher's plea for the application of good housekeeping to the broader good of the community was analogous in theoretical terms to an argument made by economics tutor at Kings' College of Household and Social Science Mabel Atkinson in 1909 (and further developed in 1910) that stressed the dynamic relationship between household management and 'economic science'.⁶² In this model, good housewives were good home-makers and careful custodians of the environment. In pushing back the perimeters of a feminised domestic arena, Fisher envisaged women's civic activity as both moving across class boundaries and mediating local, national and global domains. Far from a delimited ideal, she asserted domesticity as intrinsically malleable.

If Fisher's discussion opened up a model of domesticity to aspects of environmental and gender politics, other female philanthropists imagined the flexibility of the home to be limitless. In her book *Woman* (1930), published in America and Britain, Evangeline Booth situated women's role in the home within a discussion about the lead-up to women's formal enfranchisement. Booth wrote about the women's movement in terms very similar to those used by the celebrated British Anglican feminist Maude Royden in 1920: as a form of spiritual emancipation harder to achieve than social, political or economic because it fulfilled the gospel of redemption.⁶³ Critically, Booth believed that a domestic culture which orbited around women would continue to play a critical role in this spiritual development. The 'task ahead', she claimed, was that of 'changing the world into a home': 'The housekeeping that we have now to undertake, is housekeeping on the grand scale; it must include all nations, all people in a nation, the rich and the poor, the saints and the sinners'.⁶⁴ Booth's vision of women's domestic expertise here was broad and inclusive, and it established not only a new gendered model of civic action which cut across social class but also a redefined world order in terms that bridged national divides and assumed a global significance. By defining women's obligations in this way, she repositioned the

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 111-2.

⁶² Quoted in Jane Garnett, 'Political and domestic economy in Victorian social thought: Ruskin and Xenophon', in Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (eds), *Economy, polity and society: British intellectual history 1750-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 205; 223.

⁶³ Evangeline Booth, *Woman* (1930; London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1936), p. 15. Compare Maude Royden, *The ministry of women* (London: League of the Church Militant, 1920?).

⁶⁴ Booth, *Woman*, p. 33.

home as public, and its innermost workings as affecting social and cultural reform on the widest plane. Like Fisher in her *The housewife and the townhall* talks, Booth's message in *Woman* was both political and extra-political, and it codified female agency as part of a world-view that linked the personal to the global. For her, however, the broad significance of the home lay in its functioning as restplace, workplace and site of spiritual sustenance. This message was overlaid by a vision of incarnational Christian theology, favoured by the Salvation Army, which emphasised the ritual of faith as both communally expressive and personally resonant. This discursive framework similarly structured Booth's sermon 'Love is all' (1935), where she developed a discussion of the early Christian martyrs in Rome into a wider reflection about love as martyrdom and about martyrdom as occurring 'in the kitchen, the workshop, with your friends [where] you have opportunities to show God's grace and power to save'.⁶⁵ This was a practical as well as an epistemological point. Booth modelled the home as providing physical sustenance and the space for communal spiritual bonding. The blurring of the individual and society within a spiritually-engaged domesticity was critical to Booth's conception of how the philanthropic project ought to function.

Knowing and loving

In early 1930, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) journal *The Blue Triangle Gazette* (formerly *Our Own Gazette*) included a discussion on its page for members aged 11-16 ('The Pioneers'), about what constituted the best model of service to others. The discussion aimed to illustrate how a sincere Christian belief framed a life of devoted service to others through a sense of mutual respect and understanding. The significance of this message as an evangelical model – and therefore implicated with the cultures of middle-class religion – was clearly drawn. Audrey C. Wilson, secretary of the 'Pioneers' movement, began by situating the interwar YWCA both as morally- and socially-distanced from stereotypes of upper-class 'do-gooding' associated with the 'Victorian' period. During the middle of the last century it had suddenly become very fashionable for rich society people to want to do 'good works', Wilson wrote:

⁶⁵ Evangeline Booth, *Love is all* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1935), p. 17.

and very often their idea of helping people was to drive down to the poor part of the town in a splendid carriage with a footman on the step, and to give money and bottles of expensive wine to the crowds which gathered round. Stories like this strike us as impossible nowadays, but that is because we have all realised that effective help can only be given to people and causes after a very long enquiry into their needs. Knowledge is the beginning of service, whether we are trying to serve people poorer than ourselves or younger than ourselves, or of a different nationality from ourselves.⁶⁶

I want to consider the significance of the conception of knowledge that Wilson drew here. As in female philanthropists' discussions about domesticity, Wilson's article related to directing participation in the philanthropic effort. In this context, she implied a chain of personal relationships through which the philanthropic project was continued through a heartfelt desire to understand those whom one would help. She presented the philanthropic act, therefore, as a form of friendship to which a deep understanding of the client and their social context were integral. It was not always the case that philanthropists achieved this sort of knowledge, but they recognised the need to understand their client in the composition of his or her body, mind and spirit, as a whole person. There was a vital connection in Wilson's conception between knowledge of oneself and knowledge of others. She conceived of the girls' knowledge as growing out of an understanding of their own local roots and the history of their local YWCA club (she wanted members to discover 'If your Club were instrumental in making it known that little children had not got nearly enough room in which to play in safety, or that there were far too many starving cats and dogs about the streets, or that there didn't seem to be nearly enough Play Centres or Clubs provided').⁶⁷ The gendered and generational make-up of the audience was of vital importance to how Wilson articulated her message. But knowledge, in this context, was a widely-applied political and a social tool, through which YWCA members could break down boundaries of class, generation and race (and in other contexts also gender).

What Wilson presented to the 'Pioneers', then, was a model of philanthropy that linked personal friendship and an informed perspective in a hoped-for endeavour of positive social change. This was not a gender-exclusive model; rather, it raised questions about which social boundaries could be crossed in order for the spirituality – of both philanthropist and client – to

⁶⁶ Audrey Wilson, 'Pioneers' page', *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, 3 March 1930, p. 17.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

be refined. It is striking how historians have picked up on the concept of friendship in modern Britain in terms of its boundary-crossing nature, as related to categories of gender, sexuality and space. This model of the transgressive nature of friendship has, in Seth Koven's, Sharon Marcus' and Mark Peel's work, been framed through a queer analysis, in which the process of developing self-awareness is centred within a narrative which stresses the fluidity of gender and sexual identities.⁶⁸ Mark Peel articulated this emphasis recently in defining friendship as 'the conversation about who you had been, who you were and who you wanted to be', a process which, he argues, many men and women in the early twentieth century enjoyed with an increasing sense of personal freedom.⁶⁹ Scholars' interest in the meanings of friendship within the development of gender and sexual identity formation reflects the constructive questioning of personal categories that has animated work within queer theory.⁷⁰ But in focusing on these questions, this work has been less interested in exploring the definitional terms of personal friendship which centred on the intellectual meanings encoded in its model of disseminating and sharing knowledge. The conversation happening within the YWCA in 1930 reveals how interwar women philanthropists conceived of social knowledge as a critical aspect of a personal friendship that functioned as part of a developed civic agency through an outward-facing love for mankind.

Audrey Wilson was not alone in 1930 in discussing personal friendship as conjoining genuine knowledge of, and love for, other people. A similar conjunction of ideas played into a set of questions raised in the summer of that year by moral philosopher Professor John MacMurray. Speaking on the BBC wireless, MacMurray debated the relationship between the morality of social service and friendship. Social service, he claimed, was 'the working morality of the modern world', largely bound up in service to the state.⁷¹ By contrast, 'Friendship', he argued, 'is the essence of morality'; he explained, 'Ultimately our own morality consists precisely in our ability to

⁶⁸ Koven, *Slumming*; Sharon Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); Mark Peel, 'New worlds of friendship: the early twentieth century', in Barbara Caine (ed.), *Friendship: a history* (London; Oakville, Ct.: Equinox, 2008), pp. 279-316.

⁶⁹ Peel, 'New worlds', p. 280.

⁷⁰ For a classic discussion see Donna Penn, 'Queer: theorising politics and history', *Radical History Review*, 62 (1995), pp. 24-42.

⁷¹ John MacMurray, 'Social morality', *The Listener*, 2 July 1930, p. 34.

know people as they really are and to love them for “what they really are”.⁷² For MacMurray, ‘knowing’ and ‘loving’ was the essence of friendship, and it was this activity (which he perceived to be more freely expressed than social service which he presented as mechanised) that he fashioned as the ‘true’ basis of positive social relations. The tensions that MacMurray outlined between social service and the ‘true morality’ related to a conception of friendship that was oriented around evolving ideas about personal and political freedom. MacMurray argued that friendship was an outgrowth of self-disciplined, liberated inner ‘quality’ and ‘integrity’, rather than constructed in terms of state-directed obligation.⁷³ Like Wilson’s intervention, MacMurray’s remarks grew out of a Christian framework which sought to re-think the role of the individual in a properly functioning Christian community in the interwar years.⁷⁴ He had expanded on this debate in a lecture he gave earlier in 1930 which compared religion and science in terms of the oppositional qualities of ‘one’ and ‘fragmentary’; ‘concrete’ and ‘abstract’; concerned and unconcerned with ‘value’; ‘personal’ and ‘impersonal’.⁷⁵ The personal was again a vital frame of reference in the process of civic action here, and MacMurray used it to claim distance from the rational and bureaucratic structures of state-led service.

The significance of a Christian framework in constructing a model of personal friendship emerged as a critical part of Evangeline Booth’s institutional publicity. On the eve of her retirement in October 1939, the Salvation Army’s newspaper *The War Cry* published a supplementary issue celebrating Booth’s career as World General. The issue fashioned Booth as inhabiting a variety of aesthetic, geographic and spiritual arenas – as ‘musician’, ‘writer’, ‘international traveller’ and ‘friend-maker’.⁷⁶ *The War Cry* feature presented Booth moving between these realms, but it underlined the notion of friendship specifically as a concept which could itself transcend boundaries of various sorts. A range of social transformations was envisaged in a montage of photographs which presented Booth engaged in friendship with

⁷² John MacMurray, ‘The true morality’, *The Listener*, 9 July 1930, p.74.

⁷³ See Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach, ‘Democracy and friendship’, *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 36, 2 (2005), pp. 233-54.

⁷⁴ For a discussion of the importance attached to the idea of an organic national community in interwar Liberal Anglican thought see Grimley, *Citizenship, community, and the Church of England*.

⁷⁵ ‘Superstitions of Science,’ *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1930, p. 13.

⁷⁶ ‘General Evangeline Booth’, *The War Cry*, 28 October 1939, pp. 2-5.

philanthropic clients and patrons alike (Fig. 7). She was shown holding a baby; enthralled a working-man and his family in their London home; offering words of support to countryside hop-pickers; talking intimately with politician Lady Astor at a Royal Garden party; and with a group of women cleaners at the Salvation Army Headquarters.⁷⁷ Many of the photographs seemed to capture Booth in conversation with clients and supporters. Indeed, this focus on dialogues implied that Booth was both teaching and learning from her clients and committed to breaking down rigid social divides, whether at the level of entering a working-man's home or elite gossip. This form of friendship was intellectually conceived. But it was also figured as part of the tangible resonance of women's philanthropy. Thus the photographs visualised a metaphor used in the article about Booth's 'personal touch'. In projecting this physical image, the Salvation Army was situating Booth within a family genealogy which commemorated Booth's mother, Catherine, as a 'friend of the friendless, a strong hand of help in the dark shadow of despair and shame and sin'.⁷⁸ Booth's 'personal touch' was even more widely conceived in these photographs. It worked at an emotional and physical level to cross class, gender and generational categories, and in both rural and urban environments.

In presenting Booth in these various poses, *The War Cry* fashioned her philanthropy as an intimate activity which could transcend the private spaces of the home to more public demonstrations of sympathy and support. This representation in part fitted Booth into a mode of loving friendship that she herself had constructed. This was a model in which, like Wilson and MacMurray, Booth stressed the connections between knowledge and love for humanity. In a sermon on 'Charity' which drew heavily on Pauline theology, she stated that 'Knowledge springing from, revolving around, and resolving itself into Charity, is one of Heaven's mightiest forces. Knowledge without Love dwarfs the soul, narrows sympathies and minimises character'.⁷⁹ The notion of philanthropy as friendship was something which more overtly political contemporary commentaries disputed. Those who regarded the language of political entitlement as a new model of social welfare provision, for example, wholly failed to see the connection.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁸ Booth, *Woman*, pp. 26-7.

⁷⁹ Booth, *Love is all*, p. 40.

Writer and broadcaster Stuart Petre Mais was one such commentator. In an article about unemployment in northern England for the BBC's weekly commentary magazine *The Listener* in January 1933, Mais claimed that 'It is not charity that the unemployed want, but a practical expression of understanding friendliness – and that at once. Charity does not begin to touch the problem; friendliness may indeed in the end solve it'.⁸⁰ 'Friendship', for Mais, amounted to a process that would rebuild the confidence of those who were out of work, and was premised on a shift in understanding of these men as 'unemployables' to them as 'first-rate workmen'.⁸¹ Mais' comments here did stress the importance of a sincere knowledge of the individual to be helped and their social context, but in large part he claimed this model as part of a critique of charitable activity which discriminated against clients as deserving or undeserving.⁸² However in focusing on notions of political agency and entitlement, he overlooked the sense of intimacy and love that philanthropists like Booth understood as a vital part of 'knowing' a client.⁸³

Although friendship was conceived precisely to transcend social boundaries, a specifically gendered discourse of friendship did emerge in a discussion which Booth had with an all-female audience. Here again, though, an emphasis on social and spiritual transformation was pivotal. In a talk to British Salvation Army women which she had prepared for her Farewell Ceremony in Earls Court, London, in September 1939, Booth defined the knowledge that was derived through friendships between women within a particularly wide orbit. She spoke of the unsurpassed value of empathy in the philanthropic project, and to women's particular gifts in this respect:

Tender and loyal and devoted as men may be in their service to womankind, yet there is a breadth of understanding, and a source of sustenance and comfort that can alone come from a woman to a woman. And it is this understanding, this very kindly consideration –

⁸⁰ S. P. B. Mais, 'Wanted! Work – not charity', *The Listener*, 25 January 1933, p. 118.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁸² The language of deservingness as a criteria for social assistance can be traced to the principles of the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act which instituted the Workhouse Test as the mechanism for distinguishing between the deserving and undeserving poor: see e.g. Anne Digby, *The Poor Law in nineteenth century England and Wales* (London: Historical Association, 1982). Felix Driver observed the privileged place accorded to these classificatory principles in the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, *Power and pauperism: 1834-1884* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 72; 141.

⁸³ Interwar ideas of political entitlement and agency were not understood in the same terms as they would be in the mature welfare state, but they did resonate with pre-war grass-roots Labour activism and social leadership, which had shifted popular expectations about the required public responses to social inequalities, see Julia Bush, *Behind the lines: East London Labour 1914-1919* (London: Merlin Press, 1984).

this pity, that is so deep and tender when given by a woman to a woman in times of struggle, physical weakness and burden-bearing, that is of such inestimable value.⁸⁴

There was a powerful gendered rhetoric to Booth's assertion here which championed the mutually strengthening aspect of women's friendships. The sorts of knowledge that could be developed through this act of friendship from woman to woman were specific. 'Understanding' and 'consideration' were presented here as a form of nourishment which transcended the traditionally 'womanly' domains of psychological nourishment to function as a form of physical sustenance to bring up the weak. Like her own representation in *The War Cry*, Booth configured friendship here as both a physical and an emotional process that framed an understanding of how charity ought to be given to the whole person through tangible and spiritual means. This idea transformed any limited calibration of women's rightful sphere, and worked to encourage personal growth in both giver and receiver.

Toward a better world⁸⁵

In his book, *The morbid age: Britain and the crisis of civilisation 1918-39* (2009), Richard Overy argued that the interwar years were characterised by the idea of a 'civilisation in crisis'.⁸⁶ Overy's thesis suggested that the culture of pessimism and decay was not simply the preserve of a highbrow intellectual elite in these years, rather it was a broadly-diffused aspect of popular culture. Overy did not seek to claim that pessimism was an absolute orthodoxy between the wars, he acknowledged that 'It is obviously true that other discourses existed, pointing to a brighter progressive future, but even they could be assailed in the inter-war years by doubts and uncertainties'.⁸⁷ He hinted at an altogether more optimistic strain of thought as characterising the 1930s, writing that 'For most of the decade the conflict was expressed in terms of the survival of civilisation...sometimes in terms of some promised new civilisation'.⁸⁸ In stressing negativity over these more positive frames of thought, Overy marshalled his argument to highlight the

⁸⁴ SAA, Evangeline Booth Speeches, II, 312/1, 'The Home League', Earls Court, 2 September 1939.

⁸⁵ Evangeline Booth, *Toward a better world* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1929).

⁸⁶ Richard Overy, *The morbid age: Britain between the wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

importance of human and natural sciences in configuring popular opinion in the interwar period, playing down the role of spiritual frameworks of thought in this process. Indeed, it is striking that religious thinkers and organisations are entirely missing from his book.⁸⁹ In this sense, Overy's approach comfortably fits the dominant narrative of a 'secular' twentieth-century Britain.⁹⁰ But by focusing on the social largely to the exclusion of the spiritual aspects of interwar socially-transformative thought, Overy overlooked the critical relationship between local and the global domains within other aspects of this thought.⁹¹ In contributing to the development of a spiritually-optimistic strain of thought between the wars, female philanthropists conceived of their projects in terms of love for mankind that connected both the local to the global and the social to the spiritual. At a fundamental level, then, their projects envisaged a movement from the temporal world to a realm beyond. Expressing the mediations between the material and the spiritual worlds was a critical aspect of their projects.

Evangeline Booth was one figure who determined to stress these interconnections. In 1929 she published through the Salvation Army's press a collection of sermons with the evocative title *Toward a better world*. Beginning with a discussion of the sun as God's 'artist' ('painting flames upon the sky'), her sermons projected an incarnational theology which ranged from Christ in nature ('The Christ of the Andes'), to 'As a Mother' via his governance ('The Ultimate Sovereignty'). In one of her sermons she focused on a subtly different discussion about the agency of the individual believer in the course of living a good life. 'Faith, the only way over which we can travel', saw Booth considering the question of the journey to spiritual assurance. For her:

The condition on which we can reach our heavenly home is the same as that of the social structure of our present life, and it is unalterable...Eliminate the faith that man

⁸⁹ Matthew Grimley has shown the significant part leading religious figures played in figuring notions of the state and community in linking social vision and theology between the wars, *Citizenship, community and the Church of England*.

⁹⁰ This often continues to be defined in terms of minimal church attendance. For a recent example in the context of the interwar period see Juliet Gardiner, *The thirties: an intimate history* (London: Harper Press, 2010), pp. 487-9.

⁹¹ An omission also made by Jay Winter, who argued that before 1940 such projects were typically framed by the motivations of social class or nation; between 1940 and 1968 in terms of a universal language of 'humanity'; and thereafter by an emphasis on 'local autonomy' as underpinning proto-globalist reform: *Dreams of peace and freedom: utopian movements in the twentieth century* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 6.

has in man, and the commercial wheel halts...If by faith we travel over the commercial, industrial, social, and domestic highways of this world, should we wonder or question or be confused if only by faith we can make our way over the highway to Heaven? ⁹²

The image here of the individual believer following the path laid out by Christ to heaven was an example of the development of a very long-established discussion within the Christian church about the right path to Heaven. Booth's discussion here stressed a faithful life as crossing temporal and spiritual realms. Fundamentally, her talk recognised the need to mediate the abstract qualities of faith through a more grounded discussion of social conditions. In his biography of Booth, Paul Wilson picked up on this message through repositioning Booth within the clichéd epithet by which she was known as an 'angel', arguing that 'She has always dreamed her dreams of a "better world" but she likes to add, "angels are very beautiful in their own land. They are too good for earth. They fly too high. I try to keep my feet on the ground"'.⁹³ The 'better world' was a trope through which the philanthropic project was configured as acting beyond the temporal world. But in making this point, it was still important for religious philanthropic women to claim their very tangible purpose and position within the contemporary world.

The discourse of making the world a better place, then, involved female philanthropists in figuring an explanatory framework through which they could present their projects as joining the political to the social and spiritual domains. For some, the ethic of 'service' and the 'power of feeling' were the most important activities through which philanthropy could be linked between the past, the present, and a hoped-for 'better life'. Emily Kinnaird discussed these intersections in the early summer of 1927 in two articles for the YWCA's journal *Our Own Gazette*.⁹⁴ In the first article, entitled 'In touch with the Unseen', she set out the importance of thinking beyond the present, material world to a spiritual communion with God through contemplation and meditation. Her discussion was a reflection on the meaning and sources of women's agency: how could YWCA members, Kinnaird asked, achieve autonomy and liberation, and what would limit

⁹² Booth, *Toward a better world*, p. 31.

⁹³ Wilson, *General Evangeline Booth*, p. 60.

⁹⁴ She alluded to her sympathy with a 'socialistic point of view' in her discussion of state and public financing of Indian Health Visitors, Kinnaird, *My adopted country*, p. 37.

their agency as social actors? Her answer lay in the framework of a sincere Christian faith, but she chose to emphasise the point in relation to other faith models. In keeping with the idea of mediation, Kinnaird engaged in a dialogue with aspects of Hinduism, notably its configurations of the relationship between different temporalities of thought and experience. She thus encouraged readers to move beyond 'Karma' or 'fate', to find guidance in God through which 'to steer our course aright' (Fig. 8).⁹⁵ Karma manifested free will and responsibility for one's actions as a process that generated reactions to one's actions in the past, and therefore shaped the present and the future. In critiquing this model, Kinnaird wanted her readers to be actively engaged in shaping their own life trajectories.

Kinnaird's second article 'Seeing the invisible', developed a focus on the inter-denominational culture of spiritual contemplation. The model of 'inter-denominational[ism]', which Kinnaird envisaged as central to the YWCA's focus, had in the 1920s still to become a mainstream aspect of Christian theology.⁹⁶ In part, because of the forward-looking nature of this enterprise, Kinnaird sought to provide for her readers a variety of inspirational guides for self-reflection across the Christian faith. Unsurprisingly, her first frame of reference for self-evaluation drew on the squarely Protestant model of Augustinian Christianity (*The confessions of St. Augustine*).⁹⁷ But her discussion was also situated within the traditions of a more fluid Christian culture, which had a long history of building on inter-denominational and inter-faith roots to secure its spiritual authority and vibrancy.⁹⁸ She went on, therefore, to encourage readers to consult devotional texts, including Thomas à Kempis's *The imitation of Christ*, literature on Christian mysticism by British Anglo-Catholic Evelyn Underhill, and texts by the German mystic Henry de Suso, Julian of Norwich, Madame Guyon, Jacob Boehme and Fénelon.⁹⁹ Drawing on examples which ranged from pre-Reformation Catholicism to contemporary Anglo-Catholicism,

⁹⁵ Emily Kinnaird, 'In touch with the unseen', *Our Own Gazette*, May 1927, p. 18

⁹⁶ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 65.

⁹⁷ Emily Kinnaird, 'Seeing the invisible', *Our Own Gazette*, June 1927, p. 17.

⁹⁸ For discussions of earlier examples of inter-denominational crossovers see W. R. Ward, 'Mysticism and revival: the case of Gerhard Tersteegen', in Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (eds), *Revival and religion since 1700. Essays for John Walsh* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), pp. 41-59; William Van Reyk, 'Christian ideals of manliness during the period of the evangelical revival, c.1730-c.1840' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 2008).

⁹⁹ Kinnaird, 'In touch with the unseen', and 'Seeing the invisible'.

Kinnaird encouraged YWCA members to engage in an intellectual dialogue with different articulations of faith across different times and places as a framework through which they could re-focus the relationship between their individual spiritual needs and the social needs of the community. This was not a straightforward process, and there was an expectation that, like Kinnaird herself, YWCA members ought to engage in their own self-evaluations through sophisticated intellectual manoeuvrings. In a similar message to Audrey Wilson's conceptualisation of an outward-facing local knowledge in her article to the 'Pioneers', Kinnaird encouraged participation in the philanthropic project through learning about other people and oneself. Working for others was the essence of philanthropy, which needed to be filtered to future participants. Yet, as female philanthropists readily understood, this ideal was premised on a project of internal improvement which required a striving to better oneself both for the here and now and beyond.

The quest to establish a resonance for their projects beyond the temporal world led even some philanthropists who did not identify themselves as religious to consider the spiritual dimensions of their work. An intriguing example of this emerges in Muriel Paget's archive. Brought up in a strict Anglican household, Paget remained socially within the traditions of the Church of England, although she did not fashion her activity as religiously motivated. Throughout her international interventions, however, Paget developed an interest in the sustenance and spectacle of other denominations and faiths. Lantern slides of her time in the Baltic States in the early 1920s, produced for donors and supporters, reveal her interest in photographing orthodox Christian churches.¹⁰⁰ In May 1916, during her early work at the Anglo-Russian field hospital, she wrote to her husband recalling the ritual of the Russian Orthodox blessing of her field hospital and her motor ambulances (which transported basic medical provision to areas inaccessible to the hospital).¹⁰¹ She was clearly impressed by the spectacle of the occasion, writing about the atmosphere created by the candles, icons and the gold, bejewelled

¹⁰⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Box 5, Lantern Slides c. 1920-1. Slide of an unnamed Russian orthodox church.

¹⁰¹ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence, Box F, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 29 May 1916.

clothing of the priests.¹⁰² Twenty years later, convalescing from treatment for cancer, she travelled in February 1936 to a mission retreat near the River Ganges, Calcutta of the Ramkrishina, a Hindu reform movement which had emerged in the early-mid 1880s around the Indian mystic, Sri Ramkrishina and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda. Paget was one of a large number of Western visitors to visit the retreat in 1936, the centenary year of the birth of Ramkrishina.¹⁰³ Initially motivated by a fashionable ‘thing to do’, Paget in fact was deeply moved by her visit, and she wrote to her husband about it.¹⁰⁴ The retreat provided Paget with a new model for social service in the shape of devotee of Vivekananda, British-born woman ‘Tantine’.¹⁰⁵ Paget thought Tantine’s work was the spiritual embodiment of a ‘great mission for India’, which was centred on ‘spreading the religion of service, including the irrigation of Bengal – a big including’.¹⁰⁶ This reference was an important way for Paget to situate her philanthropy as having a meaning beyond its immediate event, as spiritually-, and by analogy also with geological work, tangibly-enduring. Moreover Paget understood Tantine as an exemplar of a mystical faith in which a dialogue between Western and non-Western practices developed.¹⁰⁷ To the monks, Paget wrote to her husband, ‘she means the spirit of the West in its highest sense, appreciating and understanding their spiritual independence and in many ways, childlike simplicity, without any vestige of the evils that so-called civilisation brings with it – bigotry, narrow-mindedness, and often soulless approach to material’.¹⁰⁸ Paget’s thought process here was focused on her desire to situate her work within a spectrum of reformist Western humanitarianism which critiqued

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Linda Prugh, *Josephine MacLeod and Vivekananda’s mission* (Chennai, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1999?), p. 438.

¹⁰⁴ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 10 February 1936.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Tantine’ was born under the name of Josephine MacLeod, Prugh, *Josephine MacLeod*.

¹⁰⁶ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letters from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 6, 10, 10-14 February 1936. The reference to irrigation was chosen deliberately and it echoed a comparison made by a friend of Paget between her work and that of Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, who instituted administrative and agricultural reforms (including drawing and irrigation systems) in the 1920s in the Gold Coast and colonial Guiana, LRA, MS 1405, Paget Collection, Correspondence Box S, Letter from George F. Peabody to Muriel Paget, 20 March 1928.

¹⁰⁷ Writing about the Irish militant suffragette Margaret Cousins’ work in post First World War India, Catherine Candy argued for ‘the mystical drive of a certain strand of feminist anti-colonialism in the interwar period’, through which ‘spiritual mystical faith...especially flourished outside the West while in dialogue with it’, ‘Mystical internationalism in Margaret Cousins’ feminist world’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 32, 1 (2009), pp. 30; 33.

¹⁰⁸ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 10-14 February 1936.

notions of materialism.¹⁰⁹ Tantine thus embodied for Paget an ‘absence of vulgarity’ and a ‘dignity and refinement’ that she thought was not always understood by Westerners.¹¹⁰ Spiritual refinement, even for this woman who did not identify herself as religious, was a critical way to move the philanthropic project beyond purely materialist concerns.

Conclusion

Paget’s subjective and intellectual discoveries at the Ramkrishina retreat were considerable. One of the thinkers whose work she found affecting during her stay was the French mystic and writer Romain Rolland. Rolland, who had been highly influential during the First World War in promoting a model of internationalist pacifism, was also interested in the development of Hinduism, and he wrote a book about the leader of the Ramkrishina, *Life of Vivekananda* (1929). Paget was taken with the book, and she urged her husband to read it.¹¹¹ In taking up Rolland’s work, Paget can be seen to have been operating in the late 1930s in the tradition of a cadre of early-twentieth-century women internationalists who sought to overcome the delimitations of nationally-oriented culture. For some, who were willing to be more overtly political than Paget, this was part of an anti-war culture that developed in the periods either side of the First World War. Vernon Lee was one such woman (who was also influenced by Romain Rolland), who wrote a number of philosophical essays about a hoped-for internationalist contract. In 1920, Lee reflected on the ideal of altruism through which individuals could move out of war patriotism to recognise the needs and desires of other people, writing that it was only by thinking ‘habitually of what I have thus called the *other* (*other* people, *other* places, *other* moments, *other* qualities, *other* relations, *other* everything and anything) that a true spirit of public service could be regained.¹¹² Lee’s emphasis was on the values of intimacy and true understanding of other people, a focus on

¹⁰⁹ Though the relationship between these ethics was always complex and interleaved, see Helen Gilbert and Chris Tiffin (eds), *Burden or benefit?: imperial benevolence and its legacies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

¹¹⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 10-14 February 1936.

¹¹¹ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget 10 February 1936.

¹¹² Vernon Lee, *Satan, the waster, a philosophic war trilogy with notes and introduction* (London: John Lane Co., 1920), quoted in Patrick Wright, *Iron curtain: from stage to Cold War* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 125. On Rolland’s influence on Lee, see Wright, *Iron curtain*, pp. 85-6.

the personal dimensions which could extend to the global. Many women held firm to this logic of inter-personal connections and they understood it working in relationship both to intimate and more fundamentally global principles over the interwar period. Lettice Fisher's discussion of the role of women in protesting against smoke pollution, or Paget's recognition of the importance of irrigation schemes, reveal interwar women philanthropists thinking about female civic activity flexibly, but fundamentally as linking the local to the global. The trajectories of interwar female philanthropists' activism examined in this chapter have shown that a shared humanitarian agenda (in the widest sense) and an understanding of self in the context of others were vital foundations for the socially-transformative visions of a group of interwar women. This was an intellectual, geographical and spiritual project. The small actions of personal and local activity were linked to a global world-view in interwar women's philanthropy, through which the social geographies of civic agency were re-mapped.

CHAPTER 2: HAPPINESS AND USEFULNESS: WORK, CITIZENSHIP AND THE ETHICS OF PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

Today Mme Bezier called for me & took me to a v[ery] nice quiet restaurant for luncheon & drove me back. She is a very practical & kind French woman & has taken in hand the finding of an apartment for me...I wish the children thought of other people sometimes, it is the failing of the self-centred – I would much rather John thought occasionally about other people than passed all the exams in the world, exams may set him somewhere but they will not help to make a happier world for other people.¹
Muriel Paget to Richard Paget

Muriel Paget wrote these words in a letter to her husband Richard in the spring of 1933. She was writing from Paris where she was undergoing the first in a series of treatments for cancer.² On first reading, the letter can be assessed as a mother's chastisement of her son (via her husband), sharpened by the context of Paget's infirmity and need for emotional and physical support. Read in these terms, the kindness that the former stranger Madame Bezier had shown Paget contrasts acutely with the apparent failing in this regard of her son John. But the letter can also be read at a level above this domestic narrative, as focusing a broader set of debates about gendered models of work and the definition of personal and public achievement. In this reading, Madame Bezier is presented as embodying a model of other-facing work which made the world a happier place, while John appears self-absorbed, preparing for entrance exams for Cambridge.³ Paget's letter, therefore, works not simply to highlight the social failings of her son, but also to set up philosophical paradigms about the meanings and purpose of different sorts of work. Indeed, the model of Bezier has both a literal and a metaphorical significance in this letter. In focusing attention on Bezier's admirable model of providing happiness for others, Paget implicitly projected herself as a provider of happiness and utility to others, and endorsed this form of work as the path to profound personal satisfaction. Paget had conceptualised the model of working for other people beyond the family as the central marker of her work identity for many years, overcoming pleas from her husband from 1916 onwards (made during her employment at the Anglo-Russian Hospital in Petrograd) to reconsider the geographical platform of her work to focus on the 'plenty of outlets nearer home!' and to return to the 'attraction of your deserted

¹ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box G, Letter from Muriel Paget to Richard Paget, 6 April 1933.

² Her treatment would continue until her death in June 1938.

³ John Paget took up a place to study engineering at Trinity College, Cambridge later in 1933.

family at home'.⁴ By the 1930s the model of providing happiness further afield was a critical aspect of Paget's public image. Thus, in his *Times* obituary of Paget in 1938, travel writer Robert Byron wrote that 'It was a rare idiosyncrasy, over and above the gift of organisation, which enabled Lady Muriel Paget to carry hope and happiness to so many of her fellow beings'.⁵ Byron's comment was an acknowledgement of a type of public achievement very different to the one that Paget portrayed her son seeking, framed by the values of competition and individual achievement around which public schooling and university education were oriented. Gendered codes of men's and women's activity underpinned Paget's discussion of work and achievement, but her letter did not establish a necessary association between women and work helping 'other people'. Rather, Paget presented this as a model of work to which everyone could and should aspire. As she emphasised, this was an activity that her son, as much as anyone else, ought to have learnt.

As a mode of writing, however, Paget's letter does focus attention onto a gendered form of self-reflection that was particularly significant in terms of constructing women's self-esteem in their own work and obligations. Her representation of Madame Bezier's kindness illustrates a long-established trend amongst literate women of measuring self-worth and public usefulness against models of enterprise of other women. Sharon Marcus has shown the many ways in which Victorian women compared and related themselves to each other in different acts of friendship, power and status.⁶ The tendency for women to construct a sense of self in relation to other women was exploited in the commercial literary market, not least through the popular nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century genre of collective biography, through which women readers 'measured' themselves against the values that exemplary women were presented as embodying. The example of collective biographies is significant because, as Alison Booth has argued, they vaunted subjects as extraordinary and often transgressive, whilst also employing

⁴ Richard Paget listed some of the many opportunities for Paget around Somerset at this time, including converting the family residences at Cranmore and Newberry into convalescent homes for wounded soldiers; training women for land work and starting co-operative industries for women after the war; Boy Scout and Girl Guide training; and beginning new arts and crafts industries for export to America, LRA, MS 1405, Box Z, Letter from Richard Paget to Muriel Paget, July 1916.

⁵ Byron, 'Muriel Paget: further tributes', *The Times*, 21 June 1938, p. 18.

⁶ Marcus, *Between women*.

narrative devices that reaffirmed traditional qualities of femininity.⁷ In part because of the awareness of the co-existence of a multiplicity of femininities, comparisons between women were often both more appropriate and more challenging than public rhetoric which juxtaposed men's and women's life- and work-paths. Women were typically much more demanding of themselves (and each other) in terms of what endeavours constituted a meaningful life, and sought satisfaction through a life purpose that could be much more varied than the essentialised models proclaimed by broader public discourse. In fashioning the kindness of Bezier, therefore, Paget was engaged not only in a public (familial) presentation of her life-work and purpose, but also an internal endeavour through which she re-valued the utility of her own work.

Philanthropy was a particularly significant framework within which to shape discussions (and self-examinations) of women's senses of satisfaction, usefulness and self-confidence because it had a fluidity of meaning in relation to models of work. Sociologists have argued that voluntary activity poses an epistemological problem in studies of working identity, because it was not motivated by economic reward and the values of the workplace.⁸ In fact, it presents the opportunity to follow new avenues. One constructive path would consider philanthropy as a leisure or supererogatory activity (for those who could afford not to work) which, as Claire Langhamer has argued in the context of working-class women in this period, were never wholly demarcated from paid work.⁹ Moreover, because female philanthropy built upon distinctive ethical codes (of the striving towards a well-spent life), it was rooted in a historical dynamic which self-consciously sought to connect up disciplines and approaches to life and society that were segregated in the dominant narratives of contemporary public discourse. An example of this deliberate circumvention of disciplinary boundaries emerged in 1835 in evangelical writer Margracia Loudon's pamphlet *Philanthropic economy: the philosophy of happiness, practically applied to the social, political and commercial relations of Great Britain*. Critiquing contemporary commentators who claimed interstices between philanthropy and political economy, Loudon argued that 'political

⁷ Alison Booth, *How to make it as a woman: collective biographical history from Victoria to the present* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), p. 4.

⁸ Rebecca Taylor, 'Rethinking voluntary work', in Lynne Pettinger (ed.), *A new sociology of work?* (Malden; Oxford: Blackwell/Sociological Review, 2005), p. 122.

⁹ On the fluid demarcations between work and leisure in the context of working-class women's leisure cultures, see Langhamer, *Women's leisure in England*.

economy was part of, not distinct from religion, morality or philanthropy'.¹⁰ Having articulated this connection, Loudon went on to contest the disassociation between political economy and women by arguing that political economy was both a form of economic practice and 'a disposition of things', which worked through expressions of 'goodwill'.¹¹ The positive connection that Loudon drew between these models gained acclamation later in the century in the heroine of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1874), Dorothea, who combined the study of political economy and an altruistic sympathy in dealing with people.¹² Loudon's and Eliot's interventions self-consciously sought to confirm linkages between the principles of economic (and individual) efficiency and goodwill in women's philanthropic enterprise. Designated 'spheres' or colourings of political and moral activity were resolutely transgressed in their works. Economics and ethics were intertwined in nineteenth-century female philanthropy, and in the process forged the way for later recastings of women's civic agency.

The custom of discussing female philanthropy as making positive connections between different approaches to life and work was rearticulated between the wars in the context of a widening field of women's paid employment opportunities, and the repositioning of women's citizen status. The legislative reforms of the 1919 Sex Discrimination (Removal) Act (SDRA) and the 1918 and 1928 Representation of the People Acts were important rhetorical steps which in theory respectively removed discrimination against women on the grounds of their sex and marriage in the workplace and civic society, and attributed formal legal rights of citizenship to women over the age of thirty (1918) and twenty-one (1928), on equal terms with men. Historians have debated the 1919 SDRA as a legislative reform which rarely matched the opportunities available in practice, and many interwar women faced a range of informal discriminations in the workplace, including those who wished to get married and found that in many occupations they

¹⁰ Margacia Loudon, *Philanthropic economy: The philosophy of happiness, practically applied to the social, political and commercial relations of Great Britain* (London: Edward Churton, 1835), v; vi-vii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vi-vii.

¹² 'She [Dorothea] sat down in the library before her particular little heap of books on political economy and kindred matters, out of which she was trying to get light as to the best way of spending money so as not to injure one's neighbours – or, what comes to the same thing – so as to do them the most good', George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1874; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 863.

came up against the restrictions of the marriage bar.¹³ However, in focusing exclusively on the paid sector, historians have overlooked the connections drawn in interwar discourse, in particular in women's advice literature, between women's paid and unpaid work, and in the process have neglected more positively framed aspects of interwar women's work culture and identity.¹⁴ Sometimes the connections between paid and unpaid work were explicitly made, and at other times they were configured through commentators' employment of common languages of cheerfulness and optimism. But in both cases women's advice literature aimed to build readers' confidence for thinking about themselves as fit for a new occupational landscape and active citizenry which could move between the paid and unpaid sectors.¹⁵ Even if interwar women achieved only limited gains in the arena of paid employment through the implementation of the SDRA, nevertheless they were beginning to be educated in a concerted narrative which stressed their own abilities for a wide range of obligations – both inside and outside the workplace. The distance between paid and unpaid work was redrawn in this discourse. Indeed, its proximity was understood as an integral part of women's positive and active citizen status.

This chapter explores the languages through which interwar Britons figured the relationship between female philanthropy and citizenship alongside models of work, public achievement and a well-spent life. It begins by exploring contemporary commentaries about women's success and public achievement. Focusing on the interwar supplements of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), it reveals an established public discourse which essentialised 'womanly' attributes (especially motherhood) as part of the successful embodiment of a career.

¹³ The historiography is vast. For key interventions see Anne Witz, *Professions and patriarchy* (London: Routledge, 1992); Alison Oram, *Women teachers and feminist politics 1900-39* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Meta Zimmeck, 'Strategies and stratagems for the employment of women in the British Civil Service, 1919-39', *Historical Journal*, 27, 4 (1984), pp. 901-24, and 'We are all professionals now: professionalisation, education and gender in the Civil Service, 1873-1939', in Penny Summerfield (ed.), *Women, education and the professions*, (Leicester: History of Education Society, 1987), pp. 67-83; Pat Thane, 'The careers of female graduates of Cambridge University, 1920s-1970s', in David Mitch, John Brown and Marco H. D. Van Leeuwen (eds), *Origins of the modern career* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 207-24. Miriam Glucksmann, *Women assemble: women workers and the new industries in interwar Britain* (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁴ Although Pat Thane has noted that in the twentieth century many women moved between the sectors (as well as balancing family obligations) across the course of a lifetime: 'Careers of female graduates', esp. pp. 210-2.

¹⁵ This finding develops McCarthy's and Thane's recent argument that the 'the 1920s saw a burgeoning of associations run by and / or for women committed to single issues and or / to the political education of new women voters, teaching them how to work the political system', 'The politics of association', p. 225.

But it also shows how contributors could renegotiate this model through centring discussions on the intensity with which women carried out their work. The chapter then explores the terms in which interwar women's advice literature sought to build women's confidence for the new occupational and community roles that the SDRA and franchise acts had formally attributed to them. The focus here is on notions of cheerfulness, ambition, and on religion as criteria for genuine happiness. The third section examines the discursive relationship between notions of giving, pleasure and 'duty'. Whilst the 'duty' of giving was understood between the wars as connoting 'Victorian' values, a growing body of contemporary women commentators defined it as part of a new model of charity and service through which both giver and receiver achieved personal satisfaction. The final section of the chapter analyses the vocabularies in which female philanthropists constructed and evaluated the purpose of a well-spent life in their personal narratives. It focuses on how they fashioned their own accomplishments in relation to other women's, and how they positioned philanthropy within these comparisons. These personal narratives expose interwar women philanthropists actively reflecting on the meanings of a good life as well as a good society. Female philanthropists sought achievement in these arenas both for themselves and for the good of the community.

'A bevy of some of the best womanhood of the period'¹⁶

In late 1937, *The Times* newspaper included an article reviewing the latest volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (*DNB*). The volume, which included 'notable persons' who had died between the years 1922 and 1930, was the second decennial 'supplement' to be published, the first being the 1912-21 supplement, which was published in 1927.¹⁷ The intellectual premise of these supplements was distinct from that of the original *DNB*. Whereas the *Dictionary* was originally conceived in the 1880s by writer Leslie Stephen to reference notable men and women across British history (in what historians have understood as a quintessentially 'Victorian' project), the supplements were intended as a record of the lives of selected worthy subjects who had died in

¹⁶ 'The D.N.B.', *The Times*, 4 November 1937, p. 15.

¹⁷ 'Prefatory Note', *Dictionary of National Biography Volume 1912-21* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), v.

the previous decade.¹⁸ This change in intellectual construction was in part a commercial necessity following the Dictionary's sale in 1917 from publisher George M. Smith and family to the Oxford University Press.¹⁹ However, there were also ideological dimensions to this shift, which meant that the interwar supplements were more restrictive than the original series had been in representing a variety (and sometimes eccentricity) of characters.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, there was an Oxford bias to these issues, as they were produced in connection with the Delegates of the Oxford University Press.²¹ In addition, the volumes were often reviewed in terms of their inter-generational nature and the various and overlapping generational groups active in any one eight- or nine-year period covered in the volume. Indeed, many worthies whose life stories spanned the early twentieth century were assessed by criteria which suggested more continuity with a notionally 'Victorian' concept of eminence than with change.²² Within these specific and broader intellectual contexts, *The Times* review of the 1922-30 volume observed what it understood to be a vital difference in the characterisation of men's and women's achievement. Rich pickings of the likes of 'Statesmen and Soldiers', it wrote, sat alongside 'a bevy of some of the best womanhood of the period'.²³

The Times article picked up on a critical assumption of the supplements' selection committee: that public significance was defined in terms of the performance of an occupational identity. It also suggested how contingent this model was on the committee's understanding of the terms of a national canon which prioritised English men. Women subjects proved a particularly awkward group within this model. In the 1912-21 volume just 15 out of 455 (3.3%) total entries featured a woman in regard to her own merits and in the 1922-30 edition, 23 out of

¹⁸ Lawrence Goldman, 'A monument to the Victorian age?: Continuity and discontinuity in the Dictionaries of National Biography 1882-2004', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 11, 1 (2006), pp. 111-32.

¹⁹ Matthew, 'Leslie Stephen and the *New DNB*'; p. 7; Faber and Harrison, *Dictionary of National Biography*, p. 171.

²⁰ Matthew, 'Leslie Stephen and the *New DNB*', p. 10.

²¹ Lists of personnel of the Delegates of the University Press can be found in *Oxford University Calendar* (here consulted for the years 1917 to 1939).

²² Robert C. K. Ensor, 'The Dictionary of National Biography, 1922-1930', *Oxford Magazine*, 24 February 1938, pp. 460-1; Keith Feiling, 'The D.N.B.: 1922-30: a rich volume', *The Observer*, 5 December 1937, p. 5.

²³ 'The D.N.B.', *The Times*, 4 November 1937, p. 15

567 (4.1%).²⁴ Women were more likely to appear as co-subjects in entries about male family members (usually husbands), as in the discussion of Mary Bridges in the entry on the poet laureate Robert Seymour Bridges in the 1922-30 volume. Mary, the entry explained, had in a familiarly supportive role edited and posthumously published much of his work.²⁵ In fact, as discussions in the *DNB* archive reveal, between the wars *Dictionary* editors and staff contrived a convoluted process in order to secure the criteria of their national canon. A list of ‘potential candidates’ for the 1912-21 volume who had died between 1919 and 1921 illuminates these points. This list categorised candidates under seventeen headings, in order: ‘Statesmen & India’; ‘Colonies’; ‘Actors, Playwrights &c’; ‘Art Patrons, Painters &c’; ‘Divines, Preachers &c’; ‘Cambridge Men’; ‘Science and Medicine’; ‘Lawyers’; ‘Engineers’; ‘Business Men’; ‘Military Officers’; ‘Naval Officers’; ‘Irishmen’; ‘Scotsmen’; ‘Women’; ‘Authors, Scholars &c’; and ‘Welshmen’.²⁶ Occupational identity was clearly the dominant mode of classification here. But for individuals who sat outside the norm of the English male, occupational identity was relegated to secondary importance, behind a primary emphasis on gender and or ethnic identity (‘Women’, ‘Irishmen’, ‘Scotsmen’, ‘Welshmen’). In this model, women had to fit conceptions of public achievement in terms of their gendered status, the assumption being that they had to exemplify qualities of womanhood. Yet in the published volumes, they, like other subjects, were classified according to their occupational status. In other words, unlike English men, women subjects in the *DNB* had to fit into a model of public achievement that sat on the faultlines of occupational identity and public discourses of womanhood, and had to meet the demands of each criterion.²⁷ Henry Davis, editor of the 1912-21 volume, underlined this dual classificatory system in a letter

²⁴ OUP, PB/ED 012911, ‘D.N.B. Supplement 1912-21: facts and figures’, p. 8; PB/ED 012912, ‘D.N.B. Supplement 1922-1930: facts and figures’, p. 8.

²⁵ N. C. Smith, ‘Bridges, Robert Seymour (1844–1930)’, *DNB Supplement 1922-1930*, ed. J. R. H. Weaver (Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 117-8.

²⁶ OUP, PB/ED/012913, Memorandum, February 1921.

²⁷ This process fits well with social scientists’ understanding of the ‘boundary object’, see Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, ‘Institutions ecology, “translations” and boundary objects: amateurs and professionals in Berkeley, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39’, *Social Studies of Science*, 19, 3 (1989), pp. 387-420.

to his secretary Robert Chapman, requesting his father-in-law to 'overhaul the ladies' classification, with a special eye to the representatives of women's sciences and occupations'.²⁸

Five women were included in the 1921 list of 'potential candidates'. They were: co-founder of Girton College, Cambridge (Sarah) Emily Davies (1830-1921); secretary of the Women's Trade Union League Mary Macarthur (1880-1921); nurse Eva Luckes (1854-1919); founder of the National Union of Women Workers Mary Clifford (1842-1919); and evangelical philanthropist and temperance worker Sarah Robinson (1834-1921). Significant in terms of the editors' conception of 'womanhood', four of these women worked either exclusively for and or with women; the exception being philanthropist Sarah Robinson, who worked with British army recruits. Only two of these women made it into the published 1912-21 volume: Emily Davies and Mary Macarthur, who, characteristically for married women subjects, was included under her married name Mary Reid Anderson. Their entries reveal that alongside selection criteria, the presentational frameworks which structured entries shaped the idea of achievement by assumptions about gender. The entries on Davies and Macarthur were written by well-known figures with whom they had been personally connected, respectively the educationist and Girton luminary Lady Barbara Stephen, and warden of Toynbee Hall and former president of the Anti-Sweating League James Joseph Mallon (who had worked closely with Macarthur in the campaign against sweated labour in the early 1900s). The two articles had in common descriptors which flagged the simultaneously professional and gendered bases of their subjects' roles. Thus Davies was described as 'promoter of women's education' and Macarthur was characterised as 'women's labour organiser'. These labels indicated Davies' and Macarthur's common concern with women's status, but the language and writing style of the entries also made the women conform to recognisable types of female public activity. Thus Davies, who was known to contemporaries as a controversial figure, was described as 'rational', 'moderate in manner', and decidedly 'unrevolutionary'.²⁹ While drawing on a notionally 'Victorian' discourse which correlated personal suffering and women's public activity, Mallon discussed Macarthur's later work as inspired by the

²⁸ OUP, PB/ED/012906, Memorandum from Henry Davis to Robert Chapman, 20 January 1922.

