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# Philanthropy and Education in Scotland

Lindsay Paterson

## Abstract

Philanthropic contributions to education have become more publicly visible in recent years, in Scotland as in many other places. Yet philanthropy used to be much more important to Scottish education than it is now. Funding from the state, from individual students, or from non-philanthropic commercial contracts remain far larger than any kind of charitable donation. The essay considers why people – now and in the past – have been inclined to make philanthropic contributions, and what would be required for there to be a truly substantial increase in philanthropy.

## Key words

Philanthropy; education; Scotland; Thomas Chalmers; Andrew Carnegie; John Baillie; Christianity; welfare state.

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## Introduction

A revealing place to start is with an anecdote.<sup>1</sup> In 2011, the Scottish Government asked the present author to write a report on the scope which philanthropy might offer to extend the opportunities for children with exceptional talents – for example, those talents that are catered for by the very few specialist music schools in Scotland. The report duly appeared, suggesting ways in which this might be achieved (Paterson, 2013).

At a public event to discuss the report, the then Education Secretary in the Scottish Government, Michael Russell, praised philanthropists for offering ‘dynamism, fresh ideas and energy that could work in the interests of all of Scotland’s ... young people’ (*The Scotsman*, 5 September 2013). Liz Smith, education spokesperson for the Scottish Conservatives, was also generously warm towards philanthropy (see also Smith, 2017). But the vehemence of the denunciation from the political left was – in good Scottish tradition – like the fiery anathemas of Covenanting preachers. Alex Wood, former headteacher in Wester Hailes, and a former militantly left-wing leader of Edinburgh Council, denounced the idea of using philanthropic money to aid outstanding children as insufferably elitist and a threat to comprehensive education.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Brian Boyd of Jordanhill teacher training college managed the vitriolic ‘there is no place for vanity projects in our education system’ (*Herald*, 6 September 2013). The teachers’ trade unions were unanimous in their scepticism, the Scottish Secondary Teachers’ Association following Professor Boyd in their attack: ‘this may give a warm glow to those doing the giving, but it is the sort of practice that goes back to another century’ *Herald*, 5 September 2013).

Mr Russell, with a referendum to fight, decided, it might be suspected, that the better part of valour is discretion, and the report sank without trace.

### **Exhortations to increase philanthropy in education**

Yet there is no shortage of exhortations to have more philanthropy. That many of these come from London may partly explain the Scottish scepticism.

A recent leader in this respect was the Blair government, which commissioned a report in 2004 on philanthropic giving to universities in England. It claimed that ‘in striving for excellence in higher education, voluntary giving can make a significant difference’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2004: 5). Blair himself said in 2012, when he was free to say what he liked, that

the best philanthropy is not just about giving money but giving leadership. ... It steps into areas Government is too fearful or too risk adverse to go. ... It is visionary, seeing the connections, the trends, the patterns that others don’t.  
(Forbes Media, 2012)

That rather eloquently captures a dominant theme – that philanthropists can be creative because they can take risks. The same theme may be found from the coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, as part of the ‘Big Society’, encouraging giving in kind as well as money (UK Cabinet Office, 2011: 4-5).

Exhortations of these sorts tend also to point hopefully to statistics seeming to show striking recent growth. Arising from that Blair-government report came the Matched Funding Scheme (which ran from 2008 to 2011), by which government offered to match other people’s giving to universities in England. The outcome was that matched funding payments of more than £143 million were added to around £580 million of giving by donors (More Partnership, 2012:18-19). In 2015-16, the amount that was donated to universities in the UK exceeded £1bn for first time, nearly tripled since 2004. This came from as many as 229,000 donors (Ross-CASE, 2017: 6; NatCen Social Research, 2008: 3).

Part of the process of exhortation is creating a whole new employment category of professional fund-raisers. The head of that at Edinburgh University – the ‘Vice-Principal Philanthropy and Advancement’ – illustrates the characteristic rhetoric:

Edinburgh has benefited from a powerful centuries-long tradition of philanthropic support, which can now be pivotal in delivering the University's global research, educational and cultural agenda to make a difference in the world.  
(Edinburgh University, 2016)

So the Edinburgh University development trust in 2016 had £17.7m income, of which £14.8m were donations and endowments (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, 2017, charity number SC004307).

Education has for ever been one of the two great charitable causes, the other being health (Checkland, 1980: 4), and this is true of general giving as well as of very wealthy giving. Among the two thirds of people across the UK who give to a charity each year, for the first time in 2015 since regular recording began a decade ago, 'children and young people' were slightly ahead of medical research as the most popular cause (30%, 29%) (Charities Aid Foundation, 2016: 3), though medical research was still the most popular cause in Scotland (Charities Aid Foundation, 2017a:12). Higher education has mostly been the main recipient of gifts of £1m or more, receiving one third of the overall value of such gifts in 2015 (Coutts, 2016:11).

We can also find plenty of examples of well-known new philanthropists in Scotland. There is Tom Hunter, founder, with his wife Marion, of the Hunter Foundation which has the aim of encouraging self-responsibility and self-determination (Handy and Handy, 2006: 82-88; *The Independent*, 16 July 2006; *The Guardian*, 2 January 2009). There is Jim McColl, founder of Newlands Junior College, successfully providing excellent vocational education for teenagers who are severely disaffected from schools (Newlands Junior College, 2017). Or there is J. K. Rowling, using her wealth to end the forcible removal of children from their families after wars and other disasters (Rowling, 2017).

So philanthropy is much talked about and seems to be growing, led by distinguished and admirable social leaders of diverse ideological hue.

