“Ground Honest in the Reform Mill”:
The Theory and Experience of Reformation in the Philanthropic Society and
Refuge for the Destitute, c.1788-1830

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ABSTRACT

“GROUND HONEST IN THE REFORM MILL”:
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This thesis is an investigation of the Philanthropic Society (est. 1788) and Refuge for the Destitute (est. 1804), two subscription charities established to prevent crime and reform members of the “criminal underclass” in London, England. This thesis engages the perspectives of both benefactors and beneficiaries, arguing that beneficiaries (or “objects”) were not passive participants in the charitable exchange, but actively sought to manipulate the institutions’ systems to secure their own desires —desires which did not always align with those of their benefactors.

The introductory chapter explores the social, economic, and political conditions which led benefactors to create the institutions and which informed their aims and methods. The first chapter examines the strategies used by objects to secure charitable aid on their own terms. The post-institutional conduct of beneficiaries is the focus of the final chapter. Despite the intensive reformatory regimen of the Philanthropic and Refuge, a significant proportion of beneficiaries —at least one third— refused to fulfill benefactors’ expectations that they become law-abiding, industrious, and pious citizens. From the day of their application to the institutions to long after their departure, objects’ actions were informed by their own expectations and desires.
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INTRODUCTION

The officials of and subscribers to the Philanthropic Society for the Prevention of Crimes and the Reform of the Criminal Poor gathered in the London Tavern in April of 1793 to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the institution. In speeches and toasts, the men congratulated themselves on the transformation of their youthful charges from “embryo robbers” — who had been on the verge of embarking upon lives of crime — into respectable tradesmen and servants.¹ As the Times reported, a procession of 130 beneficiaries around the room testified to the institution’s success:

The decent appearance and orderly demeanour of the Children, filled the minds of the spectators with the most pleasing sensations; — the natural result of contemplating the happy change which had been wrought in the situation of this numerous little group, lately in the high road of vice now leading through the paths of industry and virtue to character and happiness.²

And yet, a single line which followed the article hinted that not all was cause for such celebration. The very day before the anniversary dinner, a gentleman at Mr. Rowland Hill’s chapel in St. George’s Fields had had his pocket picked, likely by a Philanthropic child attending the same Sunday service.³

The Philanthropic Society for the Prevention of Crimes, the Promotion of Industry, and the Reform of the Infant Criminal Poor of Both Sexes (henceforth, the “Philanthropic”) was established in London in 1788 by a group of wealthy businessmen and gentlemen. As its full name suggests, the Philanthropic was designed to prevent crime and reform child beneficiaries

¹ The Times, October 23, 1789.
² The Times, April 23, 1793.
³ At this time, the Philanthropic children attended services at this chapel. Their misbehaviour while processing to and from church and during the sermon was one of the reasons why the Philanthropic governors erected the society’s own chapel on its grounds in 1806. Muriel Whitten, Nipping Crime in the Bud: How the Philanthropic Quest Was Put into Law (Hook, Hampshire: Waterside, 2010), 119-120; The Times, April 23, 1793.
—or “objects” as they were then called— through moral and occupational instruction. It was the first English institution to cater exclusively to youths from criminal backgrounds. Most Philanthropic objects entered the institution when they were between eight and eleven years of age.⁴

Another private subscription charity, the Refuge for the Destitute (henceforth, the “Refuge”), was founded in 1804. Initially, the Refuge catered to males and females of all ages above eleven who were destitute, criminal, and/or engaged in prostitution.⁵ However, by the early 1820s, it had become almost exclusively a reformatory for juveniles aged between twelve and twenty who had been convicted of crimes.⁶

The Philanthropic and Refuge were, in many respects, very similar. They both used the press widely for promotion and shared many supporters.⁷ Moreover, they established comparable reformatory regimens centred upon three primary techniques: removal from criminal environments, moral education, and occupational instruction.

The glowing accounts circulated in print by the Philanthropic and Refuge, such as the account of the anniversary dinner printed in the Times, depicted objects as orderly, obedient, and

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⁴ In its first year of operation, the Philanthropic only accepted “infants” of six years of younger. This was followed by a brief experimentation with youths in their early teen years, before the admission age solidified at eight to eleven in the early 1790s. Although objects were usually admitted as children, the institution housed youths up to the age of twenty-one. This was because objects were expected to remain under charitable care for seven to ten years following admission. First Report of the Philanthropic Society... (London: T. Becket et al., 1789), 27-28.

⁵ Elderly adults who were incapable of work were, however, not often admitted. Peter King, “Transcriptions: The Making of the Narratives,” in Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Vol. 4, Institutional Responses: The Refuge for the Destitute, ed. Peter King (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), 69.


⁷ The Duke of York was president of both institutions. In the mid 1810s, 56 per cent of Philanthropic officials (vice presidents, treasurers, committee members, and visitors) subscribed to the Refuge, while 41 per cent of Refuge officials subscribed to the Philanthropic. These figures were obtained by comparing the 1816 Philanthropic subscription list to the 1815 Refuge subscription list. The institutions do not seem to have printed subscription lists in the same year. An Account of the Nature and Present State of the Philanthropic Society... (London: Philanthropic Society, 1816), 3, 17-30; A Short Account of the Refuge for the Destitute... (London: W. Phillips, 1815), 3, 29-70.
virtuous. Yet, this characterization often belied the day-to-day realities within the institutions. I will argue that objects were far from passive receptacles for benefactors’ teachings. Rather, they consciously manipulated the charities to achieve their own ends. Objects resorted to an arsenal of strategies to do so, including negotiation, deception, non-cooperation, and even rioting. A significant proportion of objects—not less than one third—failed to embrace the virtues propounded by its benefactors.

Historians of the Philanthropic and Refuge have concentrated primarily on the charities’ official promotional material. While these sources are undoubtedly useful for exploring the social and “mental world[s]” of benefactors, they tell us little about the corresponding worlds of beneficiaries. This thesis employs official printed matter alongside less idealized sources to demonstrate that the beneficiaries of the Philanthropic and Refuge were not purely objects acted upon by benefactors, but actors themselves in the charitable exchange.

The first chapter examines the ways in which objects and, in some instances, their parents, sought to manipulate the charities from the day of youths’ application for relief to the day of their departure from the institutions. The following chapter explores the post-institutional conduct of beneficiaries, demonstrating that a third or more of all beneficiaries veered from the straight and narrow “paths of industry and virtue” which their benefactors had mapped out for them. The governors of the institutions overestimated their ability to effect lasting change in the lives of many juvenile delinquents.

8. For further accounts which portray objects in this manner, see The Second Report and Address of the Philanthropic Society... (London: T. Becket et al., 1789), 57; The Times, March 20, 1789; An Address to the Public from the Philanthropic Society... (London: John Crowder, 1790); The Morning Chronicle, May 9, 1814; The Times, May 2, 1820.


10. The Times, April 23, 1793.
Before turning to objects’ experiences, however, this introductory chapter focuses on the perspective of benefactors, exploring the social, economic, and political conditions which led them to create the institutions and which informed their aims and methods. As noted above, there was a considerable degree of similarity between the Philanthropic and Refuge. Nonetheless, the two institutions differed in certain significant respects, not least because nearly twenty years separated their foundations. This chapter will outline the divergences. In this section, I will also introduce the source material upon which the thesis relies and will assess the unique insights and limitations each type of source presents to an understanding of the Philanthropic and Refuge.

**Benefactors**

There are few reflecting minds, or feeling hearts, but must have frequently lamented the fatal depravity which pervades the lower classes of the people, especially in the more populous parts of the kingdom.¹¹

In 1787, a small group of men, headed by philanthropist Robert Young, gathered in London to discuss the “fatal depravity” of destitution, prostitution, and crime which was rife in the metropolis. To these men, penal punishment, the Poor Laws, and certain charitable ventures which existed to deal with these problems were woefully inadequate and even dangerously counterproductive. An institution was needed which would employ not only the compassion of benefactors’ “feeling hearts,” but also the scientific rigour and accountability of their “reflecting minds.” By raising —in both senses of the word— the children of the criminal poor to be tradesmen and servants, the Philanthropic would transform England’s burdens into her assets.

As suggested by the quotation above, the Philanthropists linked depravity with population. The population of England grew dramatically in the latter half of the eighteenth

¹¹. *Address to the Public* (1790), 3.
century from 5.8 million in 1751 to 8.7 million in 1801. Urban centres, and London particularly, expanded as immigrants arrived in search of employment. In 1750, 675 000 people lived in London; by 1800, there were 900 000. Overcrowded and unsanitary housing and vagrancy were widespread. As the country grew, it simultaneously became more youthful. Since the late seventeenth century, age at marriage had been steadily declining, resulting in an increasing number of dependents per family. The sheer numbers of children and their visibility on the streets may have attracted growing concern about their conduct in the late eighteenth century.

A series of economic difficulties added greater pressure to a nation already straining under its rapidly expanding populace. Trade blockades of war in the 1780s and poor harvests in the 1790s contributed to food shortages. Wheat, the main staple in the diet of the poor, increased in price by more than 70 per cent between 1791 and 1795. Enclosure and the attendant loss of common grazing and gathering rights threatened the livelihoods of the rural poor, as did the declining availability of allotments and the virtual destruction of many cottage industries in the face of factory competition.

At the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War in 1783, Britain was not only left with enormous war debts and disrupted trade relations with North America, but some 130 000

demobilized servicemen who glutted the labour market. The surplus of unemployed men contributed to a wave of property crime and “the number of offenders at the Old Bailey [the Central Criminal Court of London] from 1783 to 1786 was almost 40 percent higher than in the previous three years.”

Although this crime wave had abated by the time of the Philanthropic’s establishment in 1788, the perception that crime was as prevalent as ever persisted. The early publications of the Philanthropic described, in a tone verging on panic, the existence of an extensive criminal underclass:

They are a class which belongs to no rank of civil community; they are excommunicates in police, extra social, extra civil, extra legal; they are links which have fallen off the chain of society and, which, going to decay, injure and obstruct the whole machine.