²⁹ M. T. B. S[tephen], 'Davies, Sarah Emily (1830-1921)', *DNB Supplement 1912-21*, ed. Henry Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 148-9.

loss she felt at the deaths of her parents and husband.³⁰ By employing these discursive frameworks, the entries made Davies and Macarthur satisfy expectations about their professional significance alongside gendered assumptions about the ‘natural’ behaviour of women. And in stressing these ‘womanly’ qualities, they explicitly correlated professional life to gender-essentialised qualities which configured a woman’s ‘good’ life.

Indeed, articles in the 1922-30 volume reveal an explicit association between women’s professional achievement and the assumption of a well-spent life, which was focused on motherhood. An example of this definitional emphasis is the entry for surgeon Dame Mary Scharlieb, written by the physiologist and feminist Winifred Clara Cullis. Cullis portrayed Scharlieb in the late 1870s on a ship to England from India (where her husband worked as a lawyer), where ‘in the intervals of looking after her children, she studied mathematics with one of the engineers of the ship, and read the other necessary subjects in preparation for the London matriculation examination’.³¹ The overlaps here between Scharlieb’s experiences of childcare and professional obligations were drawn out later in the article in an emphasis on her sensitivity to the psychological and physiological needs of her patients (in the sense of her ‘thorough knowledge of human nature’).³² The message that a career could be combined with marriage and motherhood was widely promoted in these years, and Scharlieb herself gave talks and lectures encouraging married women’s entry into the professions.³³ But Cullis’ message in the *DNB* entry went further. She argued that the experience of motherhood helped Scharlieb to perform her professional role *better*. A similar point was made in the entry for actress Ellen Terry. Written by actor Henry Child, this article focused attention on how Terry as a single mother had sought adequately to provide for her children. Child’s emphasis sought to move his discussion away

³⁰ J. J. Mallon, ‘Anderson, Mary Reid (1880-1921)’, *DNB Supplement 1912-21*, ed. Henry Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), pp. 7-8. On Victorian widows’ responses to grief and mourning see Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian family* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ch. 11.

³¹ W. C. Cullis, ‘Scharlieb, Dame Mary Ann Dacomb (1845–1930)’, *DNB Supplement 1922-30*, ed. J. R. H. Weaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 750-51. On passing this examination and a further series, Scharlieb qualified in 1882 as an MB from the London School of Medicine for Women, see Greta Jones, ‘Scharlieb, Dame Mary Ann Dacomb (1845–1930)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/35968>, accessed 30 Aug 2010].

³² Cullis, ‘Scharlieb’, *DNB*, p. 751.

³³ Mary Scharlieb, *Reminiscences* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1924), p. 164.

from the critical moral line that many contemporaries assumed towards Terry's sexuality, and he carried this forward into his discussion of the link between her good motherhood and her adeptness in performing the variations of femininities codified in Shakespeare's Desdemona or Ophelia, Lady Macbeth, Queen Katherine, Portia or Beatrice.³⁴ There was a moral intonation in these articles – picked up as applicable to the whole volume by *The Times* reviewer – that these women not only needed to be exceptional at the jobs they did, but also needed to fit into a moral rhetoric of the 'best' sort of womanhood.³⁵ Contributors were careful to frame this model within late-Victorian and Edwardian assumptions about men's and women's public and domestic activity and accomplishments. But the entries also re-articulated these accomplishments in the sense that domestic activity was being used to position professional status.

A proportionately high number of the articles on women subjects in the 1922-30 supplement were structured to renegotiate this gender-essentialist framework more combatively. The contributor who wrote the most entries on women of any single author in the interwar supplements was feminist writer Ray Strachey. She contributed four entries in this volume: on surgeon Louisa Aldrich-Blake; founder of the Save the Children Fund Eglantyne Jebb; leader of the militant suffrage movement Emmeline Pankhurst; and leader of the non-militant National Union of Women Suffrage Societies Millicent Fawcett. With the exception of Aldrich-Blake, Strachey personally knew her subjects, which put her conception of biography into the model of 'recent biography' that Lettice Fisher observed in her review of the 1912-21 supplement.³⁶ The articles reveal a different standard of significance for women's lives in this period. Rather than essentialising women's occupational identities as contingent on their practice of motherhood,

³⁴ H. H. Child, 'Terry, Dame (Alice) Ellen (1847–1928)', *DNB Supplement 1922-30*, ed. J. R. H. Weaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 828-9. Michael Holroyd reported contemporary theatre-goers (and celebrities) shock at Terry's 'coming-on-disposition', which it was felt 'vulgarised' many of her performances: *A strange eventful history: the dramatic lives of Henry Irving and their remarkable families* (London: Vintage Books, 2009), p. 153.

³⁵ An observation which problematises Elizabeth Baigent, Charlotte Brewer and Vivienne Larminie's argument for a declining moral tone within the interwar *DNB* supplements compared with the original series, 'Gender in the archive: women in the *Oxford Dictionary Of National Biography* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*', *Archives*, 30, 113 (2005), p. 17.

³⁶ See above, p. 27. Strachey was particularly close to Millicent Fawcett, having worked with her in the London Society for Women's Suffrage and the NUWSS, and writing her biography, *Millicent Garrett Fawcett* (London: J. Murray, 1931). Her friendship with Eglantyne Jebb dated from the 1910s, when both women lived in Cambridge.

Strachey emphasised her subjects' boundless energy and devotion to a cause. So Fawcett 'worked unremittingly'; Pankhurst 'devoted her energies and her life'; Jebb 'worked without ceasing'; and Aldrich-Blake 'devoted her whole energy to surgery'.³⁷ There is an important synergy in Strachey's definition between the values which underpinned achievement in paid and unpaid roles, oriented around the idea of the vocation. Aldrich-Blake, she claimed, did not seek relaxation or amusement outside her paid employment, but took pleasure in administrative business and committee work.³⁸ Fawcett and Pankhurst were fitted into a recognisable narrative in which grief propelled their dedicated activity, while Jebb was placed within the model of self-sacrificial work ('she wore herself out').³⁹ Strachey's depiction of these women, however, also actively recast these tropes, and in the process contested the position of the *DNB* editors. Writing in the preface to the 1912-21 volume, Henry Davis defined career as the cumulative effect of 'a life's work', by which 'a man's personal influence must be gauged, in some degree by its duration as well as by its intensity'.⁴⁰ Strachey took up the model of intense devotion to a cause to stress women's activity as devised through the logic of a whole life, rather than simply an occupational identity. She would go on to develop this idea in an essay on employment she contributed to her 1936 edited collection *Our freedom and its results*. 'What distinguished the lives of the successful', she wrote, 'is ability to forget everything and everybody else in the interest of the one thing... This exclusive concentration is one of the faculties which we are apt to rate high or low in proportion as its object is, or is not, achieved. It is a faculty but rarely found in women'.⁴¹ In setting up this paradigm, Strachey suggested that more than men, women were likely to be found balancing multiple claims on their attention. But this was not intended to counterpose individual attainment and the pursuit of a goal in the collective interest and the common good.⁴²

³⁷ R. Strachey, 'Aldrich-Blake, Dame Louisa Brandreth'; 'Fawcett, Dame Millicent'; 'Jebb, Eglantyne'; 'Pankhurst, Emmeline'; *DNB Supplement 1922-30*, ed. J. R. H. Weaver (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 11; 299; 452; 654.

³⁸ Strachey, 'Aldrich-Blake', p. 11.

³⁹ Strachey, 'Jebb, Eglantyne', p. 452. Pat Jalland argues that 'Good works seemed the only solution' for the grief of women like Lucy Cavendish and Josephine Butler, *Death in the Victorian family*, p. 331.

⁴⁰ 'Prefatory Note', *DNB Volume 1912-21* (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), vi.

⁴¹ Ray Strachey, 'Changes in employment', in Ray Strachey (ed.), *Our freedom and its results* (London: Hogarth Press, 1936), pp. 282-3.

⁴² Lois Cuellu discussed the actress, writer and suffragist Elizabeth Robins' conceptualisation of women's collective interests in this way: 'Exceptional women, expert culture, and the academy', in Hildy Miller and

Devotion to others or to a cause was the hallmark of an activity which was proactively about self-growth as well as societal improvement.

Building self-esteem

In January 1933, the new mass-circulation weekly *Woman's Own* featured an article about women's employment opportunities. Entitled provocatively, 'A man's job: they used to call it, but today –', the article celebrated a group of famous and lesser-known women across a range of occupations, from pilot Amy Johnson to a Devon headmistress via Anglican preacher and feminist Maude Royden.⁴³ The women, who were discussed in the article alongside their portrait photographs, were chosen to illustrate women's varied tenure of a recently expanded occupational landscape, and the spirit with which they were undertaking their roles. A woman did not do these jobs 'just for show', the article wrote '– it's her trade – her life. She *works*'. In part, as in discussions of Amy Johnson, this was a message framed within the *Woman's Own* cutting-edge public image, aimed as it was at the 'up-to-date wife and wife-to-be'.⁴⁴ A less obviously 'modern', but nevertheless spirited, role model appeared in the shape of 'Mrs. May Nelson', a chimney sweep from Lea Bridge, Hackney. Nelson looked out at readers from a photograph, with a blackened face and arms, wearing an overall and cap, and holding aloft her brush (Fig. 9). On first appearances, the article wrote, Nelson might be thought to have worked in the 'dirtiest' trade of all with 'cause to be depressed'. But, it reassured readers, this was not the case:

But look at her picture on this page! You can see that she enjoys her work. She tramps the streets, carrying her own brushes and giving her special 'call'. Then she sets to work on a sooty chimney in the most efficient way – no fuss – and the least mess possible!⁴⁵

Lillian Bridwell-Bowles, *Rhetorical women: role and representations* (Tuscaloosa, AL; London: University of Alabama Press; Eurospan, 2005), p.159.

⁴³ Patricia B. Ardley, 'A man's job: they used to call it, but today—' *Woman's Own*, 7 January 1933, pp. 448-9. The interwar period also witnessed the opening of new job opportunities which had not been associated with men previously, see e.g. Mike Savage, 'Trade unions, sex segregation and the state: women's employment in "new industries" in inter-war Britain', *Social History*, 13, 2 (1988), pp. 209-30; Gertjan de Groot and Marlou Schrover, 'Between men and machines: women workers in new industries, 1870-1940', *Social History*, 20, 3 (1995), pp. 279-96.

⁴⁴ Quote in Cynthia White, *Women's magazines 1693-1968* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), p. 96.

⁴⁵ Ardley, 'A man's job', p. 448.

The magazine's visualisation of Nelson established her sense of self in carrying out this work. Although soot-covered, she was smiling and apparently wholeheartedly content in her work. Rhetorically and visually, this was an important point to make. Rather than focusing on the 'dirt[y]', unfeminine aspect of the work of a chimney sweep, Ardley presented Nelson as an 'active cheery worker', stoical (she undertook her work without 'fuss') and efficient. Stoicism could be read as part of an essentialised trope, which suggested that whilst women might not necessarily have been happy in their work, they nevertheless did not complain about their unhappiness. The emphasis on the quality of efficiency, however, suggested that Nelson also actively felt happiness that was derived through a sense of her adeptness and capability for the role. There was a sense of satisfaction to be gained through doing a job well. As another 'woman sweep' was reported to have said, 'every time my brush sticks out of the top of the chimney, and I know that I've really done the work thoroughly, I get a positive thrill!'.⁴⁶

The *Woman's Own* article focuses attention on a debate amongst interwar women commentators about the psychological and social effects of women's employment.⁴⁷ The debate spanned discussions of paid and unpaid work. Against a legal and theoretical background that proclaimed that women could undertake newly widened employment prospects, a diverse cross-section of women's advice literature sought to build women's confidence to carry out these varied roles. A critical aspect of this discussion, as the *Woman's Own* article illustrated, was the desire to contest a public rhetoric which associated particular jobs with women's or men's assumed 'natural' capacities. Lettice Fisher challenged this image in a BBC wireless talk that she gave to members of the NFWI in the 1930s as part of a series which was later published as *Mothers and families* (1932). Girls, Fisher argued, might be 'born teachers, or doctors, or needlewomen, or craftswomen, or organisers, or what not'; equally boys were 'just as capable of helping to wash up' as girls, 'there is nothing peculiarly feminine about that operation'.⁴⁸ In part, and building on her reputation in reformulating the status of unmarried mothers, Fisher sought to challenge essentialised readings which associated women with family and domestic obligations

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 448.

⁴⁷ E.g. Brittain, *Women's work*, ch. 9; Strachey, 'Employment' and Mary Hamilton, 'Changes in social life', in Strachey (ed.), *Our freedom*, chs. 3; 5.

⁴⁸ Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, *Mothers and families* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1932), pp. 33; 35.

(and men with tasks outside the home). This was a message which fitted within the didactic framework of the NFWI which configured women's home-based skills as a vital part of broader community engagement, civic agency, and activism.⁴⁹ Like the feature in *Woman's Own*, which constructed women as 'cheerful active workers', Fisher framed the varied occupational roles of men and women in terms of fulfilling active citizenship within and outside the home.

In encouraging women to take up these varied roles, some commentators believed that it was more explicitly necessary to stress the need for an active display of determination to achieve the desired results. Ministry of Labour employee M. E. Marshall made this point clearly in a series of articles discussing young women's employment prospects that she contributed to the YWCA's magazine *Our Own Gazette* in late 1925 and 1926. Following an introductory article which discussed the value of the employment exchange as a forum for providing girls with information about the availability of, and demand for, jobs, Marshall contributed articles on careers in retail, office work, 'artistic careers' (handicrafts), music and art, and the health services.⁵⁰ In her final article on the health services, she made what she intended to be the critical point of her intervention, that 'there are many promising openings for ambitious girls who are willing to qualify themselves for good posts, in spite of all that is heard about the difficulty of girls getting work'. In her experience:

What too often prevents girls from rising to the top of the tree, and making themselves respected and admired in their professions and trades is not the lack of opportunity but the lack of ambition and determination. Too many girls are quite content to 'jog along' carrying out routine work – conscientiously, maybe – but without a thought of improving themselves so as to be able to do better. Yet with the wonderful supply of evening schools and classes, no one need be content with her present qualifications or unable to improve them.

If a girl feels that her work is dull, that it is difficult to get enthusiastic about it, that it is of too routine a nature to draw out the best in her, what is her remedy? She should determine to climb nearer to the top, where she would find scope, variety, opportunities of service that would exercise and *stretch* all the faculties of her nature, and

⁴⁹ Maggie Andrews discussed the campaigning activity of the NFWI between the wars and into the mid-twentieth century which focused on improving rural housing and elevating the domestic sphere, *The acceptable face of feminism: the Women's Institute as a social movement* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), ch. 5.

⁵⁰ M. E. Marshall, 'Careers for girls', *Our Own Gazette*, November 1925, pp. 7-8; 'Girls in retail trade', *Our Own Gazette*, December 1925, p. 11; 'Girls in offices', *Our Own Gazette*, 1 January 1926, p.7; 'Handicrafts', *Our Own Gazette*, 2 February 1926, p. 7; 'Music and art', *Our Own Gazette*, 3, March 1926, p. 9; 'The Health Services', *Our Own Gazette*, 5, May 1926, p. 4.

incidentally give her that happiness that nothing gives so well as the sense that one is giving one's best to the work, and holding back nothing.⁵¹

Marshall critiqued the social and cultural constructions which conceived of women as necessarily conscientious but diminutive, through a lens which stressed the need for their more forceful self-realisation. Her vocabulary was carefully chosen to fit with the YWCA's aim of encouraging the self-determination and development of its clients across their lives. This was about the young woman 'find[ing] scope, variety, opportunities of service', and through doing so structuring her own self-development. Marshall's discussion stressed young women's aptitudes to do their best, not through a sense of competition, but rather a striving for a sense of personal satisfaction that came from knowing one had performed as well as one could. This was a different model both to 'masculine' understandings of individual attainment, and to the one presented in the *DNB* entries, which conceived of women like Mary Scharlieb or Ellen Terry as carrying out their professional roles best when they were framed within their skills as mothers. Here, performing at one's best was part of a social and spiritual sense of fulfillment gained through an ambition to improve oneself and the position of others.

Marshall's commentary on the value of constructive ambition needs to be seen within the sector of careers advice and vocational guidance that developed in the years following the First World War.⁵² A new culture of the scrutiny of work, framed by organisations such as the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP), set up in 1921 by psychologist, Charles Myer and director of a company of East India merchants, Henry Welch inaugurated the role of experimental psychology in this field.⁵³ At the Lord Mayor's show in November 1931, the NIIP's float featured boys dressed as a policeman, judge, fireman and doctor; girls dressed as a nurse, artist and cook; and a boy and a girl in academic dress, alongside a banner which proclaimed 'Vocational guidance is the key to success and happiness in work'.⁵⁴ High-tech experiments, it would seem, reinforced existing gendered stereotypes about men's suitability for authoritative,

⁵¹ Marshall, 'The Health Services', *Our Own Gazette*, 5, May 1926, p.4.

⁵² It can also be seen within the informal culture of careers advice which Penny Tinkler argues diffused the pages of interwar girls' magazines, *Constructing girlhood: popular magazines for girls growing up in England, 1920-1950* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1995), pp. 100-8.

⁵³ Thomson, *Psychological subjects*, pp. 145-7.

⁵⁴ London, London School of Economics Archive (hereafter LSE), NIIP/17/3/19, Photographs of the NIIP float in the Lord's Mayor's Parade, London, 1931.

clinical and protective roles and women's for caring, domestic and 'creative' jobs. In contrast, and perhaps in part to contest these projections, women-centred discourses sought to claim an alternative model of women's work prospects, which measured women's opportunities in their own right and on their own terms.⁵⁵ Some women continued to see the benefit of informal channels of disseminating experience and knowledge which were developed in the process of building young women's confidence for varied roles, and for the decision-making which went alongside entry into a career path. Muriel Paget thought that her daughter Sylvia needed guidance in these subjects in late 1918, and she chose to write to the veteran leader of the suffragette movement Emmeline Pankhurst. Pankhurst found it difficult to advise Paget because she did not personally know Sylvia, but she suggested in the first instance that Paget talked with her and then provided access to relevant training. A further suggestion was that Sylvia might meet her daughter Christabel. 'Girls will often unfold to girls', Pankhurst wrote, 'and Christabel although much older than your daughter is very young in everything apart from politics & her mission in life'.⁵⁶ Pankhurst's comments here fashioned her own daughter's activity (comparably to the way in which Strachey would fashion her in the entry in the *DNB*) in terms of a vocation as a spiritual form of ambition, different from narratives of domesticity as a 'spiritual mission' that had characterised much Victorian literature, but nevertheless operating through a desire that went beyond personal ambition within the framework of a metaphysical vibrancy.⁵⁷

Stressing young women's agency in constructing their own ambition was a message that put into practice what the recent and forthcoming franchise legislation meant for, and required of, women through focusing on building social and moral self-awareness. Religiously-inspired language was a critical framing device for this discussion. This was the subject of another article in the YWCA's magazine in the autumn of 1931, which was entitled 'Tonic talks for the down-hearted'. Written by the Reverend P. T. Kirk, the article juxtaposed the experiences of happiness

⁵⁵ See e.g. Ray Strachey, *Careers and opportunities for women. A survey of women's employment and a guide for those seeking work* (London: Faber and Faber 1935); G. Evelyn Gates, *The woman's year book* (1923-4) (London: Women Publishers Ltd., 1924).

⁵⁶ LRA, 1405, Correspondence Box S, Letter from Emmeline Pankhurst to Muriel Paget, 28 October 1918.

⁵⁷ Monica Cohen argues that the mid-nineteenth century novel presented domesticity within a discourse of 'collectivist spirit', which conceived the 'home as work', *Professional domesticity in the Victorian novel: women, work and home* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 2-3.

and usefulness as ‘two of the concepts driving cures for anything’.⁵⁸ It focused on what it meant to understand these experiences in terms of a life purpose that was oriented around faith in God. ‘How can we expect to find life all that it ought to be if we keep ourselves aloof from the Source of all Wisdom and Power?’, Kirk asked:

*My Heavenly Father wishes me to live happily and usefully. Of course He wants you to be happy. Did you ever know any true father who did not want happiness for his children? Think of fatherhood at its best, and you have Fatherhood of God...But there is something even higher than happiness that is usefulness. Indeed happiness comes through usefulness. You cannot be happy as long as you are leading a self-centred life’.*⁵⁹

This article encouraged YWCA members to enact self-determination through placing their trust in God. Women’s agency in finding self-contentment was configured here as a self-conscious choice of following a religious path. Faith in God provided a base upon which young women could build their own self-development. Religion, here, provided the context for the cultivation of self-confidence and genuine happiness.

Duty, giving and pleasure

In 1948, explorer and travel writer Freya Stark wrote a collection of short philosophical essays. Her subjects ranged widely on abstract themes, including not only reflections on love, death and beauty, but also ‘Mutability’ (about the transitory aspect of nature), the meaning of words and memory. In an essay entitled ‘Giving and receiving’, Stark discussed the ethics underpinning the social relationship between giver and receiver. Stark’s commentary was oriented around the relationship between Christian and Muslim values. Having visited a Franciscan monastery in San Remo, north-west Italy, when she was learning Arabic, she was accompanied by a missionary around the parts of the city where begging took place. In the Muslim tradition, Stark perceived a model that she had not entertained before, that begging was ‘the cause of virtue in others’.⁶⁰ This was a way of thinking very different from the contemporary Western culture in which she had been brought up, which she presented as characterised by the ‘domestic martyr...(usually she)’,

⁵⁸ Reverend P. T. R. Kirk, ‘Tonic talks for the down-hearted’, *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, 9 September 1931, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Freya Stark, *Persens in the Wind* (1948; London: John Murray, 1963), p. 97.

who would justify all sources of pleasure and rehearse her ‘trouble and discomfort’. ‘The whole business of giving and receiving’, Stark wrote, ‘should be lifted from the confines of duty into those of pleasure. Happiness is loving and making and ends in gifts as naturally as the stem of a plant ends in a flower. A gift that is given out of a sense of duty is spoilt and, I believe, does harm’.⁶¹ Indeed, it was the subtlety of the moral interconnection between giver and receiver that Stark observed in these ‘Desert Arabs’ that impressed her most. She would make a very similar argument a few years later when writing her autobiographical reflections. Then, she claimed that she disliked philanthropy because it encouraged ‘interference’; ‘I believe it is a modern impertinence, and I prefer the Islamic and medieval way, where you do good for the good of your own soul, which is as much as one single human being can attend to’.⁶²

Thirty years before Stark published this essay, Virginia Woolf had reflected on the relationship between duty, giving and receiving in the domestic world with which she was familiar. In September 1918, she posed herself a question about whether she should do a good deed for an ageing and infirm woman. ‘Margaret dominates’, she wrote in her diary,

& they [Janet and Lilian] taking pleasure in unselfishness, lavish sympathy & somehow make out a different scale of health for M[argaret] than for the rest of the world – but this is a little fantastic, & rises partly from the thought that I would, if I were kind, write a long affectionate amusing letter to M[argaret]. I am deterred from doing this by my prejudice against the patronage of the elderly. I want neither to be patronised, nor to patronise; & I feel that the sort of letter one writes on these occasions is an act of kindness, & so neither to be offered nor received. Inevitably the social worker approaches the non-social worker with a view to getting what they can give & very slightly disparaging the giver, who can be nothing better than a giver of amusement. Boredom is the legitimate kingdom of the philanthropic. They rule in the metropolis.⁶³

Woolf was writing here about the campaigner for women’s causes and president of the Women’s Co-operative Guild Margaret Llewellyn Davies (1861–1944). Davies, who had been brought up in the ideals of Christian socialism, dedicated her life to campaigning for improvements to women’s status within marriage and society, including fighting for a minimum wage for women co-operative workers, divorce law reform and maternity benefit in the first decade of the

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 98.

⁶² Freya Stark, *Beyond Euphrates: autobiography 1928-1933* (London: J. Murray, 1951), p. 90.

⁶³ Bell, *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, i, p. 192.

twentieth century.⁶⁴ Read out of context, as the final part of this extract often is, Woolf seems to be denigrating the philanthropic act. However, read alongside her other writings, a more complex picture emerges. Woolf did not thoroughly deride those who spent their lives working for others. Her reflections on her own mother Julia Stephen's devotion to others reveals how far from uncomplicatedly critical she was of this model. She distinguished her mother's activity from 'the mischievous philanthropy which other women practise so complacently and often with such disastrous results'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Woolf herself would go on to feel a purpose in kindness and she wrote a letter to Davies in the following month, although a few days later claimed to 'regret my generous impulse'.⁶⁶

Freya Stark's and Virginia Woolf's writings in different ways reflected on the relationship between duty, giving and receiving in the light of contemporary models of philanthropy and pleasure. Neither Stark nor Woolf disregarded the ethic of giving. Rather, they questioned the social and moral framework – what they perceived to be the debased sociability – with which philanthropy was sometimes undertaken. In part, their discussions were framed around negotiating a residual strength of 'Victorian' social and moral codes of duty, which an increasing number of modern British historians now acknowledge.⁶⁷ Stark and Woolf were rethinking the model of private conscience and public duty.⁶⁸ In seeking to move away from the politically-freighted connotations of the 'Victorian' period, they were re-articulating a position claimed by some intellectuals of the previous generation who consciously thought about the period in which they lived as 'the nineteenth century'.⁶⁹ Interwar philanthropists might also be engaged in this process. Emily Kinnaird, for example, reflected in *Reminiscences* (1925) on the shifting emphases through which YWCA conferences from the 1890s to the 1920s had functioned as a forum for

⁶⁴ Mary Stott, 'Davies, Margaret Caroline Llewelyn (1861–1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Oct 2006 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/37681, accessed 23 April 2011].

⁶⁵ Virginia Woolf, *Moments of being: unpublished autobiographical writings*, ed. J. Schulkind (1976; London: Chatto and Windus for Sussex University Press, 1985), p. 34, quoted in Jane Garnett, 'Stephen, Julia Prinsep (1846–1895)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/46943, accessed 20 April 2011].

⁶⁶ Bell, *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, i, p. 199.

⁶⁷ Mandler and Pedersen, *After the Victorians*, ix; Lawrence and Mayer (eds), *Regenerating England*, p. 2.

⁶⁸ As José Harris conceptualised the late Victorian and Edwardian periods: *Private lives, public spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (London: Penguin, 1994).

⁶⁹ Joseph Bristow, 'Why "Victorian"? A period and its problems', *Literature Compass*, 1, 1 (2001), p. 12.

the 'communion of souls fitting us for everyday life and inspiring to higher ideals in commonplace duty'.⁷⁰ She had reflected on the shift in tone in 1923 in the YWCA's annual review, outlining a conception of work for the welfare of human souls and bodies as 'in a wide sense religious work'. The results of this religious work, Kinnaird claimed, 'must be sought in a higher moral standard, a nobler conception of duty, and a deeper inner life among the members of the Association'.⁷¹ It was through a sense of good reputation and purpose that Kinnaird believed 'duty' fulfilled the desire and need for satisfaction which was measurable in terms of both social and spiritual attainment.

The idea of a spiritually-informed social duty was being discussed around the same time as Kinnaird was writing amongst a group of High-Church Anglican women led by Mrs. George Sturgeon, who formed 'The New Army of Helpers' during the First World War as a means of fundraising for various charities. From 1919 until the mid 1920s, the fiction magazine *Quiver* published a monthly letter written by Sturgeon's sister Flora to 'The New Army of Helpers', encouraging donations and fundraising activities (Fig. 10). The letter in the May 1922 *Quiver* was entitled 'Giving then and now'. In this feature, Sturgeon compared post-war principles of voluntary action favourably to older charitable methods based upon an unequal relationship between giver and receiver.⁷² Beginning with a discussion of William Henry Hudson's *A shepherd's life: impressions of the South Wiltshire downs* (1910), Sturgeon wrote that she was 'almost entirely in agreement with the author. Independence, self-respect and strength of character are easily put to flight by the activities of a Lady Bountiful. Material comfort and relief are then bought at too dear a price'.⁷³ For Sturgeon's purposes in marshalling fundraising in Christian terms, the most important thing was to emphasise the 'manner of giving'. She claimed that the sense of superiority which had underpinned some older models of philanthropy had, in the early 1920s, 'almost passed away':

In its place there has arisen a more joyful form of giving. It is demonstrated in every mail I receive from 'Helpers' up and down the country. Their letters are every bit as full of

⁷⁰ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 107.

⁷¹ MRC, MSS. 243/21/8, Emily Kinnaird, 'Religious life', in '1923 and the YWCA. A Review', p 12.

⁷² Flora Sturgeon, 'The new Army of Helpers', *Quiver*, May 1922, pp. 670-2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 671.

gratitude for the privilege of giving as the letters of those with whom I put them in touch. There is no sense of sombre duty – no patting on the back for good deeds done.⁷⁴

Through citing the ‘evidence’ of members’ letters, Sturgeon’s discussion fitted the religious tone of the magazine’s broader editorial purpose. Mike Ashley has described the ‘Army of Helpers’ articles as the means by which the originally religious-orientated *Quiver* ‘retained its crusading zeal’ in its new format as a women’s magazine with decidedly less sentimental branding in the 1920s.⁷⁵ Sturgeon’s idea that giving ought to be joyful rather than dutiful was part of a broad interpretation of late-Victorian Christian culture as associating philanthropy with the public enactment of personal and social obligation through which commentators from the late-nineteenth century onwards reoriented rather than rejected religion.⁷⁶ Indeed, in a section subtitled ‘Sin of superiority’, Sturgeon reflected in explicitly Anglican terms on the point which Freya Stark would take up over twenty years later through a critique of Western Christianity, about the tendency of an older model of charitable activity to conceive of giver and receiver within an unequal social bond. Sturgeon believed that in contrast with this older model, ‘we are not so self-satisfied’, but rather gained pleasure through a model of charitable giving that was based on the mutual love inspired by friendship.

Discussions of the pleasure of sincere civic activity were discussed later in the interwar period within associations of employed women. The Federation of Soroptimist Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland, which was formed in 1930 following the merger of the British Soroptimist movement and venture clubs, was a citizenship organisation for business and professional women. Aiming to develop high ethical standards and efficiency in business and professional life, to promote a spirit of service and friendliness amongst members, and to engage in public welfare, it invoked strict eligibility criteria based upon a conjunction of efficiency and professional

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Mike Ashley, *The age of the storytellers: British popular fiction magazines 1880-1950* (London: British Library, 2006), p. 262. *Quiver* was first published in September 1861 as the religious companion to *Cassell’s Illustrated Family Paper* (started in 1853), and was edited initially by a succession of Church ministers.

⁷⁶ E.g. Mark Bevir argues that idealist philosopher T. H. Green developed a system of ethical socialist welfarist thought in the late-nineteenth-century as a re-articulation of the connection between welfare and religion, ‘Welfarism, socialism and religion: on T. H. Green and others’, *The Review of Politics*, 55, 4 (1993), pp. 639-62.

standing in a community-oriented ethic of 'good character'.⁷⁷ The UK branch of the Soroptimists had a membership of 3,500 on the eve of the Second World War.⁷⁸ An explicit aim of this organisation was to encourage women's skills and confidence in civic agency, as reflected in the term Soroptimist which translated from Latin as 'best sister'. This theme was given an intriguing emphasis in an article in early 1934 in the monthly journal *The British Soroptimist*, contributed by film script-writer Christine Jope-Slade. Jope-Slade, who began her piece by claiming her status as a 'champion' of women, urged readers to re-think how they approached work. For her, the women to whom she was talking were like chimney sweep May Nelson, doing a 'man's work with less fuss', but she believed they were 'sentimentally and emotionally cluttered up' by a sense of other 'minor duties'.⁷⁹ It was all very well, Jope-Slade claimed, for the 'leisured Victorian woman' to have carried out these obligations, but the context had now changed, and there was a real risk that in continuing to bend to these duties women would overstretch themselves. Rather than be weighed down by a sense of obligation, Jope-Slade wanted women to be 'nonchalant'; 'To give because you want to give, to render service because it is a pleasure to you personally, [which] is a bigger thing than to render it to the exigencies of the moment, or in obedience to the necessity enforced relentlessly by others'.⁸⁰ Jope-Slade's definition of pleasure through casualness was in no sense meant to diminish women's interest in working for others. But it did suggest that this was far from a gender-exclusive activity. 'Nonchalance', which Martin Francis observed as a part of an emotionally-restrained culture animating the (masculine) world of 1950s Whitehall, emerged here in a model of public action built upon self-expression and self-determination.⁸¹ This was an economy of female public action that conjoined women's efficiency and goodwill through encouragement of their confident dealings with both men and women.

The sense that a new model of charity was framed by pleasure in giving was also taken up by a strain of international idealist thought between the wars. The language was employed

⁷⁷ *The British Soroptimist*, January 1934, v. Manchester, Greater Manchester County Record Office, G/SIG/1/1795/1/2, Minutes of British National Council of Soroptimist Clubs, Constitution of Soroptimist Clubs, 1 December 1927.

⁷⁸ McCarthy, 'Service clubs, citizenship and equality', p. 533.

⁷⁹ Jope-Slade, 'Ladies! Be nonchalant!', *The British Soroptimist*, February 1934, p. 262.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Martin Francis, 'Tears, tantrums and bared teeth: the emotional economy of three Conservative Prime Ministers, 1951-63', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), pp. 354-87.

explicitly in the magazine *The Optimist: the National Organ of the Cheerful Giver*, which ran from 1924 to 1933. *The Optimist* was designed to promote British charities through the lens of outward-facing socially-reformist thought. Edited by the well-known social and political activist Ishbel MacDonald, daughter of the former Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, it was conceived of both as a fundraising magazine and an organ to re-educate readers into a new way of thinking about the charitable project.⁸² Its inaugural issue celebrated MacDonald's mother's (Margaret's) legacy as a social and political activist through advertising the Baby Hospital Clinic in North Kensington, London, which was established in 1911 in the memory of her and her colleague, Mary Middleton.⁸³ The aim of the feature was to promote the Baby Hospital Clinic's appeal to fund expansion. Although the fund was metropolitan, *The Optimist* editorial constructed its significance within a global vocabulary: 'instead of being doleful', the article insisted, 'the Committee sends forth a ray of happiness into the World...confident that the world, in some measure, gives back the happiness it receives'.⁸⁴ Like Freya Stark's discussion about Islamic models, MacDonald articulated a mutual relationship between giver and receiver. Her plea for donations was not straightforwardly conceived of as a gift economy predicated on the richer doling out to the poorer. As its title suggested, the magazine associated cheerfulness in giving with hope and the disposition to see the best in people. Indeed, the wide canvas of *The Optimist's* social and moral vision was illustrated in the first issue, in articles on 'What is happiness in marriage' by Ramsay MacDonald; 'Children in India' (by Indian barrister, social reformer and writer Cornelia Sorabji); 'Is social progress an illusion?' (by former secretary of state for war Viscount Haldane of Cloan); and 'The spirit of brotherhood' (by United States Secretary of State

⁸² *The Optimist's* launch issue was published in December 1924. Ishbel MacDonald was a political hostess, Socialist Independent member of the London County Council, philanthropist, and one of the best known women of her day. She featured regularly in the daily press gossip columns and on news reels. See <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=2957>

⁸³ Margaret MacDonald had worked for the Charity Organisation Society in the 1890s, and went on to be an active, sometimes founder member of a wide range of extra-governmental organisations working on behalf of working women, see June Hannam, 'MacDonald, Margaret Ethel Gladstone (1870–1911)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/45462>, accessed 23 May 2010]. The Baby Clinic operated from 1911 until 1948 when it was taken over by the Ministry of Health under the 1945 National Health Act.

⁸⁴ *The Optimist*, December 1924, p. 1.

Charles E. Hughes).⁸⁵ These articles positioned *The Optimist* within an ideological commitment to internationalism as well as social justice and social reform. Through relating joy in giving to internationalist organisational standards, Ishbel MacDonald situated voluntary action as a form of happiness that extended beyond the individual into a global community.

The purpose of work

Choosing her mother's charity was an obvious place for Ishbel MacDonald to launch her journal, not least because it acted as a publicity drive from a celebrated family. In casting her intervention in these terms, however, MacDonald was also positioning herself within an existing model of exemplary women's philanthropy, and constructing social legitimation for her own activity. Reflecting on the purpose of their philanthropy as part of an ideal of a well-spent life, many philanthropic women of the period related their own endeavours both to models of intellectual thought and to practical examples of other women in public life. There were multiple and conflicting reasons for doing so. Sometimes the comparison was affirming, at other times it seemed part of a process of self-doubt. In the 1920s Violet Butler reflected on the meanings and usefulness of her life in terms of doubt. Butler, who studied history as an undergraduate at St. Anne's College, Oxford in the early 1900s, went on to undertake a teaching diploma in London and to combine paid employment researching and teaching in Oxford with charitable work for organisations such as the COS. From 1919 to 1948 she was secretary for social training at the centre for social work training set up in Oxford in 1914 as Barnett House.⁸⁶ To some extent, this life- and work-path seemed obvious. Brian Harrison, who interviewed Butler for his oral history project on suffragist and suffragette memories in 1974 when she was aged ninety, argued that 'With Josephine Butler for an aunt, and with so many relatives in literary, philanthropic, and educational circles, Violet was almost predestined to a life of social service'.⁸⁷ But Butler herself

⁸⁵ Ibid., front page.

⁸⁶ C. Violet Butler, *Barnett House, 1914 to 1964: a record for its friends* (Oxford: privately published 1964).

⁸⁷ Brian Harrison, 'Butler, (Christina) Violet (1884–1982)', rev. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/37250>, accessed 11 March 2011].

questioned the validity of her activity in this sphere, let alone its predestination. In a letter to her sister Olive in 1921 she explained her position in deeply emotive terms:

The people who are really happy – after 23 – are the people who have one purpose in life...Now I really have had a ‘purpose’ since I was 13 (it is written in the works of Matthew Arnold); but each time I’ve thought it was getting translated into something solid, somebody else has done it a good deal better, so the work, as at present, has just run away, like the tide going out (leaving the sea anemone waving its arms in vain in its pool)...Practically, it comes to this. Do I wait here (till [sic] I’m shortly too old for anything else), waiting for teaching work to come back, when all the young women are on their way to degrees? ⁸⁸

In this letter, Butler veered between over-subjectivity (which she worried was either ‘a temptation of the Devil, or a punishment for one’s own past cowardices, or both’) and a pragmatic recognition of the need to take steps to improve her situation. This questioning of self-worth reflected a shared sensitivity amongst women of Butler’s generation about the less formal nature of their university education than that of women undergraduates in the post-war years. Her remarks were also, however, a re-articulation of the trope of women’s selflessness and self-sacrifice in work – the supposed ‘woman’s mission’ – which had been pivotal to public rhetoric of nineteenth-century female philanthropy.⁸⁹

The unspoken pressure for women to find a sense of happiness in their work must have heightened self-awareness of their work performance. Certainly this was an important area in which women constructed their own assessments of their working lives and identities in comparison with other women. Butler, who never married, was aged thirty-seven when she wrote the letter to her sister, and she was beginning to doubt the wisdom of her father’s advice that ‘if one waited, looking into the right direction, the right work would come’. Partly this was because she felt that for the past nineteen years – when she had been teaching women Home Students at St. Anne’s College, Oxford – she had been merely ‘supplementing’ her sister Ruth. As for the social training work with which she was involved at Barnett House, she felt that ‘all the interesting outside work...goes to Miss [Grace] Hadow. Is this my fault or baleful circumstances

⁸⁸ Bodleian, MS Violet Butler Papers, Box 66, Letter from Violet Butler to Olive Butler to 30 June 1921.

⁸⁹ This rearticulation sits alongside interwar feminists’ critiques of the previous generation, in particular the assumption of women’s domestic roles, Amanda Vickery, ‘Golden age to separate spheres?: a review of the categories and chronologies of English women’s history’, *The Historical Journal*, 36, 2 (1993), p. 388.

again?⁹⁰ Part of Butler's dilemma was whether and how to combine paid with unpaid work. Thinking about the latter, she aspired to be a Workers' Educational Association teacher and to join the Oxford City Council, although she saw Mabel Prichard, who was prolific in voluntary activity in Oxford and would become a university representative on the Council during the following year, as a hindrance there.⁹¹ Butler summarised her options as doing probation or rescue work in a Children's Home in another town, slum work, or staying as a 'limpet' on her sister Ruth. She desperately wanted to find work that would 'stretch' her, and it was this that she believed would remove her from self-absorption.

For Butler, like M. E. Marshall in her discussion in the YWCA's journal, happiness in work necessitated being intellectually, socially and spiritually challenged. This conception of work as a way of growing as a person also emerged in discussions about Butler's former tutor Lettice Fisher. In her book *Bluestockings*, about the experiences of the first women university students, Jane Robinson observed Lettice Fisher (then Lettice Ilbert) as one of a cadre of women students at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the 1890s. At Somerville College she had 'worked hard simply because she found it made her "unreasonably happy"'.⁹² It is perhaps no coincidence that the woman to whom Robinson immediately compared Fisher was Eglantyne Jebb, who would form the Save the Children Fund in 1919 with her sister Dorothy Buxton to provide food for child victims of the post-war blockades in Austria and Germany (and who had been portrayed by Strachey as entirely devoted to her work). Robinson found Jebb writing to her sister from Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford in 1896, 'Dear work, blessed work, my heart and soul goes into my work'.⁹³ It is significant that Fisher and Jebb – both of whom would go on to lead important philanthropic interventions after the First World War – should have been writing

⁹⁰ Violet Butler, Ruth Butler and Grace Hadow all played key roles in the Society of Oxford Home Students and Barnett House.

⁹¹ Mabel Prichard was prolific in voluntary activity in Oxford between the wars. She became alderman in 1932 and was a magistrate. She worked for the Oxford Council of Social Service, was Chair of the Citizens' Advice Bureau and of Skene House, a organisation concerned with the moral welfare of young women, David Ross, 'Prichard, Harold Arthur (1871–1947)', rev. C. A. Creffield, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35611>, accessed 20 July 2010].

⁹² Jane Robinson, *Bluestockings: the remarkable story of the first women to fight for an education*, (London: Viking, 2009), p. 147.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

about their university studies in this way. Rather than self-absorption in their academic work, as Robinson believed was the attitude of many of the early women undergraduates, I suggest that the holistic spirit through which women like Fisher or Jebb undertook their labour was part of a broader figuration of the purpose of a well-spent life. The sense of personal satisfaction these women derived from their work was heartfelt. This is illustrated in a reference that Lettice Fisher's former Oxford tutor Arthur L. Smith wrote for her application for graduate study at the London School of Economics in 1898, which characterised her in terms of her intellectual ability and her 'practical good sense, her social aptitudes, and her disposition at once cheerful and sympathetic'.⁹⁴ Smith, who was himself a pastorally- and civic-minded academic, concluded that this convergence of characteristics was a 'rather unusual combination', signalling perhaps a legacy of older public discourses which maintained that whilst women were usually practical and emotional they were typically less cerebral.⁹⁵ But this was far from an unusual combination, in fact. Educated women were often conscious of their multiple abilities, not least because they brought with them an obligation to be fulfilled on every level.

Later in life, Fisher adopted a strategy similar to Butler's of evaluating her sense of self-worth alongside other women who were inhabiting a different public terrain. In early 1924, she had attended one of Lady Astor's parties with her husband, an occasion where she met a variety of political figures. On returning home, she wrote a letter to her mother, Jessie. Fisher recalled meeting eight women MPs, along with her friend Millicent Fawcett. 'The women were standing in a row', Fisher wrote, and looked 'a queer lot':

Mrs. Philipson and Lady Terrington most common, Little Miss Bondfield tiny, vivid, tremendously alive, like a small wren, Mrs. Wintringham as ever, the picture of pretty calm middleaged matronhood, the Duchess [of Atholl] also very small, which surprised me, but looks competent, and dashed at H[erbert Fisher] and at Selby Bigge [the senior official in the Education dept] to talk education. She used to be a constant visitor at the Board. Selby Bigge thinks he's going to have CP Trevelyan and is depressed, he regards him as one of the stupidest ever created. I met all sorts of people, including Miss Silcox in a beautiful rose velvet creation. She has lovely clothes. I asked Lesbia [Cochrane] what they thought of her and she replied tersely, 'rather mad'.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Private collection, Robin Ilbert: A. L. Smith reference for Lettice Fisher, 30 July 1897.

⁹⁵ See above for a discussion of the legacy of these tropes in social and intellectual histories of modern Britain, pp. 25-6.

⁹⁶ Bodleian, MSS. Eng 3784, fols. 95-6, n.d. but probably January 1924, Letter from Lettice Fisher to Jessie Ilbert.

Fisher's remarks grew out of a world of political gossip, which she knew her mother would greatly enjoy.⁹⁷ But they also reveal important points about her self-understanding as a philanthropist, and about her conceptualisation of the nature of the political. She framed the career of the political woman negatively: the MPs were seen as either 'common', odd or socially awkward. The eccentric physical and sartorial appearance of several of these women reflected, in Fisher's mind, their inner transgressive natures, while 'dashing' at people she felt exhibited a lower social status. Fisher's point was to claim her path to politicisation – through local political forums, legal campaigns and public broadcasting – as a more authentic route for women than the formal political one. As Fisher's discussion shows, validating one's self-worth as a philanthropist could mean claiming and disclaiming identities other than the philanthropic. It could mean evaluating philanthropy against a broader occupational landscape in the public sphere, in which women were gaining ground between the wars.

In Fisher's letter, the comparative device was conceived to set up differences between the model of civic agency adopted by women MPs and by herself, and to claim her own higher self-worth. In other cases, comparisons were made with a more positive emphasis, through which philanthropic women consciously sought to learn from the example set by other women. Indeed, in some instances women philanthropists appropriated the qualities and values of other women in the process of their own identity-formation. This process of learning about oneself through the example of others configured women's philanthropic work in an analogous sense to the psychological process which Linda Peterson has called Victorian women poets' 'autobiographical associations'.⁹⁸ This was the sort of transitional reflexive thinking which Muriel Paget undertook at the Ramkrishina mission retreat when she considered the mission of 'Tantine'.⁹⁹ Several years before this, in the spring of 1928, Paget was corresponding with Irene Keller about her work for the women's Catholic order of the Sisters of Mercy in Russia. Keller, who came from a wealthy background, had joined the Order after the death of her son. She

⁹⁷ Bodleian, MSS Eng 3799, MS 112, as noted by Fisher's daughter, Mary Bennett, Typed pamphlet, 'Letters from Rock Cottage, 1923-4'.

⁹⁸ Linda Peterson, *Traditions of Victorian women's autobiography: the poetics and politics of life writing* (Charlottesville, VA.; London: University Press of Virginia, 1999), p. 111.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 68.

thought it was important that no allowances were made for her in this context despite her private fortune, and she stressed that she 'led exactly the same life as all the Sisters'. Keller had undergone a process of personal and spiritual growth during her time with the religious women. Certainly, she rapidly realised that 'they did not want a countess playing at work, but a real sister.¹⁰⁰ There is a hint in this letter that Paget might have recognised in her own career the critique of the *Lady Bountiful*. As we will see, some contemporaries did disregard Paget's philanthropy in these terms.¹⁰¹ But more revealing is the sense expressed through this conversation of women's shared experience of working out an understanding of their own life-purpose and usefulness through the examples (and demands) of other women.

Conclusion

In 1928, Evangeline Booth published *Woman in America and Britain* and intervened in a transatlantic debate about the social position of women in a period of substantial legal advances. Booth took the opportunity to claim a genealogical inheritance for the Salvation Army as part of this evolution of women's legal rights. She opened her book by discussing her 'sainted Mother' as a model of religiously-inspired dedication, and went on to personify her as 'the summation of the woman's movement, her equal status with man in social and spiritual and intellectual responsibility, her readiness to find a greater happiness in service than any selfish pleasure could have afforded'. The model of happiness in serving others which Booth's mother embodied was part of a broader understanding of women's work which Booth described:

For, if woman has been successful in inspiring men to great deeds and noble aims, it is because she herself abounds in enthusiasm. It is a mistake to attribute a woman's enthusiasm to excitement, to emotion. It is, rather, an utter abandonment to an aim, only to be carried to triumph by such devotion. *If a woman loves, she worships. If she champions a cause, she will fight for it. If she gives, she gives all. If she lives for, she will die for.*¹⁰²

Fashioning women's heartfelt devotion in these terms, Booth distanced herself from a public discourse which presented women as naturally 'warm' and compassionate to argue instead that this capacity could be particularly well expressed by women when it was part of a physically- and

¹⁰⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box Q, letter from Irene Keller to Muriel Paget, 17 April 1928.

¹⁰¹ See below, pp. 212-3.

¹⁰² Booth, *Woman*, p. 27.

psychologically-sincere attachment to the common good. Her message was one part of a rhetorical mobilising device which sought to build women's confidence for their newly-achieved citizen status. Her discussion of the 'utter abandonment to an aim' calls to mind Ray Strachey's writings for the interwar *DNB*, which emphasised the emotional and physical intensity with which women carried out their roles. Like Strachey, Booth critiqued essentialised valuations of women's achievement which defined success in terms of women's innately nurturing qualities. Like Strachey, she was trying to unpack the boxes in which contemporaries often packaged women's work identities.

In excavating contemporary interwar commentaries about women's work, the meanings of public achievement and a life purpose, this chapter has applied fresh focus to the historiographical debate about women's expanded occupational opportunities and enhanced political status that were theoretically achieved between the wars. This focus has opened a new window onto the revisionist argument of women's historians that the legislation of the Sex Discrimination Removal Act and franchise acts presented significant practical limitations in terms of women's ability to enter the professions and occupations on equal terms with men. It has revealed an unexplored, but critical context, in which interwar women commentators exploited the opportunity provided by the theoretical frames of this legislation to push a new message about women's capabilities to achieve happiness and fulfillment across a wide range of occupations and roles.¹⁰³ These discussions have pointed to hitherto underexplored ethical dimensions through which interwar British women understood women's work – both in comparison to men's and on its own terms. Questions about women's 'work' and 'duty' – themselves being re-articulated from older concepts and especially those associated with 'Victorian' models – opened fluidly into broader explorations about the purpose of civic agency in a well-spent life. Even if arenas of (paid) employment remained inaccessible for women, the structures developed in the pursuit of a happy and useful life were open to all. And philanthropy offered a pivotal model around which to discuss these qualities.