Yet, despite the enthusiasm of the professional fundraisers and the alarms from the Scottish political left, the actual scale of philanthropy is, relatively speaking, extremely modest. 229,000 individual donors sound a lot, but that is only 1.2% of of alumni (More Partnership, 2012: 62; the proportion of donating alumni in the USA is 10%). £1bn in recent charitable giving to universities also seems impressive, but the total income of UK universities in that year was £35bn (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2016, Table 16). The £1bn also includes pledges of up to five years ahead, and so, annualised, the proportion is even less: 1.7% from donations and endowments for the UK as a whole, and a mere 0.77% in Scotland. Even if we include research contracts from charities that were originally set up by philanthropists (such as Leverhulme, Nuffield or Carnegie), these percentages rise to only 5.3% and 5% respectively. Whether we should include such charities may be disputed, since they are not themselves philanthropists: they were, rather, the recipients of philanthropy a century or more ago, and now operate, in effect, like the research councils or other funders of specific research projects.

Similar points may be made about individual universities. Edinburgh University is the second-largest educational charity in Scotland. Its income in 2016 was £906m. But the donations and legacies much praised by its alumni office were a mere £21.2m, which is 2.3% (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, 2017, charity number SC005336). Even adding in the activities of the University's Development Trust takes that percentage to just 3.9% (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, 2017, charity number SC004307).

The same sense of realism is also induced when we look in detail at other educational recipients of philanthropic money. Local authority schools are not recognised as charities, and so do not benefit from philanthropic donations except very peripherally. Independent schools can fully benefit, and try assiduously to do so, but even their income from donations and endowments in 2016 was a mere 2.7% of total income.<sup>3</sup>

It is not that Scotland or the UK are ungenerous by current international standards. The UK was 8<sup>th</sup> most generous in 2016 for monetary donation out of 139 countries ranked by the World Giving Index. Two thirds of people in the UK gave money, similar to the Netherlands, Australia and New Zealand, and actually ahead of the USA. Scotland is slightly more generous than the UK average (Charities Aid Foundation, 2017b: 35; Charities Aid Foundation, 2017a: 7; Paterson, 2013: 5).

The problem is not, moreover, one of tax allowances, since the framework in the UK is very similar to that in the USA (More Partnership, 2012: 6). Even in the USA, usually thought of as the home of philanthropy, only about 5-6% of all educational expenditure comes from philanthropic sources.<sup>4</sup>

Now, there is no doubt that there was greater philanthropic giving in the past. But it is important not to exaggerate this either, and it declined a long time ago as the role of the state grew. Best known in Scotland are the Carnegie grants in the early years of the twentieth century which operated like a quasi-state source for universities. Carnegie capital grants were greater than state grants in the first decade of the twentieth century (Anderson, 1983: 288). Carnegie bursaries for students paid half the fees of around 70% of eligible students in the early 1920s and 1930s (Carnegie Trust, 1926). Specific philanthropic effort at that time before the state started to pay for infrastructure was impressive. The greatest predominantly philanthropic endeavours for universities were moving Glasgow University to Gilmorehill, and building the new university college of Dundee (Checkland, 1980: 129-30). Nevertheless, although there was more philanthropic giving to universities in the past, as state support grew, philanthropic support fell. Indeed, for what we would now call recurrent expenditure – as distinct from capital – already in 1894 the endowment income of Scottish universities had fallen to less than one fifth. Fees and state grants made up over three quarters (Anderson, 1983: 289).

Somewhat the same kind of story applies to schools, but starting earlier. Philanthropic contributions declined as state funding grew. At the time of the 1872 Education Act – which established the modern system of public, or primary, schools – the income of these schools from endowments was about one quarter of their income from endowments and state grants together.<sup>5</sup> The endowments for education authority schools then were consolidated and removed, some being used for secondary schools. So by 1906, endowment income and voluntary contributions for the primary schools had fallen to 2.5% of all income, down from a quarter, similar in magnitude to fees (2%); the bulk (90%) came from various central and local public sources (compiled from Scotch Education Department, 1908, Table 3). As secondary schools also then began to grow, the same process of state substitution for endowment emerged again. In 1912, even the urban ‘higher class’ schools and the old endowed secondary schools received only 13% of income from endowments (Anderson, 1983: 247), whereas before the 1890s they had been almost entirely funded by endowments and fees.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the newer secondary schools that had been founded in the first decade of

the new century (about four fifths of all secondary schools) had only 1.3% of income from endowments (Anderson, 1983: 247).

In truth, even though philanthropy declined relative to the state as each sector of education expanded, Scotland had never been generously provided with endowments. The Argyll Commission report of 1864 pointed out that Eton or Winchester schools alone had greater revenue from landed property and church livings than the revenue from endowments of all the burgh schools and all the universities of Scotland taken together (Argyll Commission, 1864: 19; Morgan, 1927: 97). That lack of endowment was partly because, historically, Scotland had been a relatively poor country. But it was also ultimately because of the failure of one of the central intentions of the sixteenth-century Reformers who had established Scotland's strong tradition in education. They had intended that the patrimony of the pre-Reformation church be devoted to schools, but it was diverted to the nobility who did not spend it in that way. Town councils and the new church had to compensate, which they did until the state took over mainly from the late-nineteenth century onwards (Morgan, 1927: 97-99).

In short, philanthropy has never played more than a small role in Scottish education since the advent of a mass system and the welfare state, and to an extent for even longer.

### **The Philosophy of Philanthropy**

But to say that this is all a consequence of the rise of the state or the fall of the old church is too mechanical, because these changes themselves also involved human choices. So, in trying to understand philanthropy, we will now look at motives, both currently and in the past: why do people contribute philanthropically to education (or to anything else)? Considering motives might help also to indicate what would have to happen for philanthropy to become truly important.

