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PHILANTHROPY AND THE WOMAN'S SPHERE,

SYDNEY, 1870 - circa 1900.

by

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SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the impact of an ideological construct - the woman's sphere - on philanthropy in Sydney during 1870-1900. The woman's sphere was a hegemonic concept which denoted the activities and functions deemed appropriate for women. Women were encouraged to work within their sphere in philanthropy and restricted from working in areas or ways outside their sphere. Within these limits, women had a distinct and important impact on philanthropy.

Part I examines women's philanthropy in the 1870s. The first two chapters deal with the major areas of women's philanthropy; the care of girls, mixed-sex groups of children, the sick and working class women. It is argued that women's involvement in these areas was increasingly justified as being within the woman's sphere. Chapter 3 analyses two Refuges for ex-prostitutes, the essential agreement on philanthropic aims between sectarian organisations and the relationship between the lady and the female within the woman's sphere.

The 1880s, it is argued in Part II, was a decade when the lady became increasingly confident of her right to solve social problems considered to be within the philanthropic woman's sphere. In successive chapters, the impact of the woman's sphere concept on the philanthropic care of children and adults is analysed. The impact on the individual of the woman's sphere concept and the meaning of being a lady within that sphere is examined in Chapter 6.

Part III discusses the changes in, and the expansion of, woman's sphere philanthropy during the 1890s. Although a select group of ladies still dominated women's philanthropy, much of their power and prestige was eroded. The woman's sphere concept remained but it was much less a means by which women philanthropists could justify independent action.

In conclusion, it is argued that the woman's sphere concept is essential to an understanding of nineteenth-century life. Whilst this thesis demonstrates its impact on philanthropy, the concept was also a key determinant of women's activities in other areas.

Author's Statement

This is to certify that this thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement, nor has there been collaboration with any other person.

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Lastly, and not entirely facetiously, I would like to thank all those who demonstrated the need for this thesis by responding, "Women's philanthropy? Oh, you mean Caroline Chisholm"

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>A.D.B.</u>	<u>The Australian Dictionary of Biography</u>
<u>A.J.H.S.J.</u>	<u>The Australian Jewish Historical Society</u>
	<u>Journal</u>
A.N.U.	The Australian National University
<u>A.R.</u>	<u>Annual Report</u>
Cath	Catholic
C.E.T.S.W.U.	Church of England Temperance Society
	Women's Union
C. of E.	Church of England
Congreg.	Congregationalist
C.R.H.	Church Rescue Home
<u>D.T.</u>	<u>The Sydney Daily Telegraph</u>
<u>G.F.S.</u>	<u>Girls' Friendly Society</u>
<u>J.A.C.H.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the Australian Catholic</u>
	<u>Historical Society</u>
<u>J.R.A.H.S.</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Australian Histor-</u>
	<u>ical Society</u>
L.C.	Ladies' Committee
Meth.	Wesleyan Methodist
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney
M.L.A.	Member of the Legislative Assembly
M.L.C.	Member of the Legislative Council
N.S.W.	New South Wales
<u>N.S.W.L.A., V. & P.</u>	<u>N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, Votes and</u>
	<u>Proceedings</u>
Pres.	Presbyterian
R.S.P.C.A.	Royal Society for the Prevention of
	Cruelty to Animals
<u>S.C.M.H.</u>	<u>Sydney City Mission Herald</u>
<u>S.C.R.B.</u>	<u>State Children's Relief Board</u>
<u>S.M.H.</u>	<u>Sydney Morning Herald</u>
<u>S.P.H.N.C.</u>	<u>Society for Providing Homes for</u>
	<u>Neglected Children</u>
S.P.P.C.	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty
	to Children
S.R.D.C.	Society for the Relief of Destitute
	Children
S.R.W.S.	Sydney Rescue Work Society
W.C.T.U.	Women's Christian Temperance Union
Y.W.C.A.	Young Women's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to determine the nature and extent of women's philanthropy as it was practiced in Sydney during 1870-1900. In the process of the research, it became evident that women's philanthropic activity had been both restricted and encouraged in a highly specific way. The ideological construct which so affected women's philanthropy was called by contemporaries, the "woman's sphere". The woman's sphere was a dynamic concept, hegemonic during the period studied. It is only in understanding the influence of the woman's sphere concept that the pattern of women's philanthropy - its virtual non-existence in some areas and confident domination of others - can be appreciated. This understanding in turn has profound implications for both women's history and the history of social welfare in colonial Australia.

There has been a prolonged debate by welfare historians as to the appropriate definition of philanthropy, with most agreement on the futility of a highly precise definition. In addition, it appears that a broad concept of the word is needed to encompass more than simply the distribution of material aid to the poor or, as Owen has defined it, aid with a pecuniary basis.¹ The need for a broader concept arises because such material and pecuniary aid was, as argued by Harrison, inextricably linked in the Victorian mind with religious and reforming campaigns.² Philanthropy, as with other historical phenomena, must be appreciated in its historical context, and not defined primarily in light of present-day practice.³ On the other hand, Harrison advocated a definition of philanthropy which was so broad as to include every organised impulse towards social or spiritual welfare, including those which merely

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1. D.Owen, English Philanthropy, Massachusetts, 1964, p.1.
 2. B.Harrison, "Philanthropy and the Victorians", Victorian Studies, 1X, June 1966, pp.355-6.
 3. ibid., p.355 and W.Jordon, "The English Background of Philanthropy", American Historical Review, LXVI:2, 1961, esp. p.401.

devote "thought" toward relieving the miseries of the poor, the neglected, or the oppressed.¹ Such a broad sweep could only result in a general social history rather than specialised welfare history.