¹⁰³ On limitations see e.g. Witz, *Professions and patriarchy*; Oram, *Women teachers*; Zimmeck, 'Strategies and Stratagems'; Glucksmann, *Women Assemble*.

CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONAL OR AMATEUR? CALIBRATING FEMALE PHILANTHROPISTS' EXPERTISE

When, in 1968, Kathleen Woodroffe asserted that the period immediately after the First World War was the start of a paradigm shift in models of voluntary activity away from broad-based, informal philanthropic effort to specialist forms of professional social work, she made what would become a highly influential argument.¹ Woodroffe's observation, stated in her title, of the move *From charity to social work*, has been critiqued by revisionist historians for its assumption of a straightforward move between the charity and voluntary sectors, but the linear teleology of professionalisation which it sets up remains a key narrative in the history of social welfare.² The idea of the professionalisation of social welfare work has been so attractive to historians because it chimes with the more general assertions of 'the rise of the professional society' in modern England.³ In invoking the narrative of professionalisation, however, many historians have failed to observe the idiosyncrasies of Woodroffe's work, which was primarily focused on calibrating American models of community organisation, and which tended to squeeze reflections on the 'English' system into this model. Moreover, they have failed to situate her work within the intellectual context of the 1960s in which she was writing, when debates about the meanings of voluntary action suggested that professional models were not necessarily the orthodoxy. In fact, voluntary action practitioners and academics in the 1960s were celebrating and reinvigorating the vitality of older philanthropic methodologies. Geraldine Aves, who was appointed chair of the Commission on the Role of the Volunteer in the Social Services (1966), reported in 1969 that voluntary workers continued to vaunt the informality of their roles, stressing 'freedom, spontaneity, flexibility, and [the] friendliness of volunteers, and contrast[ing] themselves with

¹ Kathleen Woodroffe, *From charity to social work in England and the United States* (London: Routledge, 1968).

² David Burnham's recent discussion of Woodroffe's argument, within the field of social work historiography, is a case point, which revises her argument (by claiming her overemphasis on the COS compared with public sector social work), but which fails to problematise the narrative of professionalisation: 'Selective memory: a note on social work historiography', *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, 1 (2011), pp. 13-6. For a revised, but nevertheless analogously linear account in the context of women's social welfare work see Jane Lewis, 'Women, social work and social welfare in twentieth-century Britain: from (unpaid) influence to (paid) oblivion?', in Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, self interest and welfare in the English past* (London: UCL Press, 1996), pp. 203-23. For a critique of Woodroffe's failure to acknowledge the reconceptualisation of the philanthropic enterprise see Michael J. Moore, 'Social work and social welfare: the organisation of philanthropic resources 1900-1914', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, 2 (1977), p. 86.

³ Harold Perkin, *The rise of the professional society: England since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989).

social workers, whom they tended to see as rigid, inhuman, “official” in their attitude, and doing their work “simply as a job”.⁴ This was a period of marked growth in new models of voluntary action epitomised by the emerging Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector, which functioned through an emphasis on grass-roots politics which were far from necessarily professionally-conceived.⁵ Some scholars in the 1960s did focus on reinforcing the professional terrains of social welfare, as social work academic Robin Huws Jones did from 1961 in the new National Institute of Social Work Training.⁶ Yet, as these interventions suggest, rather than being a period which witnessed a necessary jettisoning of models of voluntary expertise in favour of the professional, 1960s Britain experienced their re-articulation in the context of debate. There was not a linear progression from the voluntary to professional organisational standards in the early-twentieth century. Woodrooffe’s thesis was taking up a position that was far from incontrovertible. The models were and remained much more intricately intertwined.

In 1966, Robin Huws Jones’s wife Enid chose to celebrate not the model of professionalism, but amateurism, in her biography of college head and prolific social activist Margery Fry (1874-1958). Enid Huws Jones, who would go on to write a biography of the novelist and philanthropist Mrs. Humphry Ward in the 1970s, entitled her 1966 biography *Margery Fry: the essential amateur*.⁷ By labelling Fry an ‘amateur’, Enid Huws Jones was communicating her subjects’ extremely varied career path. Between the 1910s and 1950 Fry undertook the posts of librarian, university warden, wartime relief worker, leading member of the Howard League penal reform movement, magistrate, college principal, member of numerous local and national committees, friend of the homeless, government advisor, and BBC broadcaster

⁴ Geraldine Aves, *The voluntary worker in the social services: report of a committee jointly set up by the National Council of Social Service and the National Institute for Social Work Training under the chairmanship of Geraldine M. Aves* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), pp. 47-8.

⁵ As discussed in many of the essays in Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton and James McKay (eds), *NGOs in contemporary Britain: non-state actors in society and politics since 1945* (London: Palgrave, 2009). See also Matthew Hilton, ‘Politics is ordinary: non-governmental organisations and political participation in contemporary Britain’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, 2 (2011), pp. 230-68.

⁶ Peter Barclay, ‘Robin Huws Jones: innovative spirit behind social work reforms’, *The Guardian*, 9 July 2001, p. 16.

⁷ Enid Huws Jones, *Margery Fry: the essential amateur* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

and governor, among others.⁸ Fry's mother characterised her as an 'administrator like [the feminist] Philippa Strachey', while Huws Jones noted Fry's competencies as an 'orator'.⁹ The skill-set of administrator and public speaker was celebrated in representations of female philanthropists from the late-nineteenth century onwards.¹⁰ However, it was the emphasis on Fry's 'becom[ing], without going through an academic discipline or a professional training, something of an expert in penology' which most obviously signposted the biography's sub-title.¹¹ Huws Jones's discussion skirted over Fry's varied educational background, which comprised home education until she was seventeen, a year at a Brighton boarding school (later to become Roedean), and three years at Somerville College, Oxford. Still, she cast Fry within the model of friendship that linked knowledge and love, claiming that she 'brought to public life an educated judgement and loving kindness'.¹² Fry's biography raises questions about how the experiences, knowledge and skills of philanthropically-minded women active before and after the First World War were calibrated by contemporary commentators (and by historians since). How were philanthropic women's competencies in administration, social investigation and policy-making defined in the interwar period? What were the structures and value systems being applied in this process? Indeed, how was philanthropic insight measured?

Margery Fry's diverse career trajectory reveals how between the wars philanthropic women could move comfortably between various models of professional and voluntary expertise, and Huws Jones' characterisation of her amateurism suggests a synthesis between these models. This evidence problematises many historians' tendency to ascribe to the professional and the voluntary domains of women's social action a differentiated (and often oppositional) status. Despite acknowledging the blending of older and newer intellectual bases, and religious and secular traditions for women's civil activity in the early-twentieth century, Angela Woollacott argues that the First World War saw the beginnings of a transformation in women's influence in

⁸ Ibid; Thomas L. Hodgkin, 'Fry, (Sara) Margery (1874–1958)', rev. Mark Pottle, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2007 [http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/33286, accessed 16 Aug 2010].

⁹ Huws Jones, *Margery Fry*, pp. 110; 118.

¹⁰ Eve Colpus, 'Philanthropy, femininity and fame: representations of notable Christian philanthropic women in late-nineteenth-century Britain' (Unpublished M.St. thesis, University of Oxford, 2006), ch. 2.

¹¹ Huws Jones, *Margery Fry*, p. 123.

¹² Ibid., p. 5. On the model of friendship, see above pp. 57-63.

voluntary work ‘from moral to professional authority’.¹³ Woollacott’s argument suggests not only that older models were abandoned in favour of professionalisation, but also attributes a lower status to moral than professional authority. Indeed, models of professionalisation are foregrounded as homogenous even in studies which offer a sincere attempt to critique the professional. Thus, Pamela Dale in her history of female psychiatric workers in the first half of the twentieth century, coins the term ‘lay professionals’ to define ‘teachers, social workers, local government officers, charity workers, probation officers and institution managers’ as well as councillors and members of governing bodies and visiting committees.¹⁴ The range of roles captured in this term suggests that the professional was not a one-dimensional status, but her argument still downplays the extent to which women could achieve self- and social-esteem through identifying their movement between professional and amateur motifs as distinct – yet compatible – operational systems. This chapter argues that it was often the creative tensions between these two models that structured women’s understandings and discussions of female philanthropists’ expertise between the wars. These tensions offered opportunities for women philanthropists to develop their own sense of self-worth in their activity, and they provided a framework for the broader intellectual purpose of their projects in rethinking the process and relevance of philanthropy. Fry’s career demonstrates that professional skills could be used to validate women’s voluntary activity, and vice versa.

Between the wars, women-centred discourses presented women’s capacities and expertise as crossing over sectors, stressing the intersections between a variety of modes of work. At its broadest, this discourse was part of a wide body of interwar advice literature which sought to build women’s confidence for their diverse roles.¹⁵ The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC)’s *Woman’s year book* of 1923-4 symbolised this message in a front-page illustration of a woman being illuminated by the knowledge she received from a book (Fig. 11). It went on to specify crossovers between, as well as the range of skills women brought to, their

¹³ Woollacott, ‘From moral to professional authority’.

¹⁴ Pamela Dale, ‘Tension in the voluntary-statutory allies, “lay professionals” and the planning and delivery of mental deficiency service, 1917-45’, in Pamela Dale and Joseph Melling (eds), *Mental illness and learning disability since 1850: finding a place for mental disorder in the United Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 156.

¹⁵ See above, pp. 83-8.

work. The chapter on social work thus included articles about infant welfare; children's care work; Dr. Barnardo's Homes; the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children; child adoption and children in industry; juvenile delinquency; the Girl Guides; the YWCA; the Girls' Friendly Society; Girls' clubs; women police, penal reform; moral welfare work; settlement work, the COS; the NFWI; and Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD).¹⁶ The message imparted through this chapter was that expertise in social work was diverse and could be present in a wide variety of organisational and individual contexts, including professional associations, state administration, and secularly- and religiously-motivated philanthropic groups. Other women commentators of the period constructed women's insights in terms of their multiple manifestations, and insisted they be understood on their own terms, and holistically. Virginia Woolf's long philosophical essay, *Three guineas* (1938), was an archetypal example of this sort of narrative.¹⁷

The NUSEC women's and Woolf's commentaries shared an overt agenda to remap the notion of expertise in terms other than those implied by masculine-dominated governmental and market orientations. In fact, as Kathryn Gleadle has observed in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, philanthropic methodologies demonstrated the potential to cast women's expertise 'through personal activities, specialist publications, and the use of elite networking...despite growing bureaucratisation and professionalism'.¹⁸ Gleadle stressed the flexible rationale through which women philanthropists conceived of their insights as relating to a broad spectrum of informal and formal organisational standards. Joyce Senders Pedersen notes a similar pliancy suffusing the concepts of mid- to-late-nineteenth-century feminists, who privileged the status of the professional whilst also emphasising philanthropy's similar set of skills to those associated with paid professional work.¹⁹ Female philanthropists active in the interwar period were positioning themselves alongside a stronger culture of professional work for middle-class women. Yet between the wars, female philanthropy was discussed in terms of its capacity to

¹⁶ Gates, *Woman's year book* pp. 531-69. Vera Brittain also elucidated 'the wide field' of voluntary work, *Women's work*, chs 7, 8.

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, *Three guineas* (1938; London: Harvest Books, 1966).

¹⁸ Gleadle, *Borderline citizens*, pp. 47, 49-51.

¹⁹ Joyce Senders Pedersen, 'Victorian liberal feminism and the "idea" of work', in Krista Cowman and Louise A. Jackson (eds), *Women and work culture: Britain c.1850-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 36.

circumvent the restrictive occupational and rhetorical pressures of the professions in order to forge a creative logic about the nature of women's work, expertise and status which valued overlaps between formal and informal status. Amateur and professional motifs were not strictly delineated in these debates. Rather, the one informed the other.

This chapter analyses the various structures which defined women philanthropists' expertise between the wars, and the philosophies that underpinned them. It focuses first on the class dimensions which underpinned correlations between amateurism and professionalism in discussions about upper- and middle-class women's philanthropy. Whilst upper-class women's work was often geared towards a claim to a professional form of expertise (in order to underline a move away from earlier amateur models), middle-class women's work tended to be already thought of in terms of occupational organisational standards, which resulted in discussions about voluntary work that could more comfortably claim women's extra-professional expertise alongside the professional. The chapter looks secondly at the significance attached by contemporaries to training for both paid and unpaid social work. Although some contemporary commentators did attempt to calibrate the differences between the sorts of training required for voluntary and paid work, many others discussed the overlaps in terms that idealised a broad-based social education, rather than a narrow specialism. Thirdly, it focuses on committee work as an archetypal mechanism of extra-professional activity through which middle- and upper-class women could develop authority and leadership skills. Finally, it investigates models of good philanthropic practice, arguing that the enduring celebration of exemplary high-Victorian female philanthropists blurred any supposedly clear dividing lines between Victorian and modern understandings of women's civil activity.

Powers of organisation

In 1919, building on the reformist momentum surrounding the SDRA, the NUSEC launched a campaign to improve women's employment rights, and concomitantly to gain increased

recognition of women's public achievement.²⁰ In the summer of 1920 the NUSEC's magazine, *The Woman's Leader*, featured a poem addressing some of the themes of its campaign:

She was only a lady of leisure
Yet she kept regular office hours
 Like a paid worker,
For a philanthropic organisation,
And superintended a household
Besides. She served on committees
 To the number of ten, and
 Kept her eye on the health
 Of her family.
People knew she would do,
And urged work upon her...
When the census taker came round
 He listed her as
 'A woman without occupation'.²¹

Entitled 'One of the idle rich', the poem satirised contemporary commentaries which undervalued, and sometimes ignored, women's voluntary activity and other obligations beyond paid work. Framing its message within a critique of the census, it pointed to the inadequacy of official representations in measuring the experiences and skills of women's work usefully and meaningfully, either within or outside the home.²² On one level, this theme sought to complicate a capitalist model which was reluctant to apprehend the workings of the family economy as 'real' work. On another, it suggested the NUSEC's aim not only to push forward the claims of working- and middle-class women to expanded employment opportunities, but also to rethink the stereotypes of an upper-class female culture as useful for re-modelling women's self-confidence in their work across class divides. The 'lady's' 'idleness' is quickly revealed to be ironic in the poem; it is the different levels of energies needed and expended by working mothers – caring for family as well as community – that the reader would have recognised. 'One of the idle rich' might also have been read as promoting a message of emulation through presenting elite

²⁰ The wide-ranging concerns of the NUSEC were representative of post-war feminist organisations attempting to build on the impetus of partial suffrage (1918), see Helen Jones, *Women in British public life, 1914-1950: gender, power and social policy* (Harlow: Longman, 2000); Thane, 'What difference did the vote make?', Caitriona Beaumont, 'The women's movement, politics and citizenship 1918-50s', in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Women in twentieth-century Britain*, pp. 262-77.

²¹ 'One of the idle rich', *The Woman's Leader*, 13 August 1920.

²² By the time the 1921 Census General Report was published in 1927, it contained separate analytical sections on the occupations of men and women.

women's cultural authority in roles such as committee work.²³ Certainly, its imagery drew on an older mobilising device for women, initially most relevant to the upper classes but which had percolated downwards, which stressed the broad set of competencies that grew out of managing a household. This was a model which highlighted the usefulness of looking beyond professional categories to embrace the value of women's non-paid work as it mediated the public and private divide. As an article in the 1901 New Year issue of the society magazine *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle* stated, 'Most women have wonderful powers of organisation, but are not aware of it...Any woman who is able to keep in order her own house, manage her servants, bring up her children, please her husband, and entertain her friends can certainly succeed in business or philanthropic undertakings'.²⁴

The significance of a non-professional rhetoric, and its link to upper-class models of female activity, emerged with a different resonance ten years later in an article in the long-running children's magazine the *Girl's Own Paper*. In a 1930 issue, Lady Norah Spencer Churchill lamented that 'professional' status was often no longer an aim for women because 'many are content to be amateurs'.²⁵ Churchill's immediate justification for this statement was her hope for a 'sterner moral code...and a desire for more efficiency'.²⁶ More importantly, though, she claimed the link between a number of models of women's cultural authority. She made a gendered argument that women's status in 'responsible work' made them 'the unconscious controllers of the destinies of men'. She also asserted the role of the professional as a 'stepping stone to fame'.²⁷ Class was another vital frame of Churchill's analysis. Aristocratic background might well have been the motivation for her claiming a status other than the stereotype of the Lady Bountiful. Partly because of the enduring resonance of this pejorative trope, it was more likely to be upper-class women who were particularly sensitive about wider perceptions of the organisational standards

²³ On the various local and national public functions of aristocratic women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain see e.g. Reynolds, *Aristocratic women*; Patricia Jalland, *Women, marriage and politics, 1860-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox, 1740-1832* (London: Vintage, 1994).

²⁴ 'A woman's enterprise', *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, 5 January 1901, p. 43.

²⁵ Lady Norah Spencer Churchill, 'A stepping-stone to fame', *Woman's Magazine and Girls Own Paper*, 50, 5, (1930), p. 267.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

of their work, and thus felt the need to claim professional status. Middle-class women – who were less likely historically to be conceptualised in terms of their bounty – could frame their activity differently. Certainly, there was a resonance to Churchill authoring her article under her unmarried name (rather than her married title, Lady Bradley-Birt), through which she asserted a cultural authority built upon her own genealogical merits.²⁸ Indeed, Churchill's recognition of the need to denote these emphases was perhaps even more pressing given that she was writing for the middle-class readership of the *Girl's Own Paper*, and wanted to dissolve boundaries of social class. By encouraging her young readers to be active agents in recognising their own expertise, Churchill juxtaposed the motifs of amateur and professional to claim their alternative moral status. Yet her discussion revealed that these models were not in any sense fixed, but instead mediated a variety of registers of authority, in which moral and formal occupational competencies were interleaved.

In contrast to discussions such as Lady Churchill's which mediated the upper- and middle-class divide, advice literature written by and for middle-class women conceptualised amateur and professional categories in a different way. Because middle-class women were not associated with the privileges of wealth and long-established critiques of inactivity and or unthinking social action, and because by the interwar period they were more obviously the candidates for choosing – and often needing – paid employment, an alternative calibration of their insights was not only required but could also helpfully smooth the sharp corners of the professional and the extra-professional.²⁹ In these discourses, women's roles were typically configured within a synthesis, and not a juxtaposition, of various forms of expertise, within and outside the home. The in-house magazine of the Federation of Women Civil Servants, *Opportunity: the Organ of the Federation of Women Civil Servants* published a revealing discussion of the overlaps in these models in early 1926. The article celebrated the retirement on marriage of the first president of the Federation of Women Civil Servants, Miss Sedgfreid. On first reading, the article constructed a familiar historical narrative of interwar women's professional careers, which

²⁸ Norah Spencer Churchill was the sister of Charles Spencer Churchill, ninth Duke of Marlborough.

²⁹ Much of the (often feminist) literature intellectualising women's work in this period was focused on the middle class. For a classic text see Brittain, *Women's work*.

necessitated the enforced withdrawal from the workplace of soon-to-be-married women.³⁰ But on closer reading, the article distilled a fluid discussion about the relationship between women's obligations in familial, professional and voluntary roles. Entitled 'Citizenship', it detailed Sedgfreid's earlier municipal and voluntary activity as a magistrate in Middlesex, a committee member for prisoners' aid and with the North Islington Welfare Centre, and noted her intention to return to this work on her retirement from the civil service.³¹ The article's message was equivocal about whether professional skills were being used to validate voluntary activity, or whether the status acquired through a professional role legitimated a move into voluntary roles. But it instilled a confidence that women's expertise was not simply confined to the professional arena. Women's insights spanned the professional and extra-professional realms, wherever they were applied.

Discussions among professional women's organisations, such as the civil servants, assumed their readers' professionalism not as a discrete category, but rather as bound up with the skills and insights which made women successful in family life and voluntary work. In its first issue in 1921, *Opportunity* repositioned women civil servants' professionalism within a discourse of traditional femininity, which could be used to appeal either to socially-conformist readers or to those women who envisaged their roles in more combative terms. This fluid message was contained in a March 1921 article which informed readers that 'Administration is at least as much a matter of heart as of brain', a mantra which it advised 'should be printed in super-large type and hung up opposite the door of every room in the Treasury'.³² On the one hand the notion of gender difference in operational values was suggested here: it encouraged women civil servants to make their values heard more loudly in male-dominated Whitehall. Yet, on the other hand gender differences could be interpreted as functioning in more than one direction at the same time.

³⁰ As discussed in the context of the civil service by e.g. Meta Zimmeck, 'Jobs for the girls: the expansion of clerical work for women 1850-1914', in Angela V. John (ed.), *Unequal opportunities: women's employment in England 1880-1918* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); p. 162; Kay Sanderson, "'A pension to look forward to...?': women civil service clerks in London, 1925-1939', in Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover, (eds.) *Our work, our lives, our words: women's history and women's work* (Totowa, N.J. Basingstoke: Barnes and Noble Books; Macmillan, 1986), p. 151; Helen Glew, 'Women's employment in the General Post Office, 1914-1939' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2009), ch. 3.

³¹ 'Citizenship', *Opportunity*, 2 February 1926, p. 24.

³² *Opportunity*, 3 March 1921, p. 2.

Opportunity's motto – 'Look up not down / Look out not in / Look forward not back & lend a hand / Equality' – could be read as presenting women civil servants either in a role of shoring up traditional gender hierarchies, or in a mutually-supportive role, in which they sought to forward their occupational aspirations collectively as women.

'Lending a hand' was itself a phrase which both registered traditional notions of feminine humility and encouraged women to claim a distinctive authority for their work. In large part because it could be made to look in both of these directions, it was a favoured trope between the wars in discussions about women's philanthropic and voluntary expertise, spanning a spectrum of social and intellectual thought. Society magazine *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle* fashioned women's charitable activity within this language in its regular column, 'Queen's Helping Hand', while a June 1932 article in the Anglican *Mothers' Union Journal* used it to frame a religious rationale through which women would be called 'to lend a hand' as branch committee members.³³ Conceptualising women's social activism as a form of 'help' was a device that had been used since the mid-nineteenth century to emphasise women's competencies in voluntary work. In her book *Lending a Hand* (1866), social commentator Charlotte Ward had considered contemporary philanthropic practice and policy, and evidenced her expertise through the display of highly specialist knowledge.³⁴ The gendered significance of the conceit of 'Lending a hand' lies in its association with a moral standard of care and nourishment for which women were thought to be particularly suited, whether in private or public domains. Indeed, even a figure as obviously indomitable as the leader of the Salvation Army Evangeline Booth, chose to discuss her role – at least to women – in these terms. In 1925, Booth received news that her niece Mary, had been appointed as head of the International Training College in Berlin. Having undertaken the role of leading a training college in London in the 1880s, Booth wrote to her niece in the summer of 1925, congratulating her and proffering some advice. Booth was at pains in the letter to downplay her position as 'controller and commander' in favour of a less dominant role: 'from the time I took command of London and the International Training College' she wrote, 'I realised

³³ A.H.S.C. 'Charity', *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper and Court Chronicle*, 1 January 1921, p. 13; 'The Editor's Letter', *Mothers' Union Journal*, June 1932, p. 30.

³⁴ Gleadle, *Borderline citizens*, pp. 48-9.

that my first duty to those under my jurisdiction was as an adviser and a helper, and that I must be more careful to be in the foreranks as an example than to be in the foreranks as a commander'.³⁵ A humility *topos* clearly underpinned Booth's remarks here, but the significance attached to the role of 'helper' in philanthropic women's self-presentations also went further. The characterisation reinforced female philanthropists in a connection of assistance and practical and intellectual nourishment, which assigned them a form of expertise (for Booth 'in the foreranks') that was more valuable than formalised official roles which could restrict their activity and the constructions of their reputation.

Training

In contemporary interwar commentaries about women's voluntary expertise the most reiterated discussion centred on the debate about training. Building on late-nineteenth-century intellectual developments – most notably the COS' famous principle of scientifically organised philanthropy – in the interwar period commentators focused on calibrating the sorts of training women philanthropists could and should expect to undertake. In her book *The social servant in the making* (1925), social worker and academic Elizabeth Macadam set out her version. According to Macadam:

We, in this country, have been bred in a tradition of philanthropy and social service and have come to regard ourselves as possessing inborn genius for its practice. In my youth we were told that a missionary spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice was the essential qualification. To-day the idiom has changed. Character, personality, personal aptitude, and practical experience are weighed against academic training to the discredit of the latter. There is some truth in these views but it is not the whole truth. The social worker, like the doctor, preacher, teacher, artist or craftsman, is born not made and inborn personal qualities must stand high. But not less than in education, religion, medicine, or art, must natural gifts be reinforced by knowledge, understanding and practice.³⁶

Writing in the mid-1920s, Macadam believed that opportunities for formal training and qualifications in social work had contributed to the evolution of the language of philanthropy. For her, it seemed that these experiences were by then grafted onto enduring understandings of the altruistic motivations of social activists. In acknowledging the conflation of organisational,

³⁵ London, Salvation Army International Heritage Centre (hereafter SAIH), Personalities File, Evangeline Booth, Box 2, Letter from Evangeline Booth to Mary Booth, 19 August, 1925.

³⁶ Elizabeth Macadam, *The social servant in the making* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1925), viii.

moral, environmental and biological factors, Macadam fashioned philanthropy as embodying a series of overlaps between institutional, physical and emotional value systems. Her argument in *The social servant in the making* echoed an intervention that she had made two years before in 1923-4 in the NUSEC's *Woman's year book*, in which she argued in the introduction to the chapter on 'Social work' that 'There is no essential difference between salaried and voluntary social work...and each requires a high standard of preparation for her task'.³⁷ Here again, was an assertion of the interconnections between the function of women's work in paid and unpaid sectors, this time focused upon the notion of their shared pursuit of proficiency.³⁸ In part, Macadam's argument ties into a commonplace historiographical narrative that the First World War heralded a new recognition of the need for greater efficiency in the workplace, which was developed in the immediate post-war years.³⁹ But it also contests historians' emphases on the supposed post-war narrowing of opportunities for women in the public sphere.⁴⁰ The concept of training, in fact, took on a critical importance in facilitating what was in some cases a potentially widened occupational arena, and in penetrating middle-class women's culture from many angles in these years. Thus, in 1938, the low-cost weekly, *Woman*, included an article stipulating that leaders of voluntary-run boys' and girls' clubs should do a year to eighteen months of training through the National Council of Girls, or a course run by the YWCA.⁴¹

Arguments about the need for (largely middle-class) women to undergo training for occupations were triggered and translated by a changing disciplinary culture within higher education which saw the development of university courses in social work. Macadam, who had helped set up the first school of Social Studies at the University of Liverpool (in 1904), became the first lecturer on the methods and practice of social work in 1911. Following Liverpool's lead, in 1908 the University of Birmingham established a social science course, the London School of

³⁷ Elizabeth Macadam, 'Social work: introduction', in Gates, *Woman's year book*, p. 531. Macadam was on the editorial team of the *Woman's year book*, Walton, *Women in social work*, pp. 106-7.

³⁸ For examples of interwar women's understandings of the porous nature of paid and unpaid work see ch. 2.

³⁹ This was both a highly gendered and racialised debate. See e.g. Gail Braybon, *Women workers in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989); Angela Woollacott, 'Maternalism, professionalism and industrial welfare supervisors in World War I Britain', *Women's History Review*, 3, 1 (1994), pp. 29-56; Deborah Thom, *Nice girls and rude girls: women workers in World War I* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 35-7.

⁴⁰ For a useful discussion of this historiography see Bingham, "'An era of domesticity'?"

⁴¹ 'Club leadership: a little known career for women', *Woman's Magazine Annual* (1938), pp. 711-2.

Economics followed suit in 1912, and the Universities of Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Barnett House (the social work department in Oxford), each instituted Social Study Departments before the outbreak of the First World War.⁴² In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* in January 1914, in which she first set out some of the arguments she would make in *The social servant in the making* (and also in *The new philanthropy*), Macadam discussed in some detail social work training at universities. She wrote about the aims of university-taught social work (to cover a diploma syllabus, instruct on broader social questions, and act as centres for investigations into social conditions in towns which lacked alternative forums), the composition of students (the majority were graduates, a minority were experienced caseworkers and a handful lacked either previous relevant educational or practical experience), and philosophical points about training. The courses, as she noted, were run with tightly-capped quotas of places, which meant that only a select group with the ability to pay the fees could benefit from this education. Possibly in response to this inbuilt elitism, and also out of sympathy with a generation of women who had not had these opportunities, in 1914 Macadam denied that ‘the training of the professional “social worker”...[was] necessarily the most important function of the school of social science’, and promoted a broad-based rather than specialist training, as well as the value of personal experiences over lectures and book study.⁴³ ‘Training’, in Macadam’s understanding, did not signify a linear process of higher education replacing the more experience-rooted model of an older generation of women philanthropists. Rather there were fluid lines in her thinking, through which older and newer wisdoms could be combined.

The university settlement movement was a critical conceptual tool in the development of the relationship between interwar philanthropy and academic social work.⁴⁴ Established in London in 1884 largely to facilitate university students’ interactions with the poor, the university settlement movement embodied a philosophy of service and training for a vocation which

⁴² Macadam, ‘Social work’, p. 409.

⁴³ Elizabeth Macadam, ‘The universities and the training of the social worker’, *Hibbert Journal: a quarterly review of religion, theology, and philosophy*, 12, 2 (1914), pp. 283-94.

⁴⁴ There is a growing historical literature on women and gender and the university settlement movement, see Katharine Bentley Beaman, *Women and the settlement movement* (London; New York: The Radcliffe Press, 1996); Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state*; Koven, *Slumming*; Nigel Scotland, *Squires in the slums: settlements and missions in late Victorian London* (London: Tauris, 2007) ch. 7; Vicinus, *Independent women*; ch. 6.

combined notions of applied social work and a strong sense of moral (often religiously-inspired) deportment. Men's settlements were the first to be instituted (in Oxford House, Bethnal Green and Toynbee Hall in 1884), but women's settlements were immediately set up alongside. In 1887, the first branch of the Women's University Settlement was opened in Nelson Square in Southwark, followed by Mayfield House in Bethnal Green (1889), Mary Ward's Passmore Edwards settlement in Bloomsbury (which began as University Hall in Gordon Square in 1890); Canning Town and Bermondsey Women's Settlements (established in 1892 by F. W. Newland, the pastor of Canning Town Congregational church); and Lady Margaret Hall settlement, founded at 129 Kennington Road in 1897 by the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Talbot, to minister to the North Lambeth and Vauxhall areas. In parallel with women's university education at this period, women's settlements employed formal and informal idioms and structures in their development.⁴⁵ Katharine Bentley Beaman's discussion of the genesis of the Women's University Settlement reveals the importance of informal meetings and committees, and how women who had official positions in university colleges (which were themselves informally associated with the universities) had particular currency in these discussions.⁴⁶ In ways comparable to these mediations between different systems of management, women's settlements were also developing a concept of training for 'service' that joined the benefits of formal to informal methods. Lady Margaret Hall settlement, for example, helped to establish the School for Sociology that later became part of the LSE, an impetus that prompted Vera Brittain to comment in the late 1920s that young women embarking on a career in social work ought to undertake a period of formal training, which included both a university diploma course and a stint at a University Settlement.⁴⁷ Yet this academic activity did not preclude women's settlements' concentration on the development of residents' moral qualities. In her 1923 history of the Lady Margaret Hall settlement, Georgina Bailey, wife of Oxford Classics scholar Cyril Bailey,

⁴⁵ On tensions between formality and informality in establishing women's access to higher education see Carol Dyhouse, *No distinction of sex?: women in British universities, 1870-1939* (London: UCL Press, 1995).

⁴⁶ Bentley Beaman, *Women and the settlement movement*, ch. 5.

⁴⁷ Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state*, p. 34. Vera Brittain argued that 'formal training' should be acquired if possible by both professional and voluntary social workers, or failing that, a few months of home study of economics, social theory and practical social action were needed rather than 'an untutored plunge into unforeseen responsibilities, on the supposition that modern welfare work resembles old-fashioned "philanthropy" in requiring as its sole qualifications a kind heart and vaguely benevolent intentions', *Women's work*, p. 137.

articulated the workings of this ethic, writing that ‘Goodness reigns, and it is goodness mixed with wisdom and good sense’.⁴⁸ Bailey’s prioritisation of goodness and judgement situated the Lady Margaret Hall settlement within a Christian tradition into which, as the daughter of former Bishop of London Mandell Creighton, she was born.⁴⁹ Bailey suggested that the settlement movement offered not only a path to formal educated status, but also a forum within which its residents could develop important understandings about themselves, and about the value of working for others.⁵⁰

Recognition of the interleaved philosophical foundations of the settlement movement – especially in the context of its religious underpinnings – highlighted the fluid lines between ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ models, but the intersections between these operational modes were not always easily interpreted. In the 1940s civil servant Hilda Martindale looked back on her aunt, Charlotte Spicer’s life of social activism at the East End Women’s Settlement at Canning Town. Martindale remembered her aunt as a ‘social worker with foresight and [a] sympathetic approach’. ‘True’, she claimed, ‘she was untrained, but hard work and common sense soon made up for that, although she would have been the last to acknowledge it, she realised the value of training and indeed worked for it’.⁵¹ Martindale, writing from the vantage-point of a professional woman in the 1940s, clearly valued training, and its links to work and common sense. To this end, she accepted the line between ‘professional’ and ‘amateur’ as blurred. But her awkwardness about conceiving her aunt’s articulation of her work in professional terms signalled a key distinction between the two women’s rationale for undertaking their respective social service. Charlotte Spicer was a devoted Congregationalist, and it was through an overarching religious motivation that she undertook her work. In emphasising early in the pen portrait her aunt’s religiosity, Martindale contrived a reason for Spicer’s eschewing of the idea of a professional source of expertise.⁵² But in fact there was no necessary contradistinction between the religious and the

⁴⁸ Georgina Bailey, *Lady Margaret Hall: a short history issued on behalf of the Lay Margaret Hall appeal fund* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 123.

⁴⁹ Jasper Griffin, ‘Bailey, Cyril (1871–1957)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2009 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/30522>, accessed 3 May 2011].

⁵⁰ Koven argues that slum-visiting was part of a process of learning about the self, *Slumming*, p. 4.

⁵¹ Hilda Martindale, *Some Victorian portraits and others* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948), p. 30.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

professional in women's voluntary work. Writing as a 'professional' woman of the 1940s, Martindale overlooked the culture of many religiously-inspired philanthropic women who believed that God required them to undertake professional training. Thus, in an article on 'Women in philanthropy' in a special issue of *The Gentlewoman* in January 1901, the prolific and celebrated philanthropist, Ishbel, the Countess of Aberdeen, argued that the 'need of training' and demand for competency constituted 'the essential difference of attitudes towards philanthropic work at the beginning of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century'. She continued by asserting that, whereas in 1800 'training' was restricted to the isolating experience of the religious convent, by 1901:

we find guides and teachers everywhere to lead us, and libraries of statistics and records to enlighten us...Hence we are bound to require of ourselves, and of all who would undertake to serve God in serving their fellows that they shall fit themselves for such service to the best of their abilities.⁵³

The Countess of Aberdeen was well-known from the late-nineteenth century up to the 1930s for her rigorous Catholicism, philanthropy and political activity in Britain, Canada and Ireland, and in later years as one of the first women Justices of the Peace.⁵⁴ Her New Year article indicated the significance she attached to Christian models of women's religious activity, and the sense of self-worth that she gained in conceiving herself within these. These facts could be downplayed in publicity for the Countess. A feature on her in 1891 in the fashionable magazine *Men and Women of the Day*, for example, claimed rather dismissively that she had no 'desire to pose as a saint and martyr before an admiring world'.⁵⁵ Indeed, few sincerely religious women did. But the representation in *Men and Women of the Day* did underline the social as well as the subjective opportunities that were opened up to women through their participation within a religious institution or organisation. As revisionist historians of women and religion have helpfully argued, a religious framework enabled women to transcend traditional borderlines of gendered activity

⁵³ Countess of Aberdeen, 'Women in philanthropy', *The Gentlewoman*, 5 January 1901, p. 10.

⁵⁴ G. F. Barbour, and Matthew Urie Baird, 'Gordon, John Campbell, first marquess of Aberdeen and Temair (1847–1934)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2008 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/33464>, accessed 4 March 2011].

⁵⁵ The Countess of Aberdeen, *Men and Women of the Day*, 4, 44, (1891), p. 92.

because they were contained within spatial and dogmatic boundaries.⁵⁶ It was not simply within these institutional frameworks, however, that religion provided opportunities for women to gain social confidence. A sincere religious faith could also provide women who operated outside these frameworks with the emotional, practical and spiritual guidance they needed to operate assuredly in a variety of social domains.⁵⁷ Sustained by the nourishment of a community of the faithful and the direction of God, religious women often imparted a strong sense of their obligation as demanding both social and spiritual capacities. This was a demanding enterprise, as the Countess of Aberdeen's comments made clear. But it was also an expansive one, and signalled the stepping outside of the delimited frames of categorisation which these women were enacting and discussing.

Committees

If certain types of women's religious engagement could demand specific forms of training, they could also provide a framework for highlighting women's insights within wider organisational structures and contexts of networking, committee work and local governance. These were avenues in which Ishbel Countess of Aberdeen, like other sincerely religious women of her generation, had been active in for a long time.⁵⁸ Looking back on the traditions set by religious men and women in the mid-to-late nineteenth century in *Reminiscences* (1925), Emily Kinnaird distinguished between several models of committee work. She wrote of her brother Arthur Kinnaird's belief in associational and committee work as contrasting with his school friend and fellow philanthropist Quintin Hogg's expression of 'individualistic work'. This distinction was an

⁵⁶ See e.g. Sue Morgan, 'Introduction', Sue Morgan (ed.), *Women, religion and feminism in Britain, 1750-1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 10-11; Martha Vicinus, *Independent women*, ch. 2; Susan Mumm, *Stolen daughters, virgin mothers: Anglican sisterhoods in Victorian Britain* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999); Carmen Mangion, 'Women, religious ministry and female institution-building', in Morgan and de Vries, *Women, gender and religious cultures*, pp. 72-93.

⁵⁷ As the vast historiography on women and evangelical religion has shown. For key interventions see Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes*, esp. chs 1-3; Gail Malmgreen (ed.), *Religion in the lives of Englishwomen 1760-1930* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); Deborah Valenze, *Prophetic sons and daughters: female preaching and popular religion in industrial England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, 'Born to serve: women and evangelical religion', in Alan Hayes and Diane Urquhart (eds), *The Irish women's history reader* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 119-25.

⁵⁸ Most notably, although by no means exclusively, through her work with the Red Cross Society and the National Council of Women, Barbour, and Baird, 'Gordon, John Campbell', *ODNB*.

important one to make, revealing that Emily Kinnaird was thinking not only about the models of committee work that women undertook, but also those characteristic of men's civic action. Her comparison drew out the multiple shadings of philanthropic method that could be perceived even by individuals of the same sex who shared an intellectual framework, and who worked, as her brother and Hogg did, for the same cause.⁵⁹ Whilst she thought that her approach was in part in line with her brother's, she emphasised 'though not to the same degree, as I feel more personal responsibility to work for the cause on the committee on which I am sat'.⁶⁰ The personalised structure of women's philanthropic activity was again reiterated in Kinnaird's comments, but she did not cast this in terms of an assumption of the necessarily gendered quality of committee work. Instead, she placed greater emphasis on the interrelationship between the informal notions of interaction and formal workings of management positions, highlighting the range of associations and skills that were brought together in committee work.

Kinnaird had a notable flair for committee work, and this was recognised by contemporary social activists as transcending specifically gendered cultures. As well as holding executive positions as honorary secretary of the London division of the YWCA from 1881-1906, and thereafter as honorary finance secretary of the British organisation as a whole, district referee for Forfarshire and Kincardineshire, and vice-president of the Scottish council, she was a founder and long-serving committee member of the British Council of Women Workers (later the National Council of Women), and became a member of the committee of the international YWCA. Indeed, as well as sitting on committees, she also facilitated the development of new ones. YWCA member Mary Philipps recalled being asked by Kinnaird in 1909 to join a new YWCA committee for the World YWCA's Conference in Berlin (which would meet in 1910), which would answer questions about social and industrial conditions amongst girls. Philipps looked back on this position as initiating a YWCA career (both paid and voluntary) as Head of the British YWCA's Social Service Department (from 1913), Secretary of the Social and

⁵⁹ In 1870, Arthur Kinnaird and Quintin Hogg jointly established Homes for Working Boys, Nicholas Fishwick, 'Kinnaird, Arthur Fitzgerald, eleventh Lord Kinnaird of Inchtute and third Baron Kinnaird of Rossie (1847–1923)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/50297>, accessed 4 May 2011].

⁶⁰ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 116.

Industrial Committee (which became the Industrial Law Bureau (1917-23)), and later national vice-president.⁶¹ Kinnaird typically sat on women-only committees. But she was also seen as competent to work alongside men in mixed-gender committees. Thus in the summer of 1918 she was invited to join the committee of the People's League of Health, founded by the former actress Olga Nethersole, as an organisation to improve the health of the nation. She reluctantly declined the invitation because of lack of time.⁶²

In her committee work Kinnaird engaged on the one hand in a woman-led culture of local governance, and on the other was seen as suitable to work in structures in which both men and women operated side-by-side. Kinnaird's welcome participation in both communities demonstrated a more fluid conception of the relationship between gender and social administration than has been argued by historians of women's overtly formal activism in the interwar period, especially the feminist movement. Historians such as Susan Kingsley Kent, Harold Smith and Martin Pugh have argued that the feminist movement fractured between the wars, and was characterised by conflict between the 'old' feminists (who continued to demand equality and to lobby for women's rights on that platform) and the 'new' feminists (who lobbied for women's rights in a separatist context, especially highlighting their roles as wives and mothers).⁶³ Revisionist historians have observed that the boundaries between 'old' and 'new' feminism were less clear cut.⁶⁴ Deborah Gorman suggests that Vera Brittain's feminism embodied an overlap between 'old' and 'new' feminisms because whilst identifying with the aims for political equality of the 'old feminist', she nevertheless campaigned for improvements to women's domestic status, which was a central preoccupation of the 'new' feminists.⁶⁵ Philanthropic women moved across these forums, and shifted easily between woman-led and

⁶¹ 'M. E. P. [Mary Philipps]: One of our national vice-presidents', *Our Own Gazette*, 12 December 1928, p. 13.

⁶² LSE, People's League of Health, PLH/1, Letter from Emily Kinnaird to Olga Nethersole, 20 June 1918.

⁶³ See Harold Smith, 'British feminism in the 1920s', in Harold Smith (ed.), *British feminism in the twentieth-century* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1990); Pugh, *Women and the women's movement* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1992); and Kent, *Making Peace*.

⁶⁴ Joanne Workman, 'Wading through the mire: an historiographical study of the British women's movement between the wars', *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, 2 (2001), pp. 1-12, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/history/.../2-workman-wading-through-the-mire> [accessed 6 January 2011].

⁶⁵ Deborah Gorham, "'Have we really rounded Seraglio Point?'" Vera Brittain and inter-war feminism', in Smith (ed.), *British feminism*, pp. 85-8.

mixed-gender environments. Arguably there was more flexibility for mutually respectful gendered interactions in early-twentieth-century committee models than in their mid-twentieth-century successors, when, as Frank Mort argues with reference to the Home Office committee on sexual offences in 1954 (the Wolfenden Committee), gendered competencies, obsessions, and access to specialist knowledge animated the committee's internal operation and its dismissive attitude to (mainly women's) voluntary groups.⁶⁶ As Kinnaird was interested in the models of her brother's and his friend's committee work, so men might take an interest in the operation of women-led committees, both in terms of viewing their benefits and critiquing them. There was no fixed line separating gender-specific and gender-relational cultures in committee work.

In fact, women's committee work was defined from the mid-nineteenth century onwards as crossing the boundaries between gender-exclusive and mixed-gender forums. Historians have highlighted the significance of designated 'Ladies committees', first established in the 1850s, as an arena of women's increasing public status. Celebrated and prolific philanthropist Angela Burdett-Coutts led the way here, as president of Ladies Committees of the English and Scottish Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals (RSPCA). In the early period, some commentators doubted whether members of these committees were sufficiently proficient for the job. Theresa Deane has observed how the influential Victorian philanthropist Louisa Twining deemed it necessary in the second half of the nineteenth century to defend the importance of ladies' committees against their critics by emphasising that committee members would be adequately trained.⁶⁷ But the existence of these bodies did not restrict women's activity to gender-exclusive domains. In her role on the RSPCA ladies' committee, for example, Burdett-Coutts spoke to mixed-gender audiences at meetings across Britain, whilst Twining's role on the first visiting committee in 1857 and her establishment of the Workhouse Visiting Society as a campaigning organisation were two of the factors that have prompted Kathryn Gleadle to

⁶⁶ Frank Mort, *Capital affairs: London and the making of the permissive society* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 147.

⁶⁷ Theresa Deane, 'Philanthropy and Louisa Twining', in Anne Digby and John Stewart (eds), *Gender, health and welfare* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 124-37.

describe her as an archetypal nineteenth-century ‘national expert’.⁶⁸ The forms of expertise that women could develop and showcase in committees did vary between single- and mixed-gender models, but the point is that women could demonstrate both. Ladies’ committees remained a part of the interwar landscape of civic action, for example, in the fields of women’s or children’s health, and here women were appointed precisely out of recognition of women’s specialist knowledge.⁶⁹ At the same time, interwar activists built on older models of mixed-gender community intervention to establish working models across genders. Thus in 1923 Georgina Bailey described long-time Warden of the Lady Margaret Hall Settlement, Miss Pearson’s place on a local Board of Guardians in terms of her ‘judgement and knowledge [that] established a relationship of mutual confidence which happily continues and grows’.⁷⁰ Committees positioned women’s insights as extending far beyond demarcated men’s and women’s arenas of activity. Indeed, as Bailey’s comments attest, for some interwar actors these boundaries had become completely porous.

The varied intellectual, socio-political and emotional investments involved in the committee work of interwar female philanthropists may be examined more closely in the career of Lettice Fisher (1875-1956). Fisher sat on the committees of a range of organisations in the first half of the twentieth century, beginning in 1902 (the same year that she became one of the first women lecturers in economic history at Oxford at the women’s college, St. Hugh’s) when she helped to found the Oxford Sanitary Aid Association, and from 1905 when she also sat as an executive member of its Health Committee (part of the Infant Welfare Association, becoming in 1912 the Oxford Health and Housing Association).⁷¹ At this time she was also a member of the health committees of the Oxford branch of the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland (NUWSS), and from 1916-18 she chaired the national executive committee of the NUWSS. In 1918, she became a founder member and first Chair of the NCUMC. Fisher’s

⁶⁸ Edna Healey, *Lady unknown: the life of Angela Burdett-Coutts* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), p. 172; Gleadle, *Borderline citizens*, pp. 53-5.

⁶⁹ Pamela Dale, ‘The Bridgewater Infant Welfare Centre, 1922-39: from an authoritative concern with “welfare mothers” to a more inclusive community health project?’, *Family and Community History*, 11/12 (2008), pp. 69-83.

⁷⁰ Bailey, *Lady Margaret Hall*, p. 121.

⁷¹ Peretz, *Infant welfare in inter-war Oxford*, pp. 134-8.

sincere commitment of time and thought to this cause was a critical aspect of her understanding of what sitting on a committee involved, but this was a model critiqued by her husband. He was worried by the energy which Fisher, like many high-profile socially-reformist women of the day, devoted to these positions.⁷² He wrote to Fisher in November 1918 insisting that ‘These potty little meetings are absurd. You should leave Miss X etc. to do the spade work’.⁷³ In part, Herbert Fisher’s denigration of his wife’s committee obligations reflected his own dislike of committee work, developed in the years before the First World War when his roles as vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield and as a member of the Royal Commission into the provision of public services in India left him little time to spare.⁷⁴ Partly his observations were premised on a sense of what he thought should have been the hierarchical social structures of committee work. In his view, there was an important distinction to be drawn between the role of chair – that he believed Fisher ought to fulfill – and more mundane work, which he identified as assignable to unmarried women. Yet Herbert Fisher’s comments wrongly characterised this culture as entirely female. In the first place, they dismissed the vibrancy of single women’s public leadership which historians have observed as a significant demographic trend from the nineteenth century onwards.⁷⁵ They also overlooked the sincere drive that motivated women like Fisher to project a democratic vision of common civic endeavour. In fact, this was not a gender-specific culture. As she wrote in *The citizen*, ‘Enormous numbers of people are wanted to serve upon endless committees, to do the steady, regular work that must be done if our needs are to be adequately met...A community which is unable to produce an adequate supply of loyal, responsible service, is a community which is doomed to failure’.⁷⁶

⁷² Pressure of work was a repeated call from high-profile women on charitable committees. In February 1933, it forced writer, magistrate, and prolific committee member, Lady Agnes Jekyll to resign her position as the Vice-Chairman of the National Birthday Trust Fund, an organisation established in 1928 which campaigned in the 1930s for improvements to maternity care: London, Wellcome Library, SA/NBT/U1/1, Annual and General Committee Meeting Agenda, Monday 27 February 1933. Lucy Baldwin, wife of Conservative Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, an equally prolific committee member, took over the vice-presidency.

⁷³ Bodleian, MS Fisher, 205, fol. 44, letter from Herbert Fisher to Lettice Fisher, 1 November 1918.

⁷⁴ In the summer of 1913 he wrote to Fisher that he ‘had just presided at a [University] library meeting which went off well. Have another Committee at 4.30 - then off to the Stephenson’s...and off by the 6.21 train. I must cut down these Committees’, Bodleian, MS Fisher, 202, fol. 13, Letter from Herbert Fisher to Lettice Fisher, 9 June 1913.

⁷⁵ Vicinus, *Independent women*.

⁷⁶ Fisher, *Citizen*, p. 246.