This uncivil community was a complete perversion of a model Christian society. In this sub-class, riot, idleness, and dissipation were “virtues” and children were trained up to crime as “other persons [in respectable life] are brought up to common trades or professions.”

The Gordon Riots of 1780, the widespread dissemination of such subversive literature as Thomas Paine’s Rights of Man (1791), and the emergence of the London Corresponding Society seemed to offer proof that England’s inhabitants were no longer bound to their social superiors by ties of respect and obedience. Developing revolution in France offered a sobering illustration of the consequences of societal breakdown.

The founders of the Philanthropic aimed to dismantle the criminal underclass by removing its youngest members from its midst, and providing moral and occupational instruction to enable these individuals to join respectable society as working men and women. Initially, the Philanthropic sought out “infants” of six years or younger. However, by 1789, the governors changed their target to those between eight and fourteen years because it was at this age that they believed youths took their first steps to crime.\(^{22}\) Age at admittance was later capped at twelve years after the institution experienced little success reforming objects who entered the society in their teen years.\(^{23}\) The founders hoped that their charges would remain under their care for several years, girls until sixteen or seventeen and boys until twenty-one.\(^{24}\)

There were several ways in which children came to the attention of the governors. Subscribers to the Philanthropic had the right to recommend individuals. Children, sometimes accompanied by their parents, also presented themselves before the admittance committee of their own accord. Many youngsters who were destitute or otherwise living in unwholesome environments were admitted in these ways. Thirteen-year-old Thomas Hunt, for example, had “no father, was turned out of doors by his mother; kn[ew] not where she was… and was reduced to begging.”\(^{25}\) In the governors’ eyes, boys in these conditions were at risk of engaging in crime.

The Philanthropists’ concern for destitute girls was more often focused upon the potential for sexual corruption and prostitution than upon property crime. One official publication described Jane Windsor, who entered the Philanthropic at age nine: “Her father is a penny barber, a notorious drunkard, who with his wife and five children, all sleep in one small bed.”\(^{26}\)

\(^{22}\) There were additional benefits to older objects. They did not require nursing out, as was necessary with infants. Moreover, older children were more productive workers; their labour could therefore contribute more to offsetting the running costs of the institution. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, 186; *First Report* (1789), 27.

\(^{23}\) *Reports from Committees; Police of the Metropolis*, Vol. 7 (1817), 442.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 445.

\(^{25}\) *Address to the Public* (1790), 19.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 18.
The fact that the Windsors possessed only one bed speaks to the family’s extreme poverty; yet, it also hints at sexual impropriety. A shared bed held the potential for incest between parents and children and even between children of different ages.

Some objects had experience of crime in addition to destitution. Children frequently arrived at the Philanthropic following the arrest, imprisonment, transportation, or execution of their parents. David Humphries was awaiting transportation for stealing a bag of feathers when his son entered the institution. Many other applicants — primarily boys — had already committed offenses; magistrates and judges frequently sent these children to the Philanthropic after arrest or conviction. Charles Crawley had been twice tried for theft when he was admitted into the Philanthropic at age ten.

The Philanthropic governors often blamed the actions (or inaction) of parents for the immorality of children. Parents failed to act as good moral examples, did not ensure their offspring were properly employed and educated, and provided insufficient supervision and correction. Left to their own idle devices, some children took to the streets where they were corrupted by bad characters and through such pastimes as gambling, drinking, and theatre-going.

Of course, an extensive legal system existed to deal with young criminals like Charles Crawley. Yet, the Philanthropists perceived this system as ineffective. English penal reformers of the 1780s and 1790s held to the theories of Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria. In his treatise *On Crimes and Punishment* (1764), Beccaria argued that punishment must be both *proportionate*

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27. Old Bailey trial of David Humphries, June 4, 1794 (t17940604-11).
28. As Philanthropic steward Thomas Russell stated in 1817, the girls in the Philanthropic were “with few exceptions, all the children of convicts.” As the institution did not have the facilities to segregate criminal from non-criminal girls and thus prevent inmate-to-inmate corruption (as it did for the boys), the Philanthropic tended to limit admissions of criminal girls. *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 443.
29. Old Bailey trial of Charles Crawley, October 26, 1791 (17911026-27); Old Bailey trial of Charles Crawley, May 23, 1792 (17920523-61).
to the crime and *certain* to be imposed in every case in order to be effective.\textsuperscript{30} The existing penal system satisfied neither of these principles. Under England’s infamous “Bloody Code,” not less than 200 separate offenses —primarily property crimes— were punishable by death at the close of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{31} The harshness of the code often made victims of crime unwilling to prosecute, and judges and juries reluctant to impose sentences. By using their discretion and “downsizing” offences, recommending mercy, or issuing pardons, officials ensured that many criminals did not feel the full brunt of the law.\textsuperscript{32}

To the Philanthropists, the criminal code was also flawed because it sought to *deter* and not *prevent* crime. In theory, execution worked through fear. Spectators refrained from breaking the law in order to avoid the terrible fate they witnessed at the gallows. Yet, as Rev. William Vincent preached before the Philanthropic in 1794, punishment failed to excite such feelings in the downtrodden:

> They have themselves nothing to lose [through crime] but their lives, and life is of little value to the outcast; —they have no means of supporting life, but by depredation, and they consider depredation as their craft and calling. The magistrate is not a terror to the good, but to the evil; to these however, evil as they are, terror has lost it’s [sic] force.\textsuperscript{33}

The criminal poor lacked the occupational training to obtain resources legally and so had little choice but to resort to crime. Moreover, they had not been exposed at an early age to the moral and religious teachings which allow one to distinguish between right and wrong. Outcasts from respectable society, criminals had little respect for its laws.

\textsuperscript{31.} An Address to the Public from the Philanthropic Society... (London: B. White and Son et al., 1791), 4;
\textsuperscript{32.} “Downsizing” or “partial verdicts” involved convicting a defendant, but of a lesser offence than that named in the indictment. Often this was achieved by undervaluing stolen goods so as to make the offence a petty crime and not a felony. Hay and Rogers, 163; May, 13.
Indeed, the entire concept of regulating conduct through fear did not sit well with the Philanthropists, many of whom were prominent members of the evangelical “Clapham Sect.” Although belonging to the Church of England, evangelicals were not so concerned with church doctrine (as were many of their Anglican brethren) as with an active and personal engagement with God. Evangelicals believed that a Christian must undergo personal conversion to obtain salvation. It was not sufficient for an individual to conduct himself or herself in an outwardly Christian manner through fear, compulsion, or punishment. True believers were inwardly reformed and acted virtuously out of a desire to follow the righteous path. Religious education was preferable to execution.

From the 1780s, evangelicals had established many charities to educate the masses and thereby combat idleness, dissipation, and crime. Among them were the Sunday schools for poor children established by Robert Raikes and Hannah More in the 1780s and 1790s and More’s Cheap Repository for Moral and Religious Publications (1794-1798), which produced moral tracts for children and adults. The Philanthropic too, heavily emphasized education. In addition to classes in reading and writing, the institution held a weekly “School of Morals” in which such virtues as honesty, piety, obedience, and gratefulness were promoted. Objects also regularly attended church. A system of rewards was instituted. Well-behaved objects received “tickets” signifying their good conduct, toys, food, clothing, or pocket money. Any misbehaviour resulted in removal of tickets, shaming reprimands, loss of privileges, or threats of expulsion. Following Beccaria’s principles of certainty and proportionality, every instance of misconduct

34. The “Clapham Sect” was a group of evangelicals who gathered around John Venn, rector of Clapham, during the 1780s and 1790s. John Julius Angerstein, Henry Thornton, and William Wilberforce were members of both the Clapham Sect and the Philanthropic.
36. Ibid., 37-40; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 443-444; Malcolm McKinnon Dick, “English Conservatives and Schools for the Poor c.1780-1833: A Study of the Sunday School, School of Industry and the Philanthropic’s School for Vagrant and Criminal Children” (PhD diss., University of Leicester, 1979), 281-282.
was recorded in the charity’s books and punishments promptly meted out in measured doses. The governors hoped that rewards would eventually become unnecessary as objects internalized moral teachings and regulated their own conduct in accordance with the scriptures.

Just as the Philanthropists condemned the punishment of the body on the scaffold, so too did they initially condemn its use in the institution. The founders of the Philanthropic ordered that corporal punishment be used only as a last resort. They also envisaged that objects would enjoy a significant degree of freedom. The grounds would not be surrounded by high walls and boys would be treated as regular apprentices, able to leave charity premises on errands. It was to be of their own free will, not out of compulsion, that objects would be reformed.

Sunday schools and the Philanthropic were far from the first institutions to care for poor children. Public relief in the form of parish apprenticeships, workhouses, and out relief had long been available through local authorities. Moreover, the self-proclaimed “Age of Benevolence” which was the eighteenth century had witnessed the emergence of dozens of private subscription charities, many of which assisted impoverished children. There were also handouts to be had from wealthy individuals. The Philanthropists considered these types of charity to be unsound—inhumane, wasteful, and contributors to the very dependency and immorality which they were supposed to dispel.

37. Although used infrequently during the early years of the Philanthropic, corporal punishment was increasingly resorted to after the institution moved to St. George’s Fields in 1792. In 1794, the Porter punished the boys with a cane and cat-of-nine-tails. Dick, 282; Whitten, 74-75.

38. Absconding was a significant problem during the institution’s early years. As a result, objects’ freedoms were severely curtailed during the 1790s. When the Philanthropic moved to St. George’s Fields in 1792, a wall two-thousand feet in circumference and fourteen feet high was erected, bars and locks were installed on bedroom windows and doors, and gates were kept securely fastened. Objects were required to obtain permission from the governors to receive visitors or leave the grounds. “Logs”—shackle-like devices fastened about the feet—were inflicted upon repeat absconders. Robert Young, Mr. Young’s Report on the Attempts Made by the Usurpers of the Philanthropic Society... (London: 1795); Police of the Metropolis (1817), 447; Whitten, 46-47, 71-71, 76.