In this thesis, "charity" is restricted to the distribution of material aid whilst the broader context of such distribution is referred to as philanthropy.² Philanthropy thus refers to the free distribution of money or any other form of aid in order to alleviate the material condition of the poor and the oppressed. This definition owes much to Harrison whilst avoiding the pitfalls of an all-encompassing definition. The emphasis on free-will, with an acknowledgement of the limitations of that concept, is crucial.³ Philanthropy always involves a "gift" relationship, demanding the gratitude of the recipient for a voluntary act of assistance.⁴ As such, it is an important "political strategy of intervention under the liberal state".⁵

The definition of philanthropy is such that a person becomes a philanthropist merely through belonging - even nominally - to a philanthropic organisation. The label "philanthropist" generally has moral implications of altruistic motivation. This connotation of philanthropy is despite the end result of philanthropic endeavour having a generally unfavourable reputation, as in "as cold as charity" and other maxims. However, philanthropic altruism was generally restrained by the philanthropists' class interests and ideology. It is not possible to survey the conscious motivation of the women

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1. Harrison, op.cit., p.356. He also implies that church building and mechanics' institutes are aspects of philanthropy.
 2. cf. J.Hodges and A.Hussain, "Review article: Jacques Donzelot, La police des familles", Ideology & Consciousness, 5, Spring 1979, p.103.
 3. B.Kirkman Gray, A History of English Philanthropy, (1905), New York, 1967, pp.viii-ix, stresses the importance of free-will.
 4. T.Titmuss, The Gift Relationship, London, 1970, esp. pp.72-5 and G.Stedman Jones, Outcast London, Oxford, 1971, ch.13.
 5. Hodges and Hussain, op.cit., p.102, misunderstands the nature of the gift relationship by describing it as the opposite of such a strategy.

discussed in this thesis. However, the finding that so surprised Ostrander in her survey of upper class American women philanthropists - that all engaged in such work primarily because of an awareness of class and self interest and none because of altruistic motivation¹ - should not be so unexpected. Unconstrained altruism was considered a great evil, destructive of self-help and self-respect, and against the interests of the whole society. On the other hand, conserving the structure of a society that was a product of the British Empire and seen as a reflection of divine will, was promoted as a most desirable action.

The basis of the philanthropists' own means of livelihood could also have little impact on an individual's philanthropic reputation. One example is Lady Allen who, with her family, was a prominent philanthropist.² Part of the vast wealth of the Allens which enabled them to acquire their philanthropic reputation was gained from being extensive "slum" landlords. Houses rented from Sir George Wigram Allen were described thus:

built of rubble ... a stinking hole ...
vermin abounded ... we were obliged to
leave hastily - we could not stand the
smell.... The tenants of these houses all
complained of ill health... (3)

The necessity to be near work and a severe lack of alternative accommodation forced people to stay in such "houses". When their children were sicker than usual they may have sent them to the Hospital for Sick Children of which Lady Allen was Vice-President and her husband President. Alternatively, they may have applied for help at the state's largest charitable institution, the N.S.W. Benevolent Asylum, of which Lady Allen was a member of the Ladies' Committee, or been forced to

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1. S.Ostrander, "Class Consciousness as Conduct and Meaning: The Case of Upper Class Women", The Insurgent Sociologist, IX:2-3, Fall 1979 - Winter 1980, esp. pp.40, 45.
 2. See Appendix A, entry for Allen.
 3. Report and Evidence of the Investigating Committees of the Sydney City and Suburban Sewerage Health Board, N.S.W.L.A., V. & P., 1875-6, vol.5, p.628 cf. houses owned by Mr Goodlet, (who with his wife was also, as shown in Appendix A, a prominent philanthropist) which were "very much in want of repair", ibid., p.627.

give up their children and have them boarded-out with another family through the S.C.R.B., of which Lady Allen was a member. In trying to escape the misery of poverty the young girls could turn to prostitution and, if that career failed, apply to be reformed at the Sydney Female Refuge, of which Lady Allen was a member of the Ladies' Committee. Alternatively, they could be rehabilitated into clean, deferential domestic servants with the help of Lady Allen and her fellow committee members at the Y.W.C.A. or the Sydney Servants' Home. Yet Lady Allen was probably genuinely motivated by compassion for the poor. Philanthropists, by definition, attempt to alleviate the miseries of the poor and oppressed, including those whom they themselves directly oppress. They do not seek to eliminate the causes of poverty as do social reformers or revolutionaries.

Another aspect of the definition of philanthropist is that the label is applied to one who supports philanthropic causes by financial donations. By convention, a donor becomes a noted philanthropist through the amount, rather than the proportion of income, contributed. The giving of the widow's mite has biblical sanction but the widow's name is soon forgotten, if recorded at all. In contrast, the lavish donations of the wealthy such as Thomas Walker and his daughter Eadith, are remembered through plaques to benefactors and through institutions, or parts thereof, named after them.¹ For the wealthy, the label of philanthropist was comparatively easy to gain.²

Philanthropy did not mean that the poor were given aid of the kind that they could, or would wish to, utilise. Colonial philanthropists frequently, in a manner characteristic of the Victorians, aimed to alleviate distress with a grand gesture and preferably a large, ornate building opened with florid speeches by the most prominent, and preferably titled,

1. See Appendix A, entry for Walker.

2. See, e.g., my "The Work for Them, and the Glory for Us!" in R. Kennedy (ed.), Australian Welfare History. Critical Essays, South Melbourne, 1982, p.86, the case of Sir Alfred Stephen.

citizens. An inspiring example for colonial philanthropists was Angela Burdett-Coutts, the first English woman to be made a Baroness in her own right, an honour ostensibly bestowed because of her philanthropy. The Baroness had built in 1864, amongst the worst slums of London, a magnificent building. It was like a cathedral and was described thus:

The gates are wonders of scroll wrought iron-work; the corridors are roofed with carved arches of polished teak; rich carvings meet the eye at every turn, with towers, belfries and pointed arches. The great Hall is a masterpiece of woodwork and polished granite columns; and the arcades on each side of the gatehouse are supplied with granite fountains. (1)

This building, among the degradation and destitution so vividly described by Charles Dickens, who had been Coutts' amanuensis, was a market hall for the selling of fruit and vegetables to the poor. It was not a success - no trading was allowed on the East End's market day (Sunday, the workers' day off) and the rules were irksome.² For wealthy philanthropists, it was another lesson on the ingratitude of the poor.