A typical conclusion about the motives of recent philanthropy is that reached by Theresa Lloyd (of the University of Kent), who found five motives to be influential on wealthy philanthropists (Lloyd, 2004: 3):

- The first was belief in a cause, which was very often the importance of education.
- The second was being a catalyst for change, such as widening access to education.
- The third was personal fulfilment, pursuing idealistic goals.
- The fourth was a sense of duty, returning to society some of the riches which society had enabled them to accumulate.
- And the fifth was about building relationships, strengthening the connections with institutions that had been influential on them, notably schools and universities.

Perhaps, to get more philanthropic money, all that is needed then is to provide more opportunities for such motives to be expressed.

But it is not that simple, since each of these five motives depend on a propitious social context. The significant causes have to be socially acceptable if social change is to come about. Personal idealism can have a social impact only if it not merely eccentric. There has to be recognition of wealth as conferring duties, which means

society's accepting wealth as legitimate. Personal achievement has to be accepted as also an expression of a social identity. Thus philanthropic motives are never enough of an explanation on their own. We also have to consider how the motives are perceived socially. Therefore, to understand changing philanthropy over time, we have to consider changing contexts.

So for the rest of this essay we will be assessing three philosophies of philanthropy that have been eloquently expressed in Scotland over the past couple of centuries. What kind of social context did each depend on, and might any analogous relationship of the individual and society be recovered today? The three come from moments in modern Scottish history when things seemed to be changing fundamentally. These are separated by half centuries, the final one coming to an end about half a century ago. The first is when industrial capitalism was rapidly growing, roughly the mid-nineteenth century. The second is when industrial capitalism was acquiring a conscience, roughly the turn of the twentieth century. And the third is when the welfare state came to fruition, in the mid-twentieth century. These resulted in three world-views that rest on three ways of understanding philanthropy, what might be called religiously inspired charity, business heroism, and paternalistic welfare. For each of these, the motives may be illustrated by considering one prominent and influential Scottish exponent of the philanthropic ideas of the age. We will then return to ask questions about philanthropy in Scottish education today.

### **Religiously inspired charity**

Olive Checkland, in her magisterial survey of philanthropy in Victorian Scotland, noted that 'for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century the state left the entire field of education to charity and to private ventures' (Checkland, 1980: 130). That has tended later to be seen as an abdication of responsibility, but the Christian tradition would have disagreed. Reciprocity actually itself constitutes Christian responsibility. So the first example of an attempted philanthropic response to social problems is from the first great wave of industrialism. The person who can epitomise this for us is Thomas Chalmers, who, S. J. Brown notes, 'was widely acknowledged to be the greatest Scottish churchman of the nineteenth century' (Brown, 1992: 62; Brown, 1983; Brown, 2004).

Chalmers was leader of the new Free Church that burst onto Scottish life at the Disruption of 1843, which was described later by Gladstone as 'the noblest collective example of ... almsgiving known, in modern times, to this or perhaps to any country' (Gladstone, 1890: 692) – a remarkable but eventually unsuccessful exercise in Christian philanthropy that embraced the whole of society. Chalmers was born in 1780 in Anstruther. His father and maternal grandfather were merchants in the small fishing towns of the East Neuk. He was initially a Church of Scotland minister, and was throughout his life a political liberal. He was sympathetic to the original ideas of the French revolution and to the philosophy and science of the Scottish Enlightenment. He converted theologically to evangelical piety in 1811, having come to believe that the only way forward was through a communal church based on the Calvinist principle of mutual social responsibility independent of the state.

His evangelical preaching became so renowned within a few years that he was poached by the town council of Glasgow, where he was shocked by the poverty and social chaos of the new industrialism. His solution was to try to recover that original

communal Calvinism, a core part of which would be the personal responsibility of the wealthy for the poor and the unchurched. He persuaded the council to create a new parish in St John's in the Gallowgate area where he tried this out. His communal Christianity depended on neighbourhood charity to provide schools as well as poor relief. It rested on the Enlightenment belief that charity, properly understood, would reform human nature, of the donor as well as of the recipient.

That small experiment largely worked in its own terms, which prepared Chalmers for the bigger project of church extension for which the Church's general assembly gave him responsibility in 1834. By 1841, he had presided over the creation of 222 new territorial churches, with schools, increasing the total by about one fifth. It was philanthropic giving by all – the pennies of the poor and the hundreds of the rich.

But ultimately this church extension failed because the state would not support it with further grants. At the Disruption, Chalmers led four tenths of ministers and about half of lay members out of the national church, partly on this matter and partly on the principle of the rights of local congregations to choose their own minister. The achievement of the Free Church was then indeed remarkable, as Gladstone noted: 700 parish churches (compared to about 900 parishes in the national church), 500 schools, 400 manses, the Free Church College (now New College of Edinburgh University). There was a sustentation fund where wealthier congregations subsidised poorer ones. For these new schools, Chalmers favoured combining permanent endowment with moderate fees. This was the policy of the sixteenth-century Reformers, he said, and made education a custom not a compulsion. Endowment was needed to enable high-quality teachers to be employed in schools for all social classes.

So in Chalmers's Christian vision, the whole community were philanthropists because the community was Christian, and because Calvinist Christianity had a concept of mutual support at its heart. He wrote in 1841 that 'the appropriate remedy for the evils of want is to be found, not in the justice of man, but in the compassion of man' (quoted by Mitchison, 2000: 159). 'The ties of kindliness', he had said in 1820 at the opening of two new schools in St John's, 'will be multiplied between the wealthy and the labouring classes. ... The wide and melancholy gulf of suspicion will come at length to be filled up by the attentions of a soft and pleasing fellowship' (quoted by Withrington, 1988: 48). That in practice meant a form of progressive redistribution since the rich would give more.