39. Out-relief was material aid (pensions, food, or clothing) distributed to paupers outside of an institutional setting.
Parish relief came under intense scrutiny in the 1780s and 1790s and several supporters of the Philanthropic actively campaigned for reform of the system. Philanthropic member and MP Samuel Whitbread Jr. introduced a reform bill into Parliament in 1807. Parish relief was a prominent theme in the early tracts of the Philanthropic.

One of the reasons behind the Philanthropists’ dislike of parish relief was the perceived inhumanity of the system. All but the most casual of relief was offered only to those who were “settled” in the parish to which they applied. A person’s settlement generally lay in the parish of his or her birth, but a settlement might also be gained through marriage or by completing a period of apprenticeship or employment in another location. Until 1795, the “non-settled” poor could be removed to their home counties if parish authorities deemed them likely to burden the local rates. As the First Report of the Philanthropic Society (1789) illustrated, the settlement system compelled some parish authorities to treat paupers deplorably:

> Families are hunted from one district to another, as if a reward was offered for their heads. The wolves, which formerly infested this country, were not so abhorrent to the villagers as the poor now are to parish officers… A beadle has been seen to drag a dying man in the streets across the way into the boundaries of another parish, simply to rid his own [parish] of his burial; and there has left him to perish.

The problem of the non-settled poor was particularly troublesome in London, which was home to a large number of migrants. Denied access to government support, some individuals turned to crime for survival. The Philanthropic regularly encountered individuals who lacked settlements and who had been maltreated by parish officials. When widow Margaret MacKabe petitioned

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40. Whitten, 40.
41. Lees, 28-30.
42. After 1795, paupers could still be forcibly removed to their parish of settlement, although they must have first applied for or obtained relief from a parish to which they did not belong; parish authorities’ fears that strangers might claim relief were no longer sufficient grounds for removal. Ibid., 29.
43. First Report (1789), 15-16.
the Philanthropic to admit her child, the governors applied to several parishes on her behalf. However, each parish simply referred her to another jurisdiction.44

Margaret’s destitution was through no fault of her own; she was a hard-worker, but the death of her husband, an unforeseen illness, and stint in hospital had exhausted her savings.45 While the Philanthropic governors accused the Poor Laws of stinginess towards “deserving” objects like Margaret, they simultaneously charged parishes with being overly generous to the “undeserving” — those perfectly capable of labouring for their bread, but who chose to rely upon handouts instead. The cost of parish relief increased drastically over the latter half of the eighteenth century. Annual expenditure “r[ose] from an average of £689,971 for the three years ending in 1750 to £1,912,241 for the period 1783 to 1785.” By 1803, this latter figure had more than doubled to reach £4,077,891.46 These mounting costs suggested to the Philanthropists that parish relief was failing to address the root causes of pauperism. Indeed, they argued, it often did just the opposite. The Poor Laws relieved poverty temporarily, but encouraged poverty and crime over the long term. By guaranteeing subsistence to the able-bodied poor, parish relief removed all incentive for industry or domestic economy. Paupers became idle, the first step down the slippery slope to crime. This criticism applied likewise to individuals and private charities which distributed handouts indiscriminately.

In the opinion of the Philanthropists, many of the private charities were little better. Mid-century institutions like the Foundling Hospital in London for the Maintenance and Education of Exposed and Deserted Young Children (est. 1739) and the Marine Society (est. 1756) had been

44. The Philanthropic did not regularly approach parish authorities on behalf of petitioners. After failing to obtain relief from the parishes, the Philanthropic governors decided against admitting Margaret’s child, but gave the woman a guinea to set up a salop stall. Ibid., 48-49.
45. Ibid.
established to increase population, contributing more labourers to spur the economy of England
and more military men to defend and expand her shores. As Donna Andrew has shown, the aims
and methods of these institutions were questioned in the final three decades of the century.47
These enormous charities had proved very expensive and the Foundling was criticized for its
shockingly high mortality rates and admittance policies, which many considered too
indiscriminate.48 Although the Foundling provided its objects with a degree of occupational
instruction, this was of an insufficient amount to dispel concerns that the institution was “an easy
refuge” which raised children above their stations and fostered idleness.49

Moreover, the notion that a large population was a blessing came under re-assessment in the late eighteenth century. Adam Smith’s The Wealth of Nations (1776) and Thomas Malthus’
Essay on Population (1798) suggested that unproductive “mouths” burdened the nation and
industrious citizens with the cost of their upkeep. For the founders of the Philanthropic, the
primary aim of charity was not to preserve lives, but to ensure lives were productive and self-
sufficient.

The Philanthropists proposed a new approach to philanthropy “founded rather on
principles of police than on charity” to avoid the faults of public and parish relief.50 Propounded
particularly by founding member Robert Young in the Second Report of the Philanthropic
Society (1789), this approach would be “scientific.” Benefactors’ “hearts,” full of sympathy for

47. Andrew, Philanthropy and Police, 155-162.
48. Alysa Levene, “The Estimation of Mortality at the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-99,” Population Studies 59, no. 1 (2005); Alysa Levene, Childcare, Health, and Mortality at the London Foundling Hospital, 1741-
49. Ibid., 158.
50. First Report (1789), 23.
their charges, would be regulated by the rationality of their “heads.” Resources would not be wasted indiscriminately on objects, but rather each aspect of the institution’s operations would be carefully regulated to secure the best results: objects selected for deservingness, rewards and punishments systematically handed out, regular hours for work, prayer, and play, and finances as well-managed as those of a business. The most popular charities of the mid-eighteenth century were capable of housing hundreds of beneficiaries at a time and boasted expansive grounds, chapels, and even an art gallery at the Foundling. The Philanthropic, which began as a set of small houses on Cambridge Heath, Hackney Road, could not have provided a greater contrast. The institution’s small size and practical layout demonstrated the governors’ commitment to financial accountability.

“Utility only [was] consulted in every arrangement” in the Philanthropic; the spatial arrangement of the institution reflected the governors’ focus on self-sufficiency. The children were not pampered in a country house-like setting, but raised in living and working conditions which were modeled upon those of typical labouring people. Each of the Philanthropic’s houses was home to a tradesman or mistress (and spouse) and a “family” of twenty objects. The Philanthropic children worked and lived in the same buildings and the boys even slept under their workbenches at night. While the governors recognized the need to separate objects from immoral parents, they nevertheless believed in the importance of parental example and guidance. The heads of the households were to treat their charges as their own children and apprentices. Conditioned to the same environments and treatment as typical apprentices and servants,

52. First Report (1789), 35.
53. Ibid., 34.
54. Ibid.
55. This was quite a novel idea; family units were routinely split up in parish workhouses and charities like the Foundling housed hundreds of objects in dormitories. Ibid.
Philanthropic objects would, in theory, easily make the transition from charitable care to the adult workforce. Although the separate houses and families were abandoned when the Philanthropic moved to St. George’s Fields in 1792 and all objects were housed under a single roof, the institution remained small and utilitarian and continued to treat its objects as apprentices.\textsuperscript{56}

While most parish workhouses and private charities forced their beneficiaries to perform a degree of labour, the Philanthropic placed occupational training at its very centre. The governors established a system—unique in private charities of the period—in which objects were formally apprenticed to masters and mistresses within the institution. The skills acquired during these apprenticeships would allow objects to provide for themselves once discharged and would thus not have any financial need to steal or engage in prostitution. Moreover, labour itself was edifying, fostering self-respect and industry. Boys were trained in knitting stockings, weaving lace and garters, twine-spinning, rope-making, rushmat-making, cooking, book-binding, bricklaying, shoemaking, and printing.\textsuperscript{57} The girls’ time was employed in needlework, spinning, and cleaning—tasks designed to prepare them for domestic service, marriage, and motherhood. Objects whom the governors deemed to be sufficiently reformed at the end of the recommended period of institutionalization were placed out in employment.

\textsuperscript{56} In 1793, the Philanthropic had approximately 130 objects, 100 boys and 30 girls. In 1815, the Philanthropic had 160 objects, 115 boys and 45 girls. By 1829, numbers were virtually unchanged and the institution cared for 161 individuals of whom 120 were boys. \textit{The Times}, April 23, 1793; \textit{Minutes of Evidence Taken by the Committee Appointed by the House of Commons to Inquire into the State of Mendicity and Vagrancy in the Metropolis and Its Neighbourhood} (London: Sherwood et al., 1815), 15; \textit{Sessional Papers of the House of Lords, 1801-1833}, Vol. 248 (1829), 165.

\textsuperscript{57} Not all of these trades were taught concurrently in the Philanthropic. Consumer demand and profitability determined which trades were embraced by the institution at any one period. For example, several boys were apprenticed as bricklayers while buildings were under construction at St. George’s Fields. This trade was discontinued and replaced with printing once the buildings were completed. Shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry, and printing were the most constant of the trades in the Philanthropic. \textit{Address to the Public} (1791), 10; Whitten, 63.
The destitution and prostitution which existed at the time of the Philanthropic’s foundation in 1788 were still ubiquitous when Rev. Edward Whitaker gathered together a group of philanthropists to found the Refuge in 1804. The cost of parish relief in the early nineteenth century was even greater than it had been in the 1790s and crime, too, continued to trouble wealthy Londoners. The Napoleonic Wars concluded in 1815, demobilizing 350,000 men and causing widespread unemployment and a crime wave which was even greater than that which had followed the American Revolutionary War.

The scope of the Refuge was initially very broad. From 1806, the governors admitted a mixture of destitutes, prostitutes, and criminals of all ages above eleven into its establishment at Hackney Road, Shoreditch. In 1815, the males moved to new premises at Hoxton while the females remained at the original site. The Refuge had fewer beneficiaries that the Philanthropic until the late 1810s, when the Refuge outstripped the Philanthropic in size. The gender composition of the institutions also differed. Whereas there were more than twice the number of boys than girls in the Philanthropic, there were slightly more females than males in the Refuge. The gender imbalance within the institutions was likely due to the variance in earning power between males and females.

