1   Colonization and humanitarianism: Histories, geographies and biographies

This book is an attempt to work through a paradox. Just at the time when elite Britons decided to abolish slavery abroad and reform governance at home; just when the first global campaign on behalf of distant and 'less fortunate' indigenous peoples was emerging; and just when colonial officials were first instructed to govern humanely, hundreds of thousands of Britons were encouraged to invade and occupy indigenous peoples' land on an unprecedentedly extensive scale. A British governmental responsibility to protect seems to have emerged at the same time and in the same spaces as that government assumed the right to colonize.

How were governmental dispositions, that we would now call 'humanitarian', reconciled with the violent settler colonization of Australia, New Zealand, southern Africa and North America? We focus on particular governmental figures and spaces, and on the period between 1815 and 1860, but we hope also to develop a more general argument: that this episode of 'humanely' governed British imperial expansion and indigenous devastation established an intriguingly ambivalent foundation for subsequent humanitarian registers of government. Michel Foucault noted that 'the history of various forms of rationality is sometimes more effective in unsettling our certitudes and dogmatism than is abstract criticism', and it is in this spirit that we wish to revisit the colonial genealogies of modern humanitarian governance.[1] We argue that violent colonial conquest was foundational and intrinsic to the shared history of British humanitarianism and governmentality.

Many analysts of contemporary Western humanitarian interventions see the penetration of humanitarian ideals and rhetoric into governance as a recent phenomenon; in the USA stemming from Bill Clinton's

---

[1] M. Foucault, *Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of Political Reason*, The Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at Stanford University, October 10 and 16, 1979, available online at http://foucault.info/documents/foucault.omnesEtSingulatim.en.html.

1

administration and in Britain's case dating from Tony Blair's doctrine
of the international community, and *The Responsibility to Protect*.[2] This is
to assume that prior to these recent imbrications, humanitarians consti-
tuted a lobby extrinsic to government, capable of influencing policy
in some cases and failing to do so in others. What is often overlooked
is that humanitarian dispositions and rationalities extended to those
exercising governance as well as those seeking to influence them. It is
widely recognized that the early nineteenth-century British colonization
of southern lands was accompanied by humanitarian lobbying, notably
from missionaries 'on the spot', and from the British metropolitan-
based Aborigines' Protection Society.[3] But a certain register of humani-
tarian thought and action, we argue, also constituted the *governance*
of these new settler colonial spaces. Governance was framed in a
moral vernacular that was central to humanitarianism more broadly.[4]
It is this intersection between humanitarianism and colonial governance,
in the new British colonies of the southern hemisphere, upon which
this book focuses.

   In stating that colonial governance could be humanitarian, we do not
wish to lend credence to conservative reinterpretations of Britain's

[2] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The
Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: IDRC, 2001). For overviews, see M. Barnett, *Empire
of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (London: Cornell University Press, 2011)
and B. Simms and D.J.B. Trim, 'Towards a History of Humanitarian Intervention', in
B. Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds.), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge
University Press, 2011). For critical analyses of recent 'humanitarian' interventions see
N.J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*
(Oxford University Press, 2000) and D. Kennedy, *The Dark Side of Virtue: Reassessing
International Humanitarianism* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

[3] The literature on missionary humanitarianism is now extensive. See, for example, B.
Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth
and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Apollos, 1990); A. Porter, *Religion versus Empire?
British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester University
Press, 2004); N. Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2005);
E. Cleall, *Missionary Discourses of Difference: Negotiating Otherness in the British Empire,
1840–1900* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). On the Aborigines' Protection
Society, see R. Rainger, 'Philanthropy and Science in the 1830's: The British and
Foreign Aborigines' Protection Society', *Man*, 15, 4 (1980), 702–17; Z. Laidlaw,
'Heathens, Slaves and Aborigines: Thomas Hodgkin's Critique of Missions and Anti-
slavery', *History Workshop Journal*, 64, 1 (2007), 113–61; J. Heartfield, *The Aborigines'
Protection Society: Humanitarian Imperialism in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, South
Africa, and the Congo, 1836–1909* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). On the
relations between missionary enterprise and the networks of humanitarian politicking, see
also A. Johnston, *The Paper War: Morality, Print Culture, and Power in Colonial New South
Wales* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2011).