Christianity of this Calvinist sort also rested on a firm principle of personal independence. The problem with legally sanctioned poor relief, Chalmers believed, was that it created barriers between rich and poor, diminishing natural benevolence, and undermining the independence of the recipients. So as important as stimulating the charity of all was nurturing independence to avoid pauperisation. Even philanthropy, if solely from the rich, could be external, like the state. This principle is indeed easy to caricature as intending to make the poor responsible for escaping poverty. But that was not its intention since its aim was human dignity. Why that was the case can be understood only if we bear in mind the fundamentally Calvinist context.

The problem in the end for Chalmers was that this Christian philosophy patently did not work any more. Chalmers died in 1847, disillusioned and, after all, coming round to the idea that only the state could be powerful enough to achieve the kind of



society he wanted (Brown, 1983: 367). The 100,000 people who observed his funeral procession to the cemetery in the Grange in Edinburgh where he is buried testified to his celebrity more than his legacy (Brown, 1983: 371). Remarkable though the range of philanthropic activities were in nineteenth-century Britain, it was clear by the last few decades of the century that charity was not enough. In particular, for Scottish schools, it was no longer possible to imagine that a national system could be sustained by voluntary effort – hence the long campaign which started in the aftermath of the Disruption to have a national system that was funded and managed by the state. It was also not possible that the necessary modernisation of the universities could be funded entirely by donations. The bonds of the stable Christian community of the rural past could not be recreated from below. And so, in Storrar's words,

Chalmers was the last Scottish churchman to advocate a comprehensive and coherent version of the old Calvinist vision of church and nation as one Christian community that stood any chance of being realised in a modern society.  
(Storrar, 1990: 42)

Before we move on, however, one cardinal principle from Chalmers's ideas is worth emphasising in our much more pecuniary age: philanthropy – love of humanity – for him and his contemporaries was never only about money. It was also about character; it was a moral relationship. There is room for that only if there is an active sense of individual responsibility (not only via the state), and only if there is something like Chalmers's sense of the moral condition of the recipients. The view was summed up well by another Scottish liberal advocate of philanthropy, Samuel Smiles:

Money is power after its sort, it is true; but intelligence, public spirit, and moral virtue, are powers too, and far nobler ones.  
(Smiles, 1996 [1866]: 191)

That did leave room for the spirit of philanthropy even after the state assumed responsibility for education. For example, voluntary time spent on School Boards after 1872 was an extension of philanthropic giving (for both men and women). In particular, all teaching is in a sense philanthropic in a moral sense, whether or not any money is involved. Teaching is, rather, like grace.

This moral basis of philanthropy inevitably has deeply religious connotations, which is why the ultimate failure of Chalmers to fulfil his philanthropic ideals is crucial to understanding what has happened to philanthropy since. The religious foundation of philanthropy is encapsulated in the Christian concept of alms, which Aquinas defined as 'a deed whereby something is given to the needy, out of compassion and for God's sake' (*Summa Theologica*, second part of second part, 32, 1). Behind that lay St Paul's 'though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, ... and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing'. The same religious foundation of philanthropy is present in the Jewish concept of tzedakah, meaning both justice and charity, a key idea for Spinoza and through him for that influential part of the

Enlightenment that led to democracy (Topolski, 2016). It is expressed also by the Islamic idea of *sadaqa*, the same concept and indeed the same word as in Hebrew. *Sadaqa* contributed to the medieval madrasas of Baghdad which, in their free enquiry and disputation, form one of the origins of the very idea of a university (Makdisi, 1981: 38, 58).

So, as we consider the later development of the idea of philanthropy, this moral aspect is fundamental. Philanthropy is not just about money. It is indeed about the love of humanity.

### **Business heroism**

The moral power of money then neatly takes us to the next philanthropic philosophy – that of Andrew Carnegie. In a sense it would be impossible not to, since Carnegie is the epitome of the rich philanthropist. He is by far Scotland’s – and probably the world’s – most famous philanthropist. And that is partly because even those more recent illustrious philanthropists who might now rival Carnegie in his fame – such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, or, in Scotland, Tom Hunter – have been influenced by Carnegie’s philosophy of philanthropy. That philosophy was expressed in his essay *The Gospel of Wealth* (originally in 1889), the most famous quotation from which is his belief that ‘he who dies rich dies disgraced’ (Carnegie, 1962 [1900]: 49).

In any case, whatever else may have led to Carnegie’s having a legacy, the actual physical embodiment of what he did with his wealth is perennially inescapable. At his death, Carnegie had given away \$350m, or about 90% of his wealth (Nasaw, 2006: 801); that would be worth about \$4.9bn<sup>7</sup> today. He left two thirds of what remained to one of his many charitable foundations. During his life, he funded 2,811 free public libraries, of which 660 are in Britain and 56 in Scotland (Tweedale, 2004; Aitken, 1956: 462-464). He paid for 7,689 church organs, including 1,005 in Scotland, to give everyone the chance to experience free what he believed to be the civilising power of great music (Nasaw, 2006: 608). We have already noted that he pioneered what was in effect the public financial support of students at Scottish universities, and the public finance of infrastructure. And he tried to stop war through his Endowment for International Peace, with \$5m in 1910 (Nasaw, 2006: 742). The consequences of that failure probably hastened his death in 1919.

Carnegie was born in Dunfermline in 1835, about half a century after Chalmers. He came from a politically radical family: his father was a weaver, and his mother’s father was the leading Chartist radical in the town. Thus, compared to Chalmers’s religious beliefs, his family traditions were a different ethical response to the displacement of capitalist industrialism. The economic depression of the 1840s led the family to emigrate to Pittsburgh in 1848 (the year of European revolution). Carnegie started work as a clerk on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and from there rose remarkably on the basis of astute commitment to technological change, insight into the character of business associates, wise investment, and – as he recognised – frequent good luck.