59. Following the conclusion of the war, the number of male petitioners to the Refuge increased dramatically, as committee member Thomas Furly Forster claimed in 1816: “in the time of the war, hardly any men [came], now we have every week three, four, five.” Hay and Rogers, 159; Minutes of Evidence Taken before a Select Committee Appointed by the House of Commons, to Inquire into the State of the Police of the Metropolis… (London: Sherwood et al., 1816), 315.
60. King, “Introduction,” xii.
61. In 1816, the Refuge had 100 inmates to the Philanthropic’s 160. By 1829, the Philanthropic still housed approximately 160 objects, but the Refuge had grown to accommodate 300 or so beneficiaries. Police of the Metropolis (1816), 441, 450; Sessional Papers (1829), 316; King, Crime and Law, 148; King, “Introduction,” xii.
62. As Donna Andrew has argued, the labour of the Philanthropic boys earned much more for the institution than did that of the girls. The boys produced goods for sale, while the girls cared primarily for the housekeeping needs of the institution. The commercial laundry run by the females was one of the most profitable ventures in the Refuge. The Philanthropic did not have a laundry, probably because washing was too laborious a task for young girls. The institutions may have admitted more objects of the sex which was most profitable. Andrew, Philanthropy and Police, 185; Police of the Metropolis (1816), 316; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 445.
The Refuge borrowed many of the reformatory methods of its forerunner with certain variations. Refuge objects, like their Philanthropic counterparts, were generally removed from criminal environments. However, Refuge objects were institutionalized for one to three years, while Philanthropic objects were expected to remain for seven to ten years. The Refuge provided moral education and occupational training as did the Philanthropic. Refuge males received instruction in pen-cutting, brush-making, twine-spinning, flax and hemp-beating, coarse netting, basket-making, carpentry, tailoring, and shoemaking.63 Females practiced needlework, knitting, and washing in the institution’s own commercial laundry. Refuge objects were not apprenticed to masters or mistresses within the institution, but the governors envisaged that they would proceed directly from the institution to employment or apprenticeship.64 As in the Philanthropic, discipline in the Refuge was based upon a system of rewards. Corporal punishment—beyond the occasional slap—was not used.65

Unlike the Philanthropic, the Refuge offered an alternative to institutionalization. The governors paid for lodging, tools, clothing, and travel expenses so that some petitioners could secure employment, go to sea, or go to friends who were capable of supporting them.66 The

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63. The Refuge did not offer training in all these trades concurrently, as was also the case in the Philanthropic (see footnote 57).
64. *Sessional Papers* (1829), 183.
65. While the Philanthropic employed corporal punishment with greater frequency in the 1790s (see footnote 37), the Refuge seemed never to have altered its initial policy banning physical correction. However, the Refuge did introduce harsh modes of punishment in the late 1810s, including solitary confinement in specially built dark “holes.” *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 452; *Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons*, Vol. 15 (1819), 157, 166; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 183, 184-185; King, “Introduction,” xvi.
66. This is not to say that Refuge officials approved of material relief in all cases. Like the Philanthropists, the Refuge governors were critical of indiscriminate handouts. The Refuge sought to avoid fostering dependency by investigating the deservingness of candidates before offering material relief. The Refuge offered out-relief only when it would be used to embark upon a self-sufficient course (for example, tools to enable a man to take up employment). This thesis will not focus on the material relief provided by the Refuge, for this was not the primarily focus of the institution’s efforts. Moreover, most objects who received this type of aid from the institution were mature adults who were not qualified for admittance and were not juvenile delinquents. King, “Introduction,” xiv. See, for example, Petition summary of Richard Woodfield Cook to the Refuge, August 2, 1821 (HAD D/S/4/23); Petition summary of Hannah Taylor to the Refuge, May 29, 1824 (HAD D/S/4/6).
provision of such material aid was, however, only a minor component of the Refuge’s work; the vast majority of the Refuge’s efforts and funds was directed at institutionalization.

Beginning in the late 1810s, the Refuge underwent several significant changes. Firstly, the institution focused increasingly upon “juveniles” between the ages of twelve and twenty and “[a]s early as 1816, 88 per cent of the males admitted… were under twenty. By the period 1826-8… the Refuge was essentially a juveniles-only institution and 96 per cent of the males were under twenty.”67 Mature petitioners were turned away with greater frequency. Secondly, the Refuge began to cater exclusively to criminals; destitution or prostitution alone no longer qualified petitioners for entry. Proof of criminal activity was required of all objects.68 In 1817, in collaboration with the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline and the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders (henceforth, the “Prison Discipline Society”), the Refuge opened two Temporary houses (one for each sex). Criminal youths were housed in the Temporary Refuges for a few weeks or months until they found employment or were transferred to the original Permanent establishments.69

The shift in the Refuge’s mandate from destitute adults to criminal youths reflected a growing fixation with juvenile delinquency in the early nineteenth century. The Philanthropists had certainly been troubled by crime among youths in the 1780s. Yet, as Peter King has explained, this concern assumed a new character in later decades:

Most of the policy initiatives and social attitudes that shaped early-nineteenth century discussion [about juvenile crime] can already be seen in the 1780s and early 1790s, albeit in a shallower and more experimental form. The building of

67. As Peter King has noted, eighteenth and nineteenth-century commentators were not in agreement as to what constituted a “child” or a “juvenile.” Following King, I employ “child” to refer to those between the ages of seven and fourteen and “juvenile” and “youth” to refer to those between seven and twenty years of age — definitions which roughly accord with charity governors’ usage of the terms. King, Crime and Law, 77-78, 148.
68. Ibid., 149-150.
69. The Temporary Refuges provided a reduced version of the regimen offered in the Permanent establishments. Objects were given moral education and performed basic, but non-skilled, tasks such as woodcutting and pounding oyster shells. Selection of Reports (1819), 149, 150.
reformatory-style prisons in some counties, the beginning of a debate about urban policing and about the repeal of the capital code, growing concern about idle children, a movement towards the provision of basic education facilities for the poor... What was new about the next post-war period, the late 1810s and early 1820s, was both the intensity of the debates about these issues and the growing focus on juvenile crime.\footnote{70}{King, Crime and Law, 104.}

The juvenile delinquent became an entirely distinct category of offender, with its own unique motivations, and therefore requiring its own investigations and solutions. Many ventures in the 1810s and 1820s considered juvenile delinquency separately from adult criminality. In 1815, the Committee for Investigating the Alarming Increase of Juvenile Delinquency conducted a study of the problem, leading to the foundation of the Prison Discipline Society two years later. The 1819 parliamentary investigation into gaols included a segment on “Juvenile Offenders.”

Several new institutions catered exclusively to juvenile delinquents: the Warwick Asylum (est. 1818), Chelsea School of Reform (est. 1825), and the Bellerophon prison hulk for boys (est. 1825).

The interest in juvenile delinquency may have been sparked by the growing numbers of youths who appeared before the courts during the 1810s and 1820s: “[i]n London and Surrey… the proportion of offenders under eighteen more than doubled between 1785-93 and 1820-22. The proportion under twenty increased by about three-quarters.”\footnote{71}{Peter King, “The Rise of Juvenile Delinquency in England, 1780-1840: Changing Patterns of Perception and Prosecution,” Past and Present 160, no. 1 (1998), 124-125; King, Crime and Law, 81-82.} It is unclear, however, whether increasing numbers of prosecutions reflected growing numbers of delinquents, or were due to victims’ greater resolve to prosecute during this period.\footnote{72}{Spurred perhaps by print coverage of juvenile delinquency, victims of crime in the 1810s and 1820s may have been more likely to formally prosecute youths than they might have been in earlier decades (when an informal punishment or admonition at the scene of the crime may have sufficed). For more possible explanations for why victims may have been more willing to prosecute, see King, “Rise of Juvenile Delinquency,” 151; King, Crime and Law, 104-108.}
Whether real or perceived, the rise in juvenile delinquency was linked to a number of causal factors by contemporary commentators: the improper conduct of parents, idle pastimes, want of education, severity of the criminal code, want of suitable employment, and the existing system of prison discipline. The first four factors have already been discussed at length with regard to the Philanthropic. The Refuge governors, too, witnessed the effects of these conditions. One Refuge publication described one latchkey youth who “was exposed to the snares of wicked and abandoned characters” because her mother was required to work at a distance from home, and could not properly supervise her daughter. Some objects had been brought low in “flash houses,” theatres, brothels, and gambling dens. The repeat offenders who appeared before the Refuge committees were proof that the criminal code was an ineffective deterrent.

The Philanthropic governors were concerned by the lack of suitable employment for youths. However, the issue was even more pressing for the Refuge officials, for its objects were of an age to leave parental care and independently enter the workforce. In the early nineteenth century, apprenticeships became less common, “particularly after 1814 when parliament repealed the requirement for seven-year apprenticeships in skilled trades.” As a result, casual employment of juveniles became widespread. The periods of unemployment which punctuated casual workers’ lives left youths susceptible to idleness and want, conditions which might lead to crime or prostitution. A Short Account of the Refuge (1818) described one boy who “in

73. These were the principal causes of juvenile delinquency according to the 1815 Committee for Investigating the Alarming Increase of Juvenile Delinquency. Report of the Committee of the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline... (London: Bensley and Sons, 1818), 12-19; Heather Shore, Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell/Royal Historical Society, 1999), 20.


75. “Flash-houses” were disreputable public houses. Shore, 24.

76. Ibid., 41.
consequence of the slackness of the business in which he had been usually employed, was left at leisure to form an acquaintance with vicious characters… and was soon afterwards convicted of stealing.” Thieving may have formed a component of youths’ “economy of makeshifts,” a supplement to low-paid, casual, or seasonal employment. The Refuge’s rigorous occupational training was designed to provide youths with the skills to obtain full-time employment.