[4] We borrow the phrase 'moral vernacular' from S. Reid-Henry, 'On the Politics of our
Humanitarian Present', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 31 2013, 753–60.

empire as a humane and progressive force in the world.[5] Humanitarian justifications are well known to have supported various forms of dispossession and exploitation. As Ann Laura Stoler remarks, 'appeals to moral uplift, compassionate charity, appreciation of cultural diversity, and protection of "brown women and children" against "brown men", . . . were woven into the very weft of empire – [they were] how control over and seizure of markets, land and labor were justified, worked through and worked out'.[6] Appeals for the protection of indigenous peoples against white and even British men, often but not always articulated through class distinctions among colonizers, were also intrinsic to the legitimation of Britain's governance of newly colonized spaces. We contend that British colonization was humanitarian in some sense, not in order to commend colonization, but rather in what we hope is a constructive critique of humanitarianism and its relationship with colonialism.

Humanitarianism has always been a spatially extensive and ambivalent discourse and practice, exerted through different agencies and expressed in different registers. These agencies include informal networks of individuals such as missionaries sharing evangelical concern, organized lobbying groups, private practitioners and states. Their registers of humane action range from the mobilization of polemics in petitions and the press, through the dispensing of charity, to the drawing up of policies attending to the precariousness of given populations. Humanitarianism places relatively privileged people on one side of the globe in relation to those they perceive as being in need of assistance on the other side and in certain spaces in between.

Our enquiry into the relationship between humanitarianism and the governance of colonization is necessarily spatially extensive too. We identify certain episodes in the elaboration of humanitarian governance across different sites of empire, beginning with the amelioration of slavery in the Caribbean in the 1820s. Amelioration marked the incorporation of humanitarian principles into the apparatus of governance – the elaboration of a new humanitarian art of government. Protectors of Slaves were appointed to effect a new project: improving the status, morals

[5] At the more subtle end of the conservative spectrum see N. Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2004) and at the more clumsy end, K. Windschuttle, *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History: Volume One, Van Diemen's Land 1803–1847* (Sydney: Macleay Press, 2004).

[6] A.L. Stoler, 'On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty', *Public Culture*, 18, 1 (2006), 134. For elaboration of the argument that sympathy requires a power imbalance between the object and agent of sympathy, and that such an imbalance underpinned colonial governance, see A. Rai, *Rule of Sympathy: Sentiment, Race, and Power, 1750–1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

and welfare of the enslaved in the Caribbean and the Cape Colony. It was thus amelioration, rather than just the triumph of the antislavery lobby in abolishing the transatlantic slave trade, that entailed the British state assuming humanitarian responsibility for its colonized subjects. For four decades thereafter, men occupying positions at varying levels within colonial governance conducted experiments not just in the more humane treatment of enslaved and otherwise exploited populations, but also in the 'benevolent' colonization of previously independent peoples.

Amelioration policies were translated into policies for the protection of indigenous peoples in southern Africa, the Australian colonies and New Zealand in the 1830s and 1840s through the mobility of 'humane' officials and ideas, and as a result of the compromises with prior inhabitants necessary to effect the invasion and resettlement of their lands. The outcomes were very different in different places, as we seek to demonstrate here with case studies from Australia, New Zealand and the Cape Colony. Packages of humane governmental measures could be coordinated in London, but such measures were 'mutable mobiles' – capable of importation to various sites only when their nature and form changed as they literally *took place*. The men charged with effecting these policies nevertheless sought consistently to render British emigrant settlers' invasion compatible with both the protection and the salvation of indigenous peoples.