By 1868, aged 35, he had assets of \$400,000 dollars, worth about \$7m today (Tweedale, 2004). By then he also had doubts about the worship of money, which he regarded as debasing, but he kept on investing, mainly in iron and steel. When he eventually sold his major steel company to J. P. Morgan in 1901 he received one thousand times (\$447m) what he had had thirty years earlier, or \$13bn today

(Tweedale, 2004). He then occupied the remaining two decades of his life giving it away. His motive was not shame at being a magnate, or guilt at being rich, and it was certainly not religion. The main motive was returning his fortune to the larger community where he believed it belonged:

The fundamental idea of the gospel of wealth is that surplus wealth should be considered as a sacred trust to be administered by those into whose hands it falls, during their lives, for the good of the community.  
(Carnegie (1962 [1900]: 55)

Just as we should look to Christian ideas for the explanation of Chalmers's work, so, to understand Carnegie's philanthropic motivation, we have to understand a view of capitalism that is now not at all popular in Scotland. We are apt now to be cynical when we read proclamations such as these from *The Gospel of Wealth*:

What is the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilization is founded have thrown it into the hands of the few?  
(Carnegie (1962 [1900]: 19)

The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, [so] that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship'.  
(Carnegie (1962 [1900]: 14)

Left-wing Scotland might be even more puzzled or dismayed by his comment that 'without wealth there can be no Mæcenas' (Carnegie (1962 [1900]: 15), referring to the Roman citizen whose name has become synonymous in several European languages with philanthropic patronage of the arts. Scottish left-wing opinion may recall that the necessity of wealth for charity was the essence of Margaret Thatcher's speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1988 (Margaret Thatcher Foundation, 2017).

Nevertheless, however unfashionable in Scotland at the moment, the philosophy for this was coherent, and included impeccably Scottish sources, from the Enlightenment, in common with politically radical Enlightenment thinkers elsewhere. This idea is that all commerce is civilising. So, for the purposes of sustaining a civil society, philanthropy is no different from the impulse that created the wealth in the first place.

On the civilising influence of commerce, there is David Hume in 1742: 'nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy' (Hume, 1742). Likewise, there is Adam Smith claiming in 1763 that 'it is commerce that introduces probity and punctuality' (Smith, 1763). Or, still from within Scotland, there is William Robertson, historian and principal of Edinburgh University for most of the second half of the eighteenth century, who wrote in 1769 that 'commerce ... softens and polishes the manners of men' (quoted by Hirschman, 1982:1465).

In politically radical circles outside Scotland, these ideas were the absolutely standard view of commerce in the Enlightenment and after. Montesquieu had written in 1749 that ‘it is almost a general rule that wherever manners are gentle there is commerce; and wherever there is commerce, manners are gentle’ (quoted by Hirschman, 1982: 1464). Thomas Paine argued in 1792 that:

[commerce] is a pacific system, operating to cordialise mankind, by rendering Nations, as well as individuals, useful to each other. ... The invention of commerce ... is the greatest approach towards universal civilization that has yet been made by any means not immediately flowing from moral principles.

(quoted by Hirschman, 1982: 1465).

The same view influenced also feminist thinkers such as, slightly later, Harriet Martineau, who believed that commerce specifically benefits the poor: she judged, writing about her tour of the USA in the 1830s, that by bringing different social interests together ‘for objects which require concession and mutual subordination’, ‘the spirit of commerce ... is, on the whole, honourable to the people’ (Martineau, 1837: 359-360). Albert Hirschman has noted furthermore that this idea that commerce actually forges the bonds of society is the very basis of sociology as formulated by Durkheim in the early years of the twentieth century, which also ultimately derives from Enlightenment Scotland (Hirschman, 1982: 1471; MacRae, 1969; Brewer and Craig, 2007).

As a result of this tradition of Enlightenment thought, the self-image of the nineteenth-century capitalist right up to the First World War was as the guarantor of civilisation. Carnegie was well aware of this. He wrote in 1891 in defence of *The Gospel of Wealth* that

those who insure steady employment to thousands, at wages not lower than others pay, need not be ashamed of their record; for steady employment is, after all, the one indispensable requisite for the welfare and the progress of the people,  
(quoted by Nasaw, 2006: 522)

which is an unconscious echo of Martineau. Carnegie’s pacifism came from a similar belief in the civilising power of commerce. He wrote in 1907 that

the world is getting to be like a workshop in which it is an impertinence and an outrage for two men to drop their tools and engage in a fisticuff and a scuffle to the destruction of the whole shop. ... The human race is one. ... The interest of thousands who depend on the manufacture of agricultural implements or machinery of other sorts is at stake when the farms of Russia are lying untilled or the factories of Germany are closed because men are off to the wars.  
(quoted by Nasaw, 2006: 724)

That is why Carnegie did not interpret philanthropy as a compensation for the other things he did. Philanthropy was the pursuit of the civilising effects of commerce by other means. He was as sceptical of irresponsible capitalism as the most advanced liberals of his day. But the solution, to him, lay in the ethical responsibilities of the capitalist, not in the state. He was a close friend of John Morley, radical Liberal MP and government minister, and biographer of Gladstone. Gladstone himself reviewed *The Gospel of Wealth*:

It must not be forgotten that the kind of wealth which chiefly grows is what may be called irresponsible wealth: wealth little watched and checked by opinion, little brought into immediate contact with duty.  
(Gladstone, 1890: 679)

Carnegie was also firmly opposed to slavery, and hence was close to the Republicans and the federal states, and he rather hero-worshipped Booker T. Washington, whom he called the the ‘Moses and Joshua of his people’, and ‘perhaps the most remarkable man living today’ (quoted by Nasaw, 2006: 714).