By the 1920s, Fisher had established a profile as a commentator on political, social and women's issues, having contributed articles to *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* and other London newspapers. By the 1930s, she was also writing economic textbooks for adult education and broadcasting on BBC Talks programmes for the NFWI. Chapters 4 and 5 illustrate how these forms of public communication were used by Fisher and other philanthropic women to interact with donors and the wider public through a complex amalgam of economic, moral, social and technological terms. Here, it is instructive to relate this output to the public valuation of Fisher as a sought-after committee person, and the social and intellectual connections that she could claim. Her reputation within economic circles was confirmed in May 1930, when she was appointed to the 'Ladies Committee' of the NIIP. The NIIP Executive had decided on the need for a Ladies Committee a decade after the organisation was founded (in 1921), and it conceived of it as a group of women of 'some social standing' who, through the established mechanism of drawing-room meetings, would focus on increasing the organisation's public finance and publicity. The Executive envisaged the Ladies Committee as an outward-facing appeal forum. But their terminology was interpreted by committee members themselves as inappropriate, and indeed as off-putting to potential members. Perhaps mindful of the devalued connotations of the 'lady' implied from the mid-nineteenth century onwards – for example in George Eliot's provocative article about the 'silly' outputs of 'lady novelists' – they stressed a different set of social signifiers through the title 'Women's Committee'.⁷⁷ They also established a remit that was much more varied. In addition to coordinating fundraising through organising drawing-room meetings, Women's Committee members were responsible for convening lectures (including choosing speakers and subjects), inducting visits of interesting houses, and presenting the NIIP's work to the public in a 'popular and vivid way'.⁷⁸ Like other well-connected committee members, Fisher cultivated personal connections amongst political and industrial elites to the benefit of the NIIP, approaching her friend, educationist and musicologist Henry Hadow, in February 1931 to

⁷⁷ George Eliot, 'Silly novels by lady novelists', *The Westminster Review*, 66 (1856), pp. 442-61.

⁷⁸ LSE, NIIP/6/1, Minutes of The Appeal Sub-Committee, Thursday 16 October.

be a speaker for the NIIP's drawing-room talk programme.⁷⁹ She also invoked her status within the NFWI in order to propagandise, as other committee members did through their connections with organisations such as the National Council of Women and National Women Citizen's Association. In these ways, the authority that these unpaid committee women claimed was both philosophical and outward-looking. Whilst gender was treated by those in authority in the NIIP as a critical framing device for women's activity, women themselves felt that their feminine sensibilities could be combined with a more proactive and intellectually-engaged form of citizenship that dismissed any falling-back on essentialised notions of women's skills.

Emulation

When considering the experience, personality and skill set needed for voluntary work, interwar women had at their disposal models of an earlier generation of philanthropic women. These women had been celebrities in their own lifetimes and had been celebrated in languages which re-enforced their womanly qualities and amateur spheres of action. However, between the wars, their examples were picked up on in ways that signalled the multiple dimensions of their images. Miss D. Warner, member of the Birmingham Soroptimist club, the organisation for business and professional women, illustrated these resonances in a lunchtime talk in November 1939. Warner's subject was women's leadership in wartime, and she addressed a mixed-gender audience of the Birmingham Rotarian and Soroptimist clubs. Warner began her talk by listing the capabilities desirable in a leader in gender-neutral terms – physical and nervous energy, a sense of purpose, enthusiasm, friendship for those who were led, integrity, decisiveness, intelligence and technical ability – but she quickly went on to portray examples of women's leadership in fields ranging from statecraft to writing via charity. 'In the social sphere', Warner claimed, 'the achievements of women as leaders have long been unchallenged'. She explained:

but then Charity – like the other chosen virtues – always was supposed to be a woman. If you have read of the conditions which Florence Nightingale found in the Crimea and

⁷⁹ LSE, NIIP, 6/1, Minutes of Women's Committee Meeting, 24 February 1931. Henry Hadow refused this invitation.

of how she vanquished them, you would know that it is entirely inappropriate that a Minister of Supply could have been found from – shall we say the dominant sex?

Elizabeth Fry risked every kind of disease in her first visit to prisons, but her schemes were eventually listened to by Parliament and this quiet Quaker woman travelled all over Europe as a consultant to the courts of her day on the problem of prison reform...The quintessence of leadership in women is the development of their essential feminine qualities allied to those of personality. And finally, there is the leadership in which every woman can lose herself, leadership in the sense of rendering the maximum of service...‘He Who Would be greatest among you, let him be the one that Serveth’.⁸⁰

Drawing on two of the most celebrated women of the late and early Victorian period respectively, Warner constructed an image of an enduring lively female tradition of voluntary action which was reframed to fit the new social context and needs of wartime Britain. Her timing signalled the re-opening of a much broader debate about what women could contribute in times of crisis. Situating Florence Nightingale as a model for this activity in wartime played to the intellectual priorities of her audience. Debates in the late-1930s about the creation of a Ministry of Supply had divided opinion and caused tensions, not least amongst the business community (the very group to which Warner was speaking), who feared unprofitability.⁸¹ Against the background message that public actors were embracing a martial and belligerent culture, Warner stressed an alternative vocabulary of action that was more complex than a straightforward equation of women and peace; indeed, Nightingale’s own philanthropic work in the Crimean War had been driven by pragmatism rather than pacifism. The model personified in Fry was equally complex. Warner promoted Fry’s ‘quiet’ nature not as diffidence or reticence but rather as part of a reputation for feminine modesty that, combined with her rationality, saw her appointed an advisor in Whitehall. Indeed, it was perhaps because Warner was making the case for reframing gendered assumptions to a mixed-gender audience (the ‘inappropriate[ness]’ of having a man directing the Ministry of Supply), that she hooked her argument onto women who were often seen in the interwar period to connote traditionally ‘Victorian’ values. This was a strategic model to present, and in doing so, Warner was picking up on the potential scope for a form of interwar

⁸⁰ ‘Women and leadership: an address given to Birmingham Rotarians and Soroptimists by Miss D. Warner (Honorary Secretary of the Federation of Soroptimist Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland)’, *The British Soroptimist*, 10, 9, (1939), pp. 170-2.

⁸¹ These debates were published in the daily press. See e.g. Hereward Brackenbury, ‘A ministry of supply effects on private industry experience in war-time’, *The Times*, 21 November 1936, p. 13.

associational culture to cross over rigid dividing lines of gendered sociability.⁸² Concluding with a biblical reference (Luke 22: 27) to the Christian tone of women's social action and selfhood, Warner returned her discussion to a religious landscape familiar both to men and women. Women's traditions of voluntary action were not neutered or emasculated by the burgeoning wartime (or welfare) state in this narrative, but rather they retained their own vibrancy, and animating dynamic.⁸³

The willingness of female philanthropists between the wars publicly to reverence past luminaries reveals not only the cultural authority that exemplary Victorian women continued to wield during the interwar years, but also how interwar philanthropists recognised the possibility of ascribing multiple identities to these women. Thus in her September 1935 address to a group of American Salvation Army women, the Home Leaguers, Evangeline Booth proclaimed that 'Women have been the heroines of emancipation: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Josephine Butler, Francis Willard [and] the heroines of service: Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale'.⁸⁴ For Booth, the point was not simply to stress that these women had been successful in pioneering roles in these spheres, but rather to explain the reasons why. In a similar talk to the British Home League in 1939 she explained that Fry and Nightingale exemplified the ways in which men's and women's expertise differed. 'Woman', Booth claimed, 'deals not with theories alone, not with science alone, not with art alone, but with the innermost secrets of life itself'.⁸⁵ This was a similar argument to the one that the British Anglican feminist Maude Royden had made during the First World War, when she wrote that 'the average woman will generally be in other walks of life not an expert but an amateur. She will be an amateur in arts and professions, an expert in human life'.⁸⁶ The main principle behind Booth's construction of the specificity of women's skills in the

⁸² This argument builds on Helen McCarthy's thesis of the increasing gender equality of interwar middle-class associational life, but it emphasises the gender-relational rather than gender-specific nature of this culture, see 'Service clubs'.

⁸³ The class and gender dynamics of women's active citizenship during the Second World War have been explored sensitively in James Hinton, *Women, social leadership, and the Second World War: continuities of class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁸⁴ SAA, Evangeline Booth Papers, Evangeline Booth Speeches, II, 312/1, 'Home League Meeting', 17 September 1935.

⁸⁵ SAA, Evangeline Booth Speeches, II, 312/1, 'The Home League', Earls Court, 2 September 1939.

⁸⁶ Maude Royden, 'The women's movement of the future', in Victor Gollancz (ed.), *The making of women* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1917), p. 143.

Home League talks was her understanding of the religiosity of women. As she claimed, it was women who went to church, mothers who prayed for absent sons and daughters, and wives who saw marriage as a sacrament to be blessed by God. We can get a better sense of Booth's understanding of the distinctiveness of women's skills of 'service' by comparing her talk to the all-women Home Leaguers with talks that she had given to future Salvation Army Officers (both men and women) in 1920 and to the American Institute of Social Sciences in 1933. In these two talks she focused respectively on the Salvation Army's social aesthetic and scientific creeds, describing it to future officers as 'the art of dealing ably with human life', and to the Institute as 'a science of service'.⁸⁷ The creed was clearly elastic and adaptable to different audiences, but in discussions aimed at women, it was useful to call on established exemplary figures.

The process of evoking historic exemplary figures, then, was not static. Rather it involved, at least in some cases, female philanthropists repositioning themselves, their colleagues and friends within changing understandings of women's role in society and forward-looking contexts. In this light, the significance attached to a cadre of canonised Victorian religious women was translated into models for interwar women's citizenship. The journal of the Mothers' Union, the most popular women's organisation of the interwar years, ran a series in 1935 which profiled Fry and Nightingale alongside social reformer and women's activist Josephine Butler, and founder of the Mothers' Union Mary Sumner as exemplary philanthropic women.⁸⁸ The promotion of this quartet of charitable women revealed the Mothers' Union's intent to stress the most traditional of womanly qualities to be emulated. Fry, Nightingale, Butler and Sumner were fashioned in the *Mothers' Union Journal* as deriving a pioneering expertise in 'social work' (a phrase resonant of the interwar years rather than the nineteenth century) from the call to serve God. This was a predictable position for the Anglican foundation to take, as was the series' insistence on the humility of the four women, who it claimed inadvertently attracted renown.⁸⁹ Cordelia Moyses has observed recently the inherent contradiction in the interwar Mothers' Union, which

⁸⁷Evangeline Booth, 'Around the world with the Salvation Army', *The National Geographic Magazine*, 37, 4 (1920), p. 347; SAA, Evangeline Booth Speeches II, 312/4, 'Institute of Social Sciences', 11 May 1933.

⁸⁸ Gertrude M. Payne, 'Four great women', *Mothers' Union Journal*, January 1935, pp. 10-1; March 1935, pp. 10-12; June 1935, pp.11-13; September 1935, pp. 3-5.

⁸⁹ Gertrude M. Payne, 'Four great women: Elizabeth Fry', *Mothers' Union Journal*, January 1935, p. 10.

on the one hand boasted a large membership, and on the other hand was intellectually out of step with wider British society, especially a new generation of women and mothers over ethical questions such as marriage and sex.⁹⁰ Moyses's observation flags the disjunction that could exist between an organisation's popularity (in terms of membership) and the cultural resonance of its message, as well as the differential impact of aspects of its message and activity. Moyses's work also raises questions about how far the emulatory models appropriated by women's organisations were related to the demographic profile of its average member – in the Mothers' Union's case a middle- to old-aged, typically married woman. It was possible for older models of women's social action to resonate with a younger generation. As Martha Vicinus has shown, new genres and media in the early- to mid twentieth century brought Florence Nightingale into the consciousness of a new generation of readers and listeners.⁹¹ Elizabeth Fry was similarly brought into the consciences of older children through a BBC play by Morna Stuart, 'Pioneers for the Kingdom', broadcast on the Regional Programme in the summer of 1937 (Fig. 12).

For some contemporary commentators, historical models could act as a foil to narratives about the social distance that the country had travelled since the Victorian age. In the summer of 1933, Margery Fry broadcast a series of BBC radio talks entitled 'Pioneers of a Humaner World' about writer and campaigner for women's rights Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin; industrialist and social reformer Robert Owen; nurse and medical reformer Florence Nightingale; surgeon and founder of antiseptic surgery Lord Lister; politician and philanthropist Lord Shaftesbury; and lawyer and politician Sir Samuel Romilly. Fry's broadcast on Nightingale was in part a reflection on the contrast between the Victorian and contemporary worlds.⁹² According to Fry, 'a century ago such a thing as a career outside marriage was still – in spite of all that Mary Wollstonecraft had written – an unthinkable thing for a well-to-do young lady'. Listeners were reminded that 'even the mildest playing at what we should now call "social work" was very difficult', that Nightingale was thirty-one before she secured a few week's nursing training in Kaiserswerth,

⁹⁰ Moyses, *History of the Mothers' Union*, p. 137.

⁹¹ Martha Vicinus, 'What makes a heroine? Girls' biographies of Florence Nightingale', in Vern L. Bullough, Bonnie Bullough, and Marietta P. Stanton (eds), *Florence Nightingale and her era: a collection of new scholarship* (London; New York: Garland, 1990), pp. 90-106.

⁹² Margery Fry, 'Pioneers of a humaner world III – Florence Nightingale', *The Listener*, 14 June 1933, pp. 942-3.

Germany, and that it was still some years before she received her parents' consent that she 'could plan and organise to her heart's content'.⁹³ Nightingale emerged as 'pioneering' in this series because she transgressed fixed gender boundaries. Fry attributed Nightingale's success despite various prejudices against her work to a wide range of personal qualities, including 'her immense devotion to the relief of suffering, her undoubted love of power, her delight in being where the strings were pulled, her skill in wrangling, the recklessness of her amusing tongue, and even the ill-health which made her keep all her energies for her work alone'.⁹⁴ The positive endorsement of characteristics such as Nightingale's 'love of power' frames a very different interwar invocation of Nightingale to the most famous, acerbic and anti-religious portrait of the period in Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918).⁹⁵ Starting from the premise that 'Florence Nightingale was a many-sided person', Fry's portrait accorded her subject a genuine moral depth. In presenting Nightingale in these holistic terms, Fry indicated a complex subjective process through which interwar female philanthropists imagined themselves, alongside their heroines, as whole people.

Alongside their function as evolving fêted historical figures in their own right and foils to complacency about the progressiveness of modern society, well-known nineteenth-century female social activists were also adopted as social types by biographers and journalists keen to stress the relational qualities of contemporary women philanthropists. Thus a *Times* obituary of Muriel Paget described her as 'the second "Lady of the Lamp"', an image which had been used in the nineteenth century to characterise Florence Nightingale.⁹⁶ There was a comparison between the geographical spheres of these women's work in Russia (Nightingale in Crimea in the 1850s, and Paget in Petrograd/Leningrad and surrounding regions in the 1920s and 30s). There were also similarities in aspects of their personalities: both women worked in military environments. But the comparison was somewhat tenuous. Drawing an analogy between Paget and Nightingale may well have grabbed the attention of some *Times* readers, but it also made Paget conform to a type, which could have varying connotations for her public reputation. The 'pioneering' status of women such as Nightingale and Fry remained a significant criterion of female philanthropists'

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 943.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 942.

⁹⁵ Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (1918; London: The Folio Society, 1967), pp. 123-74.

⁹⁶ 'Lady Muriel Paget: an appreciation', *The Times*, 22 June 1938, p. 18.

celebrity in our period, but situating this characteristic within the representative auras of their predecessors was purposive. Paget's notability was presented here neither as a personal nor an autonomous fame, but rather as a collectively-derived reputation. Feminist scholars have identified the collective presentational framework as a key theme in representations of women's public success and achievement.⁹⁷ Looked at through a broader optic, this narrative could also be used to shape how ordinary men and women understood and fashioned their own experiences and identities. Thus the obituary of Paget in *The Times* concluded that 'Such qualities as she had lived, are carried on and out by others, and therefore the lamp is always kept burning'.⁹⁸ The message here was very similar to the Mothers' Union's journal's article about how successive women would be called by God to committee work, and it was underpinned by Christian teachings about faith in God as providing the sustenance to life (Psalms 18:28). The 'lady of the lamp' image suggested the demotic potential of Paget's, and Nightingale's, work and reputation.

Conclusion

In 1895 the first Lady Almoner Mary Stewart was appointed at the Royal Free Hospital in London.⁹⁹ Lady Almoners were salaried post-holders who, in the pre-National Health Service, assisted health-care professionals through dealing with finances, drugs, appliances and administrative duties in hospitals, and overseeing the convalescent process and out-patients. By the 1920s, a university course in hospital almonry had been established to train future Lady Almoners, with further supplementary courses introduced in the 1930s to refresh practitioners' skills. The costs of this training – which rose from 40 guineas in 1923 to 30-60 guineas in 1938 – would have been prohibitive for all but the elite – but in the years immediately after the First World War, nearly a third of the women training to be almoners were demobilised members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment, who had obtained scholarships for training from the British Red

⁹⁷ E.g. Cucullu, 'Exceptional women?.'

⁹⁸ 'Lady Muriel Paget: an appreciation', *The Times*, 22 June 1938, p. 18.

⁹⁹ The first Lady almoner was Mary Stewart. For a recent discussion see Lynsey Cullen, 'The first Lady almoner: the appointment, position and findings of Miss Mary Stewart at the Royal Free Hospital, 1895-1889', <http://www.history.ac.uk/podcasts/voluntary-action-history/2009-09-28-lynsey-cullen> [accessed 30 October 2010].

Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁰ The role of Lady Almoner, therefore, could facilitate women's crossing of both occupational and social hierarchies. Indeed, the Lady Almoner retained a presence within the National Health Service up to around 1970.¹⁰¹ Lady Almoners were more than amateurs – they were salaried. Yet they also retained the benefits afforded to the amateur, of being able to work outside the rhetorical and literal constraints of fixed professional standards, whilst laying claim to knowledge that was as rigorously derived (through training) as that of their professional colleagues.

The Lady Almoner is one example of a publicly active woman in the early-twentieth-century whose cultural authority was derived from a blend of voluntary and professional insight. Another was the early woman justice of the peace, whom, as Anne Logan observes, undertook voluntary work 'not only with the enthusiasm of the amateur but also with the knowledge and expertise of the professional'.¹⁰² This chapter has shown that the varied syntheses implicated within voluntary expertise were in fact a much more broadly experienced position for women working in philanthropy and projects of active citizenship between the wars. Rather than thinking about these women's work in terms of a linear process in which amateur models were superseded by professional ones, it has revealed the ways in which professional skills could be used to validate voluntary activity, and voluntary expertise could be compared to professional organisational standards. There was creative tension and fluidity between the two realms. Indeed, discussions about women's expertise in the job market were not centred on a straightforward distinction between the voluntary and professional, but rather the overlaps between domestic, moral and organisational standards that made up women's varied obligations and status as citizens. The concept of training enjoined the implications of formal education to the development of inner qualities of self-worth. Committee work provided spaces for women to demonstrate insight in an extra-professional realm that mediated between gender-specific and mixed-gender cultures. Concurrently, in interwar Britain it was often still necessary for discussions of women's skills and specialist knowledge to invoke legitimating characteristics of

¹⁰⁰ MRC, MSS.378/IMSW/1/3/3/1, Annual Reports of the Hospital Almoners Council, 1905-38.

¹⁰¹ On the continuing role of lay – including voluntary – care in the post-1939 period, see Virginia Berridge, *Health and society in Britain since 1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 34-41.

¹⁰² Logan, 'Professionalism and the impact of England's first women justices', p. 837.

historical actors. Yet, this was not done apologetically. Rather, figures such as Florence Nightingale were taken up by a variety of different women's citizens groups, and were in some cases at least, themselves reframed in new forward-looking models. The professions were not the exclusive repository of specialist knowledge and public status for women in the interwar years. Women's insight was defined as operating on the boundary lines of the categories of professional and amateur, and necessitating the interrogation of both.

CHAPTER 4: THE ART OF KINDNESS: FUNDRAISING AND THE ECONOMIES OF WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

In 1930, children's magazine the *Girl's Own Paper* featured a cartoon about a classically 'female' form of philanthropic fundraising, the charity bazaar.¹ Drawn by the paper's illustrator, Anne Rochester, 'At a charity bazaar' showed two well-dressed women standing in front of a tabletop spilling over with trinkets and decorated with flowers (Fig. 13). The younger of the two women, the stallholder, holds an inkpot in her hand at which the older customer peers through a pair of magnifying glasses, before handing over two shillings from her purse as payment. Rochester's cartoon was an undisguised satire. In part it was a gendered critique about class, reflecting the middle-class bias of the *Girl's Own Paper's* readership and the apparent distaste of its editors for upper-class modes of female sociability.² In part it reflected the Christian tone of the magazine which, published by the British publishing house, the Lutterworth Press, echoed the evangelical accent of its forerunner, the Religious Tract Society. 'At a charity bazaar' was a critique that illustrated a change in social thought in the interwar years. In another scene, in which the stallholder suggested glibly that a hand-sewn bag might be taken round to be raffled by 'that Orphan with the squint', the reader was educated – almost in a Dickensian fashion – into the worst manifestations of an older paternalistic model of philanthropy which stressed the unequal power relationship between the giver and recipient of charity. There was little sense here of the roles played in the philanthropic project by the client. Indeed the orphan's individuality was entirely dismissed. Fundraising was shown in this scene, and the scene in which the customer purchased the inkpot, to function through exclusive interactions between the elite, rather than a genuine and meaningful interaction between charity donor and client. Beneath its arch representation of the motivations of the stallholder and her friends' charity, 'At a charity bazaar'

¹ Referring to the nineteenth-century practice, Frank Prochaska argued that 'The bazaar was pre-eminently a female affair, and was both cause and effect of the expanding influence of women in philanthropy', 'Charity bazaars in nineteenth-century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 16, 2 (1977), p. 71.

² Mary Cadogan and Patricia Craig, *You're a brick Angel!: the girls' story, 1839-1985* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976), pp. 263; 266.

had a serious and subtle message. Rochester told her young middle-class readers how not to operate in the economy of female philanthropy.³

‘At a charity bazaar’ was not alone in the interwar years in satirising well-to-do models of women’s philanthropic fundraising. In the spring of 1929 journalist and future civil servant Evelyn Sharp had written an article in Liberal newspaper *The Manchester Guardian*, lamenting the aesthetic abyss of charity sales. ‘One has only to visit the ordinary charity bazaar’, Sharp wrote, ‘to be set wondering whether, after all, a kind heart is sufficient compensation for the entire loss of simple faith in an English sense of beauty’.⁴ Sharp’s critique was focused on the economic model of the charity bazaar. Critiques of the bazaar had emerged in the late-nineteenth century amongst commentators who sought to promote the attractiveness of new retail models like the department store, aimed at the middle- and upper-class female shopper.⁵ By the turn of the century, the economic buoyancy of the upper classes led a commentator in women’s society magazine *The Gentlewoman* to question the need for sales for legitimate charity objects altogether ‘in a superlatively wealthy country like England’.⁶ Even ostensibly ‘modern’ organisations like the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP) continued to focus fundraising activity – organised by its Women’s Committee – on charity sales as a way of gaining high-profile support and publicity.⁷ Evelyn Sharp’s critique of the charity bazaar, therefore, was not aimed at overturning the model of the charity sale completely. Rather it was a comment on the need to refocus the public’s attention onto the relationship between donor and client in the process of social improvement. She questioned whether ‘kindness’ was enough to achieve genuine improvement – either social or aesthetic – when applied as a top-down model. Instead, she emphasised the need for the client to be actively engaged in an economy of self-help, a subject which she illustrated through a discussion of women in mining families in Durham and South

³ ‘At a charity bazaar’, *Girl’s Own Annual* (1930), p. 602.

⁴ Evelyn Sharp, ‘Art for kindness’s sake’, *The Manchester Guardian*, 6 March 1929, p. 8.

⁵ On understandings of the economic complexity of the bazaar see Prochaska, ‘Charity bazaars’, p. 63. On its commercial outdatedness in the late nineteenth century see Deborah Cohen, *Household gods: the British and their possessions* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 49.

⁶ M. Mercer Adam, ‘Shall charity concerts continue?’, *The Gentlewoman*, 14 January 1905, p. 50.

⁷ In the year 1931 alone, the NIIP’s Women’s Committee organised garden parties, charity matinée performances, a summer and autumn dance, a snowball appeal and school Christmas stocking appeal, LSE, NIIP 6/1, Minutes of Meetings of Women’s Committee, 7 July 1931, 13 October 1931, 10 December 1931.

Wales who were reviving local quilt-making industries. The philosophy of self-help was not new in the interwar period, but built on a long-established evangelical tradition of self-reflection.⁸ Indeed the philanthropic craftsmanship which Sharp discussed had a precedent in the late-nineteenth century in high-profile schemes such as Ishbel, Countess of Aberdeen's Irish Industries Association (founded in 1886), and was strongly focused through organisations such as the COS.⁹ But Evelyn Sharp's commentary revealed a significant development in interwar commentators' evaluations of the process of raising money for a charitable cause. Compassion and humanity were still required of the philanthropist, but this needed to be part of a participatory relationship between charity client and donor - what Sharp described ironically as 'The art of kindness'.

Anne Rochester's cartoon and Evelyn Sharp's journalism developed a narrative of philanthropic fundraising as more than the act of handing over money. This had been part of a Victorian critique amongst women commentators too. As Jill Rappoport argues in her recent study of Elizabeth Gaskell's 1851 novel, '*Cranford* is among a number of mid-century works that treat sympathetic exchange in a sustained manner and on an expanded scale, writing women's charity in terms of sympathy and sisterhood rather than coin'.¹⁰ The interwar period provided new cultural, political and social contexts for the elaboration of this rhetoric. On the one hand, as is illustrated in Rochester's cartoon, it was useful to set up such Victorian stereotypes as the Aunt Sally. At the same time, new thinking about the cultural behaviour of consumers that was developing in the advertising industry, provided a new impetus for examining the ethical and social processes of giving (as well as consuming). Between the wars, women's philanthropic fundraising operated on the boundary lines of civic and commercial cultures. Historians of social welfare have almost completely ignored the relationship between welfare and the consumer

⁸ On philanthropy and self-help see Justin Davis Smith, 'The voluntary tradition: philanthropy and self-help in Britain 1500-1945', in Davis Smith et. al., *Introduction to the voluntary sector*; Daniel Weinbren, 'Supporting self-help: charity, mutuality and reciprocity in nineteenth-century Britain', in Bernard Harris and Paul Bridgen (eds), *Charity and mutual aid in Europe and North America since 1800* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 67-88.

⁹ For a recent discussion of Lady Aberdeen's activity, together with two other British women's involvement in regional craft associations in Ireland, see Janice Helland, *British and Irish home arts and industries 1880-1914: marketing craft, making fashion* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Jill Rappoport, 'Conservation of sympathy in *Cranford*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36, 1 (2008), p. 95.

market, while historians of interwar culture have made very little of the philanthropic in their focus on consumerist profit as the motor for historical change.¹¹ Both of these historiographies have developed a dominant narrative that Britain became more consumer- and welfare- (as opposed to charity-) orientated as the national became more ‘modern’ (and implicitly more ‘secular’).¹² I challenge these models to argue for the interconnections between the discourses of civic and commercial cultures, and the relationship of both to religious models, in the practices of interwar women’s philanthropic fundraising. In some ways, this is an argument similar to that made by R. Laurence Moore in a nineteenth- and twentieth-century American context in *Selling God*, which focuses attention on the interplay of religious and commercial languages in the ‘commodification of religion’ in a broad cultural marketplace.¹³ However, while Moore argues from a secular historical perspective that such aspects of religious life ‘taint the credibility of religion’s moral influence’, I argue that fundraising shows how religious ethical action was a crucial part of the marketability of the philanthropic project.¹⁴ A study of the mechanisms and processes of women’s philanthropic fundraising reveals that not only were the realms of mass culture and philanthropy – realms usually held to be discrete – intertwined in interwar Britain, they also interconnected with older models of women’s charitable activity that sought to refine the relationship between the values of mercy and the market.

The role played by gender in the organisation of fundraising has received little attention from scholars. There has been almost no consideration of the practices in the British context since Frank Prochaska’s argument that nineteenth-century charity canvassing was utterly dependent on women’s labour, whether as volunteers or as commission-paid collectors.¹⁵ I want to highlight two levels to this argument. Ideologically, this is part of a gender-essentialised argument in which humanity and compassion were projected as ‘womanly’ qualities, or at least

¹¹ Although a growing historiography considers the relationship between consumer culture and civil society see e.g. Martin Daunt and Matthew Hilton (eds), *The politics of consumption: material culture and citizenship in Europe and America* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Frank Trentmann, *Free trade nation: consumption, civil society and commerce and modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹² The convergence of these paradigms is illustrated in Daunt and Hilton’s volume which includes one indexed entry to ‘religion and early modern material culture’, *The politics of consumption*, p. 308.

¹³ R. Laurence Moore, *Selling God: American religion in the marketplace culture* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 5; 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, quote at p. 273.

¹⁵ Prochaska, *Voluntary impulse*, ch 4.

qualities that were especially successfully practised by women. There has also been a sense that the required organisational skills of canvassing fitted with women's capacities. Some historians, especially in a North American context, have focused on the political agency which women acquired through charitable fundraising. Kathleen McCarthy argues that in pre-1930s America, middle- and upper-class wives and widows of wealthy men played a part in large-scale fundraising activities, and built forms of informal citizenship identities in the process.¹⁶ McCarthy emphasises the professional, 'business'-like enterprise of these women, a model which Ruth Crocker has also observed in Progressive-era female philanthropy.¹⁷ Writing in a Canadian context, Shirley Tillotson traces the development of the federated fundraising system between 1920 and 1960, to argue that 'the work of fundraising mixed commercial motives, power brokerage, policy activism, associational loyalties, and partisan networks'.¹⁸ The claims that these historians have made for the business models of women's charitable money-raising focuses attention on the intellectual traditions of the western world, which associate men directly with the capitalist system, and women indirectly. In interwar Britain, discussions of women's fundraising activity were related awkwardly to the language of business. But their limited acceptance into this sphere provided opportunities to claim a moral as well as a marketplace authority for their money-raising activity. Their fundraising was presented as operating on the boundaries of commerce, employing qualities of charisma and enterprise alongside altruism, which functioned through the values of beneficence and moral sentiment. Fundraising provided women with a way of mediating the capitalist market economy through a parallel emotional economy of compassion, humanity and kindness.¹⁹

This chapter analyses the emotional and material contexts in which British women philanthropists thought about and went about raising money for charity between the wars. Seen

¹⁶ Kathleen D. McCarthy, 'Women and political culture', in Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie (eds), *Charity, philanthropy, and civility in American history*, (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 183-4.

¹⁷ Ruth Crocker, 'From gift to foundation: the philanthropic lives of Mrs. Russell Sage', in *Ibid.*, pp. 199-216.

¹⁸ Shirley Tillotson, *Contributing citizens: modern charitable fundraising and the making of the welfare state, 1920-66* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), pp. 11-12.

¹⁹ An insight inspired by the discussion of the market metaphor and religion in Jane Garnett et. al., *Redefining Christian Britain*, pp. 8-11.

as innately compassionate, nurturing and caring, women were prized players in the economy of kindness. Indeed, not only were these characteristics seen to be key operational values in the female philanthropic endeavour, they also occupied a fundamental place in how women philanthropists understood their public projects and gained a sense of self-worth through their work. But if the emotional economy of philanthropy in some ways took women outside the value system of the capitalist market economy, they nevertheless had to reconnect with its material structures in the process of raising money. This was a practical and an intellectual process, and it involved women negotiating both the value of technology for reaching out to a growing community of potential donors, and new thinking in social psychology which refocused understandings of the relationship between the individual and community. The remainder of the chapter explores the interplay between these forces. It examines firstly the significances that women attached to the philosophy of social coherence in constructing a community of donors for their projects. Through focusing on the strategies used by Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget in achieving this process in very different philanthropic contexts, I argue that we need to be sensitive to the particular skills of women in constructing personal relationships and the psychologies that underpinned them. It then considers the ways in which women philanthropists sought to construct the donor's self-identity as a vital component of the process of charitable giving, exploring the nexus between gender, modernity and philanthropy. Probing further this three-way interconnection, I consider the significance of the new media of wireless radio and film in facilitating a new mode of 'mediated identification' between the philanthropic donor and client through focusing on Lettice Fisher's fundraising for the NCUMC. The chapter concludes by examining the convergence of business and civic (especially religious) models in the presentations of women's fundraising activity between the wars. The interplay between moral and commercially-driven vocabularies, it is revealed, was a key aspect in the evolution of these strategies between the wars. It facilitated women philanthropists' claims to an enduring emotional framework for their appeals, whilst appropriating new economies of technology.

Communities of donors

One might assume that elderly evangelical reformer Emily Kinnaird and ageing member of the cosmopolitan smart set Muriel Paget would have adopted very different models of philanthropic fundraising between the wars. Indeed, following different intellectual traditions and social contexts for their work meant that, on the surface, they did. While Kinnaird centred her philanthropic fundraising upon the Christian model of social and spiritual sodality, Paget situated her efforts within the post-war world of upper-class commerce and leisure. Looked at from a broader perspective, however, both Kinnaird's and Paget's money-raising activities enacted a philosophy of social coherence through which they sought to build a community of donors for their projects. A perception of the potential for philanthropy to function as a conduit for a range of non-political links was shared by both men and women philanthropists, and has been a feature of philanthropic fundraising across time and place. But women philanthropists were seen as being especially skilled in this form of non-political interaction. In the interwar period, they played on this narrative to recast modes of social confidence, and to forge a sense of emotional and moral togetherness, between themselves, donor and client. This discourse provided a forum for women to exercise political and religious agency in establishing a desired group identity of donors for their charitable cause. How, then, did Kinnaird and Paget go about forging communities of donors?

In keeping with the standards of an international elite, Paget's fundraising was both high-profile and large-scale. She set herself ambitious targets: her appeal in *The Times* in December 1930 for her charity to support British men and women stranded in Soviet Russia, the Distressed British Subjects (DBS), advertised a goal of £5000 for housing, food and medical care provisions for one year.²⁰ Her determination to improve her previous fundraising performances was clear; the 1930 campaign's target more than doubled her achievements in the 1927 drive, which had raised £2000. Paget's successful and zealous fundraising profile was premised upon her social status, and the confidence this imbued her with, which enabled her to forge personal connections within international elite society, business and avant-garde art circles. Paget cultivated these

²⁰ Muriel Paget, 'British subjects in Russia', *The Times*, 29 December 1930, p.6.

groups by reinforcing her status in frequent references to the standards of upper-class leisure and sociability. This performance forged a group identity for her donors. Paget's visibility as host and patron of high art events and dances was mediated both through traditional channels, such as letter-writing and advertisements of the social season, and new forums, such as best-selling paper the *Daily Mail's* gossip columns.²¹ Gossip columns – which were read by a broad range of tabloid readers interested both in 'gossip' and in learning about the substantive news that the columns often gave – offered the potential for a broader social base for the group.

In some ways the democratic tone of the gossip column's publicity of Paget's philanthropic ventures sat awkwardly with her own interactions with potential donors, which were intended to shore up the elite identity shared by philanthropist and donors. The first part of this process involved her awakening in her elite constituencies the long-established idea of the civic responsibilities conferred by their privilege and wealth. Of course, there was always the question of audience and reception to be considered when framing this message. So, in a talk to a group of American society women in 1927, Paget spoke of the relationship between aristocracy and notions of 'service' and 'obligation' as an identifiably European rather than an American culture, in which the social ambition which actuated donors to give funds was joined to a recognition that 'the community as a whole gains too'. She claimed that 'Women in society are realising slowly but surely that just "being" aristocratic isn't enough; that something is lacking which they must provide'.²² This was a behaviour that she thought was illustrated by some women, notably in the philanthropic work of political and suffrage activist Ruth Hanna McCormick; daughter of the financier J. P. Morgan and French relief worker Anne Morgan; author and suffragette Mrs. Janet Fairbank; socialite and opera patron Edith Rockefeller McCormick; and daughter of the former President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt,

²¹ E.g. 'Park Lane', 'As I see life', *Daily Mirror*, 21 November 1930, p. 16; 'The Rambler', 'To-day's gossip', *Daily Mirror*, 7 April 1932, p. 11. Paget had developed some of these fundraising tactics in her work with the Invalid Kitchens of London, see 'The living-picture ball', *The Manchester Guardian*, 3 December 1913, p. 8. An article in the *Daily Mail* in early 1931 observed her organising events suitable to changing fashions, including a charity bridge tournament rather than a ball: 'Looking at life', *Daily Mail*, 4 March 1931, p.8.

²² LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, Manuscript of lecture, 'Society – as seen by Lady Muriel Paget and told to Sonia Lee'.

Mrs. Nicholas Longworth.²³ But Paget felt that the examples of these women were yet to be replicated on a large-enough scale, and she appealed for a much broader understanding of the need to break down strict social demarcations in order for the true socio-moral purpose of philanthropy to be achieved.

She evoked a similar sense of moral responsibility when appealing for support from the international business community. High-profile business contacts affirmed the elite, conservative identity of Paget's donor community, and its association with international commercial exchange.²⁴ Indeed, as her appeal in 1919 to manufacturers of bulk cotton and material for clothing for her Czechoslovakian mission showed, the individuals invited to join the community of businessmen and women that she cultivated were pre-selected with a view to acquiring materials specifically needed for her philanthropy.²⁵ But, in a similar pattern to the gossip column's communication of her elite charitable events to groups outside the confines of upper-class sociability, her interactions with the business elite also projected her philanthropy through an outward-looking frame. Paget's charitable fundraising forums were constructed in order to imbue donors with the sense that their charitable donations were a form of active engagement which transcended the immediate act of donating money and connected individuals to a wider process of social improvement. For example, towards the end of her life, during her visit to the Hindu Mission retreat in outer Calcutta, Paget acted as a guide for her visiting business associates Mr. and Mrs. Hunter of Gillander and Co., both in the hope of encouraging them to donate money to her schemes and of educating them in the social and spiritual qualities of irrigation on display at the retreat.²⁶ Paget had both a practical and wider intellectual purpose in her fundraising activity. As she had emphasised in 1919 in the founding policy statement of her first

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Subscribers to the RRF included Directors and Associates of international industrial, manufacturing and shipping companies in the engineering sector (Shell, Royal Dutch Petroleum, Dunlop Rubber Co., ICI, Rio Tinto mining), shipping and export companies (P&O, Ellerman Line, Balfour Williamson), and financiers (Midland Bank), LRA, MS 1405, Box H, List of subscriptions to the Russian Reconstruction Fund, n.d. These networks of right-wing business elites can be seen to fit the model of the British half of an 'entente commerciale' with Soviet Russia which Stephen White has argued was an important force in securing diplomatic recognition upon the Soviet government in February 1924: *Britain and the Bolshevik revolution: a study in the politics of diplomacy, 1920-24* (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 176-7.

²⁵ 'Czecho-Slovak famine', *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 April 1919, p. 16

²⁶ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box H, Letter from Muriel Paget to Sir Richard A. Paget, Great Easter Hotel, Calcutta, 10 February 1936.

international philanthropy, the Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, 'This fund has come into existence to render moral and material support to Russia'.²⁷

The combination of moral and material support that Paget talked about during her post-war work in Russia and the Baltic States was also that which underpinned the activity of the YWCA, with which Emily Kinnaird was connected. Indeed, on one level, the process of creating social coherence amongst donors and the wider community was refracted through the sense of the responsibilities endowed by social elitism, suggested in advertisements for the YWCA's eightieth anniversary celebrations placed in the autumn of 1935 in the pages of society magazine *Tatler*.²⁸ But, differing from Paget's efforts, the YWCA's fundraising was also explicitly animated by a fervent evangelicalism. The inheritance of this belief system was visible in YWCA women's open distaste for materialistic methods. Minutes of the YWCA conference held in Ilkley, Yorkshire in June 1920 recorded that 'Funds are not to be raised by means of lotteries, sale of wines and spirits, palmistry, professional theatrical performances, or public subscription dances and public whist drives'. Pageants and plays were not necessarily ruled out as mechanisms for raising money but they had to be supported by National or Divisional Headquarters, and film showings were only to be arranged in association with the Vigilance Society or local YWCA or YMCA.²⁹ More positively, the religious tenor of YWCA fundraising coloured its preferred (evolving) media of drawing-room meetings, which began and ended in prayer, and flag days when members would collect money in the street and from door-to-door.³⁰

To keep up a spirit of devotion within themselves and amongst a wider group of donors, YWCA women developed fundraising strategies that built on communal faith resources to stimulate the active social engagement of a community of believers. In 1935, Kinnaird wrote an article for *The Blue Triangle Gazette* which sought to rally members for the YWCA's eightieth anniversary appeal by setting out key principles to secure success in raising money for the Jubilee.

²⁷ LRA, MS 1405, Box 14, Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, Statement of policy.

²⁸ 'Eighty years young', *Tatler*, 23 October 1935, xxii.

²⁹ MRC, MSS 243/14/14/8, Report of YWCA Biennial Conference at Ilkley, 25-30 June 1920.

³⁰ Drawing-room meetings were valued for their dual-purpose, and aimed at both increasing membership and subscriptions, see MRC, MSS.243/2/1/13, 'The YWCA in 1928: a review'. On the use of flag days see MSS. 243/98/3, National Appeal Committee Minutes, Minutes of Meeting, Tuesday 15 January 1918.

The appeal aimed to collect as many £80 purses as possible, which were to be presented to Queen Mary during the gala anniversary celebrations held in November 1935 at the Albert Hall, London.³¹ Kinnaird began her article by arguing that members should ‘pray for a feeling of fellowship in giving’.³² This feeling of fellowship implied common values and priorities of a social and spiritual connection, which members could mobilise as they reached out to potential donors. Kinnaird identified an under-tapped source for funds in older YWCA members and their descendants. Encouraging readers to target these groups, she listed descendants of the earliest subscribers who had already contributed to the appeal, including Reverend Edmund Holland, George Moon and co-founder of the YMCA Sir George Williams. Through successfully appealing to these constituencies, Kinnaird imagined ‘an ever widening chain of demand: “Ask and ye shall receive”...gather ye together the links, i.e. the bonds of comradeship, old family ties, eighty years of unexhausted life’.³³ The ‘chain of demand’ was a neat phrase that encompassed the relational motivation of a religiously-inspired fundraising effort. It received visual representation in the YWCA’s eightieth anniversary imagery, which illustrated a dialogue between two generations of YWCA women, a woman in a crinoline dress of mid-Victorian fashion passing a lamp to a young woman wearing a contemporary-style tunic above the dates ‘1855 – 1935’ (Fig. 14).³⁴

Images such as the chain and the lamp emphasised the complex interplay of different identities that could be invoked within one group or individual’s fundraising. While on the one hand the notion of the ‘chain of demand’ seemed to appropriate a metaphor of the market, on the other hand, interpreted through the lens of the social relationships encoded in the lamp, it signalled the values of religious illumination and hope. Kinnaird’s use of this metaphor was a self-conscious attempt to claim an enduring evangelical tradition of female philanthropy. But

³¹ *The Times*, 11 November 1935, p. 16.

³² A document produced to celebrate the eightieth anniversary explained the doctrine of fellowship: ‘Our aim as an Associations of women and girls is to glorify God in the fellowship of His Church and the service of His Kingdom, seeking, in personal loyalty to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, to show by our lives our wish to obey Him and to declare His call’, *Our eighty years*, p. 7.

³³ ‘Filling our purses: by the Hon. Emily Kinnaird – a wizard at it!’, *Our Own Gazette*, 53, 6, June 1935, p. 89.

³⁴ See e.g. cover page of *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, March 1935. The resonance of this image is suggested in press coverage of Kinnaird as ‘a little old lady with white hair done up in a bun, wearing flowing Victorian clothes and, unexpectedly living in one of the most modern flats in London’, Ivor Lambe’s Tales, “‘Boy Fried’ to a Princess”, *Daily Mirror*, 17 August 1939, p. 11.

even Paget's work, which neither she nor her commentators ever discussed explicitly as 'religious', was remembered for its spiritually revelatory qualities. The image of the continually burning lamp passing from person to person had been used to describe Paget's activity and legacy in her *Times* obituary (conjuring the image of Florence Nightingale).³⁵ Metaphors of the chain and the lamp, which constructed giving as transcending the immediate act of exchange, emphasised the complex set of social and temporal relationships that developed in the aftermath of a donation to charity.³⁶ Through this process, female philanthropists claimed genealogical links to the Victorian period. These bonds were premised upon human emotions. While having to operate within the broader structures of the capitalist market, the economy of women's philanthropic giving was framed not upon the values of competition, rather upon social codes of collaboration built through personal relationships.

Psychologies of fundraising

Kinnaird's and the YWCA's images of the chain and the lamp, like Paget's insistence that society women were implicated in wider community life, drew on developing psychological understandings of the self as both inhabiting and acting upon the social domain.³⁷ A diverse group of scholars have attested to the particular urgency with which interwar men and women engaged in a process of viewing themselves and their work in psychological terms.³⁸ Traditionally dominated by an interest in the psychological (and psychoanalytic) tendencies of modernist literary personnel, recent scholarship has focused on the ways in which psychological thinking looked outwards as well as inwards. Mathew Thomson argues that in the interwar years, and the

³⁵ See above, pp. 131-2.

³⁶ A process which Marcel Mauss conceptualised as 'a much more general and enduring contract', *The gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, translated by W. D. Halls (1950; London: Routledge, 1990), p. 5.

³⁷ Growing out of scholarship in cultural studies, there is a large and growing historiography on selfhood in modern Britain. For key interventions in the field see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the self: the making of the modern identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Richard Sennett, *The fall of public man* (London: Penguin, 2002); Heather A. Warren, 'The shift from character to personality in mainline Protestant thought, 1935-1945', *Church History*, 67, 3 (1998), pp. 537-55; Francis, 'Tears, tantrums and bared teeth'.

³⁸ Thomson, *Psychological subjects*; Nikolas Rose, *The psychological complex: psychology, politics, and society in England, 1869-1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), Anthony Giddens, *The transformation of intimacy: sexuality, love and eroticism in modern societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell, 1992).

twentieth century more broadly, psychological understandings connected the mind, body, ‘spirit’ and social dimensions of the person.³⁹ Holistic models of psychological thinking, and its relationship to social improvement, were not altogether new to the twentieth century, however. Rick Rylance argues that the modern discipline of psychology emerged in the late-nineteenth century alongside a movement towards its ‘professionalisation’ as a discipline, and the emergence of the influential sub-discipline of experimental psychology in the 1890s.⁴⁰ He observes four co-existing languages of psychology that preceded this development in the mid-Victorian period, with the dominant dialect, the ‘discourse of philosophy’, embedded in the focus on questions of selfhood and mental state in the highbrow literary culture of the period.⁴¹ Much of the discourse of the philosophy of the mind was framed around notions of experience – either personally derived or observed. Giving money to charity was one process by which an individual positioned his or her own experiences in relation to others’ sufferings and needs. Interwar fundraisers negotiated these themes in a shifting intellectual, political and welfare landscape, and through developing technologies. But at root, fundraising focused a set of ‘tenaciously persistent’ psychological questions which engaged donors in processes of self- and social-examination.⁴²

At the core of the psychological resonance of philanthropic fundraising lay its emphasis on how the individual as donor was connected to the wider constituency of charitable clients. Disseminating this idea involved philanthropists in a process of education. Women philanthropists were part of a much wider group of socially-reformist men and women who both conveyed and diffused knowledge about subjects outside the donor’s life experience. The technique framed the appeal literature published for the National Birthday Trust Fund (NBTF)’s ‘Safer Motherhood Campaign’, designed to answer the childbirth needs of poor women.⁴³ A flyer for the campaign in the 1930s included shocking statistics that 3,000 mothers died in childbirth

³⁹ Thomson, *Psychological subjects*, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Rick Rylance, *Victorian psychology and British culture, 1850-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40. The other three were the ‘discourse of the soul’, ‘the discourse of physiology in general biology’; and the ‘discourse of medicine’. Rylance is a literary critic, and his argument is rooted in close analysis of the works of figures including George Lewes and George Elliot.

⁴² On the historical persistence of psychological questions, see *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴³ NBTF was founded by two Conservative society women, Ina, Lady George Cholmondeley and Edith, the Marchioness of Londonderry, A. Susan Williams, *Women and childbirth in the twentieth century: a history of the National Birthday Trust Fund 1928-1993* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), p. 1.

each year; 84,569 had died in the last twenty-one years; and between 38 to 50 % of women in the gynaecological wards of the General Hospital suffered from preventable diseases directly caused by childbirth. It ended with an emphatic call: **‘This cruel and unnecessary suffering can and must be stopped. KNOWING – YOU MUST HELP’**.⁴⁴ Lamentably for members of the NBTF’s executive committee, and for the pregnant women whom it hoped to help, in the early 1930s the appeal’s call was ‘not catching on’.⁴⁵ This observation prompted co-founder of the NBTF and prolific medical charity worker Juliet Rhys Williams to conceptualise her own philanthropic role in an intriguing way, writing that she ‘ma[de] no pretence of knowing about raising money, my only concern being that we shall not let down the two Institutes whom we have promised to help’.⁴⁶ In one respect the observation of the NBTF women reflected the depressed economic conditions of the 1930s. Partly, as Susan Williams has noted, the limited success of the Fund’s campaign reflected the difficulty which surrounded talking about childbirth and pregnancy in public.⁴⁷ Juliet Rhys Williams’ remark illustrates that she sought to claim (to the other NBTF women, at least) a moral authority for her philanthropic endeavour – through a personal assurance of having usefully helped the client – which rejected the imperatives of market forces. Diffusing ‘knowledge’ was a critical part of this process. Female philanthropists deployed facts and statistics to trigger the emotional response of an engaged audience, which in turn facilitated a self-understanding that was the precursor to active citizenship.

The connection between a donor’s knowledge – whether pre-existing or recently gained – and his or her sensibilities towards a philanthropic project underpinned the appeal for Margaret MacDonald and Margaret Middleton’s Baby Hospital Clinic in North Kensington, which appeared in the first issue of Ishbel MacDonald’s socially-reformist paper *The Optimist*, in 1924. Framed by the classic fundraising headline, ‘Will you help?’, the two-page advertisement for the

⁴⁴ WLL, Papers of the National Birthday Trust Fund (hereafter NBTF), SA/NBT/U1/1, Flyer for the ‘Safer Motherhood Campaign’.

⁴⁵ WLL, NBTF, SA/NBT/U1/1, Letter from Lady Violet Astor to Lady Juliet Rhys Williams, 29 March 1933.