In tracing these humanitarian-governmental trajectories we wish to flesh out an episode that has been relatively neglected, both in histories of British colonialism and in those of modern Western humanitarianism. A recent resurgence of interest in nineteenth-century British colonialism, from a variety of disciplines, has seen significant attention paid to humanitarians and their conflicts, compromises and collusion with projects of settler encroachment on indigenous peoples' lands. However, the focus has mainly been on missionaries seeking to uphold the projects of Christian conversion and the civilization of indigenous peoples *in situ* against more disregarding and destructive planter or settler colonial projects, or on humanitarian lobbyists, external to government, who pursued similar objectives through personal, political and press networks.[7] It is

[7] See, for example, C. Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001); E. Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Z. Laidlaw, '"Aunt Anna's Report": the Buxton women and the Aborigines Select Committee, 1835–37', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 32, 2 (May 2004), 1–28; Johnston, *The Paper War.*

undeniable that many governors and lower-level functionaries also con-
sidered themselves inclined towards humanitarian objectives, or to the
exercise of 'humanity' as they would have put it, and yet there have been
relatively few works examining the ways in which their ideals functioned as
an intrinsic aspect of their governmentality.[8]

Histories written more to trace the genealogies of modern Western
humanitarianism than to understand colonialism also tend to overlook
the incorporation of a distinctly humanitarian register within early
nineteenth-century colonial governmentality. They tend to identify the
roots of humanitarianism in two separate locales and periods. The first
was the transatlantic antislavery movement of the late eighteenth century,
culminating in abolition of the slave trade in 1807. This brought about a
concern on the part of the British beneficiaries of slavery for those distant
strangers whose exploitation was intrinsic to their privilege. Although its
priority was to ensure the ending of the suffering associated with the
middle passage and the corresponding atonement of the British nation
for past sins, it has also been argued that in the broader antislavery
movement lay the origins of a 'developmental' strand of humanitarian
intervention – one designed to lift the victims of global inequalities out of
their disadvantaged social and economic condition and render them
more akin to their benefactors.[9] The second locus for the birth of modern
humanitarianism was, by most accounts, the Battle of Solferino, fought
between the Franco-Sardinian Alliance and the Austrian army in
current-day Italy in 1859. It was as a result of his witnessing the after-
math of this battle that Henri Dunant initiated the processes that led to
the Geneva Conventions and the International Red Cross.[10] Herein lay
the seeds of the emergency relief wing of the modern humanitarian
movement.[11]

This genealogy, one is tempted to say of a transatlantic antislavery
'mother' and a European battlefield 'father' for modern Western
humanitarianism, needs reassessing in the light of trans-imperial govern-
mental experiments in violently colonized settler colonial spaces. The
colonization of most of the Australian colonies, much of south-eastern

[8] For excellent recent exceptions see Z. Laidlaw, 'Investigating Empire: Humanitarians,
Reform and the Commission of Eastern Inquiry', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth
History*, 40, 5 (2012), 749–68, and T. Ballantyne, 'Humanitarian Narratives: Knowledge
and the Politics of Mission and Empire', *Social Sciences and Missions*, 24 (2011), 233–64.
[9] In Chapter 6, we trace this developmental strand more firmly to the governance of both
settler societies and India in the mid nineteenth century.
[10] See J.R. Slaughter, 'Humanitarian Reading', in Wilson and Brown (eds.),
Humanitarianism and Suffering, pp. 88–107.
[11] For an account of this dominant narrative and a pioneering attempt to reassess it, see
Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*.