One characteristic of philanthropy essential to understanding its purpose, effects and limitations is that it is a relationship across class boundaries. When Marx wrote of class, he wrote (albeit in a unique way) of a phenomenon that his contemporaries accepted and upheld in practice. The nineteenth century philanthropist commonly viewed society as an organic whole: the aristocracy and the gentry; the middle class and the working class poor, were all accepted as necessary parts sustaining the whole. It is no accident that the most commonly quoted biblical phrase of philanthropists was a variant of "the poor you have always with you" (Matthew 26:11; John 12:8; Mark 14:7).³ It was this, for example, which was engraved upon the portals of St. Vincent's Hospital⁴, reminding

1. Quoted in C. Burdett Patterson, Angela Burdett-Coutts and the Victorians, London, 1953, pp.208-9.

2. E. Healey, Lady Unknown. The life of Angela Burdett-Coutts, London, 1978, p.166.

3. During my research, present-day philanthropists also quoted that - and no other - biblical phrase to me.

4. P. Moran, History of the Catholic Church in Australasia, Sydney, n.d., p.967.

supporters that philanthropy had strictly limited social aims. Philanthropy was an activity of the ruling class and those who supported the ruling class in order to lessen class conflict arising from the exploitation of the poor. In this sense, its functions were much the same as that attributed to the later development of the welfare state by researchers such as Watts and Higgins.¹

A number of authorities, in contrast to the above, suggest that philanthropy was an activity which transcended class boundaries and was engaged in by unselfishly motivated persons from all classes. The work of Young and Ashton typifies this belief and the "whig" interpretation of philanthropy which attributes the obvious limitations of "social work" to "fear" and "ignorance" by its practitioners.² Hyslop, in her analysis of Melbourne's social reform movement, asserted that the "agents" and "objects" of social reform did not belong to "different social classes" although "most of the women directly involved in social reform work were of the middle class, while many of those at whom the reforms were directed were working-class women".³ Prochaska, dealing specifically with philanthropy, equally insisted that it was a multi-class activity, also merely (and by implication, only incidentally) dominated by middle class "agents" and working class "objects".⁴ In asserting that philanthropy was essentially an activity of the ruling class relating to the working class, it is not intended to deny the role of specific individuals whose own class (though not necessarily consciousness) defy such categorisation. Notable examples in this thesis are ex-servant Euphemia

1. R.Watts, "Social Amnesia and Welfare History", Arena, 47-8, 1977 and W.Higgins, '"To Him That Hath...." The Welfare State', in Kennedy, op.cit.

2. A.Young and E.Ashton, British Social Work in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1956, esp. pp.9,259.

3. A.Hyslop, "Agents and Objects: Women and Social Reform in Melbourne, 1900 to 1914" in M.Bevege, et.al., Worth Her Salt, Sydney, 1982, p.241.

4. F.Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, London, 1980, esp. pp.viii, 42-3.

Bowes and Catherine Talbot, wife of the President of the Trades and Labour Council.¹ However, the definition of philanthropy in this thesis is such that it was simply beyond the resources of most working class individuals. Prochaska, in his stress upon the importance of "working-class charity... philanthropy of the poor", claims that it "was usually informal and undocumented", making any "systematic analysis of their benevolence difficult".² Yet, as suggested by Prochaska's casual switch from "charity" to "philanthropy", his definition of such philanthropy is vague. Philanthropy is more (or less) than personal "benevolence", "the kindness of the poor to the poor" or "mutual help".³ Undoubtedly acts of kindness, neighbourliness and friendship occur between the poor as much as or more than as between the rich. However, if philanthropy is to refer to such activities then it must equally apply whether the doer is wealthy or poor. Such a broad definition makes nonsense of the term. If, as Prochaska claims, "dropping in on friends in distress" is philanthropy then similar acts of friendship amongst the rich must also be included; similarly "providing Sunday dinners for deprived children" should apply to emotionally deprived rich children as well as materially deprived poor children; "finding employment for friends and relatives" is patronage rather than philanthropy and if the "dropping a coin in a hat passed around a pub" is included as philanthropy then so too should the dropping of a note in a silver platter at an elite club.⁴ The fact that anything more formal or systematic was beyond the means of the working class and contrary to working class cultural traditions points to the class basis of philanthropy. It does not point to the need to redefine philanthropy as the focus switches from one class to another.

In the Australian colonies, a further determinant of the

1. See Appendix A, entries for Bowes and Talbot.

2. Prochaska, op.cit., pp.vii-viii.

3. ibid., p.viii and Harrison, op.cit., p.369.

4. Prochaska, op.cit., p.42. See also Harrison, op.cit., p.369.

nature of philanthropy was the fear of pauperisation, that is, public support of the poor, and the dreaded Poor Law as it existed in England.¹ A colonial Poor Law was feared by the poor because of the brutality of the English Poor Law's "Work-houses" and by the rich as it supported the destitute by taxation and because such support could be viewed as a right of survival rather than as a "gift" originating from the benevolence of the ruling class. In addition, colonists strove to preserve the myth that provision for the poor was not needed in a "new" land of opportunity.² Particularly before the increasing class consciousness and militancy of the working class in the 1890s made the ruling class more circumspect in their public utterances, the social control function of philanthropy was repeatedly stressed by the philanthropists themselves.