⁴⁶ WLL, NBTF, SA/NBT/U1/1, Letter from Juliet Rhys Williams to Violet Astor, 30 March 1933. Rhys Williams was involved in a wide range of unpaid work relating to medical and social work, see William Nicoll, ‘Williams, Dame Juliet Evangeline Rhys (1898–1964)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Oct 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45495>, accessed 16 Dec 2010].

⁴⁷ Williams, *Women and childbirth*, p. 14.

Baby Hospital was a montage of black and white photographs of robust babies being cared for by a doting band of female nurses and doctors. Because the penny newspaper was advertised and sold as a charitable donation, readers were engaged in a process of self-conscious voluntary action simply by purchasing a copy. The advertisement attempted to fashion the donor's or reader's sense of self on a number of levels. On one level its messages were communicated through long-established devices, such as the use of portrait photographs of high-profile donors (Queen Mary and the French Premier Edouard Herriot), which positioned potential donors within a collective identity of elite sponsors spearheaded by influential figures.⁴⁸ But there was also an attempt – critical for the paper's commercial appeal – to construct the reader's selfhood in consciously 'modern' terms. The montage gave textual and visual representation to recent findings in the biological sciences – in photographs of babies undergoing artificial sunlight treatment, and of a doctor using a stethoscope on an infant above the caption, 'I think the doctor must imagine I am a wireless set!'. By giving the babies a 'voice' through which to 'speak' to the potential donor (a photograph of one particularly well-fed baby had the caption 'Nurse says I'm a prize baby!'), it fashioned a sense that the infant clients of the Hospital were receptive to the charitable help they received, and indeed were active agents in a process of self-improvement (Fig. 15). Moreover, the emphasis on first-person voices – both of baby and donor – was critical to the psychological terms of this appeal, and drew on an aspect of late-nineteenth-century philosophy of the mind.⁴⁹ Here, the reader was being asked to think about his or herself not in terms of his or her needs, but through the needs the babies were claiming.

The Optimist's appeal for the London Baby Hospital Clinic was one illustration of a formula frequently used in interwar charity appeals which represented the philanthropic act as a way to reconfigure the self-esteem and self-understandings of the donor through an emphasis on the process of self-assessment undertaken by the client (rhetorically by the babies). Another example emerged in 1937 in Evangeline Booth's campaign to raise £75,000 for Salvation Army social work amongst children and poor mothers, the elderly, homeless and unemployed in

⁴⁸ *The Optimist*, December 1924, pp. 4-5. Herriot had entered into an alliance with Ramsay MacDonald in the summer of 1924 over German reparations.

⁴⁹ Rylance, *Victorian psychology*, p. 41.

Britain. The campaign literature, a booklet entitled familiarly, *Will you help?...a call from Evangeline Booth*, contained statistics suggesting the scale of deprivation which the Salvation Army was addressing. In 1936 Salvation Army Motor Kitchens distributed 19,433 hot meals and 28,925 gallons of soup, 55,065 meals were sold at less than cost price, tea and coffee were freely distributed to 8,956 waiting outside Labour Exchanges, and over 1,000,000 free or farthing meals were served up in poor areas in North England and Wales.⁵⁰ This quantitative evidence of social need was given a human face in the literature through a series of ‘success stories’ of the Salvation Army’s interventions. In ‘Homes are crashing every moment’, readers learnt of an ‘exemplary wife’ who, through grief at her husband’s hanging for murder, tried to kill herself and her two children, but with the assistance of Salvation Army hostels and holiday homes, restored herself to health and happiness and found a new home for her family on a farm.⁵¹ The moral significance attached to the home as the source of the woman’s self-worth as she sought to rebuild her family after the tragedy was significant, and the farm was symbolic of ideas of growth, fattening and production, both in the traditional sense of women providing nourishment in the domestic sphere and with capitalist overtones. The factual or representational accuracy of this story is neither verifiable nor pertinent, rather its significance for the historical record lies in its illustration of the Salvation Army’s claim of a philanthropic process which facilitated a shift from suffering to contentment. However, this narrative was not always straightforwardly represented, even within strategically positioned publicity. It emerged awkwardly in another narrative in the pamphlet about a London Salvation Army Children’s Home for disadvantaged children and young people. The heroine of that story was a little girl named Barbara. ‘Barbara is winning many victories over self’, the pamphlet proudly stated, “‘I used to fight other girls, especially if they was [sic] pretty’”, remarked she thoughtfully, “but now I am a Soldier of Jesus, most of the things I want to fight are inside my own heart”.⁵² The framing device of this narrative suggested the Salvation Army’s intention, but Barbara’s narration did not confirm that she was content. Barbara’s story suggested a shift from outward-looking dissatisfaction and jealousy (which she

⁵⁰ *Will you help?...a call from Evangeline Booth* (London: Salvation Army, 1937), pp. 6-7.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

had been prone to before finding the Salvation Army) to projects of internal improvement. But these internal projects still required her to engage in emotionally-fraught self-assessments, as was required of the potential donor in reading her words.

The Salvation Army's concern to encourage a new form of critical encounter between donor and client was also present in its 1935 global appeal 'Self-denial week'.⁵³ Linking this movement to a specifically gendered form of activity, an article in the *Daily Mirror* promoted the appeal under the light-hearted heading, 'Salvation in a poke bonnet'.⁵⁴ Written by the *Daily Mirror's* feature editor, Basil Nicholson, the article reiterated an older evangelical idea of self-sacrifice in the context of new thinking about social welfare. Judgement about the individual's perceived 'goodness' focused on whether the reader deserved his or her money more than the Salvation Army did. It sought to reframe the ideal of self-sacrifice, originally conceived of as part of a well-spent Christian life, within a broader popular canvas which appealed to the social make-up of the *Daily Mirror's* lower- to-middle-end readership. Subheadings such as 'The poor know best', encoded a new model of charity framed around revised models of inter-class relations. This model encouraged readers to respect clients' knowledge and experience and to view their own compassion as a form of civic friendship.⁵⁵ At the same time, understanding social differences between client and donor was emphasised as a key aspect of the psychological process of fundraising. 'We can all smile', the article wrote, 'if realities seem distant enough to us, at the crudities of the Banner and the tambourines and the poke-bonnets of Salvation...But when we look into our own hearts we will give – or hold back – according to how much good will we find there!'⁵⁶ Confronting the distance between client and donor made fundraising appear a vital step in reconstructing the relationship between individual and community. The inward-facing impulse to look to the heart was directly related to an outward-facing social disposition.

⁵³ The Salvation Army had launched its first Self-denial week in 1860, following the successful example of Self-denial fundraising drives by charities such as Dr. Barnardo's.

⁵⁴ Basil Nicholson, 'Salvation in a poke bonnet', *Daily Mirror*, 25 February 1935, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Analogously to broader discussions about the philanthropic method, see above, pp. 57-63.

⁵⁶ Nicholson's comments fit with Stefan Schwarzkopf's description of a shift in the interwar years from understandings of consumers in terms of "class" (based on income difference) to those of a 'mass' of individuals, united by need and desire: 'Classes to masses: how advertising agencies responded to the challenges of the mass market in interwar Britain', Paper given at the EHS Annual Conference 31 March- 2 April 2006, <http://www.ehs.org.uk/ehs/conference2006/Assets/IVESchwarzkopf.pdf>, accessed 21 December 2010.

New media and mediated identification

Appeals such as the Salvation Army's Self-Denial campaign engaged potential donors in a relational and visual encounter with the charitable client through a framework which stressed both commonality and distance.⁵⁷ Winning the compassion and sympathy of an engaged public was the dominant mode of nineteenth-century forms of address. Yet there were also signs of the development of a new mode in the late-nineteenth century, which sought to construct a relationship of identification between the donor and client, in addition to a feeling of sympathy. In the late-Victorian period this was initiated primarily through new developments in visual representations in print media. In his analysis of photographs used in Dr. Barnardo's turn-of-the-century publicity campaigns, Seth Koven argues that the mechanism and medium through which the charitable object or subject was reproduced had a critical impact on whether or not a potential donor responded, so that 'Barnardo's "representative" photographs, sketches, and narratives were all part of his apparatus to arouse public sympathy and activity on behalf of street children'.⁵⁸ Moral codes of veracity – which were always difficult to measure – could be bent in this enterprise.⁵⁹ As Koven's analysis of the sometimes faked 'before and after' photographs of the street children shows, the 'representative[ness]' of Barnardo's visual narratives did not necessarily equate to their authenticity, but rather to the donor's perceived – and often preconceived – idea of the charitable subject.⁶⁰ Forging a relationship of identification between donor and client was a complex process, because it was premised on successfully invoking an unguaranteed positive emotional response from potential donors. Both the medium and the personality involved in the appeal were critical tools in facilitating this relationship.

Fundraising innovations such as Barnardo's late-nineteenth-century photography were built on by philanthropists active between the wars in an evolving process of mediated

⁵⁷An insight inspired by Judith Walkowitz, 'The Indian woman, the flower girl and the Jew: photojournalism in Edwardian London', *Victorian Studies*, 42, 1 (1998), p. 5.

⁵⁸Koven, *Slumming*, p. 130.

⁵⁹On questions of authenticity and form see Michael Saler, "'Clap if you believe in Sherlock Holmes": mass culture and the re-enchantment of modernity, c.1890-c.1940', *Historical Journal*, 46, 3 (2003), pp. 599-622.

⁶⁰E.g. many of Barnardo's 'before' and 'after' photographs were found to have been taken on the same day, Koven, *Slumming*, pp. 118; 130.

identification. My phrasing points to the significance of the role of different media in both constructing and relaying messages about philanthropy to men and women. Dan LeMahieu's work on the media in the interwar period has shown that the British elite saw the new forms of mass communication as representing new opportunities for cultural intervention.⁶¹ These new forms levelled the opportunity to reach out to an expanding group of potential donors. Instead of simply reading about philanthropy or 'seeing' images of its clients reproduced in the pages of the press, interwar Britons could 'hear' about philanthropy on the wireless radio and could see it in an animated or metaphorical form in film. New media forms were significant both in awakening in men and women new sensory experiences of philanthropy and for situating philanthropy in new contexts. The wireless radio, in particular, facilitated the aural education of a growing constituency of listeners about philanthropy within the comfort of their own homes, and in doing so framed subjects (including philanthropy) in a much more emotionally confronting way. New media also demanded, as well as helping to develop, new techniques. Being unable to 'see' the protagonists or read their back-stories meant that a new description accompanied wireless broadcasts. Using my framework of mediated identification also highlights the role played in the response of the reader or listener or viewer or donor by individuals other than the donor or client, in particular by the celebrity patron or sponsor. This was not a new process; the publicity benefits of associating a high-profile personality with a particular charitable cause had been recognised for a long time.⁶² What was new to the interwar period, however, was the resonance of philanthropy with a burgeoning 'star system' through which philanthropy was helped to speak to potential donors across different cultural registers.⁶³ The terminology of mediated identification, then, holds within it a tension between a personalised, genuine 'identification' between client and donor and the 'mediation' of this process by various media, publicity systems and social norms. Developing older philanthropic publicity techniques, it embodied both an embracing and a renegotiation of developing technologies and systems of communication.

⁶¹ Dan L. LeMahieu, *A culture for democracy: mass communication and the cultivated mind in Britain between the wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

⁶² At the highest level, in the sponsorship of royalty, Prochaska, *Royal bounty*.

⁶³ Jeanine Basinger, *The star machine* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).

These themes can be illuminated through a focus on the new media fundraising efforts of Lettice Fisher's charity, the NCUMC. In 1925 the NCUMC was one of the first charities to be given airspace to make an appeal on the BBC's national programme. Charity appeals like the NCUMC's, and those made extraordinarily for war charities or in times of national emergency in the first years of the BBC's broadcasting history, became a regular feature on the BBC's national programme from early 1927 in the dedicated charity appeal feature, 'The Week's Good Cause'.⁶⁴ Personal connections might well have played a role in the NCUMC's early securing of an appeal slot: Fisher and her husband were early supporters of the BBC, and Herbert would go on to become a BBC Governor. Fisher herself broadcast the 1925 appeal. Building on the NCUMC's earlier press publicity, she spoke about the need for an engaged response to the problem of illegitimacy by men and women across the country.⁶⁵ Like Evangeline Booth in her 1937 *Will you help?* appeal, Fisher provided listeners with measurable data about the problem, specifying the 40,000 illegitimate babies who were born every year, and the one in seven who died before the age of one year. Also, like Booth, Fisher recognised that at least as important as delivering the facts about illegitimacy in Britain was the close-up image she gave of the human aspect of the NCUMC's work. NCUMC's work, Fisher informed listeners, sought to re-cement families who had been socially – and often geographically – broken, for example she spoke about a mother in Devon writing to the NCUMC about her daughter 'who has got into trouble somewhere in the north'.⁶⁶ The values of conventional domestic life and maternal care provided a familiar landscape through which to build identification between the NCUMC's donor and client.

However, it was not enough to offer unspecified narratives. In order to construct a sense of identification between the wireless listener and the philanthropic client, a detailed aural portrait of the client needed to be delivered. The significance which Fisher apportioned to this process is illustrated in the amount of airspace that she devoted in the five-minute 1925 appeal to

⁶⁴ For an extended discussion of the Week's Good Cause as an innovation in interwar philanthropic fundraising see Eve Colpus, 'The Week's Good Cause: mass culture and cultures of philanthropy at the interwar BBC', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22, 3 (2011), (forthcoming).

⁶⁵ Early NCUMC publicity included commissioned articles by the eugenicist Caleb W. Saleeby and sexologist Havelock Ellis, WL, 5/0PF/2/18/A, Meeting of the Press and Publications Committee, 27 May 1918.

⁶⁶ WL, 5/0PF/2/2/7/1, Manuscripts of broadcast NCUMC appeals: Mrs. H.A.L. Fisher, 'The Unwanted Child', 1925.

describing an unmarried mother. The portrait was fictional, but its length and detail heralded its significant value in the bid to gain an engaged response from listeners. 'Let us try to imagine for a moment', Fisher announced, 'the position of a girl who becomes an unmarried mother':

She may be only young, ignorant, or irresponsible. She may have been deceived by the child's father. She may be a girl of warm feelings and ill trained, through no fault of her own, but through the fault of all of us, who have built up this imperfect civilisation. She may be capable of infinite devotion, and indeed nothing is more remarkable than the way in which so many of these mothers pull themselves together, if only they can be given the chance, and become splendid mothers and self-respecting citizens.

The girl has almost certainly lost her work, and probably has lost it for some little time before the birth of her child. She has used up her savings, she has suffered in health, she has suffered terribly in other ways. Every woman with the least particle of imagination can realise something of what such a girl must have endured, if she comes, as she often does, of decent people. Her child is born in a maternity ward or hospital. When it is but ten days or perhaps a fortnight old, she has to go back to the world, with this helpless, exacting little creature in her arms, knowing but little of how to care for it, and faced with the problem of earning its living and her own, while she nurses and rears it. What chance has either of them? Is it any wonder that the babies die?⁶⁷

Here, Fisher used morally-freighted language to appeal to the imaginative engagement of a particular group of 'decent' women. The unmarried mother was constructed as having been gainfully employed and prudent, and her child was born in a clean, modern and respectable environment. Through emphasising these aspects of the unmarried woman's life, the appeal implicitly drew parallels between her and the 'respectable' listener, whilst always appealing to the listener's (self-) perceived higher social status. This dual technique of constructing identification with difference was a technique that Fisher used more explicitly in her February 1931 talk, 'The baby's point of view', which inaugurated a new wireless series developed for the NFWI entitled 'Other people's standpoints'.⁶⁸

Fisher's evocation of identification with difference echoed the findings of contemporary students of collective behaviour which showed that consumers responded to stimulus in malleable and multifaceted ways.⁶⁹ A classic stereotype in consumer culture of the early- to mid-

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Winifred Holtby, 'Who'd be a baby?', *The Radio Times*, 27 February 1931, p. 479.

⁶⁹ An insight inspired by Matt Houlbrook's broader discussion of the social formations of individual psychology, 'A pin to see the peep show': culture, fiction and selfhood in Edith Thompson's letters, 1921-22', *Past and Present*, 207, 1 (2010), p. 219. Houlbrook was himself building on LeMahieu's work, *Culture for democracy*, pp. 107-12.

twentieth century was of the ‘rational man’ and ‘emotional woman’.⁷⁰ Elspeth Brown’s study of photography and consumer culture in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America, where advertisers and psychologists ‘shifted their model of the typical consumer from “rational man” to “emotional woman”’, has shown that this was both a gendered strategy and one which predated the popular development of the wireless (as well as one which featured in a transatlantic, if not a global community).⁷¹ The wireless offered ways of developing these techniques in a more refined form, through which the process of identification could be more immediately achieved. In this context the emotional response sought could be either men’s or women’s, although the tone of engaging it differed depending on the gender of the listener that was being addressed. Thus, in a BBC Good Cause appeal broadcast on behalf of the NCUMC in May 1930, politician and Vice-President of the Council Neville Chamberlain, appealed to women listeners to compare the opportunities they had (whether as child or mother) with those of the unmarried mother and her illegitimate children, but urged men to donate out of a communal sense of responsibility for the selfish behaviour of those men who had fathered illegitimate children.⁷² Here, female listeners were encouraged to identify with the unmarried mother, whereas male listeners were appealed to through a sense of difference from unmarried fathers.

In charity appeals on the wireless, a mediated form of identification was centred on the relationship between broadcaster and listener. An article about the Week’s Good Cause in a 1935 issue of the BBC’s programme-listing magazine *The Radio Times* stated that the first step to a successful appeal was the broadcaster’s ‘microphone personality’.⁷³ Fisher fitted this model; through her connection with the NFWI she was a regular and practised broadcaster in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁷⁴ Being a ‘microphone personality’ was not necessarily the same thing as being a ‘celebrity’ – although some celebrities did have such an aural appeal – but it did confer a

⁷⁰ Don Slater, *Consumer culture and modernity* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass.: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 54-9.

⁷¹ Elspeth H. Brown, *The corporate eye: photography and the rationalization of American commercial culture, 1884-1929* (Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 2005), p.167. Brown argued that pioneering advertising psychologists ‘emphaised the role of mental imagery in awakening the senses’, p. 168.

⁷² WL, 5/0PF/2/2/7/1, Manuscripts of broadcast NCUMC appeals: Neville Chamberlain, 4 May 1930.

⁷³ ‘All about the Week’s Good Cause’, *The Radio Times*, 4 Jan 1935, p. 6.

⁷⁴ *Housewife* and *Mothers and families* were both published compilations of broadcast BBC talks Fisher had first given for the NFWI.

form of celebrity status upon broadcasters. Of course, the importance attached both by charities and the BBC to celebrity endorsement built on a much older tradition amongst charitable organisations which stressed the need for a 'figurehead' in order to frame their activities and fundraising within a personal dimension, just as it also signalled the increasing significance attached to the celebrity system within interwar mass culture more generally. Identification between philanthropic donor and client was not a straightforward process: whether because of disjuncture in class, gender, age, education or indeed any other life experience, those who donated to the wireless charity appeals would not necessarily have identified with the subject of an appeal. Indeed, the average middle-class wireless listener was unlikely to have been interested in identifying with the objects of the Good Cause. The image projected by the famous man or woman presenting the appeal was potentially far more attractive to the average listener, and philanthropists often encouraged donors to 'identify' with this figure.⁷⁵ In this way, listeners established a vicarious relationship with the charitable client through what was constructed as an immediate connection with the famous man or woman presenting the appeal.⁷⁶ Some personalities were associated with more than one charitable cause. Christopher Stone, who was employed by the BBC in 1927 as Britain's first disc jockey, was the most sought-after name to broadcast appeals in the 1930s, and the appeals which he made were always in the top three revenue-raisers.⁷⁷

As well as developing a fundraising presence through the medium of the wireless radio, leading NCUMC personnel also recognised the value of film for this purpose. In 1920 they commissioned a popular entertainment-model twenty-minute silent feature film about two unmarried mothers.⁷⁸ Directed by Rex Wilson and produced by British firm Grangers Exclusives, *Unmarried* told the story of a working-class woman and a squire's daughter who grew up in the

⁷⁵ For a classic exposition of the notion of identification between celebrity and audience see Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1979). For a discussion of identification through a feminist lens see Jackie Stacey, 'Feminine fascinations: forms of identification in star-audience relations', in Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Stardom: industry of desire* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 141-63.

⁷⁶ Colpus, 'The Week's Good Cause'.

⁷⁷ Caversham, BBC Written Archive Centre (hereafter WAC), RS/282/2, Appeals Results. See results for 1932, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938.

⁷⁸ Rachael Low argues that the short-length of early commercial films reflected the fact that they were aimed at 'an unselective, low-income audience going regularly [to the cinema] several times a week', *The history of the British film, 1918-1929* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1971), p. 47.

same village in Derbyshire, their journey through life as unmarried mothers, and the role played by the NCUMC in facilitating the eventual redemption of one of them. *Unmarried* was a critical failure. The film trade press criticised it both for its technical limitations (poor lighting) and its concept, describing it as too emotive and a ‘semi-propagandist melodrama’.⁷⁹ Criticisms of the amateurish quality of the film may well have stemmed from the ambivalence of the trade press towards the NCUMC, and from its knowledge that Grangers Exclusives had relinquished editorial control.⁸⁰ By contrast, publications such as *Kinematograph Weekly* and *The Bioscope* were impressed by *Unmarried*’s celebrity cast. Led by Gerald du Maurier, who had earlier achieved West End fame and renown as a film star, *Unmarried* starred a high-profile and up-and-coming cast, including American actress, Malvina Longfellow, Mary Glynne, Edmund Gwenn, and Constance Backner, wife of the co-writer Arthur Backner.⁸¹ However, while identifiable ‘screen’ personalities were discussed in the trade press, it was the group of ‘social’ celebrities who featured in the film that caught the attention of the society press. An article in *The Sketch* reproduced stills in which Lady Margery Greenwood (who would be appointed CBE in that year for services to the Irish peace); Conservative politician and Vice-President of the NCUMC Henry Cavendish Bentinck; eugenicist, Caleb Saleeby; actress and society hostess Lady Diana Cooper and Australian actress Marie Lohr all performed as members of the NCUMC (Fig. 16).⁸² There are parallels between the emotive melodrama for a cause espoused in *Unmarried* and the left-wing (often self-starring) aristocratic films that came later in the 1920s and in the 1930s, like the Socialist Film Council’s *Road to Hell* (1933) starring Naomi Mitchison. There is also an intriguing juxtaposition with the message of American silent romantic comedy, *It* (1927), in which meddling ‘Lady Bountifuls’ received the most opprobrium for misjudgment of American film star, Clara Bow’s character, Betty Lou Spence as an unmarried mother, and their failure to show compassion (like Lou did) to these women’s plight. But *Unmarried* configured the message and the significance of medium differently from both of these genres. Lettice Fisher, who addressed

⁷⁹ *Kinematograph Weekly*, 29 April 1920, p. 95; *The Bioscope*, 29 April 1920, p. 49.

⁸⁰ The reviewer in *Kinematograph* noted that ‘some of the expository sub-titles bear obvious signs of having come from other than a trade source’, *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Gerald du Maurier had an established profile in instruction films, having starred in the Ministry of Food sponsored *Everybody’s Business* (1917), which advocated food economy during wartime.

⁸² ‘Unmarried: society on the screen’, *The Sketch*, 11 February 1920, p. 227.

the audience in a short clip before the opening credits of *Unmarried*, was performing a role distinct from a film star. The glamour of commercial cinema might well have given an additional impetus to the process of philanthropic fundraising, but whilst the relationship between film star and audience was self-consciously contrived as distance, Fisher's role sought to imbue togetherness, in emotional and moral senses, between the audience and the cause she represented.⁸³

Bridging civic and commercial cultures

As well as illustrating how film could construct new forms of emotional relationship between charitable donor and client, an analysis of *Unmarried* also sheds light on contemporary understandings of the interplay between civic and commercial cultures in the enterprise of women philanthropists' fundraising. *The Bioscope* did not allude to the NCUMC's connection with the film at all.⁸⁴ *Kinematograph Weekly*, on the other hand, attempted to probe the relationship, stating that because of its connection with the NCUMC, *Unmarried* had an object beyond entertainment, and that it must 'be judged from that standpoint as well as from that of purely Trade merit'.⁸⁵ Overall *Kinematograph* thought that the NCUMC's message could have been more successfully disseminated 'through a film tracing the effect of the present state of law and public opinion regarding illegitimacy upon the life of the child...but "Unmarried" provides a model guardian for the heroine's baby and is much more largely concerned with the mother's misfortunes in poverty in London – misfortunes in no way peculiar to "unmarried mothers"'.⁸⁶ Comments like this show that the trade press was not entirely writing off the project of a charitable film because it sat outside the operational standards of commercial cinema. Just as the NCUMC was engaged in a process of re-imagining how the philanthropic project could blend the standards of philanthropy and consumption, so too were some of its critics. The connections

⁸³ A point that has been made about the documentary film genre in the 1930s: Scott Anthony, 'The GPO film unit and "Britishness" in the 1930s', in Scott Anthony and James Mansell (eds), *The projection of Britain: a complete history of the GPO Film Unit* (London: BFI, forthcoming 2011).

⁸⁴ *The Bioscope*, 29 April 1920, p. 49.

⁸⁵ *Kinematograph Weekly*, 29 April 1920, p. 95.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

between the commercial and philanthropic spheres were clearly understood amongst leading NCUMC members, who hoped the film would bring both ‘substantial financial benefit’ and ‘valuable publicity’.⁸⁷

The production of *Unmarried* involved philanthropic women such as Fisher in negotiating the intellectual nexus of commerce, mass culture and philanthropy. In part this was motivated by recognition amongst NCUMC personnel that the average donor faced a range of demands on her or his income, time and energies, from competing commercial and voluntary bodies. Accordingly, there was a choice to be made between projecting a neat or awkward conjunction of philanthropy and commerce. This could either stress philanthropy’s difference from the commercial work of consumption and entertainment, or its alignment with the world to encourage giving through consumption. At times, the juxtapositions of philanthropic and mass consumer cultures could highlight their seemingly very different ethics: on the same page as the *Daily Mirror*’s discussion of the Salvation Army’s 1935 Self-Denial appeal, for example, there was an advert for Brand’s A1 sauce.⁸⁸ In other cases, commercial and philanthropic concerns seemed to align, as in advertisements for Cadbury, which sponsored the *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, or for William Hesketh Lever’s Fairy soap sponsoring Gracie Fields’ Charity Fund (a fund set up to assist charities).⁸⁹ This cultural blending in turn may have played a larger part in framing commercially-directed appeals than is generally acknowledged by historians (possibly for fear of sullyng past campaigns by highlighting their commercial nous). Being sensitive to this possibility adds a new perspective to the work of historians examining intersections between culture and social politics in the functioning of consumer cultures. Frank Trentmann has used models of political economy to argue that in the interwar period values of consumption and civil society were configured in mutually reinforcing ways through the discourse of ‘social–democra[cy]’.⁹⁰ Trentmann’s argument chimes with a study of female philanthropy, because as Matthew Hilton

⁸⁷ WL, 5/0PF/1/4/1, Quarterly Report, 30 June 1919.

⁸⁸ The juxtaposition worked at a dryly humorous level as well: an advertisement for a condiment sat next to an anecdote about a man who had gone without pudding for a year in order to give to the Self-denial appeal, *Daily Mirror*, 25 February 1935, p. 10.

⁸⁹ *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, 9, September 1938, p. 126.

⁹⁰ Frank Trentmann, ‘Bread, milk and democracy: consumption and citizenship in Britain, c. 1903-51’, in Hilton and Daunton, *Politics of consumption*, p. 151.

and others have argued, contemporary commentators in twentieth-century Britain often gendered the consumer female.⁹¹ Yet the nexus of civic, commercial and gendered cultures of consumption was contested as much as it was accepted in interwar Britain. Thus we cannot fully understand the complexities of this experience simply by analysing the discourse of political economy. Rather, we need to account for the overlap between economic and ethical qualities. In the analysis that follows I suggest that women's philanthropy was presented as bridging civic and commercial cultures through its mediation of categories of religious and secular, and its traversing of national idiom.

Analysing the gendered intersections between public discourses of philanthropy and business reveals the various emphases on, and relationships between, these various idioms. In interwar Britain projections of male philanthropists were typically articulated in terms of a philanthropic aptitude that was derived from their business sense. Articles on men philanthropists in the interwar supplements of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, for example, tended to link their subjects' charitable projects to quantitative measures of their business acumen, while articles on women philanthropists were framed around essentialised 'womanly' qualities of altruism, care and support.⁹² The differences in the narrative devices used in these articles reflected a diffused and enduring intellectual tradition which associated men wholeheartedly, and women more awkwardly, with the capitalist system. Indeed, this tradition played upon celebratory narratives of famous men philanthropists, such as the *Daily Express* obituary of the famous soap manufacturer and English philanthropist William Hesketh Lever, Viscount Leverhulme, which quoted its subject's mantra, 'My philanthropy is business. I believe in human sympathy as an indispensable part of business'.⁹³ Like many notable nineteenth-century business figures who were also philanthropists, Lever was a dedicated Congregationalist, and his religious beliefs informed his business activity.⁹⁴ As David Jeremy's work makes explicit, there

⁹¹ Matthew Hilton, 'The female consumer and the politics of consumption in twentieth century Britain', *Historical Journal*, 45, 1 (2002), pp. 103-28.

⁹² Although there was scope to rearticulate this essentialist discourse, see above, pp. 81-3.

⁹³ 'Rise of Lord Leverhulme', *Daily Express*, 8 May 1925, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Brian Lewis, *So clean: Lord Leverhulme, soap and civilisation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

was no assumed segregation between capitalism and Christianity where men were concerned.⁹⁵ But for women, it was a different picture.

Business models clearly underpinned many religious women's philanthropic projects too, but there was a greater tension in presenting their projects in these terms. Discussions of religious women philanthropists in the late-nineteenth century were often structured by the tension between the efficient, business-like aspects of their endeavours and their prescriptively 'womanly' qualities. Narratives in this period often focused on the symbolism of the woman philanthropist's desk or study, but this was always mediated by signifiers of domesticity, often visually encoded in a well-placed kettle or similarly homely image.⁹⁶ There were some very significant late-nineteenth-century exemplars of sincerely religious female philanthropists using business methods, notably Christian socialist Octavia Hill, who famously invented a system of rent collecting, and temperance activist Agnes Weston, who would go on to become a Dame for her work providing accommodation and banking arrangements for sailors and their families.⁹⁷ In contrast, in the interwar years, religious female philanthropists and their organisations were willing more directly to use the language of business to describe their own activity, at least within organisational literature. So at a YWCA appeal committee meeting in the summer of 1921, one member emphasised the necessity for a business manager who, in the President's absence, could make emergency decisions.⁹⁸ This trend reflected the broader opening up of business and professional occupations to women workers in the post-war years. But it also showed how the organisational standards of professional and voluntary work could be blended.⁹⁹ Women working for the interwar YWCA were not relics of a religious voluntary activity that was bound to be

⁹⁵ David Jeremy (ed.), *Business and religion in Britain* (Aldershot: Gower, 1988) and *Capitalists and Christians: business leaders and the churches in Britain, 1900-1960* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). See also Jane Garnett, 'Commercial ethics: a Victorian perspective on the practice of theory', in Christopher Cowton and Roger Crisp (eds), *Business ethics: perspectives on the practice of theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 117-38.

⁹⁶ Colpus, 'Philanthropy, femininity and fame', pp. 22-4.

⁹⁷ For recent discussions of these two women see Stephen P. Walker, 'Philanthropic women and accounting. Octavia Hill and the exercise of "quiet power and sympathy"', *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, 16, 2 (2008), pp. 163-94; Alston Kennerley, 'Weston, Dame Agnes Elizabeth (1840-1918)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2008 [<http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/36842>, accessed 4 Jan 2011].

⁹⁸ MRC, MSS. 243/98/3, Appeal Committee, Minutes of Meeting of Appeal Committee, Monday 4 July 1921.

⁹⁹ See above, ch. 3.

overtaken by professionalisation. Instead, they articulated and enacted great flexibility and were arguably less constrained than business or professional women, for whom the occupational and rhetorical pressures of working life were more fixed.

Notwithstanding this gradual shift amongst female philanthropists themselves, British publicists and writers remained reluctant to frame these women within the discursive realm of business, in which an increasing number of middle- and upper-class women were publicly claiming a role.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, Evangeline Booth was credited with having refined her administrative skills during her leadership of the American Salvation Army, where she had established the organisation's national financial base, beginning in 1919 with the hugely successful Thirteen Million Dollar campaign. Publishing in America, Dale Carnegie, writer and pioneer of business psychology and author of *How to win friends and influence people* (1936) included Booth in his *Five minute biographies* (1946), noting her efficient working practices of keeping a pen and pad next to her bed at night and dictating correspondence for the duration of her one hour car journey from home to office.¹⁰¹ The willingness among American writers to accredit Booth's business skills was first publicised in 1930 in the book *Strategy in handling people*, written by advertising expert Ewing T. Webb and psychologist John B. Morgan. Published by the New York Garden City Publishing Company, *Strategy in handling people* was a study in applied psychology which offered biographies of people who showed good business sense and strategy. It was advertised in the American daily press in terms of being as 'Exciting as detective fiction'.¹⁰² Booth was the only woman included in the book. In the text the salesman was gendered as male, a distinction that one reviewer noted in highlighting Booth's lonely position among over a hundred male characters.¹⁰³ Appearing in the chapter, 'How to interest and convince people' – which focused on the ability 'to speak the other fellow's language' – Booth featured alongside the famous New York managing editor John. D. Rockefeller, and the sea captain Charles W. Brown, amongst others. Webb and Morgan discussed how Booth, appealing to other people's personal

¹⁰⁰ As attested by organisations such as the Soroptimists and the British Federation of Business and Professional women: McCarthy, 'Service clubs', esp. 542-7; Perriton, 'The education of women for citizenship', pp. 84-5

¹⁰¹ Carnegie, *Five minute biographies*, p. 98.

¹⁰² Advertisement, *The New York Times*, 8 March 1931, p. 75.

¹⁰³ Homer N. Calver, 'Strategy in handling people', *Journal of Public Health*, 21, 4 (1931), p. 459.

experience, would ‘send hardened convicts to their knees in tears after talking to them for only a few minutes’:

‘She would start with things the criminal did as a boy’, says Waldo Warren, ‘by asking him questions about his mother, drawing him out about his own experiences. The convict could resist anything that came from outside, but against ideas that came from within himself he was powerless’.¹⁰⁴

It is significant that the text focused on the emotional power of Booth’s behaviour and words, which, although not necessarily, certainly in her case were animated by a sincere religious faith. Indeed, the language of a power coming from within the prisoner is itself reminiscent of the Christian imagery of the Holy Spirit. This figurative language was vital to overcoming a discomfort, even amongst these commentators who were willing to cite Booth, in presenting a woman’s business skills which were still deemed relatively unusual. It might in fact have presented a close interaction between American and British publicity strategies, in which the emphasis on Booth’s religious over business model was always made.¹⁰⁵ The framework of ‘modern’ business methods was, in interwar men’s eyes in Britain and America, still predominantly gendered male.

Booth herself had problematised the category of business advertising through a religious language and message in her book *Toward a better world*. *Toward a better world* emphasised sincere religious commitment as the one true path for the lives of rich and poor alike. ‘Genuine religion’, Booth wrote, ‘controls the merchant, it scrutinises his balance-sheets, it verifies his statements concerning his merchandise...It compels the contractor to spread between the bricks well-tempered mortar rather than unslaked lime. It guarantees “the advertising tongue” of the fishmonger as well as “fresh fish”’.¹⁰⁶ The practice of good salesmanship, in Booth’s interpretation, involved the marriage of a spiritual faith and good business practice. Christian women recognised the tensions between these two models, but they sought to overcome them.

¹⁰⁴ Ewing T. Webb and John B. Morgan, *Strategy in handling people* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1930), p. 32

¹⁰⁵ This insight resonates with Stefan Schwarzkopf’s critique of the ‘Americanization’ of advertising and marketing in this period, ‘Who said “Americanization”? The case of twentieth-century advertising and mass marketing from a British perspective’, in Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht (ed.), *Decentering America* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007), p. 26.

¹⁰⁶ Booth, *Toward a better world*, p. 30.

In 1925 Emily Kinnaird wrote of her admiration of YWCA American secretaries who, in middle-age, were developing their knowledge of business careers ‘in order not to hinder the younger generation’.¹⁰⁷ Kinnaird understood this development to be an essential aspect of the re-articulation of the YWCA’s relevance and resonance to the latest generation of young women. She regretted that the trend was not observable within the British YWCA, despite efforts by her and other leading members to diffuse the qualities of business methods in lectures to members. ‘In contrast to this’, she wrote, ‘I see some branches throughout this country ceasing to make any impression on their neighbourhood, totally out of touch with young life, and becoming an old women’s Association’.¹⁰⁸ Comments like these, together with the YWCA’s employment of business managers, has led Susan Mumm to claim that the women who founded and developed groups such as the YWCA ‘were pioneers in the development of women’s non-profit businesses’, evolving business practices and internal bureaucratic systems as they went along.¹⁰⁹ While Mumm’s characterisation of female leaders of organisations like the YWCA as ‘senior executives’ is an important corrective to many histories which have portrayed philanthropic women as outdated, fundraising illustrates the overlaps between older and newer features of philanthropic women’s activity between the wars. An executive figure she might have been, but Emily Kinnaird wrote in 1925 that ‘I have been and hope to remain a beggar all my life’.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

Whether performed at a bazaar or in a wireless appeal, women’s roles in philanthropic fundraising in the interwar period invite psychological speculation. Philanthropic appeals were not only vehicles on the road towards full citizenship, in which women could more comfortably enter the capitalist marketplace of money exchange. Rather what needs to be explained is the interplay between the evolving models of consumer- and market-orientated activity and the values of compassion which traditionally underpinned women’s philanthropic projects. As

¹⁰⁷ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 119.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Mumm, ‘Women and philanthropic cultures’, pp. 65-6.

¹¹⁰ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, pp. 114-5.

developments and techniques in mass culture and other forms of cultural interventionism proliferated in the years between the First and Second World Wars, female philanthropists and their patrons saw both an opportunity to appropriate models that were being successfully applied in consumer contexts, and a need to reconceptualise these models within an alternative set of moral values framed by altruism. Drawing on new technologies and new thinking in psychology, female philanthropists fashioned ideas about the holistic self and the malleable and ‘emotional’ consumer in order to cultivate potential donors – both as individual consumers of a form of philanthropy identified from its competitors, and as members of a collective process in which the community as a whole benefitted. Fundraising said as much about the philanthropist’s relationship with the community as it did about herself.

Indeed, the processes of consuming and ‘giving’ were constructively and creatively linked at the levels of both materiality and psychology.¹¹¹ Looked at through the lens of subjectivity, people ‘consumed’ philanthropy even as they participated in it. Successfully tapping into donors’ sensibilities and feelings as both rational and emotional beings was critical to this process. In a sermon published in 1935 in the collection *Love is all*, Evangeline Booth spoke about the need for men and women to have a clear sense of social vision in order for Charity to be successfully given. In ‘Coloured Views’ she spoke about charity beautifying the world: ‘No matter with what magnificence and artistic correctness a scene may be portrayed on canvas’, Booth claimed, ‘if the eye lacks perception of harmonious blending of colour, or realistic grouping of life, to that eye a picture however excellent it may be is but a poor daub, whereas to vision quickened with a perception for the beautiful, it may be a triumph of art’.¹¹² Without the love of mankind that propelled the philanthropic project, Booth argued, life would be monochromatic. Fundraising involved women philanthropists in activity that was much more complicated than simply working through the structures of the capitalist market, it was also about re-imagining this structure as an emotional economy from which the status of both philanthropy and women’s place in society was derived. This was an aesthetic, intellectual and practical

¹¹¹ Sociologist Mary Douglas argued that consumption is partly about giving, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The world of goods* (1987; London: Routledge, repr. 1996).

¹¹² Booth, *Love is all*, p. 68.

process. In the seemingly prosaic world of philanthropic fundraising, the self-understandings of client, donor and philanthropist were remade.

CHAPTER 5: 'PUBLIC PHILANTHROPY', CULTURAL AUTHORITY AND THE POLITICS OF COMMUNICATION

Towards the end of November 1939, one month after she officially retired as World Leader of the Salvation Army, Evangeline Booth boarded a ship at Liverpool to return to her home in Hartsdale, New York. Booth arrived in New York on 5 December.¹ On 20 December, she wrote a letter to British portrait artist Frank O. Salisbury recalling the bleakness of the journey, which included an eleven-day black-out and several overnight submarine chases. 'The whole voyage', Booth wrote, 'was most nerve-racking [sic] to all the passengers, but I think in particular to me having responsibility for others'.² Booth was physically shaken, but spiritually reassured by this episode. She related her remarks about the bad sea crossing to a broader self-positioning within which she claimed spiritual affirmation through her work and humility in her fame. Booth situated her sense of self to complement the sort of qualities that Salisbury, a specialist in religious subjects, had painted in a portrait of her earlier in 1939. The full-length portrait featured Booth standing in military-style black jacket and skirt, embracing a colourful red and gold flag (Fig. 17). It is an arresting image of some magnitude, but in a tellingly self-effacing phrase Booth wrote in the letter that 'the form and the comeliness' of her portrait 'was created solely by Mr. Salisbury's genius'.³ Three years later, in the autumn of 1942, Booth constructed another unassuming image when replying to a letter from the Women's Commentator on the Cincinnati radio station WCKY inviting her to contribute material for a programme about her which was to be broadcast in the 'Famous Women' series. In this letter, Booth fashioned her public image as a model of 'worthwhile fame' achieved through religious conviction. Religion and celebrity came together in Booth's discussion in a democratic model which chimed well with contemporary war propaganda: 'You need not climb onto a platform in order to be famous with God', Booth wrote. 'You can be famous in His sight when you are in the home, in the kitchen or doing your

¹ 'Evangeline Booth returns for rest: "pillbox" on British liner and a passenger', *The New York Times*, 6 December 1939, p. 7.

² London, National Portrait Gallery, Heinz Archive, Frank O. Salisbury Papers, MS 100, vol. xviii, fol. 13, Letter from Evangeline Booth to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Salisbury, 20 December 1939.

³ *Ibid.*

bit in the defense [sic] factory, canteen and hospital'.⁴ A critical tension underpinned Booth's rhetoric in these two letters and indicated that the more famous she became the more emphatically she claimed humility. But this tension allowed for creative application, multiple dimensions in her public image, and identification with varied audiences.

These two letters draw attention to central themes about the construction and communication of female philanthropists' public images which this chapter will explore. Booth's celebrity status was confirmed by the time she wrote these letters; indeed she was at the peak of her world fame on the eve of her retirement, featuring regularly in the transatlantic press.⁵ In one sense, Booth's media image can be seen to fit with Charles Ponce de Leon's argument, made in the American context, that celebrity emerged as 'a particular kind of public visibility'.⁶ But her letters to Salisbury and the WCKY radio employee illustrate her strategic re-routing of her celebrity status, in ways which sought to transcend the need (and desire) to court publicity through claims to a higher avocation of status that was derived through her faith in God. Booth was strategic in making these claims to different forms of cultural authority converge. There were only very fine distinctions in her publicity between religious frames of reference and models which sought to commodify her persona in more secular and materialist terms. These nuances could be mediated by playing on different aspects of the relationship between philanthropist, audience, and medium, and by recognising the creative opportunities through which a public image could be recast to appeal to a particular constituency's point of view. So, while Booth constructed an image of 'self-effacing' femininity in the letter to Frank Salisbury, she indicated her awareness of more varied notions of femininity for the wider audience of WCKY listeners. A further way in which Booth strategically mediated her reputation was through conscious use of particular cultural registers. In the letters, she constructed her persona in text. But her discussions

⁴ SSA, Evangeline Booth Papers, 311/8, Manuscript of Evangeline Booth's contribution to 'Famous Women', included with letter from Evangeline Booth to WCKY radio station, 15 October 1942. America joined the war effort after Pearl Harbour in December 1941.

⁵ Booth's activity, and the politics surrounding her position, were wired frequently in these years from the London to the New York press, e.g. 'General Booth guest of royalty', *The New York Times*, 23 June 1938, p. 23; 'Poll in Salvation Army; majority reported for extension of General Booth's tenure', *The New York Times*, 17 August 1938, p. 8; 'General Booth to stay; retirement from the Salvation Army delayed for ten months', *The New York Times*, 24 August 1938, p. 2.

⁶ Charles Ponce de Leon, *Self-exposure: human-interest journalism and the emergence of celebrity in America, 1890–1940* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 5.

connected her reputation to other media and technologies of communication, through which her public image was transmitted to a wider audience, both visually (in the portrait) and aurally (through the wireless programme). In negotiating the practices and structures of the media, then, Booth publicly positioned herself within cultural systems that did not fit unproblematically into a static model of celebrity. Rather, she negotiated the terms of her public reputation to reflect and refract the diverse aspects of her public status, and the changing political and social contexts through which early-twentieth-century commentators – in Britain and America – configured women social activists' cultural status.

Booth's cultural interventions in these letters developed a particular politics of communication, but female philanthropists adopted a wide range of mechanisms to present themselves publicly, and to construct vehicles for public education in civic agency in the interwar years. This chapter explores how Booth, Fisher, Kinnaird and Paget established cultural authority through various manifestations of public philanthropy. The term public philanthropy provides a conceptual framework for thinking about the performative aspects of these women's public faces. It is used here to signal the relationship between philanthropist, audience and cultural mediators (such as media editors), the presentational devices to which these women's reputations were being related, and the tools of persuasion that they adopted. In conceiving of female philanthropy thus, I engage with Stefan Collini's scholarship on the nineteenth-century 'public moralist'.⁷ In analysing the 'relationship of intimacy...between writer and audience', Collini reveals the value of exploring the public moralist not simply in terms of the intellectual ideas that he evolved, but rather as an outgrowth of the public conversations that he had.⁸ His key animating concern – to understand the tone and meanings of the 'voices' and 'function' of public moralists – opened up new historical questions about the processes by which public status was forged and understood by contemporaries in the past, sometimes as an accepted form of intellectual authority, at other times through alternative sources of cultural authority.⁹ Collini's focus has been taken up in modern British historiography in only a limited sense, and in part this

⁷ Collini, *Public moralists*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3; 28; 244.

reluctance reflects his own intellectual biases. The lack of discussion about gender in his work is striking. Collini largely (deliberately) ignores women as subjects, claiming that they did not fit his model of the intellectual.¹⁰ He also assumes that the audience of public moralists was gendered male. Thus in a recent work he explores the notion of ‘publics’ in terms which infer the structures of the implicitly ‘male’ Habermasian bourgeois public sphere.¹¹ Partly to fill this gap, this chapter explores how female philanthropists addressed their varied audiences, and how they negotiated their social and cultural proclivities (and in some senses helped to construct them). It adds to historical understanding about the gendered models of ‘intimacy’ that interwar public educators negotiated with their audiences.¹² Moving beyond the boundaries of a Habermasian framework, it interrogates the nature and forms of persuasion that these women adopted to present projects and ideas which were sometimes pushing at the boundaries of what was legitimate public activity for women in this period.¹³ It explores the mechanisms through which they positioned the political and religious terms of their status alongside the models of cultural authority that were being developed in the popular culture marketplace. As female philanthropists inhabited the public sphere, they actively constructed ways to renegotiate it.

In interrogating these intersections, this chapter reveals female philanthropists’ canniness in mobilising new media and modes of communication and in recognising the cultural tastes of their various audiences. It begins by examining the significance of their activity as opinion formers. It reveals how they engaged with new and sophisticated parameters of public relations, and navigated the negative connotations of propaganda, to promote politicised messages and sometimes controversial philanthropic activity. Second, the chapter investigates how women

¹⁰ Ibid., p.3; Collini, *Absent minds*, p. 11.

¹¹ Stefan Collini, *Common reading: critics, historians, publics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 2.

¹² It builds on article- and essay-length work by Jane Martin and Matthew Grimley which reveals political and religious currencies as critical aspects of women intellectuals’ communication strategies, see Jane Martin, ‘Beyond suffrage: feminism, education and the politics of class in the interwar years’, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 29, 4 (2008), pp. 411-23; Matthew Grimley, ‘Public intellectuals and the media’, in Garnett et al. (eds), *Redefining Christian Britain*, pp. 267-77

¹³ This is also an attempt to move forward feminist scholarship which, having traditionally sought to critique the gendered categories of the intellectual, in fact has tended to reproduce them by configuring women within the ‘insider/outsider’ paradigm, see Alice Gambrell, *Women intellectuals, modernism, and difference: transatlantic culture, 1919-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2. For a broad example of this feminist project see e.g. Maria Jaschok and Shui Jingjun, “‘Outsider within’ – speaking to excursions across cultures”, *Feminist Theory* 1, 1 (2000), pp. 33-58.

philanthropists positioned their work and reputations within the commercial literary marketplace and its generic conventions. It focuses in particular on philanthropists' appropriations of literary forms which stressed women's experiential authority, and which mediated factual representations through devices associated with the romance genre and the burgeoning field of human interest journalism. Female philanthropists emerge as active agents in this process, framing their own media images and responding to the complex stances of their publicists in a dynamic relationship with their audiences. The theme of philanthropist-audience interaction is explored from a different angle in the third section, which offers a case-study of Evangeline Booth's dramatic mode of presentation. The focus here is on the ways in which in mediating her public image Booth also sought to re-fashion the terms through which her audiences thought about social problems, and therefore responded to her and the Salvation Army's work. Finally, the chapter examines how women philanthropists claimed cultural authority and competence through their physical appearance, grooming habits and dress. Women fashioned their bodies to construct and perform a public philanthropy through various politics of persuasion.

'Opinion formers'¹⁴

In the summer of 1939 Lettice Fisher wrote a short institutional history of the NCUMC. *Twenty-one years* began by outlining the organisation's early history. Fisher constructed this narrative around the rise in illegitimacy rates in Britain during the First World War; the establishment of a special enquiry committee by the Child Welfare Council of the Social Welfare Association for London (1917); the existing legal structure relating to illegitimacy (in particular the Affiliation, Bastardy and Legitimacy Acts); the need to provide adequate accommodation for unmarried mothers and their children nationally; and the necessity of dealing with individual enquiries from or on behalf of unmarried mothers across Britain.¹⁵ Having established these foundational aims and contexts, Fisher went on to discuss the mechanisms through which the NCUMC's early

¹⁴ Stefan Collini has observed this term in use as a function of public intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century, *Absent minds*, pp. 26; 32.