Moreover, the Refuge offered incentives to employers to take on youths as full-time apprentices. As Refuge visitor Samuel Hoare claimed in 1819, male apprentices generally could not turn a profit for their masters until they had received two years’ training. Since Refuge boys passed this initial “unprofitable” period in the institution, masters outside the institution would have little compunction against taking on Refuge males as apprentices. The Refuge males were better able to compete for scarce apprenticeship opportunities.

Yet, occupational training alone was not sufficient to reform juveniles, for moral failures also contributed to delinquency. Boys were led astray by gaming and whoring companions and joined roving gangs of criminals. The Refuge governors also saw many petitioners who, despite earning wages, had stolen from their masters or mistresses. Philanthropists viewed female servants as particularly susceptible to this type of crime. Not only did they have ready access to household goods in the course of their duties, but they possessed a feminine vanity and yearning for luxury. The Refuge attributed one girl’s theft of garments from her mistress to “that love of dress, which is so destructive of the virtue and happiness of so many of her sex at that age.” The light-fingeredness of servants had concerned commentators since the early eighteenth century. “Theft from a dwelling house”—a crime particularly associated with servants—of

77. Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 34.
79. Selection of Reports (1819), 152.
80. Short Account of the Refuge (1815), 14.
goods valued at above forty shillings was made a capital offence in 1713. 81 A century later, the problem had not gone away, as evidenced by the establishment of the London Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Female Servants in 1813 and the addition of a new offence, “stealing from master,” to the criminal code in 1823. 82 The Refuge would create trustworthy employees by providing moral education.

The emergence of transportation to New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land and the increasing use of imprisonment in the early nineteenth century provided more alternatives to execution than had existed in the late eighteenth century. Capital punishment was therefore not so central a concern to the founders of the Refuge as it had been to those of the Philanthropic. However, a new preoccupation with the prison was planted in nineteenth-century philanthropists’ minds. The Refuge governors recognized that criminals experienced many difficulties once discharged from prison. Not only did they often lack money and housing, but they also encountered difficulties finding employment due to their tarnished reputations. 83 The early tracts of the Refuge named the reception of criminals from the prisons and the hulks as one of the institution’s primary roles. Freed prisoners comprised a large proportion of those who received material aid from the charity and those who entered the Temporary Refuges (after 1817). 84

The Refuge governors were particularly critical of the lack of classification by age and criminal experience within many prisons and houses of correction. An eleven-year-old who had

82. The Society for Faithful Servants created a registry of honest servants for the use of employers and also offered rewards to servants who provided good service and remained in one situation for one year or longer. Ibid., Report of the Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Female Servants... (London: W. Gilbert, 1814).
83. Indeed, many petitioners informed the Refuge governors that they had remained in prison as voluntary inmates for some time after the completion of their sentences, having no where else to go. See, for example, Petition summary of Mary Thomas to the Refuge, May 25, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/3); Petition summary of Elijah Barlow to the Refuge, October 11, 1821 (HAD D/S/4/23).
picked his first pocket might share his prison cell with a hardened adult offender. In the eyes of philanthropists, the youngster would inevitably emerge from gaol in a more debased state than when he had entered. One gentleman who recommended a boy to the Refuge stated “that a residence in Gaol until the Sessions & any punishment, inflicted on his conviction, would… only harden him in vice.”  

There were few, if any, opportunities for moral or occupational education in prison. Far from preventing and discouraging crime, incarceration merely facilitated its increase. By receiving criminals directly from the prisons, the Refuge hoped to reverse the corruptive damage incurred during detention. Better yet, magistrates and the courts might send youths directly to a reformatory instead of committing them to prison; the existence of the Refuge might prevent youths from entering the prison system entirely.

Both the Refuge and the Philanthropic adopted systems of classification and segregation to prevent the inmate-to-inmate contamination which occurred so frequently in gaols. In 1802, the Philanthropic boys were divided into two separate establishments. Criminal boys were first placed in the “Reform” where they received moral and religious instruction and performed such basic chores as picking oakum. When the governors determined that their vicious habits were sufficiently quelled (usually after eighteen months to two years in the institution), they joined the non-criminal boys in the “Manufactory” and there began their apprenticeships. With the establishment of the Temporary Refuges in 1817, the Refuge also introduced a tiered system. Newly admitted objects spent some weeks on probation in the Temporary before being transferred to the Permanent establishment.

86. Lacking a second institution for the females, the Philanthropic governors limited admittance primarily to girls who were the children of convicts, rather than convicted criminals themselves.  *State of Mendicity* (1815), 20-21; *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 443; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 165.
87. Many inmates of the Temporary Refuges, however, were not on probation but were simply admitted for a few weeks or months until employment could be found (with no expectation of entering the Permanent establishments). *Selection of Reports* (1819), 156; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 186.
institutions hoped to prevent those who had made progress in their reformations from regressing under the influence of their unreformed peers.

Further measures limited the spread of bad habits. Objects were closely supervised and communication kept to a minimum.\(^ {88}\) Solitary confinement not only punished troublemakers, but prevented them from interacting with fellow inmates.\(^ {89}\) The governors also expelled instigators of riots, group abscondings, and thefts. Testifying before parliamentary committees, charity officials made much of the fact that each object slept in his or her own hammock or bed.\(^ {90}\) This was an unusual degree of personal space; beds in prisons, workhouses, and many charitable institutions were often shared by two or more people.\(^ {91}\) Indeed, Refuge officials Samuel Hoare and Stephen Lushington noted that a separate bedroom for each object would be ideal, if only the institution possessed sufficient funds for such accommodation.\(^ {92}\) Although seemingly a minor detail, the institutions’ one-object-per-bed rule illustrated the governors’ anxiety to contain immoral criminal and sexual practices.

This study examines the Philanthropic and Refuge, and the beneficiaries who passed through these institutions, between 1788 and 1830. The year 1830 marks a boundary as both charities underwent significant changes in the years which followed — changes to which a study of this length cannot do justice. From 1840, the Rev. Sydney Turner came to dominate the management of the Philanthropic, presiding over an overhaul of governing techniques and the

\(^{88}\) The boys in the Philanthropic Reform were particularly well supervised and were “never left to themselves from the time they [got] up till they [went] to bed at night, and the master’s assistant slept in the same room.” *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 444; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 186.

\(^{89}\) *Selection of Reports* (1819), 157, 166; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 183, 184-185; King, “Introduction,” xvi.

\(^{90}\) *Police of the Metropolis* (1816), 316; *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 444; *Selection of Reports* (1819), 159; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 187.

\(^{91}\) For example, in the Giltspur Street Compter, seven or eight people slept on mats placed so close together that they could easily be considered one bed. *Selection of Reports* (1819), 272.

\(^{92}\) Ibid., 155, 159, 166.
dismissal of all the girls by 1845. The boys removed to new premises in Surrey in 1846 where the governors hoped the rural surroundings would offer greater shelter from urban immorality and opportunities to develop agricultural skills. The institution became the Redhill Farm School. As Muriel Whitten has shown, the Philanthropic evolved in the 1840s and 1850s into an official reformatory which was supported by government funds and had formal links to the court and prison systems.

The Refuge experienced its greatest popularity and influx of objects in the early 1820s. However, by the late 1820s, the institution was increasingly criticized for its admittance policies and large expenditure. This led to a drop in subscriptions and a cut in government funding in 1827. From the late 1820s, the Refuge focused its efforts increasingly upon immigration schemes to the Cape of Good Hope, New South Wales, and Van Diemen’s Land as a less costly alternative to years of institutionalization in England. Continuing financial pressures in the 1830s led to a decline in living standards within the institution. The male establishments were closed in 1849 following the cessation of government support and the females moved to new premises at the Manor House, Dalston.

Sources

The earliest histories of the Philanthropic and Refuge were produced by the institutions themselves. Every few years, the societies published tracts to attract the interest of potential subscribers. The tracts were formulaic, featuring laudatory accounts of the institutions’ histories, progress, and optimistic projections of future success. The authors also argued why the

94. Ibid., 199.
95. Ibid., 217-254,
97. Ibid., xix.
98. Ibid., xxi.
institutions were necessary, often alluding to such contemporary concerns as the capital code, the Poor Laws, and juvenile delinquency (as explored above). Lists of subscribers and rules and regulations were often appended to the tracts, together with short biographies of well-behaved objects. From 1817, many of the reports of the Prison Discipline Society also reflected upon the work of the Refuge and featured detailed biographies of objects who had been sent to the Temporary Refuges by the society.99 These biographies were undoubtedly subject to the creative license and selective practices of their compilers—who wished to highlight the most promising of the societies’ objects—and therefore cannot be taken as a representative sample of the entire body of beneficiaries. However, the post-institutional lives of successfully reformed objects are particularly difficult to track, as these objects’ respectable conduct ensured they seldom appeared before the courts or in the “Police” columns of newspapers. The tracts therefore offer rare insight into the institution’s star pupils.

Tracts were not the sole means through which the institutions promoted their efforts. The Philanthropic printed a book of hymns and prayers used by the objects as well as copies of sermons which the society’s chaplain delivered at anniversary services.100 These sermons presented detailed arguments, couched in both spiritual and secular terms, of the utility of the institution and the audience’s duty to offer support.101 In addition, the Philanthropic and Refuge regularly advertised in a host of newspapers and magazines. These advertisements ranged from single paragraphs promoting the trades and services offered by objects, official publications, and


100. Newspaper advertisements indicate that sermons were preached on behalf of the Refuge; however, I have found no published copies of Refuge sermons. George Gregory, Family Prayers for the Philanthropic Reform... (London: Philanthropic Society, 1792); John Fresselicque, A Sermon, Preached at the Church of St. Peter le Poor... (London: H.L. Galabin, 1793); Vincent.

upcoming anniversary services, to longer articles providing accounts of charity dinners or summaries of annual reports.\textsuperscript{102} The publications of the institutions are vital sources for understanding the way in which benefactors defined and justified their mission to the public. By examining the body of tracts and advertisements, one can chart the evolution of the institutions’ concerns and methods over time.