Africa and New Zealand occurred largely in the period between the
antislavery movement and the Battle of Solferino.[12] As post-abolition
amelioration transmuted and relocated from a Caribbean context to
projects of protection and salvation in antipodean and southern African
contexts, and as the antislavery lobby continued to campaign for the
emancipation of slaves in the 1820s and early to mid 1830s, a critical
episode in the history of governmental humanitarianism was developed.
This episode grounded 'humanitarian reason' in the invasion and the
regulation of colonization.[13] We develop this argument by seeing the
individuals who sought to effect humanitarianism within colonial gov-
ernance as biographical subjects worthy of attention in their own right,
and by understanding the contexts in which they lived, and to which
they contributed, as dynamic assemblages within which they had some,
albeit limited, capacity to effect change. Each of these underpinning
concepts requires some further elaboration before we turn to our case
studies.

Humanitarianism

The Oxford Dictionary definition of a humanitarian is 'one who advo-
cates or practices humane [itself defined as benevolent, compassionate]
action, philanthropist; one who seeks to promote human welfare'.[14]
As Didier Fassin points out, the 'moral landscape' of humanitarianism –
consisting today of aid organizations, relief operations and governmental
interventions – 'is generally taken for granted as a mere expansion of a
supposed natural humaneness that would be innately associated with our
being human'.[15] Accordingly, humanitarianism has often been treated as
though it were a natural disposition 'without history'.[16] However, partly
as a result of critiques of contemporary 'humanitarian' geostrategic inter-
ventions and partly because of historians' turn towards critical cultural

---

[12] As did that of large parts of Canada, although this features less prominently in this book,
in part, because different maritime circuits tended to generate different (but as we will
see in the case of George Arthur, intersecting) networks of 'humane' governors. Mainly
though, Canada does not feature here very much simply because of the limits of regional
expertise and space. We would be greatly encouraged if scholars with that expertise were
to find something in our argument that could be taken further.

[13] That phrase borrowed from D. Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the
Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[14] B. Sykes (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 6th edn (Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 523–4.

[15] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, p. ix.

[16] B. Simms and D.J.B. Trim, 'Towards a History of Humanitarian Intervention', in
B. Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds.), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge
University Press, 2011), p. 2.

history, the specificities of Western humanitarianism – its 'passion of
compassion', as Hannah Arendt put it – have been interrogated more
closely of late.[17] Humanitarianism's temporal specificities are one of
three elements that we wish to draw out here; its specific and dynamic
geographies, and its different registers, including interpenetration with
projects of governmentality, are the others.

Temporality

Nietzsche's nineteenth-century complaint that the 'overestimation of and
predilection for pity ... is something new: hitherto philosophers have
been at one as to the *worthlessness* of pity', has been taken more seriously
by recent scholars, as a comment on humanitarianism's historical nov-
elty.[18] Over the past two decades, prominent and controversial Western
foreign policies, supposedly motivated by humanitarian ideals, have
sparked unprecedented interest in humanitarian intervention, past and
present. The shock of the Rwandan genocide, blamed in part on non-
intervention, has been succeeded first by a growing confidence in the
alliance between humanitarian principles and Western military interven-
tion in the Balkans and Sierra Leone, and then by increasing concern
about what that alliance is doing for humanitarianism's legitimacy as a
result of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.[19]

But it is not just critical analyses of contemporary events that have
prompted a search for the genealogy of humanitarian interventions. With
the beginnings of a 'cultural turn' in history writing during the 1980s, the
relatively recent origins of humanitarian sensibilities and discourses have

[17] H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), p. 90. Non-Western
forms of humane concern for distant strangers have received less attention, although, as
Bornstein and Redfield emphasize, they are no less worthy of historical analysis:
E. Bornstein and P. Redhill, 'An Introduction to the Anthropology of
Humanitarianism', in E. Bornstein and P. Redhill (eds.), *Forces of Compassion:
Humanitarianism Between Ethics and Politics* (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2011), pp. 3–21.
Jonathan Benthall points out that Islam has generated similar claims to humanitarian
universalism to those of Christianity, and has been similarly proselytizing and
expansionist: J. Benthall, 'Islamic Humanitarianism in Adversarial Context', in
Bornstein and Redhill, *Forces of Compassion*, pp. 99–122.