It is with the above considerations and definition of philanthropy in mind, that the significance of the role of women philanthropists must be assessed. In addition, two other characteristics of philanthropy are relevant. One is that the majority of philanthropic "objects" were women and children.³ Working class men, unless sick, handicapped or long-term unemployed, were generally able to provide for themselves through the use of savings without the degradation of asking for philanthropic help. For philanthropy was designed to degrade and humble the recipient so that it would be a last resort and so that the poor would not "impose" upon the generosity of the rich. This aspect of philanthropy is best summed up by one potential user's bitter dismissal of the N.S.W. Benevolent Asylum: "You got no charity there".⁴ The purpose of discouraging the recipient was not only to minimise

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1. See, e.g., B.Dickey, No Charity There, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 27, 230-1 and T. Kewley, Social Security in Australia, Sydney, 1965. See also Hodges and Hussain, op.cit., p.102 definition of French philanthropy as "a private intervention in the problem of pauperism".
 2. R. Kennedy, "Charity and Ideology in Colonial Victoria", in Kennedy (ed.), op.cit.
 3. For an analysis of the disproportionate number of women paupers, see P. Thane, "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England", History Workshop Journal, 6, 1978.
 4. Dickey, op.cit., p.x.

philanthropic expenditure but also to pressure the poor into accepting any work regardless of pay or conditions; relief was not given to those, or their families, who refused "reasonable" offers of employment. The fear of charity thus led many to accept employment regardless of pay or conditions.¹ Working class women were the most vulnerable as they, compared with men, had less access to constant employment and were paid much lower wages.² They could rarely constant employment that paid enough for them to provide for periods of sickness, pregnancy or unemployment, or for paid child-care. They were "doubly oppressed" by reason of their sex and class.³

The second particularly relevant characteristic of philanthropy is that middle class women were - and are - strongly identified as performing most of the work of philanthropy.⁴ The "Lady Bountiful" was a traditional figure of importance cementing class relations in the British countryside. Such a woman did not question her right to enter any working class home, "asking questions, dispensing charity or giving orders".⁵ She

had been taught her duty towards the cottagers, and that included reproving them for their wasteful habits. It also included certain charities ... doling out soup in the winter to those she called "the deserving poor". (6)

However, such an individualistic way of dispensing philanthropy was dependent on the "Lady Bountiful" knowing the poor

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1. This function of philanthropy and state welfare policy is explored in F.Piven and R.Cloward, Regulating the Poor, New York, 1971.
 2. S.Fisher, "An Accumulation of Misery?" in Kennedy, op.cit., esp.p.47 and S.Fisher, Life and Work in Sydney 1870-1890, Ph.D., Macquarie University, 1976, esp. ch.4.
 3. The term is from B.Dunning, "Who Killed Mrs Ann K-?", Hecate, IV:2, July 1978, p.36.
 4. A defence of my use of the term middle class is perhaps needed here. While appreciating the misuse of the term as outlined in T.Rowse, Australian Liberalism and National Character, Victoria, 1978, esp.pp.198,202-3, I see the middle class as having separate interests "in itself" and "for itself" similar to that of the Ehrenreichs' "Professional-Managerial Class". For a discussion of this concept see P. Walker (ed.), Between Labour and Capital, Sussex, 1979.
 5. L.Davidoff, The Best Circles, London, 1973, p.46.
 6. F.Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, (1945), London, 1948, p.184.

personally and being, as the wife or daughter of the local landowner and perhaps magistrate, in a position to enforce her ideas on how the poor should live. In an urban setting, or a time of high geographic mobility, these personal relationships broke down. Philanthropic help could still be dispensed but control was difficult to exercise. Accordingly, with increasing industrialisation and urbanisation, the term "Lady Bountiful" was transformed into a term of disparagement. Without control over the poor, such philanthropy simply became "pauperisation". Women most prominent in Victorian philanthropy accordingly condemned the older role of "Lady Bountiful". Josephine Butler, the campaigner against the Contagious Diseases Acts, complained of women who pauperised the community "by their old fashioned, Lady Bountiful way of dispensing alms and patronage".¹ Florence Nightingale was literally almost driven mad by the thought of becoming an ineffectual Lady Bountiful and so participating with her mother and sister in unsystematic "schemes of schooling for the poor ... broth and dripping are included in the plan".² In the Australian colonies, ladies bountiful were particularly discouraged because they created pauperism, the worst crime a philanthropist could commit in the eyes of the ruling class.

Organised philanthropic activity which attempted to control the poor by guaranteeing that only the "deserving" were helped, that is, the sober, industrious, deferential and utterly destitute was, in contrast, encouraged as a woman's activity. Research in European countries and colonies has verified the strength of the association between women and organised philanthropy. It was true for America and France but was especially

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1. J. Butler (ed.), Women's Work and Women's Culture, London, 1869 quoted in R. Walton, Women in Social Work, London, 1975, pp.69, 23-5.
 2. F. Nightingale, "Cassandra" quoted in R. Strachey, "The Cause". A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain, (1928), New York, 1969, p.415. See also Mary Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, (1899), New Jersey, 1969, p.xxxi.

strong for Britain and her colonies.¹ Prochaska, in particular, has demonstrated the "explosion" in the number of English women's philanthropic societies during the nineteenth century.² The extensive and high repute of women's philanthropy was also demonstrated by the "World's Columbian Exposition", held at Chicago in 1894. To the organising Board, philanthropy represented "the most beautiful and useful work that women are doing in the world".³ Further proof of the extensive dedication of women to philanthropy was provided by Burdett-Coutts' production of a book for the Exposition on all the major facets of women's philanthropy within the British Empire.⁴ The Countess of Aberdeen's survey of women's social work in 1900 similarly demonstrated their wide involvement.⁵ At an individual level, middle class girls were brought up to assume that philanthropy would be part of their adult life.⁶ In addition, Ruskin's influential concept of the ideal woman incorporated philanthropy as a woman's duty. Women's philanthropy, according to Ruskin, was necessary to soften the harshness of the male-dominated world. While men were "always hardened" by