Official promotional material rarely dwelt upon management issues, objects’ misbehaviour, or recidivism.\textsuperscript{103} However, commentary by members of the public often revealed the less savoury aspects of the institutions. Along with laudatory letters to the editor and poems of praise, print often featured criticism. In 1790, Philanthropic founder Robert Young was expelled from the society after allegedly misappropriating funds. He then proceeded to establish his own charity, The British Settlement for the Self-Support and Reform of the Destitute and Criminal Poor. After the remaining Philanthropic governors denounced him in print, Young retaliated in a series of pamphlets in which he not only defended his actions, but accused the Philanthropic of abandoning its foundational principles and allowing its charges to return to crime.\textsuperscript{104}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[102] The Philanthropic advertised in more than twenty journals between 1788 and 1830. The Refuge seemed to have limited itself to \textit{Jackson’s Oxford Journal, The Morning Chronicle, The Morning Post, The Standard}, and \textit{The Times}.
\item[103] I have found only one instance in which an official charity account provides details about objects’ misbehaviour. The \textit{First Report of the Philanthropic Society} includes a section entitled “Incidents.” Nevertheless, most of the accounts of troublesome objects included in this report conclude with the offending beneficiary realizing the error of his or her ways and begging pardon. The “Incidents” section was dropped from later reports. \textit{First Report} (1789), 44-49; \textit{First Report of the Philanthropic Society...} 2nd ed. (London: Couchman and Fry, 1790), 54-60.
\item[104] In particular, Young censured the Philanthropic governors for surrounding the premises with an enormous wall; rather than remaining in the institution of their own free will (as the founders had initially intended), objects were, in effect, incarcerated. Young also argued that the Philanthropic had failed ex-objects by allowing them to return to depraved parents and made much of the fact that the governors had no idea what had happened to more than half of all the individuals who had left the institution. \textit{Robert Young, An Introduction to an Account of the Foundation of the London Philanthropic Society and the Author’s Relations, thereto} (London, 1790); \textit{Mr. Young’s Report; Mr. Robert Young’s Address to the General Body of Subscribers to the General Body of Subscribers of the Philanthropic Society and to the Nation...} (London: 1796).
\end{footnotes}
The Refuge, too, suffered bouts of bad press. During the 1820s, the Refuge’s strict admittance policies were the source of much complaint, particularly by magistrates. These officials recommended youths to the institutions, believing them to be proper objects of charity, only to have them rejected by the Refuge governors as too young, too old, or insufficiently criminal. Some contemporaries disliked the Refuge’s policy of only admitting objects into the Temporary establishments who had relations or other sponsors willing to pay seven shillings weekly for their maintenance. The Lord Mayor’s dissatisfaction with the Refuge was such that he called for the creation of a new institution “to supply that which none of the ostentatious establishments now gave — work to all those who were found at large in a state of destitution, under the necessity of either robbing or starving.”

Occasionally, negative publicity was sparked by the behaviour of particular beneficiaries. For example, in 1830, prostitute Sarah Alexander was arrested for walking the streets at night and brought before magistrate Sir Richard Birnie at Bow Street. Sarah begged the court not to send her to gaol as she had a young brother who lived upon the profits of her trade. She claimed that she had kept her brother in ignorance of her immoral conduct and had tried unsuccessfully to secure him a place in an asylum so that she might return to domestic service. Sarah’s tale, reported in the press, attracted spontaneous offers of aid from readers and Birnie (a member of the Refuge) secured her a place in the institution. However, less than a month later, Sarah was discharged from the Refuge at her own request and returned to prostitution. This case, along

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108. The police officer, Sergeant McSweeney, who had initially brought Sarah to Bow Street was so incensed by the girl’s ungrateful rejection of the Refuge’s aid that he again arrested her for being a common prostitute and brought her to Bow Street. She was discharged due to insufficient evidence, but not before McSweeney had declared he would no longer look after her brother’s interests. Neither the Refuge minute books nor the newspapers provide any explanation of why Sarah chose to leave the institution. *The Times*, September 8,
with further reports of ex-objects’ recidivism, made some commentators question the advisability of offering aid to juvenile delinquents when more worthy —and more grateful— objects of charity abounded.

Of course, those who penned criticisms were not often unbiased observers. Robert Young’s pamphlets were designed to smear the Philanthropic governors who had so publicly discredited him. The Lord Mayor’s vocal condemnation of the Refuge may have been motivated as much by the injury done to his pride when his benevolent recommendations to the institution had been so harshly rebuffed, as by the reasoning behind the Refuge’s policies. Nevertheless, these commentators often offered valid points which counterbalanced the overly optimistic claims of official charity publications. 109

The Philanthropic and Refuge also came under scrutiny in their dealings with government. The Refuge and, to a lesser degree, the Philanthropic applied for financial aid from Parliament. The House of Commons frequently granted funds to the institutions without much discussion. However, in certain years (particularly in the late 1820s), the charities’ proposals met with much debate. These debates were recorded in official parliamentary papers and circulated in the press. In 1827, the government’s grant to the Refuge was reduced from £5000 to £4000 after several MPs expressed concerns about the institution’s selection procedures and large expenditure. 110

1830; The Standard, September 8, 1830; The Morning Post, September 13, 1830; The Belfast News-Letter, September 14, 1830; The Standard, September 15, 1830; The Sheffield Independent, and Yorkshire and Derbyshire Advertiser, September 18, 1830; The Age, October 10, 1830; The Standard, October 22, 1830; The Age, October 24, 1830; The Age, October 31, 1830.

109. Robert Young supported his arguments with information collected and published by the Philanthropic. For example, the Philanthropic governors conducted a study in which they traced how each object had been discharged from the institution. Young quoted figures from this study to support his claim that the Philanthropic had allowed its objects to return to crime. Young also used numbers from the institution’s financial reports to argue that the governors were wasteful. Young, Mr. Young’s Report, 35-37.

110. The Morning Post, May 15, 1827.
Charity officials also testified before parliamentary committees. Philanthropic superintendent Richard Collyer spoke before the 1815 investigation into the State of Mendicity and Vagrancy in the Metropolis. Thomas Furly Forster, a member of the Refuge, gave evidence for the 1816 inquiry into the Police of the Metropolis. The following year, the Special Committee on the Police of the Metropolis heard from three representatives of the institutions: Philanthropic steward Thomas Russell, Refuge treasurer Edward Forster, and Refuge visitor Samuel Hoare. In 1819, Samuel Hoare spoke before the Committee on Gaols, as did Refuge committee members Stephen Lushington and William Crawford. Richard Collyer and Refuge superintendent James Ross were examined by the 1828 Select Committee on the Police of the Metropolis. Hoare testified again at the 1829 Select Committee on Criminal Commitments and Convictions and the 1832 inquiry into Secondary Punishments.

In response to their examiners’ probing questions, the charity officials detailed the number and backgrounds of objects, reformatory techniques, expenditure, and living and working conditions of the institutions. The committees also requested information about recidivism. The representatives of the Philanthropic and Refuge were not always upfront with the committees. Thomas Russell, when asked about the type of punishments used in the Philanthropic, answered “very slight” and failed to mention the corporal punishment which was frequently employed within the institution at this time.

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111. State of Mendicity (1815), 14-15.
112. Police of the Metropolis (1816), 314-317.
113. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 441-447, 448-453, 524-529.
114. Selection of Reports (1819), 149-161, 161-167, 169-172.
115. Sessional Papers (1829), 165-167, 182-188.
116. Hoare often appeared before these inquiries to speak about the Prison Discipline Society (of which he was also a member) and his plans to establish a gaol for juvenile delinquents. However, he often made detailed references to the Refuge for the Destitute. Sessional Papers of the House of Lords, 1801-1833, Vol. 248 (1829), 83-91; Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons, Vol. 53 (1836), 107-116.
117. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 444; Whitten, 74-75, 126, 164-166.
Samuel Hoare claimed that Refuge objects “Never” stole materials from the institution. Yet, no fewer than five individuals were charged with stealing clothes from the Refuge in 1818 and 1819 alone. 

The officials’ evidence, particularly with regard to recidivism, was often anecdotal in nature. For example, Thomas Furly Forster claimed female ex-objects’ attendance at the Refuge’s anniversary services with marriage licenses in hand was proof of the society’s success. In 1828, Richard Collyer stated that he was aware of only three or four Philanthropic objects who had been convicted of crime after leaving the institution. However, when asked whether he had “look[ed] over the trials of the Old Bailey, and other records, to give [him] that information,” Collyer replied: “No, not particularly.” As will be shown in the final chapter of this thesis, had Collyer checked the records, he would have found more than four recidivists. Charity officials may not have been inclined to share the least favourable aspects of the institutions with the committees. After all, the committee members before whom they testified were the same MPs who voted on the institutions’ government grants. Evidence from inquiries also appeared in print to be read by current and potential subscribers. The inaccuracy of testimony, and its anecdotal nature, may also be due to the fact that charity officials were often not fully informed about the post-institutional lives of their beneficiaries. As several officials acknowledged, many ex-objects took pains to conceal the fact that they had been in

118. Selection of Reports (1819), 157.
119. Old Bailey trial of Charles Loadsman, June 17, 1818 (t18180617-46); Old Bailey trial of Susannah Feasey and Mary Knight, February 17, 1819 (t18190217-50); The Times, April 23, 1819.
120. Police of the Metropolis (1816), 315.
121. Sessional Papers (1829), 166.
reformatories. In spite of these faults, the committee evidence describes the treatment and conduct of beneficiaries in much more detail than the charity reports.

The first scholarly histories of the institutions, published in the 1970s and 1980s, relied primarily upon official publications and testimony. Wiley B. Sanders’ *Juvenile Offenders for a Thousand Years: Selected Readings from Anglo-Saxon Times to 1900* (1970) included only transcribed charity reports to represent the Philanthropic and Refuge. This printed matter was not only more readily accessible than scattered manuscript sources to early historians of charity, but were the best sources through which to establish the basic historical development of reformatories and the concerns and motivations of benefactors. In *Caring for Children in Trouble* (1970), Julius Carlebach demonstrated how the ideas and methods described in early Philanthropic tracts were still employed in the juvenile reformatories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, albeit in modified form. Donna T. Andrew used the subscription lists and tracts of the Philanthropic to argue that self-sufficiency and financial accountability replaced population and national defense as the primary concerns of late eighteenth-century philanthropists.