So the key to understanding all aspects of Carnegie is a belief in commerce – as the maker of civilisation as well as the source of the profits that would enable the great commercial magnate to be also the great philanthropist.

That philosophy is as much in the past now as is Chalmers’s belief in a Christian commonwealth. The subsequent century has reversed the whole view. Under the influence of thinkers as diverse as John Stuart Mill, Keynes, Popper and Marx, we have come to view capitalism without intervention from the state as destructive of civilisation. Popper sums up this belief as that: ‘unlimited freedom means that a strong man is free to bully one who is weak and to rob him of his freedom’ (Popper, 1966: 124).

Thus far Carnegie might have agreed, and indeed he once half-jestingly called himself a socialist because he believed that people ought to ‘work for the general welfare’ and ‘share their riches with their neighbours’ (quoted by Nasaw, 2006: 257). But Carnegie’s belief was not statist. He would not have agreed with the next step in even the firmly liberal Popper’s argument, a step which we largely take for granted:

This is why we demand that the state should limit freedom to a certain extent, so that everyone's freedom is protected by law. Nobody should be at the mercy of others, but all should have a right to be protected by the state.  
(Popper, 1966: 124)

Carnegie’s was not a selfish worldview, despite present-day detractors. It was a personal morality that was both communal and deeply individual. So it could never have satisfied the reinterpretation of philanthropy which came next, which is our third and last example of philanthropic philosophy: the era of the welfare state.

## Paternalistic welfare

We do not usually interpret the welfare state as an expression of philanthropy, and indeed the one was contrasted with the other earlier in this essay. But in trying to understand what has happened to philanthropy since the middle of the twentieth century, it is valuable to recall that a central motive which led to the welfare state was a sense of social duty mediated through the state. Commerce on its own had failed to create the good society (despite Carnegie), and Christianity free of the state had failed to counter-act the worst effects of commerce (despite Chalmers). The state, moreover – as taught by both Chalmers and Carnegie – was a potentially dangerous Leviathan. So perhaps a state informed by a Christian concept of charitable duty as well as Christian humility could resolve all these contradictions.

To illustrate the Scottish aspects of this, we can take a third thinker about the practical aspects of philanthropy – the Scottish theologian John Baillie (Fergusson, 1993; Newlands, 2004). Baillie was born in 1886, half a century after Carnegie (and a century after Chalmers). He was the son of the Free Church minister in Gairloch. He and his brother Donald both graduated from Edinburgh University in philosophy and divinity, and both went on to become distinguished theologians. John Baillie worked as an academic theologian in New York and Toronto in the 1920s. At the Union Theological Seminary in New York he met Reinhold Niebuhr, who became a lifelong associate. With others, they had a very strong influence on the World Council of Churches from 1937. He returned to Edinburgh in 1934 to become professor of divinity there. It was in that position that he made his most important contribution to public life in Scotland.

In 1940, the Church of Scotland set up a Commission with the rather grand title ‘for the interpretation of God’s will in the present crisis’. Baillie chaired it. The Baillie Commission was Scotland’s most distinguished contribution to the debate about the welfare state, though remarkably almost completely forgotten today (but see the collection of essays edited by Morton (1994)). Among its recommendations were elements of a programme that were at least as radical as that which was pursued by the post-war Labour government of the UK: ‘The possessors of economic power must be answerable for the use of that power, not only to their own consciencies, but to appropriate social organs’ (quoted by Smith, 1987: 378).

It cast these views in the tradition of Calvinism:

Selfishness is of the very essence of the sin from which ... men need to be redeemed; but what if there be no particular form of this sin from which we more need to be redeemed today than a complacent indifference to the social evils that surround our comfortable lives?  
(quoted by Smith, 1987: 377)

The philosophy was about mutual human dependence: ‘our interdependence is given in the very nature of our being’ (quoted by Forrester, 1993: 226). Asserting that principle would be the return of the ‘spirit of community after the long reign of individualism’ (quoted by Forrester, 1993: 227). And the philosophy was about duty and humility:

Many of us [Christians] must plead guilty to the ... damaging charge of complacently accepting the amenities, and availing ourselves of the privileges, of a social order which happened to offer these things to ourselves while denying it to others.

(quoted by Smith, 1987: 375)

The views of the Commission were then highly influential on political thinking on the left (Cheyne, 1993: 185; Forrester, 1993: 232; Harvie, 1983: 939; Smith, 1987: 373). What was notable was that the Commission placed an entire Christian denomination behind the project for the welfare state.

Christianity thus brought to an interpretation of the welfare state a sense of moral duty, which – as with Chalmers and Carnegie – is a philanthropic impulse. The sense of philanthropic duties indeed actually came from Chalmers, since his ideas inspired late-nineteenth-century Christian collectivism in Glasgow, what was often called municipal socialism (Brown, 1992). There were communal ideas in the university extension movement at that time (Checkland, 1980: 304). A similar Christian spirit, again, informed the early development of social work (Cree, 1995). These ideas were an attempt to address the reasons why Chalmers had failed, but from within the same tradition of Christian benevolence and mutual responsibility as had lain at the heart of his work.

The new element in the 1940s was a belief that the state could articulate duty. That role of the state is also then what differentiates the welfare-state idea of philanthropy from Carnegie's. And the importance of duty is what distinguishes it from the ideas that are dominant today. John Baillie sought to reconcile the idea of the state with personal obligation in an essay of 1945:

No institution ... can flourish on the basis of legal compulsion alone, dispensing altogether with love; nor is there any personal relationship that is altogether independent of institutions, and into which there enters no element of justice.  
(Baillie, 1945: 58)

Thus in reply to Chalmers's assertion that the solution to social problems 'is to be found, not in the justice of man, but in the compassion of man', Baillie would reply that the implied opposition is spurious: justice through the state depended, he thought, on Christian compassion, which, as love of humanity, is philanthropy.