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1. See, e.g., R.Bremmer, American Philanthropy, Chicago, 1960; W.Leach, True Love and Perfect Union. The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society, London, 1981, p.164; B.Pope, "Angels in the Devil's Workshop", in R.Bridenthal and C.Koonz (eds.), Becoming Visible, Boston, 1977; J.Acton (ed.), Women at Work Ontario 1850-1930, Toronto, 1974 and R.Dalziel, "The Colonial Helpmeet: Women's Role and Vote in Nineteenth Century New Zealand", The New Zealand Journal of History, 11:2, October 1977.
 2. Prochaska, op.cit., ch.1 and esp. p.32.
 3. Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, "The Organisation Room of the Women's Building", p.1. Held by the Chicago Historical Society, copy in the possession of J. Roe, Macquarie University.
 4. A.Burdett-Coutts (ed.), Woman's Mission, London, 1894. A ch. on N.S.W. philanthropic work is included but much of the information arrived too late for Coutts to include it in the book. Efforts to locate these unutilised papers have been to no avail, despite the help of Janet Ramsay (British Museum), Jill Roe (Chicago Historical Society) and Edna Healey (Burdett-Coutts and Osborne Papers).
 5. Countess of Aberdeen (ed.), Women in Social Life. The Transactions of the Social Section of the International Congress of Women, London, 1900.
 6. Prochaska, op.cit., ch.III.

their "rough work in the open world", a true woman should be a "Sister of Charity always", showing the poor "how to make as much of everything as possible, coaxing and tempting them into tidy and pretty ways".¹

What research has failed to establish, however, is that the role of women had any distinctive impact upon philanthropy. The role of women is typically, and erroneously, dismissed by such phrases as that of Swain: "They [women] worked in all sections of the [charity] network but have left little record of their activities".² This thesis aims to demonstrate that while Swain's concept of the charity network is also valid for New South Wales³, women did not work in all sections of philanthropy equally and that they left an abundance of records. Swain's assumption about women's philanthropy is also reflected in the work on English philanthropy - the model for so much of colonial philanthropy.⁴

Jordon's monumental work on English philanthropy (1480-1660) contains little reference to the role of women, except as donors. Even then, Jordon only queries the role of women across the range, and within broad categories of, philanthropic activity. He does not ask, for example, why women supported particular philanthropic organisations and institutions or why their "maturity of understanding" was so "very impressive".⁵ Owen took up the English philanthropic story where Jordon left off but in his work too, with all its achievements, women's philanthropy is a neglected area. The extensive work of

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1. J. Ruskin, Sesame and Lilies, (1893), London, 1902, pp.108, xxviii, xix. For similar and also influential sentiments, see Anna Jameson, Sisters of Charity, Catholic and Protestant, (1857), Boston, 1976.
 2. S. Swain, The Charity Network in Melbourne, 1880-1890, Ph.D., University of Melbourne, 1977, p.284.
 3. See also, M. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks", Feminist Studies, 5:1, Spring 1979.
 4. E. Windschuttle, "Women and the Origins of Colonial Philanthropy" in Kennedy, op.cit., demonstrates the English origins of colonial philanthropy.
 5. W. Jordon, Philanthropy in England. 1480-1660. London. 1959, pp.354. See also pp.352-5, 382-3.

"lady visitors" as outlined by Summers¹, for example, was virtually ignored. Instead Owen emphasised the role of a few prominent philanthropic women - notably Burdett-Coutts and the "self-appointed school mistress of the lower classes", Octavia Hill.² Such women tend to appear as unfortunate exceptions to the general rule of the insignificance of women philanthropists. In welcome contrast is the work of McCrone and Schupf³ which takes the philanthropy of "exceptional" women and places it in its historical context. For most historians of nineteenth century philanthropy, however, Windschuttle's rebuke needs to be taken to heart:

If a woman surfaces against the strong currents of our patriarchal institutions we ought to consider it at least possible that she got there by standing on the shoulders of a great many of her sisters. (4)

As the approach of simply featuring a few "exceptional" women fails, so too does the aim to fill in "one or two gaps" by including women in the existing framework of welfare historiography. As Prochaska partially learnt⁵, such a theoretically sterile approach is, at best, inadequate.⁶

Comparatively little research has been undertaken on nineteenth century philanthropy in N.S.W. and the main studies have contradictory implications about the extent and significance of women's involvement in philanthropy. Peyser's pioneering survey suggests widespread involvement at least until

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1. A.Summers, "A Home from Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century" in S.Burman (ed.), Work Fit for Women, London, 1979.
 2. Owen, op.cit., esp. p.413-20, 508.
 3. K.McCrone, "Feminism and Philanthropy in Victorian England: the Case of Louisa Twining", Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, 1976 and H.Schupf, "Single Women and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century England: The Case of Mary Carpenter", Victorian Studies, XVIII:3, March 1974.
 4. E.Windschuttle, Introduction in E.Windschuttle, (ed.), Women, Class and History, Melbourne, 1980, p.24.
 5. Prochaska, op.cit., p.vii.
 6. For a detailed criticism of this approach, see, e.g., G. Lerner, "Placing Women in History: A 1975 Perspective" in B. Carroll (ed.), Liberating Women's History, Illinois, 1976.

1900.¹ Similarly, Windschuttle's research for 1800-50 demonstrates that women were involved in a wide range of philanthropic societies, predominantly modelled on British organisations and serving to preserve and consolidate the interests of the ruling class. She has demonstrated that whilst ruling class women dominated many of the charitable societies, women from "the socially mobile skilled working class, lower middle class or middle class" became prominent in the temperance movement in the 1830s and 1840s.² The evangelical movement, controlling an estimated 75% of British charitable organisations during 1850-1900³, has been cited by Windschuttle as a major mobiliser of middle class women into activities of social reform and philanthropy. Given the strength of the evidence Windschuttle has assembled, there is little doubt that philanthropy was a major activity for middle class women in the first half of the nineteenth century. The implication is that not only was philanthropy important to these women but that such women were important to philanthropy.