More recently, however, many historians have turned their attention from the desires, motivations, and experiences of the wealthy to those of the poor. The poor seldom had the leisure, the funds, or the literacy to produce tracts as did their social superiors. Therefore, scholars have sought the agency of the poor in previously overlooked sources. David R. Green used the records of London’s police courts and boards of Poor Law guardians to argue that

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122. The charity officials explained that ex-objects were reluctant to associate with their former benefactors because employers might not look favourably upon them if it were known that they had been institutionalized for crime. *Police of the Metropolis* (1817), 445-446, 453; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 166, 184.
paupers bargained for relief with parish authorities. The poor brought complaints before magistrates and destroyed parish property if their perceived rights were denied.\textsuperscript{126} Lynn Hollen Lees has found evidence in popular ballads that the poor claimed a right to relief.\textsuperscript{127} In “Agents in Their Own Concerns?: Charity and the Economy of Makeshifts in Eighteenth-Century Britain,” Sarah Lloyd demonstrates that objects of London charity schools were often far from passive and obedient. The minute books of these institutions indicate that many beneficiaries showed little loyalty to a single institution, instead “shopping” around for the charity (or charities) which offered the best relief. Mothers complained loudly about the punishment of their children in the schools and objects regularly pawned or defaced their uniforms.\textsuperscript{128} Other scholars have employed written petitions to charities, pauper examinations before Poor Law committees, and even snippets of fabric deposited with children at the Foundling to make similar claims about the agency of the poor.\textsuperscript{129}

The minute books and behavioural registers of the Philanthropic and Refuge are invaluable sources for exploring beneficiaries’ responses to institutionalization. These records describe objects’ progress in manufacturing or domestic work and behaviour while under charitable care. Both Malcolm McKinnon Dick and Muriel Whitten have used the Philanthropic registers to portray benefactors’ daily struggle to maintain order and to question the efficacy of the institution’s disciplinary and educational models.\textsuperscript{130} In addition to recording the conduct of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{127} Lees, 153-176.
\textsuperscript{130} Dick, 280-283, 292-296; Whitten.
\end{footnotesize}
beneficiaries, the Refuge secretary, Robert Crosby, described each candidate who petitioned the institution for relief at the weekly sittings of the male and female admittance committees.\textsuperscript{131} Crosby recorded the name, age, and place of settlement (if known) of each applicant, together with an explanation of how he or she came before the admittance committee. The longer summaries noted such details as: petitioners’ addresses, location and employment of parents, experience of crime and/or prostitution, names and addresses of recommending individuals, and petitioners’ professed willingness to reform.\textsuperscript{132} The committee’s decision on each case, and often the reasons behind rejections, were also included.\textsuperscript{133}

The petition summaries are not verbatim transcriptions of applicants’ oral or written petitions. The secretary summarized and often added his own commentary. Nor are the petition summaries necessarily truthful. The committee room was a charged atmosphere of unequal power relations. Every week, the committees saw far more petitioners than than the institution could accommodate on its limited budget. In 1821, applications for admission into the Refuge were reportedly “five times greater than could possibly be received.”\textsuperscript{134} The committee members held the power to grant or withhold the limited number of available places.


\textsuperscript{132} The petition summaries vary in length. Unusual petitions were generally recorded in greater detail, while the secretary often did not bother to write much about petitioners whose circumstances virtually guaranteed their acceptance (for example, youths whose judgment had been respited on condition of entering the Refuge). Those who were clearly not qualified for entry were also treated in a cursory manner. King, “Introduction,” xxv; King, “Transcriptions,” 69.

\textsuperscript{133} There were several ways in which the committees disposed of petitioners. They might be “Admitted” or “Not admitted,” but also offered material relief, requested to attend a future sitting of the committee, or recommended to the parish or another charitable establishment. Reasons behind rejections were varied, but included: improper age, insufficient criminal history, the existence of parents or a parish capable of care, lack of desire to reform, pregnancy or illness, petitioner deemed too “dangerous,” or, most frequently, lack of room within the Refuge.

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{Daily National Intelligencer} (Washington), October 23, 1821.
Recognizing the need to convince the examiners of their suitability for admission, petitioners (and their parents) occasionally exaggerated and lied. Nevertheless, the perspectives of beneficiaries are revealed in the petition summaries, as Peter King has argued.\(^{135}\) King has examined the petition records to discover the ways in which young women explained their descent into crime and prostitution.\(^{136}\) K.D.M. Snell has used the same sources to explore how the poor understood such concepts as “home” and “friends.”\(^{137}\) In any case, this study is not concerned with establishing the veracity of petitioners’ statements; falsities in the petition summaries do not make the minute books useless. Rather, as will be shown in the following chapters, these lies support the argument that petitioners consciously manipulated the charitable system.

Minute books demonstrate best how objects experienced the charities, but trial records offer the greatest insights into beneficiaries’ interactions with the courts. Despite the fact that the Philanthropic and Refuge dealt with criminal youths, most historians of these charities have not embraced the vast body of records associated with the law. Neither Malcolm McKinnon Dick nor Muriel Whitten employed trial records in their detailed studies. Peter King has used these sources to show how reformatories served as alternative sentencing options for magistrates and judges. Yet, little work has explored how beneficiaries manipulated the system of court referrals; King has described only one case in which an object did so.\(^{138}\)

\(^{135}\) King, “Introduction,” xxv.

\(^{136}\) Peter King, “Destitution, Desperation and Delinquency: Female Petitions to the London Refuge for the Destitute,” in *Being Poor in Modern Europe: Institutions, Surveillance and Experiences*, eds. Andreas Gestrich, Steven King, and Raphael Lutz (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006).


The Proceedings of the Old Bailey are extremely useful for tracing how individuals came to be in the institutions and how they behaved following discharge from charitable care.\textsuperscript{139} Moreover, the records also provide some insight into how objects conducted themselves while in the institutions. The governors of the Philanthropic and Refuge occasionally prosecuted their own charges for theft or violent acts committed within the reformatories.

On their own, however, the Old Bailey Proceedings do not provide a comprehensive impression of objects’ experience of crime and the law. The Old Bailey, although the largest, was not the sole court in London. Objects of the Philanthropic were also tried in sessions and assizes held outside of London proper and, occasionally, in other parts of the country.

Moreover, youths who committed crimes might never face a judge or jury. Those accused of crimes were often examined before magistrates at one of London’s police offices or the Lord Mayor’s residence at Mansion House. Frequently, the magistrates or Lord Mayor would not commit youths to full trial, but instead sentence them to a minor punishment like a whipping or imprisonment (for a misdemeanour) or recommend them to the Philanthropic or Refuge. Charity officials also used the summary courts to prosecute objects who had stolen from the institutions, and the Philanthropic regularly appeared before magistrates to charge runaways with breaking their indentures. In many of these cases, the magistrates passed summary sentences and they did not proceed to the Old Bailey.

In addition, as Drew D. Gray and David R. Green have shown, the poor frequently approached magistrates to seek advice and solicit help in securing parish or charitable relief.\textsuperscript{140}

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\textsuperscript{139} Emsley, Hitchcock, and Shoemaker, \textit{Old Bailey Proceedings}.
\end{flushright}
Criminal youths and parents driven to desperation by the conduct of their offspring sometimes presented themselves before magistrates to request places in the Philanthropic and Refuge.

Only the trial transcripts of the Old Bailey were consulted for this study; the records of the police offices and the courts outside of London are too numerous and dispersed for a study of this scope. However, newspaper articles on “Police” are widely used in this thesis. Not only did the press frequently report on examinations and trials within non-Old Bailey courts, but also on crimes committed by individuals (including ex-objects of the institutions) who were not caught or punished.141

Even where an Old Bailey transcript exists for a crime, newspaper accounts can shed additional light upon the case. Defendants were usually committed for trial after one or several examinations before magistrates; press reports of these preliminary interrogations can provide details which were not mentioned at the Old Bailey. Moreover, the trials at the Old Bailey were often abridged in the published trial proceedings.142 Until the 1840s, it was common for a series of trials to be conducted in succession; all those found guilty in this “batch” would then be called up a second time.143 Defendants who had been tried for felonies were able to provide a short statement of defence before sentence was passed. At this time, juvenile delinquents (or their parents) sometimes requested the court for recommendations to the Philanthropic or Refuge and criminals, often prompted by the recorder, confessed to having been in the institutions.144 These

141. For example, in 1827, the Times reported that a gentleman’s house had been robbed by two young women who had only recently been discharged from the Refuge. The girls escaped with the stolen goods and there is no evidence to suggest they were caught or prosecuted. The Times, January 12, 1827.
143. Ibid.
144. These confessions are extremely useful for tracing the post-institutional lives of ex-objects.
interactions are rarely recorded in the Old Bailey transcripts, “perhaps because the publisher did not wish to give any publicity to the convict.”

Always on the look-out for a good story, the press had no such qualms about printing the voices of the poor. Newspapers thus provide rare insight into the dynamics of the courtroom. On October 24, 1821, three boys were tried at the Old Bailey for stripping a young girl of her coral necklace. All three were found guilty of the crime; however, while Henry Harris and Richard Pendergrass were sentenced to be whipped, Michael Anderson’s judgment was respited on condition that he enter the Refuge. It is unclear from the trial transcript why Michael received a more lenient sentence than his companions-in-crime. All three boys had been seen accosting the girl and had been caught while running away. Moreover, they were all of a similar age and met both the age and criminal conviction qualifications for entry into the institution. Why did the court not send them all to the Refuge? An article in the *Morning Post* provides the answer, for it notes that the judge sent Michael to the Refuge “at the request of his mother.” In this case, and in many others like it, the newspaper article shows what the trial transcript does not: the active intervention of a poor individual determined a youth’s experience of charity.