[18] F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale
(New York: Vintage, 1989), p. 19, quoted in S. Moyn, 'Empathy in History:
Empathizing With Humanity', *History and Theory*, 45 (2006), 399.

[19] C. Douzinas, *Human Rights and Empire: The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism*
(Abingdon: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007); Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*; J. Bricmont,
Humanitarian Imperialism (London: Monthly Review Press, 2006) and S. Moyn, *The
Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard
University Press, 2010).

8   Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance

been noted more explicitly.[20] Thomas Laqueur, for instance, drew atten-
tion to the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century invention of
those narrative forms that encapsulate and convey humanitarian sensibil-
ities. New narrative structures like the novel, the medical report, even the
autopsy, all spoke during this period 'in extraordinarily detailed fashion
about the pains and deaths of ordinary people in such a way as to make
apparent the causal chains that might connect the actions of ... readers
with the sufferings of ... subjects'.[21] As Laqueur elaborates, during
the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, 'stories and senti-
ments spread their influence to encompass distant as well as nearby
people and to compel action and not just tears. Narratives that expanded
the "circle of the we" – of those to whom one owes humane behaviour,
"humanity" – worked in ways much like beauty works in art: they came to
have the power to command "slow looking", "attentive looking", an
insistent regard not of a work of art but of a person and a condition in
its particularity'.[22]

There are various ways of interpreting the rise of such concern for, and
also action on behalf of, distant strangers in the late eighteenth century,
including functionalist accounts of its role in easing the class tensions of
the industrial revolution, cultural explanations founded on a Christian
sense of obligation and the need for redemption for new forms of eco-
nomic exploitation, and evolutionary biological ones based on the advan-
tages of reciprocity in a more interconnected and complex world.
Transcending these is Michael Barnett's claim 'that a conjunction of
material and ideational forces have formed a particular meaning of
humanity' in the last three centuries.[23] For Barnett, it is faith, both secular
and religious, that underpins the association between humanitarianism

---

[20] Terminology relating to the histories of humanitarianism has become a contentious issue
of late, with scholars such as Claire McLisky pointing out that use of the term
'humanitarian' is anachronistic in the early nineteenth century and preferring to use
the term 'philanthropist'. Here, we use 'humanitarianism' to refer to the assemblage
comprised of 'donors', 'recipients' and the people representing humanitarian discourse
who actively engage with those recipients, whom we refer to as 'practitioners'. We will
also use the term 'humanitarians' to refer to both 'donors' and 'practitioners': C.
McLisky, '"Due Observance of Justice, and the Protection of their Rights":
Philanthropy, Humanitarianism and Moral Purpose in the Aborigines' Protection
Society circa 1837 and its portrayal in Australian Historiography, 1883–2003', *Limina:
A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies*, 11 (2005), 57–66.
[21] Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Bodies, details, and humanitarian narrative', in L. Hunt (ed.),
The New Cultural History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 177.
[22] Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Mourning, pity, and the work of narrative', in R.A. Wilson and
R.D. Brown (eds.), *Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy*
(Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 31–57.
[23] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p. 26.

and modernity. He cites the former Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) director Rony Braumon's assertion that 'I am not sure if progress exists, but it is good to act as if I believe it exists'.[24] While Nicolas Guilhot believes that it is the *return* of faith that characterizes contemporary humanitarianism, a faith that 'comes to the surface when the structures of the modern, secular nation-state fail to alleviate the tragic condition of modernity', and Samuel Moyn dates a new humanitarian faith to the failure of secular utopianism from the 1970s, the association between humanitarian governance and evangelical Christianity was an obvious one in the early nineteenth century.[25] Fassin 'privileges an essentially Christian interpretation of humanitarianism. Associated with suffering as redemption, with a language of salvation, with notions of absolute good and evil, with the assertion of the sacred character of life, and with an idea of universal equality, [Western] humanitarianism is inscribed within a specifically Christian history'.[26] According to Fassin, the fascination with suffering that characterizes the current culture and its particular manifestation in the politics of compassion can be traced to the Passion of Christ.[27]