A contradictory implication arises from the work of Dickey, who has demonstrated the nature of charity in N.S.W. for the period 1850-1914.⁴ Dickey, in the tradition of Woodroffe⁵, described his work as demonstrating the transformation of charity from basically "Lady Bountiful" activity to an acceptance of the principles of social justice.⁶ He analysed a wide range of charitable activity, demonstrated the motivating fear of pauperisation, increased state control and the advent of more humane policies towards the poor. Dickey presents women as only occasionally important to charity and then, as in the case of the all-woman Boarding Out Society which transformed traditional philanthropic child-care in the 1880s, as more an

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1. D.Peyser, "A Study of Welfare Work in Sydney 1788-1900", J.R.A.H.S., Parts 1 and 2, 25:2-3, 1940.
 2. Windschuttle, "Feeding the Poor and Sapping their Strength" in Windschuttle, op.cit., and "Women, Class and Temperance", The Push from the Bush, 3, May 1979, esp. p.12.
 3. K.Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, London, 1962, p.14.
 4. B.Dickey, Charity in N.S.W. 1850-1914, Ph.D., A.N.U., 1966.
 5. K.Woodroffe, From Charity to Social Work in England and the United States, London, 1962.
 6. Dickey, Ph.D., op.cit., p.279.

aberration than as a logical development.¹ Kewley, for the post 1900 period, confirms this impression of the minimal importance of women in N.S.W. social welfare history.²

The resolution of the implied contradiction between, amongst others, Windschuttle and Dickey, as to the extent of women's participation in philanthropy has bearing on another debate in Australian historiography. This debate centres on the status of women in Australian society. Windschuttle describes women who led purposeful lives upon which were conferred high social prestige and status. They had an important role in implementing the social policies, unity and ideological hegemony of the ruling class. For the second half of the nineteenth century, Kingston sees a similar role for a restricted number of women. Kingston maintained that through marriage, middle class women had a purposeful, albeit restricted role, in perpetuating "society" and in performing functions attuned to community needs. Philanthropy was one of the community needs met by women "of proper standing and responsibility".³ A high status for selected women is extended by Grimshaw to be a general characteristic of Australian women. Grimshaw's argument is that as the family was the basic economic unit in society and as women's labour was vital to the family economy, women were accorded a relatively high status, which was reflected in public acceptance of their legal and political emancipation.⁴ Grimshaw's main quarrel⁵ is with Dixson who argued that Australian women had and still have a comparatively low status and a consequent impoverished self-concept.⁶ A further interpretation of the status of Australian women was offered by Summers

1. ibid., ch. 6.

2. Kewley, op.cit.

3. B.Kingston, My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann, Sydney, 1975, p.25.

4. P.Grimshaw and G.Willet, "Women's History and Family History", in N.Grieve and P.Grimshaw (eds.), Australian Women, Oxford, 1981 is the clearest statement of Grimshaw's theory.

5. P.Grimshaw, "Women and family in Australian history - a reply to The Real Matilda", Historical Studies, 18:72, April 1979.

6. M.Dixson, The Real Matilda, Harmondsworth, 1976.

who argued that by the second half of the nineteenth century, the "God's Police" role for women was in ascendancy. Women were accorded status and access to participation in social and political affairs as long as they confined that participation to "moral policing".¹

In part, the differences outlined above are matters of emphasis. Grimshaw stresses the evidence available for women's high status; Dixon the evidence for women's low status. Kingston and Summers emphasise the ideology that confers status on women at the cost of severely restricted opportunities and life-styles. A study of women's philanthropy can make an important contribution to this debate on the role and status of Australian women as philanthropy was one of the few public and highly visible activities both allowed and encouraged for women.

This thesis accordingly explores the pattern and characteristics of Sydney women's philanthropy during 1870-1900. It demonstrates that middle class women had an important and very active role in philanthropy: they were not confined to the "home" or the "private" sphere, just as men were not solely confined to the "public" sphere. However, they were restricted to what contemporaries called the "woman's sphere". The woman's sphere was based on the belief that the two sexes were fundamentally different physically, emotionally, mentally and morally, and that "each sex had its own modes of expression and its own separate sources of authority".² A classic expression of this belief was made by Elizabeth Ward to justify women's suffrage:

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1. A. Summers, Damned Whores and God's Police, Harmondsworth, 1975.
 2. R. Bloch, "Untangling the Roots of Modern Sex Roles", Signs, 4:2, Winter 1978, p.238. See also B. Harrison, Separate Spheres, London, 1978, esp. pp.56, 60-3.

Women have their homes to protect,
and special wrongs to right. They
look at the world and at human life
from a distinct and separate point
of view which men do not and cannot
take. (1)

The woman's sphere was a hegemonic concept during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its evolution has been traced to the decline of economic production in the home and the transformation of domestic work into an activity with no commercial value.² The concept of the woman's sphere did not mean, however, that there was an inflexible and immutable demarcation between male and female roles.³ As Sicherman has stressed, the relationship between ideology and behaviour is necessarily complex - while behaviour is influenced by the "ideal" it is clear that not everyone lives up to cultural "ideals".⁴

The woman's sphere concept was also complex in another way: it was both a means of repressing women and a base for the development of a separate women's culture. The woman's sphere fundamentally denoted "those aspects of activity and function men determined appropriate to women".⁵ As demonstrated in this thesis, women were restricted to upholding the values, and promoting the ideological hegemony of, the bourgeois family. They were also basically restricted in philanthropy to aiding other members of their own sex, children and in performing "domestic" functions of supervision. However, the woman's sphere was not simply a means of oppression; it was also a means through which women were accorded legitimacy and purpose. As American historians in particular have demonstrated, the woman's sphere concept also enabled women, albeit in a limited