¹⁵ Lettice Fisher, *Twenty-one years: 1918-1939* [A history of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child] (London: NCUMC, June 1939), pp. 3-5.

initiatives were enacted. She stated trenchantly that ‘The first task of the Council was to educate public opinion’. She explained:

Measures for the benefit of the unmarried mother were honestly regarded as a challenge to the accepted standards of morality, and the difficulty of getting workers or indeed subscribers to accept a constructive rather than a deterrent policy was considerable. Much energy had to be expended in the production of newspaper and magazine articles, leaflets, addresses to every sort of meeting, and in getting editors to accept and audiences to hear the articles and addresses... We circularised, we wrote, we spoke, and before long we came to feel that we were meeting with sympathy and response.¹⁶

Fisher’s remarks were part of an institutional history which celebrated the NCUMC’s radical agenda in moving away from the punitive treatment meted out to unmarried mothers in the provision of the Poor Law and stressing the importance of keeping mother and child together.¹⁷ This policy was grounded in evolving psychologies and sciences of motherhood and childcare.¹⁸ But even positioned within this legitimising scientific structure, it was fundamentally controversial. Indeed, Fisher’s remarks in the extract illuminate how much of the NCUMC’s agenda was organised around the strategic public dissemination of information. She signalled her and her colleagues’ recognition in these early years of activity of the need to confront intellectual premises amongst the makers and readers of news that labelled illegitimacy as a specifically ‘female’ moral failing. What Fisher’s discussion revealingly pointed to, therefore, was the strategic thinking which early NCUMC personnel had to apply in order to develop and convey a ‘constructive’ policy as publicly palatable. This was not a straightforward, nor necessarily achievable, process. As Fisher emphasised, it required determination and a bank of physical and emotional energy. Indeed, ‘educat[ing] public opinion’ away from existing gendered stereotypes demanded getting support not only from the general public but, more importantly, from the mediators of popular opinion who translated political and social messages into popular terms. If they wanted their message to spread and take hold, NCUMC personnel needed models to negotiate the ideological positions of the editors of the press.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁷ Pat Thane, ‘Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England’, *History Workshop*, 6 (1978), pp. 29-51; ‘Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England’, p. 11; 18.

¹⁸ Fisher related to new scientific thought in her NFWI broadcasts when she spoke about recent discoveries in biology of the value of Vitamin D, and the ‘modern mother’s’ knowledge of the value of sun for infant’s development, *Mothers and families*, pp. 57-8; 87.

NCUMC's hope for successful cultural re-education required their media publicity to renegotiate the social frameworks that shaped interwar Britons' understanding of illegitimacy. In particular this meant confronting the dominant Protestant sensibility which unequivocally condemned extra-marital sex.¹⁹ Against this Christian moral backdrop, the NCUMC's media interventions typically took the form of clarifying the distinction between sex outside marriage (which it regarded as a moral and social problem) and the unmarried mother (who, when viewed more holistically, NCUMC personnel believed was capable of reformation). Thus in an article in *The Times* in the autumn of 1922, Fisher wrote that the women whom the NCUMC helped were 'not abandoned or depraved', rather 'the victims of folly and ignorance'. While the NCUMC did not condone 'the sin' of illegitimacy, it did attempt to prevent 'suffering' by innocent infants, and the further suffering of unmarried mothers.²⁰ In a similar tone a BBC wireless radio appeal, made in the autumn of 1936 by the actor Cyril Maude insisted that, contrary to the high-minded assumptions of some commentators, 'we are not encouraging immorality!'²¹ The rhetoric of Maude's script was successful. The appeal raised £1502. 10. 6, a significant increase on the NCUMC's previously most successful national appeal in May 1930, when Neville Chamberlain's broadcast raised £463.²² Looking beyond rhetoric, these media interventions point to recognition amongst NCUMC men and women of the need to readdress the cultural value systems that were encoded in establishment forums such as the early BBC and the interwar *Times*. This was a tactic that the publicity committee also applied in its engagement in other media forums. Fisher emphasised this point in *Twenty-one years*. Reflecting on the first years of NCUMC activity (from early 1918 onwards), she recognised the fundamental benefit to the Council of the 'press experience' of the NCUMC's second secretary Mrs. Trounson, and the public support of the Lord Mayor of London Sir Edward Cooper, who chaired an NCUMC meeting at the Mayoral

¹⁹ How these languages diffused into popular consciousness is an intriguing question. Simon Szreter and Kate Fisher note that religious teaching and language informed some of the oral history testimonies on sexual behaviour in their study of sex before 1963, but that 'they were more usually muted, vague, or absent', *Sex before the sexual revolution: intimate lives in England 1918-1963* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 31. Claire Langhamer argues for a distinction between sex outside and before marriage in discussions of extra-marital sex after the Second World War, 'Adultery in post-war England', *History Workshop Journal*, 62, 1 (2006), pp. 86-115.

²⁰ Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, 'Unmarried mothers', *The Times*, 24 October 1922, p. 8.

²¹ WL, 5/0PF/2/2/7/1, script of BBC appeal on behalf of the NCUMC by Cyril Maude.

²² WAC, R7/308/5, 'Index Books of Organisations: 'N-Q', 'National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child'.

residence Mansion House in 1919.²³ These individuals provided already established press connections, and an awareness of the manoeuvrability required in dealing with the industry. They knew the discursive and strategic spaces that needed to be occupied in the British press for the NCUMC's successful publicity.

Fisher's description of Mrs. Trounson negotiating fits the increasing attempts of private and public sector organisations to manage the media between the wars. Indeed, the interwar years saw the emergence of public relations. Public relations gained impetus from the social and political innovations of the public information services made necessary by the demands on citizens implemented during the First World War.²⁴ Taking hold first in the Civil Service, it was initiated also under the alternative name of 'personal relations' and salesmanship to add a personal touch to new social provisions which it was felt were too harshly bureaucratised to be expanded.²⁵ Early public relations in Britain was dominated by a group of (mainly male) Liberal intellectuals, many of whom were influenced by the philosophy of idealism, and who had as young men undertaken philanthropic work, often through their work in university settlements.²⁶ In the interwar years, many of these men would re-appraise their early philanthropic work, but there was a fundamental philosophical continuity between the philanthropic enterprise and early public relations. Jacquie L'Etang has argued that ethics and social responsibility were a critical part of the occupational identity of early public relations in the model of 'public service', a notion which was 'intrinsically connected to that of the public interest and notions of the public good'.²⁷ Nevertheless, how to distill this 'occupational identity' was a contested issue amongst early public relations personnel. One aspect of this debate emerged around the discussion between the

²³ Fisher, *Twenty-one years*, p. 6.

²⁴ Philip Taylor, *British propaganda in the twentieth century: selling democracy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 2-3; chs. 1-3.

²⁵ Mariel Grant, *Propaganda and the role of the state in inter-war Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), esp. chs. 3-7.

²⁶ Scott Anthony argues that Stephen Tallents' public relations programme at the General Post Office in the 1930s was 'enacted as a criticism of Toynbee Hall' methods, *Night Mail* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), fn. 93.

²⁷ Jacqui L'Etang, 'The myth of the "ethical guardian": an examination of its origins, potency and illusions', *Journal of Communication Management*, 8, 1 (2003), p. 57.

vocabularies of ‘projection’ and ‘propaganda’.²⁸ In the interwar years, the term propaganda was becoming increasingly morally and politically freighted against the backdrop of European fascism and communism. It was also, as Philip Taylor and Scott Anthony argue, becoming a critical aspect of ‘national projection’ in the mid- to-late interwar period, itself a tool of political and cultural diplomacy.²⁹ ‘Projection’ was linked to a new model of active citizenship that was maturing between the wars, in which the nature of the relationship between citizen and state was reconfigured along with its form.

Determined and sophisticated political forms of communication as encoded in interwar public relations have significant parallels with the techniques of public persuasion that female philanthropists were presented with, and presented themselves through, during this period. In some cases the term ‘propaganda’ was used to describe the philanthropic enterprise. In 1938, Constance Braithwaite defended ‘voluntary financial contributions and voluntary personal service to propaganda activities [which] should be regarded as types of philanthropy’.³⁰ In a direct discussion of women’s philanthropy, Ray Strachey wrote about Eglantyne Jebb in her *DNB* entry as starting (with Mrs. Buxton) an organisation for investigation and propaganda called the “‘Fight-the-Famine” Council’.³¹ Strachey correctly identified a specifically nationalistic propaganda as a key driver of post-war Save the Children Fund (SCF) women, which pivoted on a particular vision of social responsibility as an imperialist humanitarian project, spearheaded by a self-consciously British citizenry.³² Individuals affiliated to the SCF did not always regard these rhetorics of communication and persuasion as the best strategy for securing much needed public sponsorship, however. Muriel Paget, who formed a partnership with the SCF in her work in the Baltic States in the early 1920s, was one such dissenter. Rather than insisting on working through

²⁸ Grant, *Propaganda and the role of the state*, ch. 2; Taylor, *British propaganda*, chs. 4-6; Temple Willcox, ‘Projection or publicity? Rival concepts in the pre-war planning of the British Ministry of Information’, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18, 1 (1983), pp. 97-116.

²⁹ Although Philip Taylor notes that the culture was taken up reluctantly by government Ministers in the 1930s: *The projection of Britain: British overseas publicity and propaganda 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 291-2; Anthony, *Public relations* (forthcoming 2011).

³⁰ Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, p. 40.

³¹ Strachey, ‘Jebb, Eglantyne’, *DNB*, p. 451.

³² Emily Baughan, “‘Every citizen of empire implored to save the children!’ Empire, internationalism and the Save the Children Fund in interwar Britain’ (unpublished paper given at Institute of Historical Research, 19 May 2011). I am grateful to Emily for permitting me to cite this.

British partners, she believed that there were strategic advantages to cultivating the leaders of the new Eastern European countries to encourage the development of nationally-led relief schemes. Thus in a letter to SCF employee Mr. Golden in the spring of 1920, Paget stated that the disadvantages of potentially converging with the minutiae of national politics in these states 'would be counterbalanced by the advantages to be obtained by belonging to a national movement'.³³ Paget's desire to mediate sincerely between cultures focused both a rhetorical purpose and sincerely held belief that the imperialism of the SCF women needed to be reframed (at least at times) within a genuine cross-national philanthropic project.³⁴ She actively engaged her clients and their societies in the process of their own social improvement, and she envisaged her philanthropy as a form of 'permanent' relief work through which local doctors, nurses, and teachers could be trained to run the feeding clinics and schools when her missions withdrew.³⁵ Paget's activity was as highly politicised as the 'propagand[ist]' activity of the SCF women, but her use of a rhetoric of social purpose which was only covertly politically freighted was an important part of the public message she sought to convey.

As well as being used nationalistically, propaganda also functioned within the project of female philanthropy as a device to convince audiences of a strong message. Thus, while Paget shied away from the use of nationalistic propaganda, nevertheless she understood the value of this more generic aspect of the term, and she used it to re-route cultural stereotypes. Like Fisher, who worked in Britain to re-orientate negative images of unmarried mothers, Paget sought to forge a positive public understanding of Soviet Russia. She undertook this task amongst various audiences, both male and female, in interwar America and Britain. In early January 1927 Paget sailed to New York to begin a three-month American lecture tour, where she would give

³³ London, Save the Children Archives (SCA), EJ 215, Letter from Muriel Paget to Mr. Golden, 15 March 1920.

³⁴ This is the subject of ch. 6.

³⁵ LRA, MS 1405, Box 17, 'Agreement Regarding Ruthenia' between Czechoslovakian Pěče o dítě (Food Ministry) and Muriel Paget Czechoslovakian Mission, 5 August 1920; Box 4, 'Proposals by Lady Muriel Paget and L. Webster for Missions in the Baltic States', 5 April 1921. For difficulties enforcing her vision see Box 19, 'Memorandum by Lady Muriel Paget, Report on the Closing of the Hospital at Bytca, Czechoslovakia, 1 January 1922', 10 February 1922.

nineteen lectures in fourteen cities across the East Coast and Middle West states.³⁶ A key goal in this tour was to re-animate popular interest in Russian society and communist politics, which had declined in the 1920s in the context of hyper-capitalism and the economic boom that America enjoyed (before the Great Depression).³⁷ Paget was not articulating a particularly sophisticated message in this tour; as she explained to agents of the Foreign Press Service Paul Kennaday and Arthur Livingstone in 1927 in a resonant biblical idiom, she intended her media interventions to educate the American public in Russia as a 'land of promise'.³⁸ Her commitment to reclaiming a positive image of Russia was in itself straightforward. It similarly suffused a talk that she gave to expatriate American women at the American Women's Club in London in December 1931 about deteriorating food conditions in Russia.³⁹ Having outlined her understanding of the Russian Government's Five Year Plan, Paget sought in this talk to reshape popular understandings of the Soviet government, away from the popular image of 'cut throats' to a realisation of the sincerity of their aims, no matter how ruthless the means.⁴⁰ But if the statement was simple, the message was difficult to deliver successfully. Not least because in attempting to do so, Paget was engaged in a three-way cultural negotiation in which she, an English woman, educated an American audience about Russia. To negotiate this challenge, Paget focused her discussion on the Five Year Plan's radical classification of citizens via dietary requirements. This emphasis appealed to an entrenched public discourse which configured women as managers of family nutrition within the domestic economy.⁴¹ In addition, it played to Paget's strengths as an expert in issues of food

³⁶ The tour had been scheduled for late 1926 but was postponed due to Paget's ill health, Blunt, *Lady Muriel*, pp. 233-4.

³⁷ Although this was a general trend, some business leaders, social workers and journalists did present more diverse political and cultural pictures of Russia at this time, see editorial in *New York Journal of Commerce*, 4 June 1926, and Oswald Garrison Villard, 'Russia from a car window: V. The Soviets and the human being', *Nation*, 4 December 1929, p. 654, quoted in Peter G. Filene (ed.), *American views of Soviet Russia, 1917-1965* (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1968), pp. 56; 63.

³⁸ LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, Letter from Paul Kennaday to Lady Muriel Paget, 10 January 1927.

³⁹ Founded in 1899 as the Society of American Women, the American Women's Club of London provided social, cultural, educational and philanthropic activities for expatriated American women living in London.

⁴⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Box 38, Manuscript of Muriel Paget's speech for The American Women's Club, 17 December 1930. The Five Year Plan categorised citizens as army and heavy workers, overseers, sedentary workers, Russian non-workers and children, and Paget believed that only the army and workers in heavy trades were 'still getting an adequate scientific diet'.

⁴¹ Historians have tended to focus on this issue in the context of working-class and poor families see e.g. Ellen Ross, *Love and toil: motherhood and outcast London 1870-1914* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), ch. 2; Sara Horrell and Deborah Oxley, 'Crust or crumb?: intrahousehold resource allocation and male breadwinning in late-Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, 52, 3 (1999), pp. 494-522.

in Eastern Europe, gained through her personal experiences of establishing relief feeding programmes.

Potentially more taxing, in the sense of convincing her audience of her intellectual authority, were two talks that Paget was invited to give at the Imperial Defence College (IDC) and Chatham House in 1929 and 1930 respectively. In these forums, Paget could not rely upon the empathy of speaking as a woman to women. It is possible that she drew on the military nature of her image. Certainly, she used a different approach and structure for the talks she gave to the one she had delivered to American women. Descriptive rather than discursive, and written in note form rather than prose, these speeches pivoted on a narrative account of Russian society and economy. In her talk to the IDC in 1929, Paget avoided opinion altogether to provide an outline of recent events:

First stage of Revolution October 1917 – Communist party overthrew Kerensky regime – to March 1921, Kronstadt rising [War Communism]...Second phase of revolution [New Economic Policy] which lasted until end of 1926 /early 1927 – state enlarged powers...We are now witnessing the third phase...the inevitable struggle between Communist party and Peasantry.⁴²

The chronology here was straightforward, and it cut through the wide-ranging emphases of elite opinion on the Soviet Union in this period.⁴³ Speaking at Chatham House in 1930, however, Paget took a more combative stance. Perhaps seeking to reorient the hard-line muscular Christianity and aggressive imperialism that historians have attributed to Chatham House men of this period, Paget argued that Russia was ‘against principles rather than nationalities’.⁴⁴ Her claim suggested her attempt to challenge the dirigiste perspective of the Chatham House men by emphasising, as she did in her talk’s title, ‘personal relations with the Soviet Government’. There

⁴² LRA, MS 1405, Box 38, Speeches folder, Manuscript speech, Muriel Paget, ‘Lecture to the Imperial Defence College, 1929’.

⁴³ The overall progression from war communism to the new economic policy (NEP) and the ‘great break’ of Stalinist industrialisation is now accepted, although some of Paget’s dates would need slight alteration to completely fit this model (notably collectivisation, which dates from 1931-2, the first five year plan from 1928, and the war between Bolshevik leaders and the peasantry, which was actually a much wider social conflict), see e.g. Robert Service, *A history of modern Russia: from Nicholas II to Putin* (London: Penguin, 2003), chs 8, 9. On varied elite views see Filene (ed.), *American views of Soviet Russia*.

⁴⁴ On the imperialism of Chatham House men see Inderjeet Parmar, ‘Anglo-American elites in the interwar years: idealism and power in the intellectual roots of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations’, *International Relations*, 16, 1 (2002), p. 54. LRA, MS 1405, Box 38, Speeches folder, Muriel Paget, ‘Personal Relations with the Soviet Government’, Lecture given at the Institute for International Affairs, 13 November 1930.

was a gendered positioning to Paget's rhetoric of the 'personal' which denoted an approach that could circumvent the political boundaries of the state through an alternative international-mindedness.⁴⁵ This was a bold argument to take to the Chatham House audience. In doing so, Paget signalled her willingness to confront the dominant (gendered) intellectual premises of interwar international relations, and to give a self-confident performance of her brand of social activism.

Genres

Paget's talks at the American Women's Club in London, Chatham House and the IDC illustrate the importance of narrative form and structure, as well as content, in the process of female philanthropists' 'opinion forming'. Frank Prochaska argues that philanthropists are and were particularly adept at appropriating new forms of technology and media to promote their causes.⁴⁶ Certainly, in the interwar period female philanthropists took up new media (wireless and film) and new forms of journalistic reporting. What is significant, however, is the ways in which they used these media. In establishing a media presence, female philanthropists recognised the potential to communicate nuanced versions of their public images. They constructed images which defined their sensibilities in terms of a new relationship between emotion and intellect. They also used new modes of identity to step outside gender-specific structures in order to relate to the mechanisms of mass culture. Between the wars, whilst existing forms of media were packaging new forms of documentation, new media were also fashioning imaginative and fictive frameworks, in what Michael Saler has characterised as 'the spectacularisation of culture'.⁴⁷ Female philanthropists were conscious of the commercial value of this culture, and of the opportunities it provided to present their work in newly marketable and commodified ways. Because female philanthropists were operating on a global stage in the interwar period, negotiating these conventions also required them to be mindful of the implications of different literary forms and the idiosyncrasies of national printing norms and vernaculars.

⁴⁵ As Constance Braithwaite noted, *Voluntary citizen*, pp. 43-9.

⁴⁶ Prochaska, *Voluntary impulse*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Saler, "Clap if you believe in Sherlock Holmes".

The construction of a female philanthropist's media image involved striking a balance between the woman's agency and the various stances of her publicists and the media barons she relied on for publicity. In order to be given media space, female philanthropists had to fit with the models of women's cultural status that the press were willing to report. At the same time, female philanthropists' media images very often picked up on narratives which the women themselves had first constructed in a different context. Emily Kinnaird's participation in an evening debate about the 'modern girl' reported in Liberal newspaper *The Manchester Guardian* in February 1927 is an example of these converging models. Held in the Forum Club, London, the debate addressed the proposition that 'The modern girl is not a distinct improvement on her mother'. While Lady Barrett proposed the motion (arguing that the modern girl simply had disproportionately greater opportunities than her mother's generation for education, sociability and work), Kinnaird opposed it, arguing that not only were young women better-mannered than they had previously been, they were also more competent in, and confident of, their capabilities and, more importantly their own minds.⁴⁸ Kinnaird's point, which *The Manchester Guardian* reported sensitively, was that women's capacities required measurement in intellectual as well as practical terms. But the reporter was more interested in locating the source of Kinnaird's authority in making this statement, which it concluded was her 'wider and more understanding knowledge of the modern girl than any other woman in England because, veteran as she is, she will always be a girl of the day'.⁴⁹ In this statement, *The Manchester Guardian* was picking up on an image which Kinnaird and the YWCA had cultivated since the First World War – and indeed in her presentation at the Forum Club debate – of her as young at heart and up to the minute.

Emily Kinnaird directed her own press by fashioning an image that linked her experiential authority to generational codes. Muriel Paget did so in a way that tapped into the models of the post-war celebrity system. In Paget's media image, personal experience was part of a sentimentalised narrative playing to new modes of celebrity news reportage. Another *The Manchester Guardian* article published in 1927 showcased these themes. In this article the journalist

⁴⁸ 'The modern girl', *The Manchester Guardian*, 27 February 1925, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

reported a talk Paget had given at a London meeting of the Society for Cultural Relations between the Peoples of the British Commonwealth and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (SCR), a group which sought to forge Anglo-Soviet links within artistic, literary, scientific and industrial circles.⁵⁰ The journalist began by summarising Paget's discussions of child welfare provision in Russia since 1922 (more homes, hospitals and welfare centres), and an outline of her agenda to maintain cultural links between Britain and Russia. However, he or she (the article is anonymous) went on to focus in more detail on the tone of Paget's talk, which it described as 'full of human touches'.⁵¹ The *Guardian* journalist reported Paget speaking about a Russian maternity hospital where a baby had been killed by a rat, and evoked a heart-rending portrait of the 3,000 'wild children' who were orphaned in the revolutionary war.⁵² The emphasis the journalist placed on the 'heart-felt' aspects of Paget's talk reveal her success in strategically relating her public image to the burgeoning genre of human interest journalism. In coming to dominate the British popular press between the wars, this mode of reportage was typically associated with sensationalism, or with a collapsing of the boundaries between public and private life.⁵³ Shani D'Cruze has argued that this was a means by which 'readers were invited into a participatory relationship with the newspaper'.⁵⁴ Certainly, *The Manchester Guardian's* journalism reveals a critical link between reporter and celebrity, in the sense that the journalist recognised that the *Guardian's* readership would be moved by a sensational representation of Paget's emotive speech.⁵⁵

The Manchester Guardian article also mirrored structures that Paget had already used in her own journalism. Earlier in 1927, Paget had appropriated the techniques of celebrity journalism in a series of articles she wrote for *The Daily Telegraph*. The modelling of Paget's activity as a story of

⁵⁰ Founded in 1924, the SCR was recognised as the British counterpart of the Soviet Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS): *Nature*, 29 July 1944, pp. 141-2.

⁵¹ 'Child welfare in Russia', *The Manchester Guardian*, 8 July 1927, p. 14.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ For a discussion of 'human interest' stories that came to dominate interwar journalism in Britain, see LeMahieu, *Culture for democracy*, pp. 17-55; Bingham, *Gender, modernity and the popular press; Family newspapers? Sex, private life and the British popular press, 1918-1978* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Charles Ponce de Leon talks about the relationship between the genre and celebrity in an American context: *Self exposure*, pp. 30-40; ch. 2.

⁵⁴ Shani D'Cruze, 'Intimacy, professionalism and domestic homicide in interwar Britain: the case of Buck Ruxton', *Women's History Review* 16, 5, (2007), p. 715.

⁵⁵ Ponce de Leon, *Self exposure*, ch. 2.

‘constructive Conservatism’ fitted the culturally conservative newspaper well, and in her articles, entitled ‘Some Pictures of Russia’, Paget assumed the role of participant journalist in articles about the Russian Revolution, life in 1920s Moscow and Leningrad, schooling, healthcare, and homelessness amongst children, illustrating her engagement with relatively mainstream subjects. Yet, Paget’s articles were rhetorically geared to shock. As well as discovering a trend of school leavers’ desires to go to university, Paget revealed troubling evidence about child drug taking. ‘Anitpieff, a boy of 14, was asked why he had started snuffing [cocaine]’, she wrote, ‘and he said, “It is our habit – everyone snuffs, so why should not I? We always want to do what others do. If one of us is eating a cake the others must also go and get a cake. We always imitate each other”’.⁵⁶ The veracity of these comments, like those in Evangeline Booth’s *Will you help?* appeal, was not as important as the publicity that they generated.⁵⁷ This style of writing was part of a commercial culture, through which Paget self-consciously commodified her philanthropic projects, and in doing so, her philanthropic clients.

Paget’s sensational framing of *The Daily Telegraph* articles underlines her recognition of the importance not only of the media but also of the genre which she employed in her public presentations.⁵⁸ During her 1927 American lecture tour, Paget mediated national literary idiosyncrasies to ensure her appeal to the masses. Because of the distinct operation of American and British vernaculars, Paget hired the services of the American literary agent and publicist William Feakins. Feakins specialised in non-fiction and self-improvement texts on history, education, music, and poetry, a literary subsection that reveals much about Paget’s self-identification and fashioning.⁵⁹ His advertising literature illustrates how he set about refining Paget’s public image within the categories of his specialism. Feakins presented Paget in the brochure for his winter 1925/6 programme as the star speaker in an international line-up including author Mary Agnes Hamilton, Congregationalist minister Dr. Charles F. Aked, poets

⁵⁶ Muriel Paget, ‘Some pictures of Russia: III: the wild children’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 1927, p. 9

⁵⁷ See above, p. 150.

⁵⁸ As Claire Squires has argued, ‘Genre...is a crucial component in the marketplace, as it is one of the primary means by which authors and readers communicate’, *Marketing literature: the making of contemporary writing in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 70; ch. 3.

⁵⁹ John Mercer, ‘Writing and re-writing suffrage history: Sylvia Pankhurst’s *The Suffragette*’, *Women’s History Magazine*, 56, (2007), p. 14.

Dubose Heyward and Joseph Auslander, and wife of the Estonian Minister to London Madame Aino Kallas. He described Paget as a ‘fascinating speaker’ with ‘experiences [that] are as exciting as romance’.⁶⁰ The terminology was vital. The ‘romance’ genre, like human interest journalism, could blend fact and fiction.⁶¹ Likewise, the term ‘fascinating’ encoded Paget’s charm and possibly sexual attractiveness both to men and women, a material image that was signalled in the accompanying portrait of Paget in a chiffon blouse and pearls (Fig. 18).⁶² Broadly, Feakins painted a commercial gloss over the outwardly dry titles of Paget’s talks (‘Women’s work in war and reconstruction’, ‘Episodes of the Russian debacle and revolution’, and ‘Russia and central Europe’).⁶³ His emphasis probably reflected Paget’s cultural status in America in 1925/6, which was still in the process of being cemented. By the time she undertook the lecture tour in early 1927 (having postponed it in 1926 due to illness), her reputation was more established. Paget had been to Russia again in the summer of 1926, when she had done work (and gained more publicity) on behalf of the DBS. Certainly by early 1927, the American press was presenting her in more authoritative and respectful terms; as the *New York Herald Tribune* put it, her reputation in the American press was by then that of ‘a far sighted, tolerant, intelligent citizen of the world, such as old England produces so successfully’.⁶⁴ Indeed, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was by 1927 a public champion, and lent her weight to organising Paget’s trip.⁶⁵ More confident of his client’s transatlantic status, therefore, Feakins thought it unnecessary in 1927 to situate her within the parameters of an explicitly commercial model as emphatically as he had done in 1925/6. His brochure for January 1927 thus advertised Paget’s reputation through a claim to authenticity, presenting her lectures as ‘based on her experiences in founding and operating the Anglo-Russian

⁶⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, 1925-26 Fall Bulletin of William M. Feakins Inc.

⁶¹ Matt Houlbrook described the genre as blending the ‘everyday’ and the ‘fictional’, ‘A pin to see the peepshow’, p. 241.

⁶² As argued by Valerie Steele in *Fashion and eroticism: ideals of feminine beauty from the Victorian era to the jazz age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 213.

⁶³ LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, Unsigned letter from William Feakins’ offices to Lady Muriel Paget, 15 October 1926.

⁶⁴ ‘A wrong impression’, *New York Herald Tribune*, 27 March 1927, p. 8.

⁶⁵ LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, Letter from Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt to William Feakins 5 January 1927.

Hospitals and the Lady Muriel Paget Missions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czecho-Slovakia and Roumania [sic].⁶⁶

The shifts in emphasis in Feakins' publicity for Paget also reflected assumptions about the make-up and preferences of her audiences. The reference to the romance genre in 1925/6 can be linked to a middlebrow culture which historians of Britain and America have claimed was gendered female, not only because most authors of romance fiction were women, but also because its tone was sentimental, and thus thought to appeal to historical notions of feminine character.⁶⁷ But this feminising of the romance genre is complicated by female philanthropists' use of the term. Even in the 1925/6 literature about Paget's talk, the inference of Paget's sexualized fascination was part of an appeal to a mixed gender audience. A similarly wide appeal was sought for a book that Evangeline Booth co-wrote with Grace Livingston-Hill and published through the American firm J. B. Lippincott, *The war romance of the Salvation Army* (1919). Characteristic of the Christian romance genre, of which Hill was the archetypal author, this 'war romance' centred upon the stories of young female ingénues of the Army, who evinced a strong Christian character and whose everyday lives were made extraordinary through their participation in the war.⁶⁸ Reviewing the book for the British *Times Literary Supplement*, writer Francis Henry Gribble claimed that it was mostly occupied with describing the work of the Salvation Army 'lassies' in the First World War 'who fried so many doughnuts and baked so many pies under fire'.⁶⁹ This focus on the 'lassies' appealed as much to men's tastes as it did to women's – the lassie embodied a version of self-sacrificing, modestly sexualised womanhood, primarily concerned with supporting men in wartime. Perhaps it was the breadth of the book's appeal that prompted Booth to use the same title for a popular talk about the Salvation Army she first gave in 1922. In a later wireless version, Booth acknowledged that the 'The world's greatest romance' was a 'bold and startling statement', but she insisted that it was an apt portrayal of the Salvation

⁶⁶ LRA, MS 1405, Box 34, William Feakins' publicity pamphlet of Paget's American tour, January 1927.

⁶⁷ Jamie Harker, *America the middlebrow: women's novels, progressivism, and middlebrow authorship between the wars* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 1; Light, *Forever England*; Janice Radway, *Reading the romance: women, patriarchy and popular literature* (New York: Verso, 1984).

⁶⁸ Evangeline Booth and Grace Livingston Hill, *The war romance of the Salvation Army* (London; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1919).

⁶⁹ Francis Henry Gribble, 'Salvationists in the trenches', *TLS*, 20 November 1919, p. 667.

Army's organisational identity, which she described as 'a wondrous, chivalrous, adventurous, and mysterious tale'.⁷⁰ This characterisation was intended to appeal across genders. Female philanthropists did not appropriate the romance genre because it was assumed to connote a straightforwardly 'womanly' status. They and their publicists were using it to appeal to the different tastes of men and women, and to the common desire to escape from time to time the realism of life into an imaginative realm.

Theatre

Crowds surge and jostle, yet no idle word
Mars the tense stillness, as the thousands wait.
No envious, bitter comment can be heard –
Forgotten jealousy and feuds and hate.

No tongue will say, "It was for this, for that,
What has been done was done, at home, abroad?"
None cites ambition of some autocrat
Risen to power through bribery, guile, or fraud.

If one should speak, it is of tender care
Of hardship undertaken without meed
Of burning zeal to cheer, uplift and share
Courage undaunted, stanch for any deed.

For as they wait, the throngs see gentle hands,
Which minister to scarred and wretched souls
A steadfastness which in the breach still stands
Where Misery's woeful tide, appalling, rolls.

Not as a queen she comes – yet salvos greet
The humble toiler whom all creeds acclaim –
Handmaiden of Service, Mercy, grave and sweet,
Who, self-forgetting, does all "in His Name!"⁷¹

This poem was published in *The New York Times* in May 1924. Entitled 'Evangeline Booth's tour', it was a commentary on Booth's status as Commander of the American Salvation Army. Invoking debates about the Salvation Army's autocratic leadership style (which would reverberate loudly during the campaign for world leadership in the early 1930s, which Booth eventually won), and its social purpose ('tender care'; 'zeal to cheer, uplift and share'; 'minister to

⁷⁰ American readers of *Time* magazine were informed that Booth rehearsed this talk in late 1936 for an audience in Britain which included Mrs. Wallace Simpson, 'Foreign news: world's greatest romance', *Time*, 16 November 1936, p. 11.

⁷¹ Ella A. Fanning, 'Evangeline Booth's tour', *The New York Times*, 26 May 1924, p. 16.

scarred and wretched souls'), the poem reflected and refracted both an institutional identity and Booth's individual fame. What is most striking about 'Evangeline Booth's tour', however, is its only implicit visualisation of Booth. Indeed, rather than Booth herself, it is her audience that takes centre stage in this poem. They are configured as dynamic spectators; it is the character of the crowd – its 'tense stillness' and its hushed volume – that is the poet's subject. In fact, this was a subtle way of focusing attention on Booth. De-centring Booth complemented the discourse of her humility which ran through the poem ('humble toiler'; 'Handmaiden of Service'; 'self-forgetting'), and which she herself would invoke in the letters to Frank Salisbury and the WCKY employee.⁷² The key point is that 'Evangeline Booth's tour' was structured so as to emphasise how Booth's public image was performed and received. Indeed the very lack of Booth's visual presence becomes the main tension of the poem. It is not Booth's words that the audience waited to hear; rather they were waiting to 'see' her hands.

The focus in the poem on the visual aspect rather than the substance of Booth's presentation was part of a broader and long-established institutional narrative about the Salvation Army's mission to the less fortunate. By the 1920s, a motif that Salvation Army members were not highly educated was a well-established part of Booth's public performances. In one sense, the organisational narrative constructed an inverse relationship between education and experience. An article in the spring 1906 issue of the journal for Salvation Army officers *The Field Officer* discussed how Booth prepared her speeches not by reading and research, but instead by studying people and nature:

She has little taste for it [reading], even if she had time. She is inclined to the theory that after one has undergone the education that best fits him for the position in his life he is called to fill, he should then be free from the trammels and errors of book-reading.⁷³

Later in her career, Booth herself sought to build a genealogy for this image, writing in 1929 in *Toward a better world* that, 'My mother [Catherine Booth] used to say, "Away with arguments of your theoretical religion which would drive from the world all practical Christianity!" And so I say here – Away with them! Away with cold, stiff forms...I must have

⁷² See above, pp. 168-9.

⁷³ A.M.N., 'How the commander prepares her addresses', *The Field Officer*, May 1906, p. 403.

more than theory and form'.⁷⁴ Booth's remarks positioned her approach within the broader framework of the Salvation Army as an urban, working-class religion, with the class-based implications of urban theology's social outreach mission.⁷⁵ But her mother's public personae endured into the interwar years and beyond, at least partly premised on her intellectual status, which moved from an early-twentieth-century appreciation of her spiritual authority (likened to American evangelical preacher Dwight Moody, or British Methodist Charles Wesley) to her interwar characterisation as a 'suburban blue-stocking'.⁷⁶ Evangeline Booth's speeches actually aimed to convey a particular sort of education, rather than dismissing the educative altogether. True, her interventions reveal a fairly limited pool of reading, perhaps reflecting the fact that on her death a public sale of her estate which was held at O'Reilly's Plaza Art Galleries in New York on 13 April 1951 contained only 13 books.⁷⁷ Certainly, in her speeches she repeatedly drew on the same few authorities, whose books she owned. In *Woman*, for example, she alluded to Thomas Carlyle (who defined 'human life as a supreme choice between the Everlasting Yea and the Everlasting Nay'), William Shakespeare ('A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers') and Abraham Lincoln (addressing Harriet Beecher Stowe as having precipitated the modern fight for American women's equal rights).⁷⁸ Among Booth's authorities, both Carlyle and Lincoln were known for their nonconformist and unconventional, but nevertheless sincere religious faith, and Shakespeare's writings also contain many Biblical references. In context, it is also significant that these luminaries were all male; a point which gained additional rhetorical meaning in *Woman* as a deliberate attempt to show how gender barriers had been broken down. In quoting these authorities, Booth wanted to ground her public messages in a literary canon to which audiences with limited education could relate. But she also

⁷⁴ Booth, *Toward a better world*, p. 194.

⁷⁵ Walker, *Pulling the Devil's kingdom down*.

⁷⁶ Ronald Bayne, 'Booth, Mrs. Catherine (1829–1890)', in Sidney Lee (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Supplement I (London: Smith, Edler and Co., 1901), pp. 233-5; Harold Begbie, 'Booth, William (1829–1912)', Harold Begbie, 'Booth, William (1829–1912)', *DNB Supplement Volume 1912-1921*, ed. Henry Davies (Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 50.

⁷⁷ Some of these books were: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, (11th edition); *Works of Shakespeare*; *Works of Hawthorne*; William M Sloane, *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*; J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln*; *Works of Lord Byron*; *The works of Thomas Carlyle*; *Charles Kingsley, his letters and memoirs of his life*; Herman Grimm, *Life of Michael Angelo*; *The writings of George Eliot*; and *History of Westchester County*, SAA, VA 2 (Additional material), folder 3, 'Evangeline Booth, Miscellaneous'.

⁷⁸ Booth, *Woman*, pp. 10; 22.

wanted to educate them with particular sources that were useful to thinking about the religious operation of a good society.

During the course of her career, Booth addressed many different and varied audiences. It is estimated that she made 144 speeches, and her informal interviews would put this total at a much higher figure.⁷⁹ Booth was renowned for a dramatic style of oratory. She popularised a narrative that as a young woman her parents had worried that she would leave the Salvation Army in favour of a career on the stage, because of her 'good looks' and 'gift for speaking'.⁸⁰ One of her most melodramatic performances was staged during her career in America, when she performed as the 'Commander in Rags'.⁸¹ Dressed as her younger-self visiting the East London slums in 1880, Booth enacted scenes of an active, practical philanthropy.⁸² Diane Winston has argued that while Booth performed a choreographed part of her own history in this tableau, she also gave a 'text-book' performance of the discourse of celebrity.⁸³ 'The Commander in Rags' performances, however, did not simply illustrate Booth fitting into the end products of the celebrity system. Rather they involved her active engagement in the processes of renegotiating her own celebrity status to fit the goals of the Salvation Army. Indeed, her performances had the effect of not only showcasing Booth as a celebrity, but also implicitly visualising social models of humanitarianism in action. Watching her performance, audiences were intended to imagine other versions of femininity, notably those of the slum women. The visibility of the celebrity system was both personally and institutionally profitable to a woman like Booth, but it was not a static or non-negotiable form.

⁷⁹ Archivist at the Salvation Army International Headquarters, Susan Mitchem listed these speeches, 'List of Evangeline Booth Speeches', 28 October 1996.

⁸⁰ Dorothy Walworth, 'General of the Army: Evangeline Booth', *Reader's Digest*, August 1947, p. 36, quoted in Diane Winston, 'All the world's a stage: the performed religion of the Salvation Army 1880-1920', in Stewart M. Hoover and Lynn Schofield Clark (eds), *Practicing religion in the age of the media: explorations in media, religion, and culture* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 122.

⁸¹ Winston, *Red hot and righteous*, p. 146.

⁸² As she said in a talk in 1921 accepting an honorary MA at Tufts University, dressing in rags as she did as a young woman preaching in the East End slums, enabled her to reach the 'bodies and souls of men' in the 'lowest and darkest places': 'The one source', quoted in John D. Waldon (ed.), *The world for God: writings and speeches of Evangeline Cory Booth*, (The Salvation Army, USA Eastern Territory, 1992), ii, p. 189.

⁸³ Winston evaluated Booth's performances in this guise in the light of Ponce de Leon's analytical frame of 'celebrity discourse' through which media professionals transformed individuals into symbols of larger democratic trends, 'All the world's a stage', p. 122. A report in *The New York Times* of Booth's performance in May 1924 at the Metropolitan Opera House stated, 'Great audience reduced to tears': 'Evangeline Booth pleads in tatters', *The New York Times*, 7 May 1924, p. 21.

Despite its success in garnering publicity not everyone admired Booth's dramatic style of presentation. One critique, which focused on the evangelical tone of her interventions, emerged in a feature on Booth's retirement in the autumn 1939 edition of British patriotic magazine *John Bull*. Journalist Hannen Swaffer wrote Booth into his 'Who's Who' column as 'eloquent' in platform speeches, but 'histrionic' in rehearsed performances' (Fig. 19).⁸⁴ Swaffer expressed admiration for Booth but critiqued her dramatic tendencies out of a secularly-driven distaste for what he assumed were the proselytising aspects of the Salvation Army's methodology. Comparing its praxis to the emerging socio-political welfare schemes of the Labour Party, he wrote: 'I told her [Booth] that I believed more in a New London than in an Old London with a bun, a cup of coffee and a hymn – that, in my view, people should have food and shelter as a right and not because of charity'.⁸⁵ Swaffer's remarks configured the typical Salvation Army client within a context of understandings of poverty and its remedies which had evolved little from the missionary framework that inspired the Salvation Army's early activity in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Underlying his comments was his uptake of a model of political entitlement similar to that which writer and broadcaster Stuart Petre Mais developed in his discussion of friendship, charity and unemployment in early 1933.⁸⁶ Like Mais, Swaffer focused his commentary around the social contracts which were bound up in processes of social welfare provision. His claim was that the Salvation Army was engaged in a performance of welfare that constructed social hierarchies by emphasising the contingency of social relief and evangelical conversion. To some extent, the construction of social status was an inevitable part of philanthropy. As Mark Peel argues in relation to the Charity Organisation Society's activity in early-twentieth-century Melbourne, 'performance of assistance, and in some cases rejection', was part of the history of welfare, in which class relationships were reconfigured.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, these social relationships were not necessarily part of a straightforward disciplinary logic. Swaffer overlooked the cultural relevance of these methods to the particular constituency of urban working-class believers. Far from outmoded, hymn singing and basic refreshments were carefully

⁸⁴ Hannen Swaffer, 'Last of the Booths', *John Bull*, 15 July 1939, p. 15.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ See above, pp. 61-2.

⁸⁷ Peel, 'Charity, casework and the dramas of class', p. 83.4

choreographed means of reaching out to poor city men and women, who in non-work time sought avenues of popular entertainment. The strategic value of this technique has had an afterlife long after Booth's retirement. The association of the Salvation Army and music remains a vital part of their institutional identity to this day.⁸⁸

Embodying competence

As Hannen Swaffer observed, the drama of Booth's public philanthropy was a political tool through which she enacted and hoped to reinforce social change. Yet the political could be conceived in a number of ways. While Swaffer configured it in relation to the social agenda of party politics, other commentators focused more on forms of gender politics, in which the philanthropist's body became a critically politicised site. An article in *The Manchester Guardian* in November 1936 focused attention on this theme in a report of Booth's forthcoming world tour. Along with noting the extensive five-month itinerary (which would see Booth visiting India, China, Malaya, Korea, Japan and the United States), the article observed that she was 'thinner and rather more frail' than when she had been elected World General in late 1934, but that 'she did not look a day older', and she 'talked energetically about her plans for the future'.⁸⁹ The connection between Booth's age and physique is significant, and it relates to a broader historical phenomenon in which age is centrally configured in constructions of femininity. Cynthia Port has argued that in the wake of the First World War, ageing often preoccupied women to the detriment of a focus on their personal and professional development.⁹⁰ Port's focus on the relationship between the ageing process and women's capacities to engage in useful employment suggests important points about the value attached to physical appearance in women's senses of self across their lifetimes, but contemporaries did not always conceive of the correlation negatively. Ageing also presented strategic opportunities within which women's dedication, expertise and fitness for particular roles could be reviewed. *The Manchester Guardian* article

⁸⁸ The Salvation Army's public image today remains closely tied to its brass band.

⁸⁹ 'General Booth's world's tour', *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 November 1936, p. 19.

⁹⁰ Cynthia Port, "'Ages are the stuff!': the traffic in ages in interwar Britain", *NWSA Journal*, 18, 1 (2006), pp. 138-61.

conceptualised Booth's ageing body as both a strength and a weakness. It fitted her into a classic trope about women social activists' bodily infirmities and mental depth. In picking up on the image of seemingly infinite emotional stamina but physical frailty caused by over-work and self-sacrifice, it placed her alongside a familiar narrative about female philanthropists, encoded most famously in discussions of Florence Nightingale.⁹¹ Indeed, it seemed at times that Booth was in the news as often for being ill – and sometimes only for the suspicion of illness – as for her robust activism, and the comparison between her illnesses and interventions was also implicitly drawn. Physical exhaustion brought cultural status to this woman, and figured her work as a suppression of her own needs and recognition of others'. And there were important historical precedents for claiming this authority.

Images of the ageing and infirm body as a symbol of women's competencies reflected a broadly-diffused and enduring association of physical appearance and interior moral qualities. For philanthropic women, the subjective merged with the social dimension of worth. Critical reflections on the state and meanings of physical attractiveness were pivotal to these reflections. In an essay on her childhood memories of India, published in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1936, Lettice Fisher fashioned a narrative about the relationship between women's prettiness and their role in constructing a good society. She recalled a conversation she had had with the Viceroy of India, Lord Dufferin which had ended with his emphatic call ('which he repeated three times, in impressive tones'): 'Remember that what a Viceroy says is absolutely true. It is better to be pretty than good'. Fisher recalled being inconsolably upset afterwards, because she was 'accustomed, though not resigned' to her 'exceeding ugliness' (as measured against her 'unusually pretty' younger sisters).⁹² Even though we need to be mindful of the light-heartedness (and potential mis-quotation) of this comment, the fact that it remained near the forefront of Fisher's consciousness into adulthood is revealing. Through drawing a disjuncture between being

⁹¹ Lynda Nauright, 'Politics and power: a new look at Florence Nightingale', *Nursing Forum*, 21, 1 (1984), p. 6. Alison Light has argued, even interwar British women writers who appropriated potentially transgressive literary conventions of adventure stories represented the female body in terms of its 'its apparent sufferings and not its pleasures', through which a legitimate and recognisable femininity could be re-articulated, *Forever England*, pp. 173-4.

⁹² Lettice Fisher, 'Indian memories', *The Cornhill Magazine*, 154 (1936), p. 344. Fisher's sisters were Olive, Jessie and Mora Ilbert. Her youngest sister Joyce was born in London in the summer of 1890.

attractive and being 'good', Dufferin constructed a patriarchal ideal of femininity that prioritised how women looked over what they did. In choosing to publish her recollection nearly fifty years later, Fisher was participating in the public exploration of the relationship between her physical appearance and social conscience; she was self-conscious about being unattractive, but sought to validate her cultural authority as a philanthropist regardless.

While Fisher focused on her unattractiveness as signaling her 'goodness' (in Dufferin's oppositional terms), other women philanthropists played more on the persuasive potential of being pretty and charming. In the summer of 1925 the *Illustrated London News* discussed Paget in its feature 'The world of women', describing her as a woman 'of whom we have to be proud', and her grown-up daughters (soon to be married) 'like herself, charming, thoughtful for others, innocent of lipstick or rouge, very good to look at, and have delightful manners'.⁹³ This discussion oriented the significance and relevance of feminine charm in a different way to other contemporary commentaries. Virginia Woolf would describe courtier Lady Augusta Stanley with reference to ideas of 'feminine charm' and 'old amenity' in a 1927 essay which compared her unfavourably to 'the new efficiency' and 'courage' of suffragist Emily Davies.⁹⁴ Woolf's distinction between 'charm' and 'courage' and 'old' and 'new' disclaimed the political potential of women's charm to achieve real and relevant social influence. However, as well as the upper-class model of charm, there were other more explicitly moral contexts for claiming the validity of women's wholesome and attractive appearance. Booth, for example, wrote in *Woman* (1930) that beauty was not about the 'lottery' of outer appearance but rather reflected the 'inner' qualities of love.⁹⁵ This comment partly took the form of Christian teaching about vanity. It was also a critique of consumption and the burgeoning mass market in which young women were increasingly using cosmetics.⁹⁶ Booth used make-up (and wore a wig), because of illness and age. Young women, whose inner grace she insisted was reflected outwardly, had no need to fall for the allure of the market. Her comments, however, were not meant to dismiss Salvation Army

⁹³ A. E. L., 'The world of women', *Illustrated London News*, 18 July 1925; p. 128.

⁹⁴ Virginia Woolf, 'Two women', in Andrew McNeillie (ed.), *The essays of Virginia Woolf*, (4 vols, London, 1994), iv, pp. 422; 424.

⁹⁵ Booth, *Woman* (1930), p. 21.

⁹⁶ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the body: beauty, health, and fitness in Britain, 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 239.

women's attractiveness. Indeed, being attractive could help them to perform their roles better, as was attested in the many advertisements for Salvation Army campaigns which typically featured an alluring photograph of a modestly-dressed, pretty young women.

Discussions about female philanthropists' use of cosmetics and grooming habits formed one aspect of the debate about the political significance of their dress, which extended into retrospective commentaries. These discussions placed dress at the symbolic heart of women philanthropists' self- and public projections as individuals working for the good of society. Such mapping of moral and political meanings onto clothes emerged in mid- to-late-twentieth-century recollections of Lettice Fisher. Contributing to Brian Harrison's 1970s oral history project on suffragism, former New College undergraduate Michael Crum recalled how as a student he used to think Fisher's dress sense as Warden's wife was 'very very dowdy' (a commentary that echoed Virginia Woolf's portrait of Fisher's 'dowdy clothes'), but in retrospect he believed that her style of dress was 'an unconscious symbolism of her sympathy with the poor'.⁹⁷ The political and social sympathies thought to underpin Fisher's style of dress also appeared in family recollections. In 1953, three years before Fisher's death, her sister, novelist Olive Heseltine published *Lost Contents*, and looked back on Fisher in the earlier part of the century as 'the practical, progressive, democratic woman, careless in her dress, frugal in her habits, indifferent (except for music) to the fine arts' within a wider lament of the decline of upper-class sociability in mid-twentieth-century Britain (Fig. 20).⁹⁸ In recalling Fisher in younger life, Heseltine drew on familiar imagery of the early-twentieth-century political women whose dress was understood to signify a gender-specific form of social activism.⁹⁹ Heseltine's comments infer that Fisher was in fact more strategic in her choice of dress than Crum had suggested in his observation of her 'unconscious[ly]' constructed image. Heseltine disclosed that a considered subjectivity and a sense of social values were portrayed through women's dress, and not only by those who chose to clothe themselves in the latest fashions. There was a strong connection between a woman's

⁹⁷ WL, 8 SUF/B/027, Interview by Brian Harrison of Michael Crum. On Woolf's portrait, see Bell, *Diary of Virginia Woolf*, iv, pp. 250 [9 October 1934].