It was no coincidence that the late eighteenth-century evangelical revival in Britain coincided with the assumption of an imperial role in the world.[28] The greater inclusivity of the category of 'humanity' that had begun to emerge by the 1800s was fundamental to the extension of religious obligation and assistance beyond the boundaries of the familiar and proximate, to embrace contact with unfamiliar cultures.[29] The thrust of much of the recent literature, however, from both international relations- and historically-minded scholars, is that there is nothing universal about the actual relationships that humanitarianism has fostered. Western humanitarianism is a manifestation not only of relatively recent

[24] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, p. 238.
[25] N. Guilhot, 'The Anthropologist as Witness: Humanitarianism between Ethnography and Critique', *Humanity*, 3, 1 (2012), 81–100; S. Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). See also Reid-Henry, 'On the Politics of our Humanitarian Present'.
[26] Guilhot, 'The Anthropologist as Witness', p. 97.   [27] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*.
[28] B. Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1795–1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); S. Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire: Science and Evangelical Mission in the Pacific, 1795–1850* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[29] See K. Halttunen, 'Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture', *The American Historical Review*, 100, 2 (1995), 303–34; E. Bornstein, 'The Impulse of Philanthropy', *Cultural Anthropology*, 24, 4 (2009), 622–51; Wilson and Brown (eds.), *Humanitarianism and Suffering*; Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; M. Abruzzo, *Polemical Pain: Slavery, Cruelty, and the Rise of Humanitarianism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

and religiously circumscribed, but also of quite geographically specific
material interconnections, and of the ideas that emerged in association
with them in the modern West.

In this book we attempt to trace the different forms that humanitarian
governmentality took as it dealt with diverse social assemblages in vary-
ing colonial times and places. Broadly, the victory of the abolitionist
campaign in the early 1800s gave rise to amelioration policies to deal
with the governance of subjects considered equally human and yet still
enslaved in the Caribbean during the 1820s; amelioration morphed into
policies of Protection once independent indigenous peoples' land was
invaded by emigrant Britons on an unprecedented scale in the southern
hemisphere during the 1830s and early 1840s; and finally, as our con-
cluding chapter suggests, Protection split into projects of ethnographic
salvage for 'dying races' and humane governance of colonized subjects
through utilitarian notions of forceful Development from the 1840s.

Spatiality

As this brief résumé of humanitarian governance suggests, the spatiality
of humanitarianism is as deserving of critical enquiry as its temporality.
As Simon Reid-Henry points out, 'humanitarian reason and action are
obviously shot through with an uneven imaginative geography: globally
we speak of suffering populations, locally, in rich countries, we speak of
individuals in need'.[30] Humanitarian projects, regardless of the register
in which they are articulated, are assembled between three kinds of
agents: 'donors', 'practitioners' and 'recipients'. Donors are those who
supply the resources and political backing to enable practitioners to
intervene in distant space; practitioners are these active intermediaries,
the people who try to effect donors' intentions in those spaces; and
'recipients', or more recently, 'partners', are the intended beneficiaries
of humanitarian interventions. Through networks between these individ-
ual and institutional components, humanitarianism 'mobilizes sympathy
and technology, physicians and logisticians'.[31] Humanitarianism is thus
an assemblage of disparate agents reproducing flexible and dynamic
registers of ideas and practice with the ultimate welfare of others in mind,
but always through a particular global geography.[32]

[30] Reid-Henry, 'On the Politics of Our Humanitarian Present', citing Fassin, *Humanitarian
Reason*, p. 253.
[31] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, p. x.
[32] D. Lambert and A. Lester, 'Geographies of Colonial Philanthropy', *Progress in Human
Geography*, 28, 3 (2004), 320–41.