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1. E.Ward, Out of Weakness Made Strong, Sydney, 1903, p.117.
See also Appendix A, entry for Ward.
 2. Bloch, op.cit., esp. p.246.
 3. This is the (unreferenced) criticism of F.B.Smith, "Sexuality in Britain 1800-1900" in M.Vicinus (ed.), A Widening Sphere, London, 1977, p.187.
 4. B.Sicherman, "Review essay. American History", Signs, 1:2, 1975, p.470.
 5. G.Lerner, Contribution to Symposium, Politics and Culture in Women's History, Feminist Studies, 6:1, Spring 1980, p.52.

way, to transform their sphere into an autonomous women's culture.¹ As well, the associated belief in women's moral superiority meant that for a significant number, "women had both the right and duty of leaving the confines of the home and working to purify the male world".² It was their awareness of their justification by the woman's sphere concept that gave women philanthropists in New South Wales much of their confidence during 1870-1900 and, as argued, especially in the 1880s. This confidence ensured that women were not, as has been assumed, excluded from positions of power within philanthropy and left only with the routine, thankless labour.³

Women's interaction with each other, as Smith Rosenberg has argued and demonstrated, is a legitimate and fruitful specialisation in research.⁴ As women's experience has been significantly different from that of her male counterpart, any general history needs to incorporate both experiences in order to make valid general conclusions.⁵ This insistence is not, however, to ignore the diversity of women's experience nor the class divisions between women.⁶ The woman's sphere, as

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1. e.g., N.Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, New Haven, 1977 and J.Faragher and C.Stansell, "Women and their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867", Feminist Studies, 2:2-3, 1975.
 2. C.Smith Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast and the Militant Woman", American Quarterly, XXIII:4, October 1971, p.583.
 3. cf., McCrone, op.cit., p.124 and Schupf, op.cit., p.302.
 4. e.g., C.Smith Rosenberg, Contribution to Symposium, op.cit., esp. p.55; "The New Woman and the New History", Feminist Studies, 3, Fall 1975 and "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America", Signs, 1:1, Autumn 1975.
 5. e.g., cf. R.Connell and T.Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Melbourne, 1980 with B.Cass, "Women's Place in the Class Structure" in E.Wheelwright and K.Buckley (eds.), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Brookvale, 1978.
 6. See, e.g., A.Summers, "An Object Lesson in Women's History", in J.Mercer (ed.), The Other Half. Women in Australian Society, Harmondsworth, 1975, p.55, warning of "monofeminism" and K.Daniels, "Women's History", in G.Osborne and W.Mandle, (eds.), New History. Studying Australia Today, Sydney, 1982.

stressed throughout this thesis, was intrinsic to the society in which it existed and therefore the same class and status divisions of the wider society were also evident in the woman's sphere. It is for this reason that the role of the lady was so significant in the nineteenth century. The word "lady" was not an imprecise title of either honour or denigration as it is today. "Ladies" had a significant function in maintaining and organising a family's status and social life¹ and being a "lady" was seen by women to be an occupation in itself.² The term "lady" also accurately indicated a woman's combined class and status within the woman's sphere. The hierarchy was indicated in the language as lady:woman:female. These categories corresponded roughly to elite and upper middle class women; lower middle class and "respectable" working class women and lastly, the disreputable poor. Contemporaries used such terms with precision and advisedly. It is a major contention of this thesis that language reflects material reality and thus can be an important tool in enabling historians to "honour the perceptions of the historical actors in question".³ As contemporaries understood, "ladies" were in a position to dominate the woman's sphere. As is demonstrated by their philanthropy, when the power and autonomy of ladies declined, so too did much of the prestige and autonomy of the woman's sphere.

The operation of the woman's sphere, as argued in the Conclusion, can be demonstrated in all the major activities undertaken by middle class women in the Victorian age. Generally, historians have assumed its nature and impact in an analysis of its "widening" during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ However, this thesis seeks to establish that

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1. The best accounts for such function of ladies are Davidoff, op.cit., and A.Firor Scott, The Southern Lady. From Pedestal to Politics, Chicago, 1970.
 2. Account of the 1871 Victorian census, The Age Centenary Supplement, 6 September 1934.
 3. E.DuBois, "The Radicalism of the Woman Suffrage Movement", Feminist Studies, 3:1-2, Fall 1975, p.65.
 4. e.g., Vicinus, op.cit.

it was a central concept in the lives of women and one which needs to be explicitly explored and its impact understood. Along the lines advocated by Hammerton, women's philanthropy provides a "concentrated and manageable" study which makes "maximum use of the full range of available sources" in order to test the validity and nature of the woman's sphere concept.¹

This thesis is divided in two major ways. Within each part there is one chapter on women's philanthropy concerned with assisting the young and another concerned with assisting adults. These two strands, it is argued, represent two related but distinct areas of concern for women philanthropists. In addition, two chapters explore the impact of the woman's sphere concept in philanthropy at an institutional (Chapter 3) and individual (Chapter 6) level. The second major division is chronological. There are three major benchmarks in women's philanthropy during this period: the Royal Commissions into Public Charities of 1873-4 and 1898-9 and the dramatic increase in the number of women's philanthropic organisations which dates from 1879. These benchmarks have lent themselves to a division based on the three decades covered in this thesis. The 1870s was a decade in which was witnessed the increasing importance of women's philanthropy justified by the concept that certain philanthropic activities were rightly within the woman's sphere. The rise of organised women's philanthropy was heralded by the changes in 1879; changes related to the strong advocacy of the woman's sphere concept by the Royal Commission of 1873-4. The 1880s, it is argued in Part II, was a decade of confidence and expansion for women's philanthropy although constrained by the boundaries of the woman's sphere. An important aspect of the increase in women's philanthropy in the 1880s was the work of nuns and the number of women working under evangelical auspices. Together, evangelical bodies and the Catholic Church dominated

1. A.J.Hammerton, "New Trends in the History of Working Women in Britain", Labour History, 31, November 1976, p.60.

women's philanthropy. Both were influenced by the woman's sphere concept and, despite sectarian differences, in practice their philanthropy was very similar. Part III of this thesis deals with the challenge of the 1890s; the ending of the "long boom" with the concomitant diminishing faith in philanthropy, along with the advent of the "new woman". During this decade, new solutions to social problems were adopted which transformed philanthropy and laid the foundations for the "welfare state".¹ In addition, the power and prestige of the lady within the philanthropic woman's sphere was severely eroded. The concept of the woman's sphere remained but with women increasingly working under the control of the state or male professionals. The decline of the lady also meant a decline in effective, autonomous women's philanthropy.