⁹⁸ The inference here is that Fisher had fallen out of conventional upper-class modes within which she had once been positioned: Heseltine, *Lost content* p. 55. For an illustration of Fisher wearing opulent French fashions at her wedding see *Lady's Pictorial*, 15 July 1899, p. 96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

work done for the good of others and her choice of apparel. Dress manifested a vital part of the self- and public images of an authentic female philanthropy.

Olive Heseltine's comments attached a critical significance to Fisher's clothes as part of the construction of a public persona which claimed a particular gendered efficiency. Indeed, the association of clothes with competence emerged in commentaries throughout the first half of the twentieth century in various iterations of a narrative which juxtaposed usefulness and capacity with attractiveness. In his book *The art of English costume* (1948), doctor C. Willett Cunnington suggested that over the years following the Second World War Britons had developed a 'modern' style of costume that 'suggests proficiency'.¹⁰⁰ Cunnington, who took an amateur interest in the subject of dress, did not expand upon the relationship between costume and competence, but rather included his comments in a chapter entitled 'Principles of sex-attraction', which he understood as one of three primary functions of costume.¹⁰¹ Cunnington's comments were not gender-specific, but an interwar woman-centered narrative made the point about dress and competence in explicitly gendered terms. In *Three guineas* (1938), Virginia Woolf satirised the symbols of status ('buttons...rosettes...stripes') that adorned the official dress of men and the elite and exclusive ceremonies with which they were associated, claiming that the 'tradition' of 'express[ing] worth of any kind, whether intellectual or moral, by wearing pieces of metal, or ribbon, coloured hoods or gowns, is a barbarity which deserves the ridicule which we bestow upon the rites of savages'.¹⁰² Woolf's rhetoric added weight to her projection of women's 'comparatively simple' use of dress, which alongside covering the body 'creates beauty for the eye [and] attracts the admiration of your sex'.¹⁰³ The idea of a relational valuation of self-worth was, as we have seen, a central part of how philanthropically-minded women understood their own achievements.¹⁰⁴ It could also form a strategic purpose for their publicity. In the post-war decades Booth commented on the role of dress in political terms and she sought to position herself within gendered norms and against the transgressions of what she presented as a more

¹⁰⁰ C. Willett Cunnington, *The art of English costume* (London: Clear-type press, 1948), p. 193.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰² Woolf, *Three guineas*, pp. 19-21.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰⁴ See above, pp. 95-100.

overtly challenging group of women. The New York *Sun* reported her stating in the wake of the First World War, 'I don't think I could aspire to be a "new woman"...I don't want to vote and I don't want to wear male attire'.¹⁰⁵ Even if the Salvation Army sought to some degree to re-define gender relations, Booth did not seek radically to reconceptualise gender identity and roles. Booth wanted her own proficiencies to be understood in conventionally, rather than combatively, feminine terms.

Between the wars women philanthropists' publicists used feminine styles of dress to affirm their subjects' femininity against an assumption that their work could push at some of the boundaries of what was deemed appropriate activity for women. In Booth's case, this might well have reflected the fact that she was working with mixed-gender audiences. But fashion choices were also part of how these women projected their own competencies, both in relation to public discourses about middle- and upper-class women's work and sociability, and to the geographical and intellectual contexts in which they situated themselves. Paget's public image veered between claiming social authority based upon a model of upper-class femininity and framing her philanthropy within more combative models. In the mid-1920s she featured regularly in the society pages of the British press as a veritable fashion-plate, shopping in the London branch of Paris designer Paul Caret, and setting a style trend that would be aped in the famous London nightclub, the Kit Kat Club.¹⁰⁶ She appeared in a 'People you should know' feature in *The Graphic* in May 1927 alongside a *mélange* of international male stars in a fashionable evening dress.¹⁰⁷ In publicity material which she developed for her work, however, Paget was typically photographed in a military-style uniform.¹⁰⁸ Paget's confidence in presenting this doubled image contrasted with the unease of the interwar society press, which was perhaps more willing to recognise a shift away from the glamorous image of upper-class women and war that Laura Doan has argued was

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Lavine, *Evangeline Booth*, pp. 87-8.

¹⁰⁶ 'Shopping', *The Westminster Gazette*, 31 October 1925, p. 9; *Eve, The Lady's Pictorial*, 14 October 1925, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Other well known personalities featured were British tenor Tom Burke; novelist, lecturer, and politician John Buchan; American comedian and compère Nikita Bellieff; French airman Captain Nungesser; and Czech playwright Josef Capek: 'People you should know', *The Graphic*, 7 May 1927, p. 222.

¹⁰⁸ This was the style she chose to be photographed in for her lantern slide publicity collection, see Figure 4.

part of the First World War discourse of gender transgression, and who sought to shore it up.¹⁰⁹ Commentaries about Paget's dress, like the *London Illustrated News* discussion of her and her daughters' charm positioned her within a stereotypically feminine image. The press opened up new avenues for Paget's sometimes sensational publicity, but it also sought to fix the protean nature of her public face.

Conclusion

When Muriel Paget's biographer Wilfrid Blunt wrote about her 1927 American lecture tour he described it as a 'failure' because Paget was unwilling to meet the demands of her audiences for gossip about the British royal family and high society.¹¹⁰ Blunt's assessment, made in the 1960s, assumed that Paget fitted into an early-twentieth-century model of transatlantic celebrity, premised upon her society credentials.¹¹¹ If we look backwards (rather than seeking to trace connections with a shifting present, as Blunt did), in some ways Paget can be seen to embody the evolution of a pre-First World War lexicon of privileged cosmopolitan celebrity that Judith Walkowitz argues 'confirmed some existing hierarchies [and] disrupted others'.¹¹² What is most revealing about Blunt's comments, however, is the framing of Paget's public reputation around her audience. Indeed, what is striking about Paget's public image is the ways in which she made and remade it in the process of configuring her public philanthropy to different audiences. Sometimes positioning her cultural authority within the mechanisms of the celebrity system (as in her media interventions within the burgeoning mode of human interest journalism), at other times she claimed competence through outwardly political discourses (notably in the association she drew with military imagery in the talks at the IDC and Chatham House). As these varied emphases reveal, Paget's public image in the American lecture tour which Blunt discussed was not straightforwardly premised on legitimising a set of behaviours associated with an

¹⁰⁹ Laura Doan, 'Topsy-turvydom: gender inversion, Sapphism and the Great War', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 12 (2006), 517-42.

¹¹⁰ Blunt, *Lady Muriel*, p. 238.

¹¹¹ On the complex intersections between aristocracy and celebrity in the permissive society era see Mort, *Capitals affairs*.

¹¹² Judith Walkowitz, 'The "vision of Salome": cosmopolitanism and erotic dancing in central London, 1908-1918', *American Historical Review*, 108, 2 (2003), p. 339.

international elite. Rather, it was an aspect of a malleable public identity through which she constructed her philanthropy in relation to the varied constituencies and make-up of her audience.

In focusing on the models and significance of women's public philanthropy, this chapter has turned on hitherto unexplored aspects of the political significance of their projects. Historians are right to point to women's philanthropy as a form of political consciousness.¹¹³ But the nature of the political is more complicated than is typically suggested. The politics in female philanthropists' public communication strategies reveal new aspects of the gendered configurations of these women's activity between the wars. This chapter illustrates that these women claimed cultural authority in a highly self-conscious and politicised process, which involved them mediating their social message to diverse audiences. Through engaging in forms of political communication similar to public relations; negotiating the marketability of a public message within the literary market; exploring the potential of philanthropy as a form of theatre; and suggesting links between female bodies and interior behaviour, these women claimed various sets of competencies and cultural status. The means of their persuasion varied according to the tastes of their audiences. In doing so, they negotiated political and religious currencies for women's work and the mechanisms of mass culture and commercial markets through which both celebrity and the role of the educationalist were reconfigured.

¹¹³ Gleadle, *British women*, p. 66; *Borderline citizens*; Luddy, *Women and philanthropy*; Lewis, *Women and social action*; Midgley, 'Anti-slavery and feminism'; Reynolds, *Aristocratic women*; Twells, *Civilising mission*; Summers, 'A home from home'.

CHAPTER 6: CROSSING BORDERS AND BELIEFS: TRANSCULTURAL PHILANTHROPIC EXCHANGES

Looking on the notice board in a YWCA club in the autumn of 1935, British members would have seen a poster advertising the forthcoming World Fellowship Week. Under the title ‘Relayed from the World’, the poster included summaries of YWCA activity in Burma, Denmark, Finland, India, Jamaica, Japan and Korea, as well as short articles on water collection in West Africa and transatlantic commerce (Fig. 21).¹ The aim of the YWCA’s World Fellowship Week – which was held every November – was twofold: to educate members in a commitment to the democratisation of international relations, and to encourage them to engage with social issues as broadly as possible, and think beyond the national. Various mechanisms were used in World Fellowship Weeks to impart to members this kind of socio-moral thinking, including travel bureau posters, newspaper clippings of international news stories, language study groups, wireless talks and trips to local collections of international art.² Film showings were thought to be a particularly useful educative medium. Suggested titles for the 1935 Fellowship Week included General Post Office (GPO) productions *The Great St. Lawrence*, *Canada’s Metropolis*, *People and Products of India*, *Tea Leaves*, *African Trails* and Gaumont British titles *Secrets of India*, *Bikaner*, *Katmandu*, and from their miniature series, *A Friesland Wedding*, *The Hague* and *Dutch Cheese*.³ A recent history of the GPO film unit in the 1930s has argued that film showings such as these sought to imbue in audiences a form of ‘Britishness’ that was active, engaged and participatory. Indeed, Scott Anthony has argued that these characteristics mirrored the very principles that underpinned a national voluntary associational culture.⁴ The YWCA’s showings illustrate that the form of Britishness disseminated through these films could also be – when analysed in the context of a broader philanthropic project – markedly outward-looking. It was this very outward-facingness – of looking beyond British borders – suggested by the wide geographical coverage of

¹ The poster was included in a supplementary issue of the YWCA’s magazine, *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, October 1935.

² ‘World-faring’, *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, May 1935, p. 72.

³ ‘Why not a film show?’, *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, October 1935, p. 156.

⁴ Scott Anthony, ‘The GPO film unit and “Britishness” in the 1930s’.

these titles, which formed the broader message of World Fellowship Week, encouraging international-mindedness and social and spiritual unity.

World Fellowship Week provided leading YWCA women with an annual forum within which to focus the intellectual underpinnings of the organisation's worldwide endeavours. With roots in a mid-late Victorian women's prayer union and a London home for girls, in its eightieth jubilee year in 1935, the YWCA was established in fifty-six countries with a membership in excess of one million.⁵ Its administrative structure was organised around overlapping units run at local, national and international levels, conceptualised in diagrams in YWCA organisational literature as a series of concentric circles. Taking as its starting-point the mechanism of the YWCA's World Fellowship Week, this chapter conceives of interwar women's philanthropy operating within a global community of reformist activists who were committed to cross-cultural endeavours for social improvement in both physical and philosophical senses. Indeed, female philanthropists crossed territorial borders in order to work with their clients, and engaged in transcultural exchanges with those whom they helped and other social activists as part of intellectual and practical processes of conceiving and performing their philanthropic projects. Female philanthropy between the wars was truly transnational.

By blurring the boundaries between imperial and non-imperial territories, the transnational lens has the scope to provide rich insights into the cultural, political and social meanings of women's philanthropy in the interwar years. These years have been understood as a moment when transnational thinking was sharpened by a particular urgency. Glenda Sluga has argued that the years immediately after the First World War, marked by interventions such as the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, heralded the beginning of 'a new international age of nationalism' which was premised upon an earlier 'transnational discourse of psychology'.⁶ A growing body of scholarship addresses the role of post-war humanitarian non-state actors in the

⁵ *Our eighty years*, p. 10. On the nineteenth-century foundations of the YWCA see Mumm, 'Women and philanthropic cultures', p. 57.

⁶ Glenda Sluga, *Nation, psychology, and international politics 1870-1919* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-2.

processes and systems of transnational exchange.⁷ Studies of women's humanitarian endeavours in our period have tended to focus on groups that were explicitly political (and usually explicitly feminist), in particular those connected with the work of the League of Nations.⁸ But the role of women philanthropists has yet to be fully explored within a transnational frame.⁹ Examining female philanthropists' activity through this lens raises new questions about international relations and gendered models of social activism. Thinking about their projects as transnational provides another challenge to the dominant historiographical narrative that assumes that women's philanthropy declined in the twentieth century as measurable by the fall off of parish- and domestic-based activity with which it was instituted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ It also problematises the preoccupation with empire that emerges in most studies of nineteenth-century women's (extra-national) humanitarian efforts.¹¹ Building on these traditions partly in order to subvert them, interwar female philanthropists fashioned their activity as truly cross-cultural, engaging in sincere conversations with clients, colleagues and the general public across geographical and intellectual divides. An appreciation of this activity draws attention to the new conceptual focus of global female philanthropy between the First and Second World Wars. In form, this was distinct from some aspects of earlier female philanthropy because in only a very

⁷ For studies addressing humanitarianism and transnationalism see Barbara Metzger, 'Towards an international human rights regime during the inter-war years: the League of Nations' combat of traffic in women and children', in Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann (eds), *Beyond sovereignty: Britain, empire and transnationalism, c.1880-1950* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 54-79; John F. Hutchinson, "'Custodians of the sacred fire": The ICRC and the postwar reorganisation of the International Red Cross,' and Bridget Towers, 'Red Cross organisational politics, 1918-1922: relations of dominance and the influence of the United States', in Paul Weindling, (ed.), *International health organisations and movements, 1918-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 17-35; pp. 36-55; Helen McCarthy, 'The lifeblood of the League? Voluntary associations and League of Nations activism in Britain', in Daniel Laqua and Katharina Rietzler (eds), *Internationalism reconfigured: transnational ideas and movements between the wars* (London: Tauris academic studies, 2011), pp. 187-208.

⁸ Carol Miller, 'Women in international relations? The debate in inter-war Britain', in Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (eds), *Gender and International Relations* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1991), pp. 64 - 82; 'Lobbying the league: women's international organisations and the League of Nations' (Unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1992); "'Geneva – the key to equality': interwar feminists and the League of Nations', *Women's History Review*, 3, 2 (1994), pp. 219-45; Susan Pedersen, 'Metaphors of the schoolroom: women working the mandates system of the League of Nations', *History Workshop Journal*, 66, 1 (2008), pp. 188-207.

⁹ Work is emerging which cross-cuts this theme, see e.g. Baughan, 'Every citizen of empire'.

¹⁰ Prochaska, *Christianity and social service*, chs. 3-5.

¹¹ This literature is vast. Important recent interventions include Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, (eds), *At home with the empire: metropolitan culture and the imperial world* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Claire Midgley, *Feminism and empire: women activists in imperial Britain, 1790-1865* (London: Routledge, 2007); Twells, *Civilising mission*.

few cases was the focus exclusively or primarily on validating women's work.¹² In the interwar years female philanthropists presented their work in terms of a dialogue between older ideas about the scope and spheres of female philanthropy and newer understandings of the gendered intellectual and organisational standards of voluntary expertise. Through their transnational projects these women made philanthropy relevant to a new, global post-war world.

The transnational is now understood as a conceptual category which can open up understandings of the ways in which, as borders were crossed, points of national difference could be re-articulated as well as inter-racial reciprocity valued.¹³ Imperial intellectual traditions retained a place in internationalist and transnationalist ideas at least up to the Second World War.¹⁴ Yet as Priya Satia has recently argued, the discourse of imperialism was itself confused, as older notions of empire as a means of moral and social uplift came into contact with newer schools of thought framed around developing technologies and the intellectual domains of anthropology and ethnography.¹⁵ Peter Mandler describes in reference to Cold War America a shift from anthropologically inspired ideas of cultural relativism – dominant in the interwar period – to notions of cultural universalism proposed by policy makers.¹⁶ The tensions between earlier traditions of valuing cultural difference and newer internationalist understandings of universal humanity is drawn starkly, reflecting an apparently sharp intellectual transition between the pre- and post-Second World War periods. But the stories of interwar women philanthropists show that between the wars identifiers of inter-cultural status were not fixed. In part because of the gendered dimensions of public activity in the interwar period – which meant that female actors remained on the boundaries of formal institutional activity – and in part because the enterprise of

¹² See e.g. Leila Rupp, *Worlds of women: the making of an international women's movement* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1997); Anne Summers, 'Which women? What Europe?: Josephine Butler and the International Abolitionist Federation', *History Workshop Journal*, 62, 1 (2006), pp. 214-31; Ian Tyrrell, *Woman's world/woman's empire: the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in international perspective, 1880-1930* (Chapel Hill; London: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

¹³ Patricia Clavin, 'Defining transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, special issue on 'Transnational communities in European History, 1920-1970', 14, 4 (2005), pp. 421-39.

¹⁴ Kevin Grant, Philippa Levine and Frank Trentmann, 'Introduction', in Grant, Levine, Trentmann, *Beyond sovereignty*, p. 2.

¹⁵ Priya Satia, 'Developing Iraq: Britain, India and the redemption of empire and technology in the First World War', *Past and Present*, 197, 1 (2007), pp. 211-55.

¹⁶ Peter Mandler, 'One world, many cultures: Margaret Mead and the limits to Cold War anthropology', *History Workshop Journal*, 68, 1 (2009), pp. 149-72.

philanthropy could enable them to act and think creatively, female philanthropists could appropriate models both of cultural difference and universal humanity. There were tensions between these models, but philanthropic women were cognisant of them, and indeed of the opportunities that were thereby opened up for a creative working life.

This chapter examines the different meanings and modes of the transcultural exchanges underpinning female philanthropists' projects in the interwar years. It concentrates on four key conceptual devices: intellectual exchanges, 'public diplomacy', religious universalism, and inter-racial encounters. First, it addresses cross-national models of intellectual exchange in the projects of Lettice Fisher and Muriel Paget. It argues that these exchanges were a critical part of female philanthropists' activity at two levels; in the mutual sharing of knowledge between a group of committed social activists, and in processes of translation between them and the wider public. Secondly, the chapter examines philanthropic women's transcultural activity as a form of 'public diplomacy'. Focusing on the public rhetoric employed by Muriel Paget and Evangeline Booth, it reveals how the international interventions of interwar female philanthropists sat outside the structures of formal diplomacy whilst negotiating inter-personal endeavours of statecraft. The third section explores notions of religious universalism as a way of conceptualising a global endeavour for both Booth and Emily Kinnaird and their organisations. Finally, I examine constructions of race within discussions of British female philanthropists' projects, arguing that both religious frameworks of the spiritual community of the faithful, and more secularly-driven notions of ethnic identification, could underpin these women's understandings of inter-racial encounters in the interwar period. Focusing on the transnational geographies of female philanthropists' benevolence opens up new avenues of thought. What was the relationship between the horizontal, cross-territorial nature of transnational female philanthropy and the vertical hierarchies of imperial structures? Should female philanthropists be viewed as agents of empire, or as enforcing a moral check on power through their more fluid cross-cultural projects? What was the relationship between border crossing in physical and philosophical terms? These themes emerge throughout this discussion in various ways within and between the different

projects of female philanthropists, and the broader intellectual and organisational criteria by which they and their commentators defined their work.

Intellectual exchanges

For some women philanthropists active in the interwar period, transcultural exchanges began before they left Britain (and sometimes without their doing so), through the informal and professional associations they constructed with other socially-reformist men and women. Indeed, at one level, the vibrancy of voluntary associational culture had always depended on the connections between people who shared a socially-reformist vision much in the same way that transnationalism, which is first and foremost about the social spaces that people inhabit, gains momentum from the networks built and the ideas exchanged.¹⁷ These interrelated processes can be seen at work in the early activity of the NCUMC, in which Lettice Fisher was a leading figure. The NCUMC was well known in Britain for providing practical assistance to single women and their children, and also as a lobbying body which campaigned for legislative reforms to illegitimacy laws.¹⁸ In lobbying roles, leading NCUMC members were sincerely interested in the comparative approaches taken to the problem of illegitimacy by social activists in Europe, North America and the (mainly white) colonies of the British Empire. One way of accessing such information was through governmental channels, which were opened up to the NCUMC in particular through Fisher's connections (via her husband) at Whitehall. Thus in early 1924, for example, the NCUMC's General Secretary Miss Musson wrote to a secretary of the Intelligence Division of the Ministry of Health, thanking her for sending information about Scandinavian legislative systems and asking for copies of an article in a 1923 issue of the *Journal of Social Hygiene* about the Norwegian Illegitimacy Act, the Act for the Protection of Illegitimate Children in Sweden (1917), details of the workings of the Gottenborg Act, and a translation of the provisions of the Norwegian Marriage Laws (1918).¹⁹ At its broadest, these exchanges formed part of the

¹⁷ Clavin, 'Defining transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, p. 422.

¹⁸ Fisher, *Twenty-one years*, pp. 5; 7-9.

¹⁹ WL, 5/OPE/9/1/2, Letter from Miss Musson to Miss Charlesworth (Intelligence Division of Ministry of Health), 4 February 1924.

development of a pan-European knowledge pool about demographic developments in the interwar years.²⁰ Of course, the information that was disseminated to NCUMC women through these associations was at best second-hand. Nevertheless, through these connections, NCUMC members had access to specialist knowledge from what was seen to be an authentic and reliable source.

NCUMC members also forged links with female experts on illegitimacy in other countries.²¹ NCUMC members met sympathetic international activists at a range of forums, including a 1918 Conference of the British Dominions' Women's Suffrage Union, in conferences organised by the NCUMC (such as the Conference of Comparative Legislation for Overseas Visitors in October 1924), and through members' representation at congresses, like the International Congresses on Child Welfare, the first of which was held in Geneva in 1926.²² In addition, talks given to and by NCUMC members were often explicitly aimed at providing a transnational dimension to the Council's research agenda. Two early talks given at NCUMC meetings illustrate this. The first, *Status of the illegitimate child in Germany*, was given in November 1922 by German politician Adele Schreiber.²³ In her talk, Schreiber showcased the precocious development of child welfare policy in Weimar Germany. She praised the passing earlier in 1922 of the National Child Welfare Act which, when it came into force in 1924, would expand and centralise public child welfare through a mixed public and private system coordinated through the Child Welfare Bureaux. Moreover, Schreiber hoped that in the next sitting of the Reichstag an act would be passed which would give illegitimate children a claim on paternal inheritance, and would legalise the proposition that in cases where paternity was disputed both men should

²⁰ Allan Carlson, *The Swedish experiment in family politics: the Myrdals and the interwar population crisis* (New Brunswick, N.J; London: Transaction Publications, 1990), xiii.

²¹ This was a similar strategy to that undertaken by early women social workers, see Anette Kniephoff-Knebel, 'Establishing international cooperation in social work education', *International Social Work*, 51, 6 (2008), pp. 790-812.

²² On press coverage see WL, 5/0PF/2/18/a, Minutes of Press and Publicity Committee Meeting, 27 May 1918. For details of the conference on Comparative Legislation, organised by the NCUMC in co-operation with the feminist Six Point Group see WL, 5/0PF/1/4/1, Minutes of Quarterly Meeting, 13 October 1924.

²³ Frau Adele Schreiber, *Status of the illegitimate child in Germany* (National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child) [British Library Miscellaneous Pamphlets 1878 f. 46]. Originally published in *Maternity and child welfare*, January 1923.

be liable to pay child maintenance.²⁴ The second, *Illegitimacy in Norway: the Castberg laws* was read at a meeting in February 1923 on behalf of its author British magistrate Mrs. Edwin Gray.²⁵ Gray's talk considered the progressive Castberg Laws, which granted rights to children born outside marriage through a critique of the Norwegian state's centralising approach to the question of illegitimacy. She thought that this model rendered women passive through its appropriation of all aspects of the legal processes of the affiliation and guardianship of illegitimate children.

The assumption of the interlocking methodologies of state and voluntary welfare provision is obvious in these talks; indeed both are oriented around the evolution of national state systems. Although Schreiber's and Gray's talks discussed illegitimacy and its solutions through outlining two very different constructions of the state, the broader stance of their discussions was actually complementary. Schreiber and Gray framed child welfare provision in terms of the balance within the state and voluntary axis, and encouraged the active participation of women therein, the very processes that the NCUMC was thinking about in Britain. Both women had long-standing profiles in infant welfare work and public health. Schreiber was a founding member of the Berlin Federal maternity board (founded in 1908) and the German society for parental and child rights (1910), and in the 1920s she worked at a German hostel for mothers under the auspices of the Red Cross. Gray had been an English Poor Law Guardian from the late 1890s to 1910s before sitting on committees for a maternity hospital and a Health and Housing Reform Association. They also shared an interest, along with Fisher, in the legal status of women, more broadly conceived. For commentators such as Schreiber and Gray, using a comparative lens in research was vital to working out the value of a particular model of welfare reform. In her talk Gray went on to reference American, Dutch, Finnish and Swedish models of illegitimacy provision (and in other talks she discussed Australian and New Zealand models). As she concluded:

²⁴ For a discussion about the processes of the Weimar state's infant welfare provision see Edward Ross Dickinson, 'Welfare, democracy, and fascism: the political crises in German child welfare, 1922-1933', *German Studies Review*, 22, 1 (1999), pp. 43-66.

²⁵ Mrs. Edwin Gray, *Illegitimacy in Norway: the Castberg laws*, (National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child) [British Library Miscellaneous Pamphlets 1878 f. 46]. Originally published in *Maternity and child welfare*, April 1923.

In practically all the civilised countries of the world this question is receiving serious attention; and while everyone recognises that the question of legislation is a difficult one...I feel that we must continue to concentrate our attention upon a possible solution, with all the knowledge that we can procure, and with all the energies that we command.²⁶

NCUMC personnel understood transcultural intellectual exchanges to be vital to the development of their research agenda, but these individuals also recognised the process to be equally important for the purpose of publicity amongst a wider public of potential donors and supporters. Fisher recognised the expediency of adopting cross-national comparisons both in conceptualising and projecting models of the NCUMC's activity for the general public. Thus, in the BBC wireless appeal in 1925, she pegged her socially-reformist vision to recognisable discussions about women's moral reform work shoring up domesticity and the domestic economy, claiming that to diminish illegitimacy meant 'fac[ing] as all over America and Canada they are trying to face, the as yet unsolved problem of adolescence'.²⁷ In this statement Fisher referred to a long-established target of social control – adolescent drinking – and linked it to a newer, more progressive view of the need for the active acceptance of responsibilities of parenthood by both single mothers and fathers as part of a wider model of transnational trends of public service.²⁸ She situated this discussion within the notion of an Anglo-American culture of social reform, and – echoing Gray – in an imperial discourse which claimed that 'All over the civilised world this problem is being studied'.²⁹ The language of the progressive, educative imperial project (fostered by 'the civilised world') was critical to Fisher's promotion of the NCUMC's idea of citizenship, an idea which she would later discuss in her book for the Workers' Education Association series, *A brief survey of the British empire* (1932), adopting the discourse of self-governing citizenship.³⁰ By framing her wireless appeal within a transatlantic argument, Fisher pointed her listening audience towards the common values of liberal, devolved states which privileged freedoms and took pride in a voluntary associational culture.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁷ WL, 5/0PF/2/2/7/1, Manuscript of wireless appeal, Mrs. H.A.L. Fisher, 'The unwanted child', 1925.

²⁸ There are parallels here with the older temperance tradition – itself a transnational movement – which sought to bolster a domestic economy made fragile by anti-social drinking. On the global dimensions of women's temperance see Tyrell, *Woman's world/woman's empire*.

²⁹ WL, 5/0PF/2/2/7/1, Manuscript of wireless appeal, Mrs. H.A.L. Fisher, 'The Unwanted Child', 1925.

³⁰ Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher, *A brief survey of the British Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 110-1.

This popular understanding of British civil society emerged in a more refined statement – and through a different comparative emphasis – in a conversation which Fisher had with her friend, the French historian and philosopher Elie Halévy about his book *History of the English people in the nineteenth century* (1924-34). Halévy's book, published in 1937 as one of the first Pelican paperbacks, explored the idea of Englishness through a study of political, economic and religious life.³¹ In her review Fisher criticised the French blind spot in Halévy's thinking which 'ignor[ed] provincial and rural England, the England of quiet taken-for-granted but devoted social service'.³² At its broadest, Fisher's remark formed part of a process through which she sought to formulate (publicly) her understanding of public and voluntary service. Her characterisation reveals that she understood an English heritage of local social action as integral to her projections of national public service. She criticised Halévy's identification of the progressive in the model of Nonconformist liberty and individualism in order to situate English voluntary activity within a much wider range of traditions, invested with the timeless value of the rural.³³ Her discussion raises questions about the tensions that could arise when speaking across cultures, and it indicates the need to consider the limitations, as well as the opportunities, provided by transnational encounters. Participants in cross-cultural conversations could get some things wrong, or they could speak at cross-purposes. But even such difficult dialogues formed part of the dynamic process of cultural cross-fertilisation by which women such as Fisher projected their philanthropic projects between the wars.

Fundamentally Fisher's interaction with Halévy was about a process of translation. In cases where philanthropic projects took place outside Britain, the significances attached to this level of exchange were even more urgent. Translating the nuance and the freight of its meanings was difficult.³⁴ Commentators such as the Lord Mayor of London Sir Frank Bowater hinted at

³¹ Asa Briggs, 'Foreword', in Elie Halévy, *A history of the English people* (1924; London; New York; Ark Paperbacks, 1987), vii.

³² Bodleian, MS Fisher 70, fol. 7, Letter from Elie Halévy to Lettice Fisher, 26 July 1934.

³³ See John Stevenson, 'The countryside, planning and civil society in Britain, 1926-1947', in Harris, *Civil society, in British history*, pp. 191-212.

³⁴ This cultural capital operated both at the levels of the social and the subjective, see Roy Porter, 'Introduction', in Peter Burke and Roy Porter (eds), *Language, self and society: a social history of language* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 1-20; Eric Hobsbawm, 'Language, culture and national identity', *Social Research*, 63, 4 (1996), pp. 1065-81.

the challenges of this enterprise in a speech given at a lunch in Evangeline Booth's honour hosted by the London Grocers' Company in early 1939, in which he observed the Salvation Army's global reach both territorially (it operated in 97 countries and colonies) and culturally (it functioned through 100 languages). A more developed commentary on this process is illustrated by publicity for Muriel Paget's international philanthropy in Czechoslovakia. In the years immediately after the foundation of the Czech Republic as an independent state (1918), Paget established a number of hospitals, children's welfare centres and feeding schemes, which she operated with the agreement of the new national authorities.³⁵ In early 1921 she set up a children's hospital in Bytca, in the north-western territory of the former state of Slovakia. Her project received publicity in a lead article in the bi-weekly photojournalist magazine, *Český Svět* (*Czech World*) (Fig. 22).³⁶ In keeping with the magazine's emphasis on visual narratives, the article was juxtaposed against photographs of Paget's work, its clients and employees. Critically, it was the only article in the issue to be published both in *Czech and English*, showing not only the transnational significance of her philanthropic project, but also how the transnational exchanges which her enterprise inaugurated were expanded outwards through a wider constituency of readers, both English and Czech. Mediating cultural difference through a national language was vital to the success of international projects such as Paget's not just at the level of publicity, but also at that of interaction with philanthropic clients. This second point was made clearly in a letter Paget received in the summer of 1918 from the daughter of the first President of the Republic of Czechoslovakia Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, the social and women's activist Alice Masaryk.³⁷ Masaryk discussed the value of the international activity of the Red Cross (with whom Paget had trained and retained connections and she herself played a leading role as President of the Czech organisation) as a source of help to the 'Russian' people because it took seriously its needs on its own terms. Masaryk saw particular benefits in Paget's suggestion to send English

³⁵ Paget worked closely with the new *Péče o dítě* (Food Ministry) in her Czechoslovakian Mission.

³⁶ 'The official opening of the Muriel Paget Hospital for Children in Bytca near Zilina', *Český Svět*, 10 March 1921, pp. 2-5

³⁷ Nadezda Kubickova, 'Historical portraits of important European leaders in social work. Alice Masaryk (1879-1966) – Czechoslovakia', *Journal of European Social Work*, 4, 3 (2001), pp. 303-11.

medical workers who could speak Russian and who understood the political and social context, 'for they can reach the population and meet their great needs'.³⁸

Alice Masaryk's remark about 'reaching the population' referred to the period of initial contact between philanthropist and client, but in fact 'reaching the population' could also mean an evolving interaction in which the cultural values both of philanthropist and client could be imported and exported. This longer-term relationship was premised on the mutual social education of these constituencies, and formed a key intellectual basis on which Paget's international philanthropy was discussed as 'permanent'. The links that Paget established with the national authorities in the places where she practised her philanthropy were of course fundamental to achieving this permanence, a process all the more urgent in the new Baltic states, whose cultural and territorial bases were still fragile in the immediate post-war period. There was also a sense that in establishing her interventions on a permanent footing, Paget's work would be distinguished from rival – mainly American – relief schemes, which were typically conceived of as temporary.³⁹ Paget had written explicitly about her goal of permanent welfare intervention in a statement in April 1921 proposing the work of her Mission in Eastern Europe. 'The aim of the Mission', Paget wrote, 'is to establish a permanent system of Social Welfare which can be carried on in sequence when it leaves', where children's clinics would continue to be run by a local doctor under the guidance of the Medical Director.⁴⁰ Paget's conception of the sequential aspect of her project mirrored the idea of the chain of demand or lamp passing between people that contemporaries, and sociologists since, have identified as a core aspect of the process of giving.⁴¹ Her proposals for her Mission indicated the didactic agenda of her philanthropy, in which British health workers would pass on skills to local workers, who in turn would continue to run the clinics once her philanthropy had been disbanded. A document by the Czechoslovakian Ministry in August 1920 set out a similar trajectory for Paget's Mission in Ruthenia (from which it was agreed she would withdraw on 1 October 1920), emphasising that in the process of transfer, 'The

³⁸ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Files, Box R, Letter from Alice Masaryk to Muriel Paget, 26 June 1918.

³⁹ A fact stated in an article by lecturer and linguist M. E. Walker in the *Northern Echo*, 10 June 1928, p. 6.

⁴⁰ MS 1405, Box 4, Proposals by Lady Muriel Paget and L. Webster for Missions in the Baltic States, 5 April 1921.

⁴¹ See above, pp. 145-6.

British workers will also explain to the new workers all about the arrangements of the feeding stations and introduce them into the work in the field'.⁴² Interactions with local workers involved a process of translation through which Paget bridged international understandings of English philanthropic projects and her clients' understandings of a community-work model of welfare. Examples such as this emphasise the multifaceted aspects of female philanthropists' transcultural exchange. Women's philanthropy could involve both crossing territorial borders and transcending different intellectual terrains of voluntary action.

Public diplomacy

Interwar British commentators tended to present Paget's activity in terms which validated the imperatives of her international work through the lens of national prestige. In part, this reflected apparent emphases in Paget's projects upon the relative importance of Englishness compared with the national character of the country in which she worked. For example, she was quoted in an early publicity pamphlet for the Anglo-Russian hospital, for which she held the post of Honorary Organising Secretary to the Executive Committee, describing it as 'our national gift to Russia' in thanks for alliance in wartime.⁴³ Towards the end of her life, Paget's role as custodian of a particularly cosmopolitan version of Englishness was suggested in an article in early 1937 in the establishment newspaper *The Sunday Times*. Describing the work of a group of upper-class notaries, including Paget's husband, the article characterised Paget – the only woman – as 'almost Ambassadorial'.⁴⁴ In approximating Paget's public persona to a version of diplomacy, *The Sunday Times* article was observing less a model of cross-national activity that was bound by internationalist organisational standards than a genteel mode of sociability associated with the diplomatic endeavour, suggested in the remark that it was '*the* thing for British visitors' to lunch with her.⁴⁵ This form of official entertaining fitted neatly with traditional notions of the upper-class woman as society hostess – indeed, in framing its article in the (possibly fictional) setting of

⁴² LRA, MS 1405, Box 17, Document by Food Ministry of Czechoslovakian Republic [Prague], 'Agreement Regarding Ruthenia', 5 August 1920.

⁴³ LRA, MS 1405, Box 2, Publicity pamphlet of Anglo-Russian Hospital, 1916.

⁴⁴ 'Atticus', 'Men, women, and memories', *The Sunday Times*, 14 February 1937, p. 15.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

a society dinner party hosted by the Pagets, *The Sunday Times* made this connection consciously. Closer to home, it seemed that Paget's understanding and metaphoric embodiment of diplomatic culture was rooted within a much more rigorous sense of the political context. Paget's daughter Sylvia articulated the practical rootedness of this culture in the spring of 1933 in a letter to her mother which discussed the Russian-Sino-Japanese relationship she was learning about in Shanghai, where her husband was the general manager of the outpost of press emporium Reuters. Although we need to acknowledge a degree of intra-familial image-making in this correspondence, nevertheless Sylvia Chancellor saw the need for a more open expression of official diplomatic culture than that which was marshalled through the Foreign Office, concluding that Paget 'had better come out here as Britain's first woman Ambassador!'⁴⁶ In both of these portraits the gendered traits of tactfulness and finesse were implied as holding opportunities for a different sort of politics from the traditional establishment endeavour of diplomacy. Women's benevolence, it seemed, could bring a different dimension to statecraft.

The overlapping discourses which commentators used to characterise Paget's activity between the wars need to be seen in the context of what were and were not deemed to be accessible spheres of public influence for women in this period. As Helen McCarthy has shown, women were engaged in formal diplomatic activity only on a very limited scale in these years.⁴⁷ Indeed, if we employ a strict definition of diplomacy as international organisational standards and the traditional business of negotiation it does seem that Paget's international philanthropy was doing something very different. Perhaps unsurprisingly this was the conservative view of the British diplomatic establishment in Soviet Russia. The Consul General in Moscow (and later Leningrad) Reader Bullard gave voice to this view. Bullard came into close contact with Paget between 1930 and 1932 when the headquarters of the Distressed British Subjects Fund was housed temporarily in a room in the British Consulate in Leningrad. In a diary entry of 3 September 1932 he described Paget as 'liv[ing] in a world of make-believe', deciding on a whim that 'the onions in the villa garden must be pulled up so that she might herself play Lady

⁴⁶ LRA, MS 1405, Correspondence Box K, Letter from Sylvia Chancellor to Muriel Paget, 12 March 1933.

⁴⁷ Helen McCarthy, 'Petticoat diplomacy: the admission of women to the British Foreign Service, 1919-1946', *Twentieth Century British History*, 20, 3 (2009), pp. 285-321.

Bountiful and present them to the Distressed British Subjects when they come for their monthly pensions'.⁴⁸ It is significant that Bullard envisaged Paget as a 'Lady Bountiful' in the garden of the Distressed British Subjects home. At one level this was a long-established gendered critique about class – about the paternalist model of well-to-do women's philanthropy that relied upon the unequal social relationship between giver and receiver. But Bullard's comment was also a critique of what he perceived to be Paget's enactment of an unchanged domesticated model of female philanthropy. Bullard was constrained in his thinking by this model, and also probably by the ideal of the diplomatic wife, with which he would have been familiar. He failed to see that Paget's work was re-articulating these models, and framing them in a more combative way.

Paget operated within a model of 'public diplomacy' that demanded she think strategically about displaying her combativeness. Coined in the 1960s by the former American foreign service officer Edmund Gullion to denote forms of international relations that happened outside the sphere of formal diplomatic activity, the phrase 'public diplomacy' was actually used in earlier periods, and in the interwar years in the rhetoric of internationalist idealists like League of Nations' personnel James Shotwell and Clarence Streit.⁴⁹ Paget operated on a similar terrain; she positioned her international interventions on the faultlines of the traditional diplomatic endeavour, rather than appropriating it fully. Thus in the spring of 1920, having recently set up a charity providing food, clothing, educational and health facilities for Polish Russian children named the Children of Russia Relief Fund, she wrote to the officer in charge of an existing (and rather confusingly-named) charity, the Russian Relief and Reconstruction Fund, stating that she hoped that the two Funds would co-operate in their activity in North Russia. She claimed 'Our policy is to recognise no political or geographical boundaries where relief is concerned'.⁵⁰ Specifically she did not wish to evacuate hospitals should they be taken over by the Soviet Government. Despite Paget's claim to an apolitical stance, this was a heavily politicised rhetoric. Her discussion came in the wake of the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris which, operating through

⁴⁸ Julian and Margaret Bullard (eds), *Inside Stalin's Russia: the diaries of Reader Bullard, 1930-34* (Charlbury: Day Books, 2000), pp. 221-2.

⁴⁹ Nicholas J. Cull, "'Public diplomacy' before Gullion: the evolution of a phrase', USC Center on Public Diplomacy Paper, <http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdfs/gullion.pdf> [accessed 12 January 2011].

⁵⁰ LRA, MS 1405, Box 12, Letter from Lady Muriel Paget to Reverend F. Komlosy, 16 March 1920.

the internationalist standards of formal negotiation, had sought to delimit territorial boundaries between the states of Poland and Czechoslovakia. In this letter, Paget showed how she was building on the diplomatic endeavour, whilst circumventing it. Her rhetoric, reiterated in the later 1920s and 1930s English-language international newspapers the *Rand Daily Mail* and the *Japanese Times and Mail*, situated her own interventions in Eastern Europe both as transcending diplomatic and cartographic borders and as non-political.⁵¹ She promoted her international welfare work as she had framed earlier her work amongst the destitute for the Invalid Kitchens of London, as ‘personal service on an organised basis’, and this could cut across national boundaries.⁵² The idea of the personal rather than the political motivational impetus was picked up on by sympathetic commentators such as Una Pope-Hennessy, who argued for the non-ideological basis of Paget’s work in statements such as ‘Russia is just Russia for her whatever the administration’.⁵³ Yet Paget’s rhetoric of transcending the narrowly political aspects of public activity was highly political and strategic. It sought both to downplay her role within the complex and fragile conditions of international politics and her political activity as a woman.

Evangeline Booth used a similar discourse of transcending geography and politics in her discussions of the Salvation Army’s social work in the post-First World War period. In an article in a 1920 issue of the American *National Geographic Magazine*, Booth, then in charge of the American Salvation Army, was reported to have said that as the Salvation Army had grown, ‘it has become increasingly apparent that the faith which regenerates men recognises no barrier of nationality or geographical limitation’.⁵⁴ Booth linked her argument to a claim which was to become a repeated slogan in the interwar years about the Salvation Army’s religious methodology being consonant with aesthetic and scientific socially-minded creeds. She alluded to the latter model at the American Institute of Social Science.⁵⁵ Here, she discussed the Salvation Army’s

⁵¹ ‘A woman’s work in reconstruction: Lady Muriel Paget’s errantry’, *Rand Daily Mail* 22 March 1927, p. 6; ‘IRCC personality’, *Japanese Times and Mail*, 22 October 1934, p. 5.

⁵² TNA, FR 608/6, Report by Lady Muriel Paget, ‘British Assistance for Slovakia’, 12 April 1919.

⁵³ Pope-Hennessy, *Closed city*, p. 44.

⁵⁴ Evangeline Booth, ‘Around the world with the Salvation Army’, *National Geographic Magazine*, 37, 4 (1920), p. 351.

⁵⁵ See above, p. 128.

system of officer training as ‘the art of dealing ably with human life’.⁵⁶ There was, nevertheless, a complex relationship within the Salvation Army’s social philosophy between models of scientific and religious social service. On another occasion, Booth advocated that Salvation Army efficiency would be improved through members’ broadening their knowledge of scientific and technical developments, but she warned them against departing from ‘the distinctive and basic principles of your faith’, which meant that people could only be redeemed through a spiritual revival.⁵⁷

By the late 1930s, Booth was coupling arguments about the transcultural resonance of the Salvation Army with a claim that it was politically neutral. Her denial of the political inflections of Salvation Army activity enabled her to claim the Salvation Army’s broad-mindedness in a political context that was edging towards global crisis. Speaking at the London Grocers’ Company lunch in February 1939, Booth stated trenchantly that ‘The Salvation Army takes no part in politics’. This assertion prefaced a topical discussion about world peace in which Booth claimed that her wide experiences of travel had convinced her that people across the world ‘desired above all else that there should be a unifying and abiding friendship between all nations’.⁵⁸ Booth’s speech was reported in *The Times* and broadcast by the BBC on the wireless, and her rhetoric functioned as a brokering device to translate ideals of transnational friendship between establishment and popular audiences. Her authority in international questions was acknowledged at the lunch by leading establishment figures, in tributes paid to her by politician and lawyer Sir John Simon, Governor-General of Canada and Viceroy of India first Marquess of Willingdon, and *in absentia*, Secretary of State for War Mr. Hore-Belisha.⁵⁹ Booth’s emphasis dovetailed with the rhetoric of the League of Nations about friendly co-operation and working across national borders. But it also did something distinctive, in blending the international socio-political endeavour with a set of explicitly religious values. This alternative motivational impetus

⁵⁶ Booth, ‘Around the world with the Salvation Army’, p. 347.

⁵⁷ SAA, Evangeline Booth Papers, Speeches I, 311/5, ‘Above All’, n.d.

⁵⁸ ‘Work of Salvation Army: General Booth honoured’, *The Times*, 22 February 1939, p. 19; BBC Sound Archive, 2098-99, ‘Booth, General Evangeline, head of the Salvation Army’, Speech at a luncheon held in the Grocers’ Hall, given in her honour by the City of London to celebrate her five years in office as Head of the Salvation Army, 21 February 1939.

⁵⁹ ‘General Booth honoured’, p. 19.

is illustrated in an article in *The War Cry* in March 1938, in which Booth stipulated the need to imbue an increasingly secular-driven world with the Christian values of redemption. ‘We have our private opinions’, Booth wrote:

But we play no part in politics. We are not concerned as an Army with parties or systems of economics and government. We do not involve ourselves in national rivalries and wars. Ours is the privilege, peace or war, of caring for the casualties that civilisation leaves on the pathway of progress...He cannot conceive of salvation without a Saviour, nor of service without divine assistance.⁶⁰

Here, Booth was complicating the secular motivations she afforded the transnational endeavour of most international relations. For her, a truly transnational project functioned on a level beyond the traditional institutions of diplomacy, economy, and politics: it needed to work through a dynamic and sincerely-held religious faith.

Religious universalism

For religious female philanthropists like Booth, claims that their public activity was a form of friendship and politically neutral revealed the complex ideological underpinnings of women’s international humanitarian activity between the wars, in which both cultural difference and cross-national reciprocity could be valued. A critical framework for this juxtaposition emerged in the language of spiritual assurance. Drawing upon this reference, religious women philanthropists opened up a discursive space for a more fundamental debate about the value of spiritual affirmation in sustaining both their cross-national endeavours and their own senses of self-worth. Booth described the Salvation Army at the speech at the Grocers’ Company lunch as uniting under its spiritual banner national differences of inherited tradition, custom, creed and taste.⁶¹ This was a bold claim to make in the context of the fracturing global politics of the late 1930s. How was it to be achieved?

In the years immediately after the First World War, when Booth led the Salvation Army in America, she envisaged this unity through the trope of empire. In her 1919 book *The war*

⁶⁰ Extracts from an article published in *The Commentator, The War Cry*, 19 March 1938, p. 4.

⁶¹ BBC Sound archive, 2098-99, ‘Booth, Gen. Evangeline, Head of the Salvation Army’, Speech at London Grocers’ Company Lunch, 21 February 1939.

romance of the Salvation Army she described the Salvation Army as an ‘empire geographically unlike any other’, lacking a frontier, and ‘composed of a tangle of races, tongues, and colors [sic], of types of civilisation and enlightened barbarism such as never before in all human history gathered together under one flag’.⁶² The flag of empire, of course, was a stock motif in nineteenth-century imperial expansionism, and it was also a symbol of the religious militarism of the Salvation Army. Booth invoked this image to distinguish the ‘self-interest, desire for fame, kinship, blood, speech, or patriotism’ which had bound together territorial empires in the past from the ‘spiritual ideal’ which united the Salvation Army’s.⁶³ The following year, in an article in the *National Geographic Magazine*, she discussed the Salvation Army’s empire as composed of fragments ‘but all bound together by the common cause of service to mankind’.⁶⁴ Historians such as Mark Lee have shown that the fragility of empire prompted a wide range of political and non-political actors and organisations in the interwar years to promote the unity of empire through a spiritualised vision.⁶⁵ Booth’s and the Salvation Army’s version imagined an ‘empire of service’ which brought together ideas of an unbounded spiritual community with the colonial language of an enlightened mission conquering a native barbarism. Thus her discussion in the *National Geographic Magazine* article was illustrated by photographs of new Salvation Army recruits, such as a portrait of a group of Hindu men, and accompanied by statements about the process of spiritual transformation of local communities, whose wooden and stone idols of worship had had to be ‘cleans[ed]’ and ‘destroy[ed]’ (Fig. 23).⁶⁶ This colonial language was similar to that used by Booth’s father in the late 1870s, when he first described the Salvation Army as a global mission.⁶⁷ However, there was a shift in Booth’s conceptualisation in 1920 from her father’s over forty years earlier, in her emphasis on the target of the Salvation Army’s ‘empire of service’ as a universalist ‘mankind’.⁶⁸ Politics and identities were inextricably connected in this spiritual

⁶² Booth and Livingston Hill, *War romance*, pp. 20-1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁶⁴ Booth, ‘Around the world with the Salvation Army’, p. 363.

⁶⁵ Mark Lee, ‘The story of Greater Britain: what lessons does it teach?’, *National Identities*, 6, 2 (2004), pp. 123-42. See also a recent collection of essays which focuses on the religious dimensions of the British empire: Hilary Carey (ed.), *Empires of religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008).

⁶⁶ Booth, ‘Around the world with the Salvation Army’, pp. 349; 351.

⁶⁷ William Booth, ‘Our new name’, *Salvationist*, 1 (1879), p. 1, cited in Eason, ‘Desperate fighting at the cape’, p. 268.