A specifically educational instance of Christian duty at the heart of Scottish welfare-state thinking is in the various reports of the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland in the late 1940s. These reports were acutely aware of the difficult balance that had to be struck, when educating children, between freedom and the necessary duties without which freedom could not be guaranteed. For example, in a 1947 report, they said that the purpose of secondary education should be to fill 'the years of youth with security, graciousness and ordered freedom', defining through that word 'grace' both 'the high disinterested care' that teachers ought to have and the 'responsive friendliness' which such care would, they believed, inspire in the young (Scottish Education Department, 1947: 10-11). So education is not only an expression of that

philanthropic grace which is at the heart of all teaching, but might also – in a democratic age – be a stimulant of further understanding that citizens have duties to each other.

Thus we see in these views from Baillie, from the Commission he chaired, and from other contemporary sources, a view of the welfare state as embodying a love of humanity, or philanthropy. It was a reminder that one of the romantic critiques of capitalism had been that it destroyed charity and love. That had been a conservative critique – notably for Scotland from Thomas Carlyle (for example, Carlyle, 1858 [1829]). Gladstone had written in his review of Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth* that:

we pay a heavy price, in what Carlyle called the establishment of cash payment as the sole nexus between man and man. The ties, the relations, ... which were strictly human, have very largely become mechanical.  
(Gladstone, 1890: 681)

These Christian views now became, in the statist twentieth century, a belief in a philanthropic society, whose reciprocity creates the state and is guaranteed by the state.

Though this welfare-state idea might seem to survive better than the other two philosophies that we have been considering, it is actually as remote as they are, eroded by political and social change since the 1980s. Reciprocal duty is not now felt to be the defining feature of the welfare state. Duncan Forrester, one of Baillie's distinguished successors in the School of Divinity at Edinburgh University (and who died in 2016, a further half a century on in our story) suggested why duties have come to be replaced by individual rights: it was because the original conception of the welfare state was paternalistically Fabian, which was a legacy of late-nineteenth century philanthropy. He concluded in 1985 that, although 'the anti-welfare consensus may be partly contrived and manipulated by the popular press', nevertheless that suspicion of the state:

also springs out of ... the experience of inflated expectations disappointed by a remote and unintelligible bureaucratic system, by the contrast between the supermarket where the shopper is treated with respect and given freedom of choice because one person's money is as good as the next's, and the dowdy, impersonal social security office.  
(Forrester, 1985: 49)

Forrester was writing from a position on the political left. But the most politically potent critique of the philanthropic paternalism in the welfare state came from the political right – Hayek and Friedman most notably. A comment from Hayek in 1960 is not far from those that later came to be taken for granted in the left's assault on paternalism and the left's assertion of rights: 'The greatest danger to liberty today comes from ... the efficient expert administrators exclusively concerned with what they regard as the public good' (Hayek, 1960: 262).



That represents the mandarin as the administrator of the philanthropy of the state, just like the officials to whom Carnegie delegated the management of his charitable trusts, who in turn were like the managers to whom he entrusted the management of his businesses.

A later conservative, Roger Scruton, is less convinced by Hayek's critique of the charitable state, and is more sympathetic to the charitable impulse: 'To a certain extent the egalitarian outlook in politics stems from a suspicion of charity, and a desire to construe all duties as duties of justice', not love (Scruton, 2014: 49). Scruton may regret this, but his point remains, like those of Forrester and Hayek. The state is alien (as seen from the right) or paternalistic (when seen from the left) because it was conceived on the model of philanthropy. The response from the left is to say that the state ought to be based on rights, and the response from the right is that the state ought to be based on consumer choice, which is another way of saying that it should be based on the rights of the impersonal market place devoid of the civilising effects of commerce that were expected in the tradition from Hume to Carnegie. So every position converges on the assertion of individual rights, to the exclusion of duty and therefore also of charity. Where duties are asserted, they too are individual – the duty to look for a job, or to pass exams. The duties that are neglected are those to society in the form that the philanthropic motive enjoins.

This ascendancy of rights over social duty, of contract over love of humanity, is also, in welfare-state terms, the eclipsing of Richard Titmuss by T. H. Marshall, whose explanation of the welfare state as the embodiment of social rights is now the central focus of academic debate. Lost with that account is Titmuss's metaphor of the welfare state as what he called a 'gift relationship', or a form of mutual philanthropy based on loyalty and shared belonging, much more than on rights (Titmuss, 1970; Marshall, 1950).

Most writers about the welfare state would, accordingly, now argue that a society founded on individual rights is preferable to a society founded on obligations. Perhaps we might be inclined to agree because paternalism without the consent of those being patronised, or unless they are children, is now widely deplored, ultimately for Mills's reason that 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant' (Mill, 1859, ch. 1). Notions of false consciousness, where an autonomous adult does not properly understand their own interests – and which thus might justify paternalistic intervention – are deeply problematic for any kind of liberal philosophy, ultimately because, as Lukes points out, even the most subjugated of humans have the capacity to imagine a different world (Lukes, 2005: 138-151). Philanthropy leaves all the imagination to the philanthropist.

But that is all rather beside the point for the purposes of this essay. Whether or not a preference for rights is shared, a society based on rights is not likely to be a society where the obligations of philanthropy flourish. If you have a right to my money, then any money I give you is not philanthropic – not given out of love for humanity – but is expropriation, a more euphemistic term for which is taxation. If I assert my right not to give you any money, then I am denying any obligation, and am again, then, not acting out of any kind of love. That is why John Baillie's recognition of the love

inherent in his Christian idea of the welfare state seems as quaintly old fashioned as the ideas of Chalmers or of Carnegie. Rights dispense with the need for love.