This thesis covers the period before social work was established as a profession for women.² However, as is evident throughout the thesis, the professional fore-runners of the social workers and hospital almoners were active. These were the employed Matrons, sub-Matrons and missionaries. The means by which they too were controlled and restricted by the woman's sphere - as "women" rather than ladies - is a secondary but important theme of this thesis.

The popular bogey against the writing of women's history, lack of sources, was not a problem in the writing of this thesis. The more usual problem, the uneven way in which records have survived, was encountered. Problems with particular sources have been noted in the text and their diverse and scattered nature will be evident. A number of organisations have left particularly rich accounts of their work, namely the

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1. For an excellent overall coverage of the position of women throughout changing welfare policies, see E.Wilson, Women & the Welfare State, London, 1977. The forthcoming C.Baldock and B.Cass (eds.), Women, Social Welfare and the State in Australia, George Allen and Unwin, should provide an Australian perspective on this issue.
 2. See, e.g., R.Lawrence, Professional Social Work in Australia, A.N.U., 1965 and L.O'Brien and C.Turner, Establishing Medical Social Work in Victoria, University of Melbourne, 1979 (there is no comparable study for N.S.W.).

Infants' Home, the Sydney Female Refuge, the Y.W.C.A. and the Church Rescue Home.¹ These organisations naturally receive a greater depth of coverage than an organisation which has left few records. However, care has been taken not to inflate their importance according to the amount of material they left behind. Another problem was the, frequently strong, bias in the sources. The Royal Commissions and other parliamentary reports of inquiry, like the infamous Royal Commission into the Decline of the Birthrate², were particularly prone to use the evidence presented to them in order to "prove" pre-determined theories. Accordingly, the evidence and reports of such commissions were evaluated in light of such preconceptions. Other organisations, such as the Salvation Army and the many instrumentalities of George Ardill, appear to have left little other than newspaper reports or generalised annual reports specifically aimed at gaining public support. This "publicity factor" has been taken into account. A number of particularly revealing sources have been discovered in a variety of locations. Most notably these were the extensive papers of Helen Fell, the Matron's Journals and Ladies' Committee Minutes of the Sydney Female Refuge, Infants' Home and Church Rescue Home, and the comprehensive survey of social agencies in 1911 by Carlile Fox. There were also a number of disappointments: no personal papers of the Goodlets or of George Ardill were located³ and, most disappointing of all, none of the journals

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1. The W.C.T.U. has also left an abundance of source material but a frustratingly typical problem arose with their utilisation. The Minutes of the Sydney branch for 1890-2 were missing from their box (uncat. MLSS 3641, Box K134787) when I attempted to consult them (last in 1982). As the W.C.T.U. records are held at the Kingswood depot where there are no trained archivists, little hope was held for them being found (if misplaced) except by accident by another reader.
 2. N.Hicks, 'This Sin and Scandal' Australia's Population Debate 1891-1911, Canberra, 1978, analysed this Royal Commission.
 3. Dickey, op.cit., p.294n believed that Ardill's papers had probably survived, but I have been unable to trace them. Many papers were destroyed when the S.R.W.S. moved to its present Burwood office, perhaps Ardill's papers amongst them. Ardill's Our Children's Home, now at Concord and run independently from the S.R.W.S., holds no records of the nineteenth century, pers. comm. Rev. Mr I.Thornton and Matron, Our Children's Home, January 1982.

kept by any of the missionaries employed by such organisations as the Sydney Female Refuge, Church Home, Y.W.C.A. and Sydney City Mission have been discovered. These journals were kept by the missionaries about their work in the "slums" and were read at the committee meetings; if any survive they should provide an intimate, detailed and fascinating record of philanthropy and working class life.

A further problem with the sources - and a reason for the inclusion of the biographical Appendix A - was the absence of any reliable biographical information about any but the most prominent women studied in the thesis. As noted in Appendix A, neither the A.D.B., Cobb¹ nor any other biographical source was able to provide more than sparse and sometimes unreliable biographical information. It is hoped that Appendix A helps remedy this situation for other researchers.

A further frustration with the sources is commented upon throughout this thesis and concerns the vagueness, inaccuracy and ambiguity of the available statistics - especially the financial statistics. This feature of philanthropic statistics arises partly because of idiosyncratic book-keeping practices and partly because of a need for favourable publicity.² In addition, it is probable that given the large numbers of subscriptions and donations counted that a margin of error applies.³ The evidence provided by such statistics was seen as too important to be ignored. They provided clear indications of the impact of the woman's sphere concept on philanthropy but should be viewed as indicative of trends, not as tabulations of highly reliable raw figures. The trends which do emerge in this thesis indicate the changing but always influential boundaries of the woman's sphere in philanthropy.

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1. J.Cobb, *The Women's Movement in New South Wales, 1880-1914*, M.A. (Hons.), University of New England, 1966, Appendix E.
 2. S.Eade, *The Reclaimers: A Study of the Reformatory Movement in England and Wales, 1846-1893*, Ph.D., A.N.U., 1975, Appendix A points out the problem of statistics designed to elicit a favourable public reaction without there necessarily being "bad faith".
 3. Prochaska, op.cit., p.235n also concedes this problem.