⁶⁸ Booth, ‘Around the world with the Salvation Army’, p. 363.

reading, as were older and newer frames of reference. Critically, the specification of the Salvation Army's clients had changed from the idea of the colonised to a more neutral understanding of a Christian commonwealth.

In Christian circles it was important to set understandings of philanthropy in a wider context about the nature of Christianity as a global religion in a world of nations. In these discussions philanthropy was not seen as an end in itself. Rather, a creative Christian community needed to explore both what religious social activism could achieve in its different forms, and its wider social, moral and political significance. One of the most revealing discussions of these issues surviving in Booth's archive is a draft of a speech that she was invited to give by the International Missionary Council (IMC). Established in 1921 as an outgrowth of the world mission conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 and its outcome, the International Review Mission, the IMC was part of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century ecumenical movement growing in significance in the interwar years.⁶⁹ The IMC wrote to Booth in the 1930s asking her to prepare a speech addressing how the Salvation Army understood evangelism and the contemporary relevance of the Gospels. Booth began by reasserting that the Salvation Army was 'non-political', a position from which she argued it was difficult for her to draw connections between the temporality of the everyday world and the permanency of the religious. For Booth, evangelism meant the acceptance of Christ as the Incarnation of God, a principle which she believed was 'infinite in time and space' and 'embrace[d] all peoples, at all periods in history, whatever their race, religion and culture, in one continuous mission to seek and to save those who are lost'.⁷⁰ Similarly, she saw the Gospel as a text to which civilisation should adapt itself, not the other way round.⁷¹ Booth interpreted the IMC's questions as an invitation to move the Salvation Army away from worldly identifiers in order to stress its metaphysical significance. This was a religiously infused reading of active citizenship which prepared the ground for the

⁶⁹ William Richey Hogg, *Ecumenical foundations: a history of the International Missionary Council and its nineteenth-century background* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952).

⁷⁰ SAA, Evangeline Booth Papers, Speeches, II, 312/7, Manuscript in response to questions by the IMC.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

intellectual and practical interests of post-Second World War ecumenical thinkers.⁷² Ruth Compton Brouwer argues that ‘ecumenism’ took ‘modern’ professional missionary women ‘beyond nationalism as well as beyond denominationalism’.⁷³ In her discussions with the IMC, Booth showed that women outside the professions were also working within these frameworks to transcend both institutional boundaries and temporal identifiers. Indeed, by complicating the relationship between the territorial and spiritual contours of Salvation Army activity, Booth conveyed the message that however much social and political circumstances changed – the contexts which provided the targets of philanthropy – the message of Christianity remained the same.

Booth’s speech for the IMC was one attempt amongst Christian groups to build an explanatory framework in which to express the insights of post-war social religious schemes. Another emerged in Britain in 1924 at the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (Copec). Copec brought together representatives from all British Christian churches to translate the social gospel language of late-Victorian Britain in a new social context through discussing the churches’ approaches to contemporary social problems. Moreover, it acted as a forum through which religious organisations could redefine their social schemes. These processes of redefinition and translation were worked out in particular ways by religious women, as can be seen in the pattern of the YWCA’s participation in the conference. In her book *Reminiscences*, published the year after the conference, Emily Kinnaird presented the YWCA as a social mission which transcended Protestantism and evangelicalism through what she called ‘interdenominationalism’. Interdenominational activity grew in popularity between the wars amongst liberal Anglican churchmen. But Kinnaird traced the YWCA’s extra-ecclesiastical basis to the broad missionary purview of her parents, co-founder of the YWCA Mary-Jane Kinnaird

⁷² See Darril Hudson, *The ecumenical movement in world affairs* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson for the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1969).

⁷³ Ruth Compton Brouwer, *Modern women modernizing men: the changing missions of three professional women in Asia and Africa, 1902-69* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), p. 9.

and Liberal MP Arthur Fitzgerald Kinnaird.⁷⁴ In this intra-familial reading, the older roots of the YWCA's cross-cultural activity were still strong.

In discussing 'interdenominationalism', Kinnaird was making epistemological and genealogical points, but also a pragmatic one. For her, it was important to distinguish the YWCA from its rivals. For example, she wrote about the Girls' Friendly Society (set up in 1875) as socially and spiritually limited because it operated within a strict Anglican frame. This limitation first came into focus for Kinnaird when she was doing social work in India in the late 1880s, where she recognised that a denominational philosophy such as that promoted by the Girls' Friendly Society was at odds with local thought.⁷⁵ She published an account of her commitment to Indian society in 1944 in *My adopted country*, in which she spoke about a move amongst newspapers and secular books in the war years to discuss religion more openly again, and recommended readers to consult recent literature on the social and ecumenical priorities of British Christian thought as presented in the reports of the Malvern Conference 1940-1 on church-state relations, the literature of the Student Christian movement, and, seminally, in the speeches of Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple.⁷⁶ Kinnaird's understanding of religious philanthropy as a practical social action and philosophy developed her mother's work of establishing Christian-inspired institutes, libraries, and educational classes for young women working away from home in a new idiom, though training girls in business methods and public speaking. This work recognised the new skills and new religiosity needed by an emerging womanhood in the interwar years in morally- and socially-evolutionary terms. As an article in the 1931 YWCA Review explained, only 'interdenominationalism' could enable religious social activism to face the complexities of 'modern life'.⁷⁷

A year before Copec, Kinnaird had written an article for the YWCA's magazine in which she reflected on her recent visit to Lisbon. Kinnaird had not been to Portugal before, and for her, the fascination of visiting a new country was to find 'not so much new things, as new ways of

⁷⁴ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 65.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁷⁶ Kinnaird, *Adopted country*, pp. 107-8.

⁷⁷ 'The YWCA today: a review', 1931, p. 1.

doing things and a different point of view from that of one's own country', and to reinforce an 'underlying sense of unity'.⁷⁸ The article included textual sketches of Lisbon's nine-mile-broad river Tagus and its British-run tramway system. It also raised fundamental questions about the effects of technology in mobilising international culture – 'If the railway is a great leveller, what will be the differences of national custom when we move by aeroplane?', Kinnaird wondered – and about the methodology of religious social service, which she thought should be 'adaptabl[e]'.⁷⁹ The ideal of combining flexibility in social methods and unity in philosophy was reiterated throughout Kinnaird's discussions and in YWCA literature more broadly. A pamphlet published in 1935 to celebrate the organisation's eightieth anniversary referred to its comprehensive aims of respecting individual freedoms and securing 'full wellbeing', as involving primarily 'elasticity of method and local self-government'. It went on, 'These have developed in often unexpected ways but have never been irreconcilable with unity of spirit'. The pamphlet configured these aims and methods as placing a particular responsibility on YWCA membership to reconsider social values and to turn to 'the eternal behind the uncertainties of a rapidly changing world'.⁸⁰ In a similar sense to Booth's discussion at the IMC, the YWCA conceived of its message as crossing time, culture and space.

The new complexities of everyday life encouraged leading members of the YWCA to re-evaluate their work and how it fitted with and within a new set of international relations. This involved exploring the meanings of an international religious model of women's social service and how it might be sincerely established. In the YWCA 1927 almanac, the Secretary to the Overseas Committee Constance Garside doubted whether friendship was enough to secure international understanding, which required 'imagination', a determination 'to discover truth' and an 'eagerness to believe the best of others'.⁸¹ Garside's observations were linked through the almanac's lead article to a discussion about who ought to constitute the focus of YWCA members' 'service'. In that article, members were encouraged to serve not only the people and groups who were physically closest to them (family and friends) but also 'people who are far out

⁷⁸ Emily Kinnaird, 'What of Portugal?', *Our Own Gazette*, November 1923, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸⁰ *Our eighty years*, p. 3.

⁸¹ Constance Garside, 'International friendship', *YWCA Almanac 1927*, pp. 31-2.

of reach of personal contact, people we shall never see'.⁸² The idea of religiously-inspired 'service' that transcended personal contact re-articulated the value of a personalised model of women's philanthropy. It signalled how interwar YWCA members ought to focus on the intangible connections between people as well as tangible links. The limitations of physical boundaries, it was claimed, could be transcended through a form of voluntary action that was premised on social imagination. Transcultural exchange required both concrete transactions between parties, and an emotional engagement, through which a spirit of social and cultural reciprocity would be both practically and philosophically fostered.

Inter-racial encounters

Channelling a social imagination involved YWCA members thinking about others in a way which both accepted, and reduced the significance of, qualities of difference. This two-part message was promoted to young YWCA members in the autumn of 1936 through an article in *The Blue Triangle Gazette's* 'Pioneers' page'. In October 1936, the page launched what its authors hoped would become a nation-wide YWCA discussion about 'Skin-Colour'. The article began by asking readers what World Fellowship Week meant to their group. Encouraging them to see it as a time for 'intelligent thinking about international affairs', it then listed a series of questions which could form the basis for discussion:

1. Where do we get our ideas – the cinema – the newspapers – magazines – what someone else said?
2. What is prejudice? Where do we get our prejudices?
3. Have you ever discovered an idea you had was due to your own ignorance? What happened after you gained your knowledge?
4. Can wrong ideas continue when they are contrary to personal experience?
5. Think of someone of another skin colour than your own; what do you think of their contribution to poetry, science, music, art, etc?
6. Why are coloured people often treated so badly in this country? Have you ever met or had anything to do with coloured people? Would you like them to come to your home or to be seen walking in the street with them?
7. Is it right to speak of the coloured races as inferior? Could you think of any great men or women who have been coloured? Do you know anything about Kagawa?
8. Have you heard people arguing about foreign missions? Which side would you take and what arguments would you use?

⁸² Irene Cox, 'By love serve one another', YWCA Almanac 1927, front page.

9. Ought we to talk more about “foreign” missions? Is England a Christian country? Ought the East to send missionaries to us?⁸³

These questions raise a fascinating combination of abstract and more contextualised themes. Asking 11-16 year-olds about what constituted the ‘sources’ of one’s knowledge raised fundamentally challenging questions about the moral and intellectual frameworks of cultural registers and structures of education. Questioning how they might value the aesthetic and philosophical contributions of other races challenged them to think about the cultural systems that might be employed by different societies. The article’s allusion to Japanese evangelist Toyohiko Kagawa sought to steer discussion to a specific consideration of transcultural models of Christian social reform.⁸⁴ Questions such as these, which sought to raise cognisance of the interconnections as well as the separations between races, were especially resonant for a generation of girls growing up in an era that was at least in part characterised by developments in communication technologies which brought the world’s inhabitants closer together. But the choice of questions also needs to be read against what would have been the young people’s background knowledge of increasingly precarious international relations. Recent months had seen the outbreak of war in Abyssinia, Civil War in Spain and the threat of an increasingly militarised Germany. Discussions of the value of a religious social order and community would be voiced in the early-1940s in the context of the fledgling welfare state by figures such as the British Christian socialist Archbishop William Temple.⁸⁵ This nexus had its roots in interwar discussions, such as those encouraged on the ‘Pioneers’ Page’. YWCA women considered a religious commendation for social justice both within and outside the nation-state.

The YWCA’s ‘Skin-Colour’ discussion shows that ideas of cultural relativism and universalism were not regarded as mutually exclusive in the interwar period, but instead they could be blended together in order to project a harmonised world-vision in which difference was both celebrated and moderated. There was an important precedent within the YWCA leadership for bridging the gap between different races. Emily Kinnaird wrote in *Reminiscences* about how in the mid-nineteenth century, her parents had hosted black and Indian missionaries in their

⁸³ ‘Pioneers and “skin-colour”’, *The Blue Triangle Gazette*, October 1936, p. 164.

⁸⁴ Robert Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa: apostle of love and social justice* (Berkeley, CA.: Centenary Books, 1988).

⁸⁵ William Temple, *Christianity and social order* (1942; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956).

London home. Inter-racial mixing was not, Kinnaird explained, the dominant view of social service either in the early years of YWCA activity (1870s) or in the 1920s, when, she claimed, ‘interdenominationalism and internationalism were still controversial’.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, in Kinnaird’s projection, the YWCA’s heritage was radically outward-looking in the sense that under its Christian auspices, national identities could be balanced with a global worldview which built cross-national friendships. Fundamentally, this message was about overcoming the prejudicial boundaries that separated different creeds and races. But being sensitive to ways to overcome discrimination did not imply a diminution of respect for the traditions of the nation to which one belonged. Indeed, Anglican feminist Maude Royden had contributed an article to the YWCA’s magazine in the 1920s in which she argued that not only was respect for national traditions compatible with international feelings, it was also essential for sincere attempts to ‘serve the world’.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, an altruistic method was presented here as transcultural, in that it crossed over the national and international dimensions that operated synchronically within an individual’s life.

Situating their projects within a cross-national framework provided opportunities for religious women philanthropists to reflect upon the meanings of human society. For Evangeline Booth, this was a multinational and multiracial community that could be connected through the Salvation Army’s practical evangelical theology and social work; a world of peoples connected through Christian love and values that transcended race and creed. Imperial discourses remained important conceptual devices through which these ideas were distilled throughout the interwar years, but political bandwagons were also shifting, and Booth moved with them. By the 1920s and ’30s the image of the comradely brotherhood of nations (originally a trope of the ‘Sovietisation’ of the USSR) was ubiquitous. In 1937 the Salvation Army appropriated this image in its international appeal entitled unmistakably *This brotherhood of nations*. The front cover of the appeal booklet visualised comradeship in an image of a group of men and women of different ethnicities from across the world standing side by side (Fig. 24). The image seemed to pay

⁸⁶ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 54.

⁸⁷ A. Maude Royden, ‘Christianity and the love of one’s own country’, *Our Own Gazette*, September 1926, p. 17.

homage to propaganda of Soviet society. However in picking up on this motif, the campaign also found a shorthand for the more entrenched imagery of (usually monotheistic) *religious* brotherhood, and not least because Soviet ideology was so often configured – by supporters and critics – as a type of ‘religion’. The pamphlet was produced for a British audience, and it included heart-rending photographs of deprivation in Korean opium dens, amongst Indonesian children and prisoners, and blind people in Jamaica, groups for whom the Salvation Army was setting up institutional assistance. Difference was fashioned in order to draw sympathy from readers and potential donors, but this was undercut with a message about the inter-cultural connections, and therefore communal responsibilities, of global kinship.

The implications of the *This brotherhood of nations* appeal built on Booth’s earlier discussion about the Salvation Army’s worldwide social work in the article in 1920 in the American *National Geographic Magazine*. In that article Booth spoke in imperial terms about a form of moral uplift through religious cleansing, but also educated readers about the customs of nations other than their own. In one photograph, a large group of Korean men, women and children were shown receiving bowls of rice measured from a sack by three Korean men dressed in the uniforms of the Salvation Army, a symbolic representation of the transcultural social endeavour in which the Salvation Army was engaged. Booth went on to articulate the inter-racial framing of this endeavour, writing that ‘The Salvation Army maintains that, as suffering recognises neither race nor creed nor clime, human service should be equally cosmopolitan’.⁸⁸ The discourse of the *This brotherhood of nations* appeal was also at times imperialistic – Booth spoke in the foreword about the ‘Homeland’ ‘penetrat[ing] into the darkest regions of the world’.⁸⁹ But this language was mediated by a new universalist rhetoric of socio-spiritual fellowship which drew upon the values of moral coincidence between racial groups rather than differentiation. Indeed, the appeal can be read as illustrating the Salvation Army’s vision of a spiritually-informed civil agency as an alternative to the secularly-driven value system of communism. Booth voiced this contrast even more explicitly in a talk she gave to an American audience in the early 1950s at

⁸⁸ Booth, ‘Around the World with the Salvation Army’, p. 358.

⁸⁹ Evangeline Booth, ‘Foreword’, *This brotherhood of nations* (St. Albans, The Campfield Press, 1937).

the beginning of the Korean War and the American campaign against domestic communism led by Senator Joseph McCarthy, in which she contrasted communism and Christianity, citing the principles of redemption and the spiritual meanings of fellowship as the main points of ideological divergence.⁹⁰ As this example shows, there was a complex relationship in Salvation Army publicity between the appropriation and inversion of contemporary secular social models. Operating within and upon worldly domains posed challenges, as well as opportunities, for a religious universalist project.

The projections of other women philanthropists' projects, where religion was a less explicit motivation, lacked the emphases of a spiritual community that were advanced by Evangeline Booth and Emily Kinnaird. The ability – or even desire – to promote racial harmony were asserted less forcefully by these women. For Paget, whose activity was projected within a model of upper-class cosmopolitanism rather than evangelicalism, talking about the inter-racial aspects of her work caused notable tensions. On first appearance, it might be thought that this tension can be traced to the enduring significance of the imperial basis of Paget's work, and the unequal power relationships that this encoded. In her book about the anti-imperial affiliations of minority groups in late-nineteenth-century Britain and Europe, Leela Gandhi coined the term the 'politics of friendship' to describe 'countercultural revolutionary practices' of groups politicised around homosexuality, vegetarianism, animal rights, spiritualism and aestheticism, who united against imperialism through forging 'strong bonds' with colonial subjects.⁹¹ Considering what a 'politics of friendship' might mean in practice to a well-connected society philanthropist such as Paget, we can see that it need not necessarily be counter-cultural nor post-colonial. Rather 'strong bonds' could be formed with colonised subjects within the unequal class and ethnic relationships that underpinned colonial society. Thus these bonds of friendship could work to instil relationships of inequality, through which issues of racial tension emerged.

⁹⁰ SAA, Evangeline Booth Papers, Speeches I, 298/18, Manuscript of Evangeline Booth's speech, 'Communism and Christianity'.

⁹¹ Leela Gandhi, *Affective communities: anti-colonial thought, fin-de-siècle radicalism, and the politics of friendship* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 9.

Indeed, the rhetoric of pan-national friendship which underpinned Paget's international schemes was strengthened by a set of class, gender, and racial hierarchies embodied in the workforces that she hired. A lantern slide of Paget's Baby Welfare Clinic in Bytca, northwestern Slovakia set up in 1921, illustrates the patriotism which augmented the functioning of the clinic, visualised in the central positioning of the Union Jack (Fig. 25). It also shows how patriotic feelings conjoined with understandings of the unequal status attached to British and Slovak workers – the Slovak woman is seen as marginal, literally on the edge of things. This ethnic inequality can also be seen in Paget's welfare clinics established in Russia through the Russian Relief Fund, where Britons were employed as medical staff while Russian workers undertook the roles of cook, maid, charwomen, chauffeur and porter.⁹² The labours of local workers in these clinics exempted British professionals from performing basic domestic jobs. Moreover, it seemed as though British workers were oblivious to the national inequalities codified in Paget's schemes. Dr. Mabel Emslie, who was in charge of the children's hospital in Sebastopol, Crimea (opened in July 1920), wrote to Paget in autumn 1920 insisting that the hospital 'was greatly admired' by the locals because 'it looked so clean and smelt so sweet and they voted it thoroughly "English"'.⁹³

The racial inequalities implicit in this remark are clear. Yet it is equally significant to note its relational aspect – Englishness was identified here in relation to perceived local standards. There was a process of transcultural exchange at work in this observation, through which racial difference was valued. In fact, in many of her projects Paget was receptive to local traditions. Discussions about the communal home that she would establish as part of her Distressed British Subjects Fund (for the British citizens marooned in Soviet Russia) show her sincere interest in blending the cultural value systems of different ethnic groups. The original scheme was discussed in March 1931 in the British *The Architect's Journal* which envisioned an imposing quadrangle hostel in suburban Leningrad in an 'unusual combination of Russian and Byzantine architecture with a tinge of Early Victorianism' to house one hundred residents in individual bed-sitting rooms.⁹⁴ The elaborate plans, drawn up by the architect, town-planner, and scholar Patrick

⁹² LRA, MS 1405, Box 15, Memorandum, 'Staff of WCRRF [Welfare Clinic of the Russian Relief Fund]'.

⁹³ LRA, MS 1405, Box 12, Letter from Mabel Emslie to Lady Muriel Paget, 9 September 1920.

⁹⁴ 'British hostel: Professor Abercrombie's', *The Architect's Journal*, 18 March 1931, pp. 408-12.

Abercrombie, were aborted because of cost, but three months later, the Committee agreed on a new scheme for the building of a ten-roomed traditional Russian bungalow ('dacha') in Sosnovka, north-eastern Russia.

Commentaries such as these suggest that the transcultural dimensions of Paget's international enterprises were more complex than some of her advisors would have believed, and suggested. The Medical Officer of the British Trade Mission to Russia wrote to her in the summer of 1921 about the humanitarian need among British and foreign prisoners in camps in Kovno (now Kaunas, Lithuania). Dr. Fitzwilliams claimed that Paget's response was required immediately, and that if she set up a relief system for these prisoners 'great kudos' would be won in 'England, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Turkestan and the Baltic Provinces'.⁹⁵ Fitzwilliams did not specify whether this public recognition would come from institutions or personal acquaintances, nevertheless he was confident that international philanthropy provided an opportunity for Paget to achieve personal and national esteem throughout Europe. Indeed, celebrity was one of the outcomes of her interventions, but it was not the only one. For other commentators, Paget undertook a transnational project in which she herself became transcultural. The historian and Russian scholar Bernard Pares articulated this intersection in an obituary of Paget published in *The Slavonic and East European review*. Adopting a somewhat patronising tone when describing her as 'like a Russian in her unfailing good nature and the charm of her simple friendliness', he nonetheless praised her transcultural project, validating it in the model of Western-led 'orientalising' projects which reclaimed values that had been lost.⁹⁶ Being seen to have imbued the traits of the ethnic groups with whom she worked, Paget was, on this reading, the embodiment of a truly cross-cultural project.

Conclusion

In her farewell message to Salvation Army officers in November 1938, Evangeline Booth spoke of the essence of Salvation Army activity as 'internationalism'. Internationalism was 'the very life,

⁹⁵ LRA, MS 1405, Box 12, Letter from E. L. Fitzwilliams to Muriel Paget, 25 August 1921.

⁹⁶ Bernard Pares, 'Lady Muriel Paget', *The Slavonic and East European review*, 17, 49 (1938), pp. 218-9, quote at p. 219.

soul and purpose of our Organisation', she claimed, and without it, the organisation would sink from an efficient unit to a mass of 'uncoordinated bits', and would fall short of Christ's ideal of a people "redeemed unto God" out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation'.⁹⁷ The international reputation of the Salvation Army was certainly, by then, well-known; in 1937 Adolf Hitler had even permitted the Salvation Army to continue working in Nazi Germany.⁹⁸ In fact the internationalism that Booth spoke of was a form of transnationalism, in which a sincere Christian faith could be used to mediate between different cultures and nations. Her notion of a 'kindred people' – a religious form of universal humanity – was a mechanism through which national difference could be both celebrated and transcended.

The co-existence of the models of cultural difference and universalism in the projects and projections of interwar female philanthropists challenges the oppositional terms in which they have been constructed recently by historians.⁹⁹ Tropes of both cultural difference and universal humanity interweave in the endeavours of interwar female philanthropists. But these women appropriated neither one model nor the other; through crossing borders and beliefs they remained open to both. Whether at the levels of a research agenda about illegitimacy which required comparative perspective, a politically-fragile intervention into an international famine disaster area, or the complex matrices of what constituted people's sense of religious or racial identities, female philanthropists negotiated the intersections between cultural relativism and universalism creatively. There was a whole range of reasons why women adopted these different models at different times, but their own cognisance of understandings and projections of their work as female philanthropists was critical. Operating on the faultlines of official channels of power, women philanthropists were able to draw on a flexibility of approach that was not available to their professional counterparts – whether male or female. Collectively, their work reveals that in the new post-war world, cultural difference needed to be mediated, and that it could be constructively. Engaging in cross-cultural exchange, British female philanthropists were opening up both new worlds and new ways of thinking about the world.

⁹⁷ Evangeline Booth, 'My farewell message to officers', *The Officers' Review*, Nov-Dec 1938, p. 484.

⁹⁸ 'General of the Army: Evangeline Booth', *Reader's Digest*, September 1947, p. 21.

⁹⁹ As in the opposition of relativism/universalism proposed for the later period by Mandler, 'One world, many cultures'.

CONCLUSION: 'THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE MATTER'¹

In 1934, President of the London YWCA Hilda Grenfell wrote an article for the YWCA's almanac on the theme Isaiah 43:10: 'Ye are my witness, saith the Lord'. Grenfell's article interrogated the Biblical portrait of the Lord's servant to explore what Christian discipleship meant in practice for sincerely religious women in the early-twentieth century. Grenfell explained the idea of the role of 'witness' as the hand of God unfolding through good works in daily life. Because God's activity happened at the level of 'ordinary citizenship', she asserted, YWCA members needed to rethink the 'little homely ways' of their lives:

'Witness' is to come off the peaks of prophecy and vision, and here, down in the dust and turmoil of our individual lives, are we, as prophets to proclaim His Kingdom. This is what we may call the geography of the matter, the setting for our Witness.²

Grenfell's remark was aimed at the grass roots membership of the YWCA as a call to consider how they could live their everyday lives profitably and meaningfully in the image of God. Articulated in the wake of the Representation of the People Act (1928), her comments encouraged both YWCA members' confidence in their newfound political status ('ordinary citizenship') and the re-orientation of this role in the light of wider social and deeper spiritual purposes than were brought forward simply by the formal act of emancipation. This discussion indicated Grenfell's understanding of the democratisation of the philanthropic project, through which it was hoped not simply to impose help, but also to direct the participation of broader constituencies in a chain of philanthropic action. Grenfell expressed an understanding shared by many philanthropic women in the interwar years of the changing terrain of women's civic agency, and the need for, and difficulty of, articulating its contours. The metaphor of moving from the 'dust' and the minutiae of quotidian life to the plane of 'prophecy and vision' illustrated a feature that characterised interwar female philanthropy: the integration of personal and civic domains. In this process, female philanthropists conceptualised a mixture of small actions at the local level becoming part of a broader, cosmic vision.

¹ MRC, MSS.243/11/32, Young Women's Christian Association almanac, 1934, inside front cover.

² Ibid.

Hilda Grenfell enacted this philosophy in her life and work. Born in 1885, Grenfell had started working with the YWCA in 1922. In 1935, the YWCA's eightieth anniversary year, she became its National President. At that time, Grenfell was not as well-known as her colleague, eighty-year old Emily Kinnaird. Indeed, during the jubilee celebrations it was Kinnaird who made the local and national press reports, being described respectively as the 'grandmother of the YWCA' and 'as youthful as the youngest member in spirit'.³ Nevertheless, following the example of Kinnaird, Grenfell was beginning to establish a public reputation in the 1930s. She authored an appeal letter for *The Times* to coincide with the jubilee celebrations, asserting the YWCA's aim of 'rededicating' and 'repledging' a commitment to improving the social position of young women as a form of institutional renewal.⁴ Grenfell's media presence, if not a fully-fledged media image, had been growing since the early 1930s, when she began writing for the national press about the YWCA's training programmes for post elementary-school age girls in domestic science.⁵ Grenfell retired as YWCA National President in 1942, but she continued to work for the organisation throughout the challenging years of the Second World War. In 1943-4 she undertook a world tour to survey the YWCA's transnational terrain, visiting West Africa, East Africa, Palestine, India, Ceylon, Australia, New Guinea, Hong Kong and America.⁶ Grenfell died in 1972, thirty years after Kinnaird, having developed her predecessor's legacy, in what her *Times* obituarist called her abundance of 'fresh ideas', 'persuasive charm' and 'amazing spirit'.⁷ 'Charm' and spirit were qualities that Virginia Woolf had decried in 1927 as part of the 'old amenity' of womanhood, but Hilda Grenfell exemplified their continued resonance as markers of philanthropic women's cultural authority into the early 1970s.⁸ There was not a necessary or wholesale shift from older to newer philanthropic practices or reputations for women in the interwar period, or indeed beyond.

³ E.g. *Bolton Evening News*, 25 October 1935, p.5; *Gloucester Echo*, 25 October 1935, p. 5; 'The YWCA: today's 80th birthday', *The Manchester Guardian*, 9 November 1935, p. 13.

⁴ Hilda Grenfell, 'The YWCA: 80th birthday celebration', *The Times*, 5 November 1935, p. 12.

⁵ Hilda Grenfell, 'Girls of fourteen', *The Times*, 12 April 1933, p. 8; 'Girls clubs in new housing areas', *The Times*, 25 March 1935, p. 10.

⁶ 'Mrs. Hilda Grenfell', *The Times*, 12 June 1972, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Woolf, 'Two women', p. 422.

Hilda Grenfell represented the younger subsection of a generation of interwar women philanthropists upon whom this thesis has focused. Like her YWCA colleague Emily Kinnaird; National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child (NCUMC) founder Lettice Fisher; international relief worker Muriel Paget and Salvation Army leader Evangeline Booth, Grenfell has been ignored by twentieth-century British historians and historians of philanthropy.⁹ Assumed to be outdated and socially conservative, these women have emerged in this thesis as spanning the political spectrum, embracing the modern developments of contemporary life, and enacting the widest spiritual principles of philanthropy. Like these four women, Grenfell imagined a philanthropic enterprise that reached across time and space to join the local to the global in a sincerely ethical (in her case explicitly religious) ideal. They engaged in a common project that spanned the horizons of altruistic behaviour and the ‘modern’ realms of celebrity, the media and mass culture. Interwar female philanthropists moved smoothly between these cultural, intellectual and political systems to engage their clients, colleagues, donors and the wider public in socially- and culturally-resonant registers. In making these fluid transitions, these women contested the fixity which some interwar commentators – themselves often drawing on longer-established social norms and value systems – and many historians since attached to the model of philanthropy, and women’s association with it. Interwar female philanthropy could not be delineated in straightforward or static terms. Rather it embodied a critical aspect of the transforming nature of the interwar period, of women’s social position at the time, and the contours of social welfare provision. In these concluding remarks I will tease out the interwoven threads and tensions holding these contingencies together, as well as the nuances within female philanthropists’ status, which have been examined throughout this thesis. In highlighting how female philanthropists actively interrogated the practical and political dimensions of their work, this thesis has revealed a new appreciation of the social expansiveness and cultural vibrancy of women’s philanthropy during the two decades following the First World War. This in itself brings a fresh perspective on the interwar period as a whole, nuancing our understanding of

⁹ Hilda Grenfell’s absence from twentieth-century historiography points to the lacuna in understandings of women’s philanthropy in mid- to-late-twentieth-century Britain.

gendered, political, cultural, economic, and transnational relationships through the lens of philanthropic endeavour.

A transforming landscape

Female philanthropy has been studied extensively as part of the legitimate public sphere of religiously-inspired nineteenth-century women's activity. Yet Frank Prochaska argues that it declined, as the philanthropic enterprise did more generally, during the early- to-mid-twentieth century in the lead-up to the development of the welfare state.¹⁰ Prochaska lamented that decline, but other historians have viewed early-twentieth-century women's philanthropy in negative terms, as an elitist endeavour that was ill at ease with the democratising aspects of British society and culture. James Vernon repeats a platitude of many historians of twentieth-century Britain in his assessment that the unpopularity of the National Kitchen Movement, established at the end of the First World War, was because of its association with charity soup kitchens and the 'voluntary assistance of lady philanthropists'.¹¹ Vernon presents female philanthropy as a socially-divisive enterprise (an 'infliction on the poor'), which sat awkwardly with emerging philosophies of community action in post-war Britain. His claim – a rearticulation of the Lady Bountiful critique – disregards the contribution of female philanthropy in the interwar years to forward-looking ('radical') social projects, an assumption which implicitly informs many cultural, political and social histories (typically on the political left) of the period. It also signals the lower status that historians have habitually assigned to 'voluntary' activity (often assumed to be gendered) as opposed to professional or state-led forms of social action.¹² Yet these historical narratives fail to appreciate that women's philanthropy blended socially (though not necessarily politically) conservative and radical social visions, and that it functioned by connecting formal and informal operational motifs. Vernon's comments completely ignore the fact that interwar female philanthropists were themselves participating in an evolving practice of building communities between those who needed and gave help. Female philanthropists' role as facilitators of this

¹⁰ Prochaska, *Christianity and social service*, chs. 3-5.

¹¹ Vernon, *Hunger*, p. 182.

¹² Woollacott, 'From moral to professional authority'.

community engagement has been overlooked for the interwar period. Hilda Grenfell's comments were just one articulation of a social message that has recurred throughout this thesis, in which female philanthropists envisaged profound personal connections between themselves and the wider constituencies of their clients in a shared journey towards social and spiritual improvement.

This thesis has argued that during the interwar period, the connections between women and philanthropy were especially strong because each was characterised by movement across and between fixed social entities and values. The interwar period was a transitional moment in terms of developments in mass transport, mass communication and mass democracy.¹³ Women's social roles and status were shifting in this period sometimes back to, but more often within, the home, as well as between the home and the (paid and unpaid) workplace.¹⁴ Interwar philanthropy was engaged in a process of adaptation as it sought to rearticulate its position alongside growing state welfare provision, and the beginnings of a professionalised social work sector.¹⁵ Female philanthropists were at the heart of these cultural transformations, and this investigation of their work and the philosophy that underpinned it has revealed how a series of overlapping social relationships were changing on the ground as part of the interwar search for new forms of social contract. The intersections between these transformations raised new possibilities for the philanthropic projects with which women actively engaged. Technological and transport developments led Emily Kinnaird to wonder how the aeroplane would bring people of different classes and nations together, while Muriel Paget showed an awareness of the value of human interest journalism for communicating a public philanthropy to the mass literate public. Lettice Fisher was part of a liberal educated stream of interwar thinkers engaged in rethinking the meanings of citizenship, while Evangeline Booth negotiated the spiritual and material benefits of celebrity philanthropy. The multifaceted nature of these women's status was both an advantage

¹³ David Edgerton discusses the relationship between new technology and changing conceptions of time in the interwar period and the twentieth-century as a whole, *The shock of the old: technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile Books, 2008), ch. 2. On interwar mass communications and democracy see LeMahieu, *Culture for democracy*; Bingham, *Gender, modernity and the popular press*; Bill Schwarz, 'Politics and rhetoric in the age of mass culture', *History Workshop Journal*, 46 (1998), pp. 129-59; Laura Beers, *Your Britain: media and the making of the Labour Party* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2010). See also Peter Clarke, *Hope and glory: Britain 1900-2000* (London: Penguin, 2004), chs. 4-5.

¹⁴ Bingham, 'Back to home and duty?'

¹⁵ Macadam, *New philanthropy*; Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*.

in spanning these various developments, and helps to highlight the political, social and cultural tensions that defined the period. Female philanthropists' critical contribution to this cultural moment lay in their attempts to navigate its tensions. Emily Kinnaird's 1925 definition of the YWCA's 'interdenominational...international and... inter-class' reach neatly articulated this endeavour.¹⁶

This study of interwar female philanthropy has also disrupted an entrenched set of linear 'before' and 'after' narratives. On one level, it has subverted the idea of a break between Victorian and interwar worlds of philanthropy. In 1983, retired civil servant and social reformer Geraldine Aves looked back on her social work career beginning in the 1920s, 'remembering that then a great many people who called themselves social workers were in fact voluntary visitors as in Victorian days'.¹⁷ Aves' comments registered a broad discomfort with the 'Victorian' (as a cultural construct), which continued into the late-twentieth century. But they also indicated the tendency amongst commentators to employ the 'Victorian' comparatively to define later terrains of voluntary action, often through a Whiggish narrative which assumed progression thereafter. Aves' remarks also have the (unwitting) effect of highlighting that the boundary lines between the 'Victorian days' and the 1920s and 1930s were porous. It is unsurprising that individuals who had been brought up in the late-Victorian period, as the four protagonists of this thesis had been, should have retained aspects of the period's formative intellectual and social values into adulthood. For some, like Evangeline Booth and Emily Kinnaird, the presentation of this inheritance was particularly apposite in the development of family and institutional genealogies. More broadly, interwar female philanthropists negotiated the negative connotations of the Victorian period. The YWCA's eightieth anniversary image of a late-Victorian woman passing a lamp to a young member in 1935 visualised the sincerity of these conversations across and between the two periods (Image 14). The dialogue illustrated Grenfell's description in the jubilee *Times* appeal of institutional and personal 'rededicating' and 'repledging'. It also highlighted a

¹⁶ Kinnaird, *Reminiscences*, p. 68.

¹⁷ Dame Geraldine Aves, '1923-1983: commentary by a social servant', Eileen Younghusband Lecture 1983 (London: The National Institute for Social Work, 1983), p. 3.

critical conception among interwar female philanthropists of the value of continuity in change (and modernity).¹⁸

Another linear narrative that has been dislodged in this thesis is the shift from amateur to professional status. Many historians have suggested the move from amateur voluntary activity to professional social work, and Jane Lewis has analysed the gendered import of this shift in terms of ‘from (unpaid) influence to (paid) oblivion’.¹⁹ This thesis has illustrated that influence and insight were not neatly compartmentalised in either formal or informal models of activity. Rather it has argued that women’s philanthropy synthesised long-established amateur modes of charitable activity and newer sites of voluntary expertise that might, but might not be, gendered female. This synthesis befitted the political compromises of the interwar period (heralded in David Lloyd George’s Coalition Government (1916-22) and developed in the National Governments of the 1930s). It was also a representation of how long-established modes of charitable goodwill were inherently linked in interwar women’s philanthropic projects to recognition of the need for efficiency in organisational standards. Female philanthropists had been discussing these connections prior to the First World War. The Countess of Aberdeen’s comments in 1901 about God’s direction for training emphasised religion as a critical organisational structure. Capitalising on ‘one’s best abilities’ brought together the best of the formal and informal modes of activity. As well as blending the personal and the civic, then, female philanthropy blended the personal and the professional. And interwar female philanthropists employed a flexible logic to move fluidly across these philosophical terrains.

Mapping interwar female philanthropy

Interwar female philanthropists cannot easily be situated within the hard political and intellectual categories that dominate twentieth-century British historiography. These women cannot be understood solely in terms of the paradigms of the welfare state, professionalisation or

¹⁸ On the idea of continuity within a definitionally ‘British’ modernity see Martin Daunton and Bernhard Rieger, ‘Introduction’, in Daunton and Rieger (eds), *Meanings of modernity: Britain from the late-Victorian era to World War II* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 12.

¹⁹ Lewis, ‘Women, social work and social welfare in twentieth-century Britain’.

secularisation, indeed they would not have wanted such a reputation. However, because female philanthropists do not uniformly support dominant historiographical narratives, it does not mean that they did not have significant intellectual and political ramifications on the period in which they lived. If Richard Overy's recent discussion of the scientific thought producing the idea of a 'civilisation in crisis' is one side of a coin in which interwar 'ideas were communicated...extensively, socially and geographically', the other side included a system of thought to which female philanthropists were contributing, which centred the qualities of devotion, emotion and passion within a positive vision of humanity.²⁰ The spaces in which these women voiced that message were also vital. The fact that female philanthropists negotiated the conflicts of modernity – through mediating between the 'modern' realms of celebrity, the mass market and the media and long-established moral and social arenas – rather than seeking to claim modernity is a strength with which historians have trouble grappling. The fact that interwar female philanthropists were wary of being categorised has made them hard to evaluate, at least beyond essentialised assumptions of the association of women with philanthropy. However, the problematics that these women raise means we need to stretch our analytical vocabulary, not just ignore them. This is the methodological challenge that this thesis has taken up. It has explored the meanings of the language (its forms and emphasis) with which female philanthropists were presented between the wars. It has analysed the cultural registers and media which relayed their messages. Through being alive to the 'potential of inconsistency' within constructions of gender, it has argued for a complex relationship between continuity and change within the ideas, spaces and structures of interwar female philanthropy.²¹

Chapter 1 interrogated these elastic principles through examining the shift between formal and informal networks of knowledge which allowed women to transgress social, gender and spatial boundaries in the various aspects of the philanthropic project. Some of the devices female philanthropists used were long-established. Cultures of hospitality, for example, had enabled women from the eighteenth century onwards to gain informal political influence, and

²⁰ Overy, *Morbid age*, p. 5.

²¹ Garnett, 'Whose logic?', p. 82.

interwar female philanthropists used this forum to mediate between the nourishing values associated with domesticity and more combative attempts to widen support for the cause. Re-articulations of domesticity also emerged as a critical device in women's attempts to encourage participation in the philanthropic project (usually amongst female audiences), with women like Lettice Fisher emphasising the relationship between the local dimensions of the home and much wider spaces of environmental improvement. Interwar female philanthropists also contributed to the practical enactment of new forms of democratic voluntary action through conceptualising the philanthropic project as friendship. The Salvation Army's construction of Evangeline Booth as a 'friend-maker' embodied the wide scope of this model as a symbol of a civic action based upon a sincere two-way dialogue. Indeed, boundary crossings worked to frame female philanthropists' positioning of their activity on the cusp of spiritual and social domains at a more expansive dimension still. Envisaging a better world necessitated forging links across time and space.

Chapter 2 analysed hitherto unexplored ethical dimensions underpinning interwar understandings of women's philanthropy as work and citizenship. Philanthropy has posed an epistemological problem to scholars of work because it does not fit a model of economic reward. This chapter suggested a strength in this problematic, by arguing that philanthropy's fluidity of meaning in relation to models of work provides a sharp lens through which to examine the meanings attached to women's work and personal achievement as crossing the paid and unpaid divide. This chapter argued that although public discourse (examined through a case-study of the *Dictionary of National Biography*) presented women's achievement in terms of essentialised 'womanly' qualities, and typically in comparison with men's, discussions by and among women offered a more nuanced picture of the relationship between women's work and citizenship. The interwar period was one in which women were being encouraged to 'stretch' themselves through ambition and determination, as in M. E. Marshall's discussion for YWCA members, and also to communicate a revised idea of duty to others as an activity which brought personal pleasure. Philanthropically-minded women did not always achieve happiness, but this was not because the philanthropic project was straightforwardly self-sacrificial, but rather because it represented a

fundamental challenge in the process of self-development, through which they typically measured their own self-worth against the perceived achievements of other women.

The structures of interwar female philanthropy were the focus of Chapter 3, which explored the relationship of philanthropic activity to interwar constructions of women's expertise. Rather than thinking about women's philanthropy in terms of a linear process in which amateur models were superseded by professional equivalents, Chapter 3 revealed the ways in which professional skills and voluntary activity validated each other at different times in projections of interwar women's public activity. The overlaps between these domains emerged clearly in the discussion about Miss Sedgwick's varied career roles in the Women's Civil Servants' in-house magazine *Opportunity*. They were also configured in discussions about training for social service, which blended emerging preoccupations of academic social science in commentaries by women like Elizabeth Macadam and older notions of the value of spiritually-directed goodwill and efficiency. Concurrently, 'old' and 'new' frameworks of management and administrative aspects of philanthropy were broken down in the various models of women's committee work, which spanned gender-specific and mixed-gender forums. Interwar female philanthropists put a human face to these overlapping principles through exploring the potential for meaningful comparison between their own and their colleagues' work through appropriating the purposive auras of famous Victorian philanthropists, notably Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale. Such complexities in the constructions of interwar philanthropic women's expertise defy straightforward characterisations of a shift from older amateur models to modern professional terms.

Chapter 4 turned to examine the mediations between market, media and moral forces in fundraising activity. It argued that as fundraisers, interwar female philanthropists worked to mediate enduring ethical principles of giving within the opportunities provided by new cultural registers and media. Interwar female philanthropists re-explored the marketable value of religious and social genealogies to build communities of donors. They reworked the strategic devices used in older print charity appeals to forge a new blend of statistical knowledge and subjective (emotionally-conceived) obligation. Female philanthropists were also involved in applying

innovative thinking in advertising psychology to philanthropy, aiming to construct a new relationship of identification between philanthropist, donor and client. Film was understood to hold new opportunities for visual engagement (as in the NCUMC's production *Unmarried*), but the wireless radio offered a particularly arresting medium. In penetrating listeners' homes, the wireless constructed new spaces and worked through new aural sensory experiences to forge a profound emotional confrontation between philanthropists, potential donors and clients. There was a tension between commercial and (often religiously-inspired) civic arenas, and for some women, like Juliet Rhys Williams who denied her ability to fundraise for the National Birthday Trust Fund, the market retained a murkiness in comparison with the perceived higher plane of moral authority. But many women philanthropists recognised the need to marry good business practice and moral imperatives, often expressed through sincere religious faith. Negotiating the suspicion with which many interwar commentators treated business-minded women, female philanthropists found ways to claim and encourage good business sense whilst retaining a cultural authority beyond. Thus, Emily Kinnaird's self-promotion as a 'beggar' presented an image of engagement in the market without the thrusting ambition and charisma associated with the entrepreneur.

The relationship between philanthropy and the mass media emerged through a different lens in chapter 5, which explored the public reputations of interwar female philanthropists in the nexus of celebrity and education. This chapter argued that women philanthropists engaged in strategic and political forums of communication to appeal to the various audiences of their work. The convergence between public relations mantras about personal service and philanthropic principles emerged clearly in Lettice Fisher's recognition of the seminal role of 'opinion forming', and in the tensions that surrounded Muriel Paget's presentations of her work in connection to the various meanings of 'propaganda'. Women philanthropists also explored the potential of literary and mass culture markets for opening up new avenues for popularising philanthropy, for example within the exciting and commodifiable genres of human interest journalism and 'romance' fiction. Female philanthropists' successes at integrating themselves into the popular culture market could be met with suspicion. The British press was wary of Evangeline Booth's

‘wisecracks’ (both for their perceived ‘Americanisation’ and gender transgression), but her confident demeanour for the transatlantic press saw her cultivating a self-consciously dramatic public image.²² Booth was particularly good at constructing her own visibility within the press, but each of the women foregrounded in this thesis were cognisant of the political implications of their bodies. Older tropes about the association between philanthropic women’s physical exhaustion and emotional strength were a way of framing ageing and illness for many of these women, but this had to be balanced by the recognition of the political capital attached to female attractiveness. The ‘charm’ that Paget and her daughters (unadorned by cosmetics) presented was part of a projection of female altruism which assumed that goodness and attractiveness went hand in hand.

Chapter 6 examined the notion of political communication within a broader context, through analysing the transnational dimensions of interwar women’s philanthropy. It argued that against the backdrop of developing ideas of international relations, female philanthropists were engaged in a complex (and sometimes tense) process of mediation between philosophies of cultural difference and universalism. Through exploring four devices of women’s transnational engagement – intellectual exchanges, public diplomacy, Christian universalism, and inter-racial encounters – it revealed the interwoven dynamics between imperial codes which emphasised vertical hierarchies between coloniser and colonized and the cross-national, horizontal aspects of these women’s projects which worked through a model of sincere intellectual exchange. Sometimes these vertical and horizontal models were brought together, as in the Salvation Army’s 1937 international appeal *This brotherhood of nations*. A critical argument of this chapter was that national and imperial domains could be genuinely unimportant in constructing women’s humanitarian geographies of concern, a finding which contests historians’ associations of the feminine with the national and imperial in interwar women’s philanthropy and citizenship. Analogously, it undermines the emphasis placed by historians of nineteenth-century women’s extra-national humanitarianism on questions of empire.²³ The non-national and non-political

²² ‘Evangeline Booth: Woman of 68 chief of Salvation Army’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 September 1934, p.1.

²³ Prochaska, *Christianity and social service*, chs 3-5; Light, *Forever England*; Hall and Rose, *At home with the empire*; Midgley, *Feminism and empire*; Twells, *Civilising mission*.

rhetoric employed by Evangeline Booth and Muriel Paget (albeit in highly strategic ways) highlights the strategic claims and disclaimers that underpinned women philanthropists' transnational activity, and their connections to women's self-understandings and projections of their own motivations. In circumventing the state, these women were engaged in a form of activity which social scientist Constance Braithwaite argued in 1938 was especially attractive for women.²⁴ This activity represented a different sort of politics to ideologically-informed party politics. Women's transnational philanthropic projects worked through personal interactions to embrace and stitch together constructions of cultural, racial and religious difference.

Epilogue

In February 2011, BBC Radio 4's *Moral Maze* programme posed a fundamental question: 'Have we forgotten the meaning of charity?'.²⁵ Framed by the coalition government's latest discussions of the Big Society, guests offered their own definitions of charity, ranging from 'passion and mission' to 'experimental and innovative' via 'idiosyncratic'. Chief Executive of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations Sir Stephen Bubb's intervention in the debate, however, proved controversial. Characterising charity in terms of formal organisational standards of care, he omitted to reference altruism, an oversight for which he was challenged (by *Daily Mail* journalist Melanie Philipps), and which he later blogged as a fatal error.²⁶ Bubb's comments, and the response that they provoked, highlight a critical tension within the twenty-first-century voluntary sector between bureaucratised and human-centred ethics, and philosophical confusion brought about by late-twentieth-century funding regimes and supervisory policy agendas. The *Moral Maze* debate drew on historical models, yet failed to recognise a potential beacon in the maze provided by earlier debates about charity activity. This suggests one important rationale for studying the neglected philosophical and political considerations of interwar female philanthropists. Unencumbered by the political freighting of the welfare state, these women

²⁴ Braithwaite, *Voluntary citizen*, p. 44.

²⁵ *Moral Maze*, BBC Radio 4, 23 February 2011

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11/episodes/player> [accessed 26 February 2011].

²⁶ *Ibid.*, <http://bloggerbubb.blogspot.com/> 24 February 2011 [accessed 26 February 2011].

consciously sought to confront and negotiate the tensions between different forms of civic agency. They found ways to move smoothly between the values of ethics and expertise which linked the personal to the civic in ways that have since become rigidly distinguished from each other. Interwar female philanthropy was in some respects a characteristically voluntary-sector 'experiment'. As the preceding chapters have illustrated, interwar female philanthropists navigated the contours of civil agency and a good society not only through inhabiting 'modern' arenas of celebrity, the market and the mass media, but also through renegotiating these realms to reposition long-established ideals about the moral purposes of philanthropy. Women like Evangeline Booth, Lettice Fisher, Emily Kinnaird and Muriel Paget were not always certain of how these experiments would play out in their projects, but they had the courage and foresight to re-articulate and adapt their ideas within resonant cultural and political registers. Female philanthropy was an inherently creative enterprise in the years between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the Second World War, which functioned through a meaningfully elastic method. Blending small actions at a local and personal level with a global and spiritual vision of societal improvement, the meaning of charity for female philanthropists was both intricate and infinite. As Hilda Grenfell's article for the YWCA women highlighted, interwar philanthropy was part of, and envisaged, a form of active citizenship that was spiritually engaged.

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