## Conclusions

Drawing this all now together, we should remind ourselves of the statistics that were summarised earlier showing the relative insignificance of philanthropy in the overall scheme of things in Scottish education today. Despite all the rhetoric, donations and endowments make up under 1% of the income of the Scottish universities, and even for independent schools make up under 3%.

Philanthropy can still be valuable in small but important ways. That might include providing opportunities for gifted children, and specialist schools, as was argued in the 2011 report which was referred to at the beginning. There still does seem, moreover, to be a role for philanthropy in helping to renovate important historical buildings, such as the McEwan Hall at Edinburgh University (Ross-CASE, 2017: 20), though a certain cultural decline is rather evident in the disfigurement of Bristo Square which the new entrance to that building has imposed upon us. A high standard of aesthetic taste was a common characteristic of philanthropists in the past, William McEwan and Carnegie among them.

But the main theme here is that the historical context has changed fundamentally. To hope for a significantly greater amount of philanthropy would be to ask for the return of a moral universe that has gone – a return to the sense of social duty rather than individual rights in the welfare state, a return to the idea that commerce is intrinsically civilising, or a return to a Christian (or other religious) community. All three of our examples were seeking that defining moral framework which Aquinas said was the basis of almsgiving, but all three have now been superseded. None of these three sets of motives now seems remotely plausible. For philanthropy we are in a similar position to that which Alasdair MacIntyre said we inhabit for morality as a whole: ‘The language of morality ... [embodies] the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts of which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived’ (MacIntyre, 1981: 2). None of the conceptual schemes that sustained extensive philanthropy in the past has survived.

In particular, the political left now says almost nothing about voluntary moral obligation as central to citizenship, and indeed when some left-wing politicians do try to insist on it, such as Tony Blair, they are accused by liberals of being authoritarian (for example, Dahrendorf, 1999). The force of the left’s objections to philanthropy which were quoted from the event mentioned at the beginning of this essay in truth does not lie in the complaint about the wealthy philanthropists but rather in the insistence on rights against mutual duties, and so the left’s explanation for the decline of philanthropy is based on the premise that the state is simply a guarantor of rights rather than an expression of citizens’ duties to each other. On the political right, the notion of reciprocal responsibility is faintly echoed in the expectations of recent philanthropists that there should be some kind of ‘contract’. But ad hoc contracts for each specific act of giving miss the underpinning moral framework of these earlier visions of philanthropy where the very notion of a contract was unnecessary because a sense of obligation was a moral sentiment deep in society.

Reciprocal responsibility is echoed also in philanthropists' ideal of fulfilling themselves, which we should never deprecate even in a thoroughly secular and cynical age. There is always, for the individual, David Hume's comment on benevolence that 'we may feel a desire of another's happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment' (Hume, 1751). But a moral framework cannot be sustained only by a few, and, here, cannot be sustained only by a few wealthy givers. Political slogans, however worthy, do not themselves re-create the moral community that John Baillie or Andrew Carnegie or Thomas Chalmers were seeking.

The question of philanthropy, when examined over two centuries, thus tells us about a lot more than merely the technical matter of the amount of charitable donations. It raises fundamental questions about the nature of society, of its sustaining moral values, and of the role of government and every citizen in seeing to the welfare of all. The versions of philanthropy with which Scotland has attempted to give answers to these challenges have been varied and imaginative – non-state voluntarism, civilising commerce, state welfare. None any longer works, and so philanthropy – however individually admirable and locally effective – is unlikely to make any more than a marginal contribution to Scotland's educational welfare.

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<sup>1</sup> This essay started as the Third Enlightenment Lecture at Edinburgh University, 31 October 2017. The author is grateful to the organisers of that event for the opportunity to raise the issues discussed here.

<sup>2</sup> Author's notes from the meeting.

<sup>3</sup> Most of their income is from fees. Calculated from the individual school entries in the web page of the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (2017) [22 September 2017], with the list of independent schools from the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (2017) [22 September 2017].

<sup>4</sup> Giving USA estimates that in 2014 the total amount of philanthropic giving to education was \$54.62bn (Giving USA, 2015). OECD, (2017, Table B2.3), shows that (in 2014) 6.2% of the GDP of the USA was spent on education (from all sources, public and private). The GDP of the USA in 2014 was \$17,427bn (OECD data, 2017). 54.62 is approximately 5.1% of 6.2% of 17,427.

<sup>5</sup> £43k from endowments 'mainly in connection with elementary schools' (Colebrooke Commission, 1875, p. 239) and £137k in total (Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, 1874-5: cviii, including only grants to schools, not to central administration).

<sup>6</sup> The Argyll Commission (1864: xv) reported that the total annual income of the burgh schools (which were the predecessors of most of the public higher class schools in the early twentieth century) in the 1860s was £50,000, of which £42,000 was in fees and £3,000 in endowments. See also Anderson (1983: 162-201). In the 1870s, the amount from endowments for the schools that were the predecessors of most of the older endowed schools in the early twentieth century had been around £96k (Colebrooke Commission, 1875: 239, combining the revenue for 'hospital endowments' and 'endowments mainly in connection with secondary schools'). So, when state grants started to be paid, the historical legacy of endowments for these two groups of school was around £100k per annum. The first state grant for secondary education did not come till the 1890s, when it was about £15,000 annually (Anderson, 1983: 214); by the late-1890s this annual grant was around £60,000 (Committee of Council on Education in Scotland, 1898-99: xxxiii).

<sup>7</sup> Calculated as 'historic standard of living' from the 'measuring worth' website of the Economic History Association (2017). The same source is used for other monetary sums below.

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