However enlightening, the press is not without limitations. Writers may have exaggerated or failed to mention certain details, or made errors while taking notes in fast-paced courtrooms. Events which were particularly unusual or shocking were more likely to sell newspapers than mundane accounts of pickpocketing. Therefore, the existence of a number of articles on a case (or type of case) does not necessarily imply that the situation described was common. Rather, these articles may simply reflect a high degree of interest in unusual

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occurrences. For example, it is uncertain whether parents routinely prosecuted their own children in the hope of securing entry into the Refuge (as several articles report). Of course, a lengthy article and such headers as “Extraordinary Case” or “Shocking Instance” are obvious indicators of novelty.\textsuperscript{148} Details within the reports, too, are telling. When Mr. Keys brought his delinquent son James to Mansion House, the Lord Mayor reportedly commented: “Surely it never can be the father’s intention to prosecute his own child, and one so young as this, for it is not likely that the boy’s morals will be amended by his being sent to gaol.”\textsuperscript{149} The Mayor’s expression of disbelief signified that it was rare for a father to prosecute his son, or to believe that a prison was capable of reforming a boy (or both). Provided the historian avoids drawing generalizations from a single article, newspapers can nonetheless contribute to an understanding of juvenile delinquents’ interactions with the law.

Having outlined the sources which reveal the perspectives of both poor beneficiaries and their benefactors, and having explored the aims and motivations of the latter, this study will now proceed to the experience of objects.

\textsuperscript{148} The Newcastle Courant \textit{&c.}, December 13, 1829.

\textsuperscript{149} James’ father responded to the Lord Mayor by stating that “[h]e should be exceedingly glad to get [James] into the Refuge for the Destitute, but to leave him to himself would be destructive.” The Lord Mayor sent the boy to prison for one week of solitary confinement. \textit{The Standard}, October 1, 1828.
CHAPTER ONE

Charity does not move in a single downwards direction from rich benefactor to poor beneficiary. Rather, as many scholars have come to see it, charity is a two-way process—a “gift exchange”—in which both benefactor and beneficiary are obligated to give and to receive. The benefactors of the Philanthropic and Refuge expected that their provision of food, clothing, lodging, and education would yield returns. By embracing honesty and industry, beneficiaries would abstain from the criminal conduct which so displeased and threatened their benefactors. Moreover, beneficiaries would be grateful. However, benefactors’ expectations of charity were not always fulfilled. Objects has their own set of motivations and strategies to satisfy their own expectations, expectations which often did not align with those held by their social superiors.

Admittance

The committees of the Philanthropic and Refuge sat at an appointed time each week to review applications for admission. Although the officials had the last word on who was admitted and who rejected, the poor were not passive supplicants whose futures depended entirely upon committees’ whims. Applicants often possessed detailed knowledge of the institutions’ “system” of regulations which determined who was a proper object of charity (and hence likely to be relieved) and who was not (and therefore to be rejected). Using this knowledge, some applicants strategically manipulated admittance procedures to increase the likelihood of securing

their desired outcome, whether this outcome be admittance, rejection, or a material form of relief. Moreover, applicants sought relief for a variety of reasons, not simply—and perhaps not at all—to undergo the moral re-education which benefactors prescribed. The poor sometimes consciously selected charities because they offered food, clothing, lodging, an alternative to penal punishment, or (in the case of some objects’ parents) an escape from burdensome offspring.

There was always a greater demand for, than supply of, places within the Philanthropic and Refuge. In the mid 1810s, the Philanthropic turned away nine out of ten candidates for relief, while Samuel Hoare estimated in 1819 that the Refuge “reject[ed] three-fourths of the deserving cases, perhaps… five-sixths.” The Refuge minute books are littered with notations of “Not admitted for want of room” and recommendations that petitioners try again at a later date or approach other institutions for aid. The admittance process was a highly competitive ordeal. Possessing knowledge of institutional policies could make the difference between success and failure.

While some petitioners appeared before the committees with little prior awareness of the institutions, well-meaning benefactors having plucked them from the streets, many applicants were familiar with the workings of charity. Information about charitable organizations circulated through multiple channels. The Refuge minute books testify to the wide availability of this knowledge; petition summaries noted that youths learned of the reformatory by conversing with members of the middling and upper ranks of society and with officials and employees of establishments frequented by the poor: magistrates, prison chaplains and turnkeys, hospital

151. As will be shown below, some applicants were brought before the committees by parents against their will; these individuals may have actively sought to be rejected by the committee.
152. Only one in seven petitioners who qualified for entry into the Philanthropic were admitted. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 442, 452, 529; Selection of Reports (1819), 151, 156.
matrons and nurses, and parish overseers. Signs advertising the Refuge posted in summary courts, Newgate Prison, and the hulks also caught the attention of some petitioners. One man decided to apply to the Refuge after reading about the institution in a newspaper.

Word-of-mouth also played a significant role in the transmission of charitable “know-how.” Refuge petitioners were often encouraged to apply by friends, relations, and acquaintances. Ann Cassity learned of the institution through Ann Pound, a woman with whom she shared a house. Occasionally, women who had formerly been in the Refuge recommended their friends. Ex-object Sarah Walker convinced Ann Peckham to petition in December of 1814. Sarah was engaged in prostitution at the time (as Ann most likely was as well), demonstrating that knowledge about charitable institutions circulated within the criminal underclass. It is also likely that such information passed from inmate to inmate in the crowded quarters of prisons and workhouses.

Many petitioners not only possessed knowledge about charitable relief, but had experience securing it. Nearly 18 per cent of a sample of petition summaries record that applicants had received aid from sources other than the Refuge. Of these petitioners, 32 per cent had secured parish aid, 25 per cent had been enrolled in a school, 21 per cent in a medical hospital, 13 per cent in an asylum or reform, and 9 per cent had obtained relief from two or more

153. Petition summary of John Paul to the Refuge, July 22, 1812 (HAD D/S/4/3); Petition summary of William Fordyce to the Refuge, August 13, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/4); Petition summary of Susannah Reed to the Refuge, November 10, 1821 (HAD D/S/4/6).
154. It was probably quite unusual for petitioners to learn about the Refuge in this way; newspaper advertisements were intended to attract subscribers and not applicants. Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 32.
157. This sample included all the petition summaries recorded between 1812 and 1830 which are featured in Peter King’s edited volume Narratives of the Poor and digitized as part of the Old Bailey Proceedings Online project. Summaries which appear in both collections were only counted once. Peter King, ed., Narratives of the Poor; Old Bailey Proceedings Online.
The proportion of Refuge petitioners with prior experience of charity was likely much greater than 18 per cent. Many summaries provide only the barest of details; petitioners’ charitable experiences were likely never recorded in many instances. A majority of petitioners was able to name a parish of settlement and many youths identified themselves as apprentices, positions which were often obtained through parish authorities, suggesting a broad familiarity with parish relief. Moreover, some petitioners neglected to mention the fact that they had previously been in charitable institutions, for fear that such a confession would ruin their chances of gaining admittance. The Philanthropic’s records provide fewer details of objects’ pre-institutional lives that do those of the Refuge; it is therefore difficult to estimate the degree of charitable experience among the Philanthropic youths. Nonetheless, the admittance registers do note that at least some objects had been apprenticed out by the parish, lodged in workhouses, or placed in schools of industry.

Armed with knowledge and experience, many applicants set out to collect the recommendations and documents which were required for admission, or significantly strengthened petitioners’ chance of success. Youths (or parents) approached respectable citizens to request letters of reference or to convince them to provide oral testimony of their suitability for admission before the charity committee. A group of eight girls presented itself at the house a Philanthropic member to beg for his intervention in securing them entry into the institution. Sherriff Williams claimed that two boys had begged him on their knees that “when their term of

158. Included in the category of “parish relief” are out-relief, nursing out of infants by the parish, parish apprenticeship, and/or admittance into a workhouse or farmed house. More than 32 different workhouses, 31 schools, 7 hospitals, and 10 asylums or refuges are named in the sample of petition summaries.

159. The Philanthropic and Refuge often did not offer entry to those who had other means of obtaining relief and may have looked unfavourably upon those who had behaved badly in other establishments. This is discussed further below.

160. Whitten, 48-49, 55, 58.

161. The girls were refused admittance. Second Report, 58.
imprisonment was ended, that [he] would secure them a place in the Refuge."  

The poor often sought out magistrates for recommendations and certificates testifying to criminal conduct.  

Hannah Abbott appeared at Guildhall the day after her husband had received sentence of death at the Old Bailey for viciously attacking her. She had not been called to attend, but came of her own accord “hav[ing] been informed that if she could obtain the signatures of the committing magistrate, and of the judge who tried her husband, there would be little doubt of success” in securing places for her three children in the Philanthropic.  

A boy named Cox, newly discharged from prison, proceeded directly to Bow Street to entreat magistrate Sir Richard Birnie to get him into the Refuge.  

Occasionally, securing the proper paperwork required a degree of deception. In 1828, superintendent Richard Collyer described the Philanthropic’s improved admittance policies:

> We require that [criminal children] should have been taken before a magistrate, and charged upon oath; the oath of some person who is not a relative, because formerly we had a great many cases made for us by the lower orders of the people, boys qualified on purpose to be admitted.

The Philanthropic had introduced the requirement that petitioners be charged before magistrates after the governors had discovered that petitioners exaggerated their offences or invented crimes altogether when applying for relief. Even this measure, however, did not curb the problem, for parents were willing to charge their own offspring (of false offences) before the magistrates

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163. Certificates of criminal conviction or imprisonment became particularly important when the Refuge began admitting only *criminal* youths in the late 1810s and early 1820s. Destitution or prostitution alone no longer qualified objects for a place in the institution and petitioners were required to prove that they had been involved in crime.
164. It is unclear who told Mrs. Abbott to collect the signatures. It is unlikely that the Philanthropic governors did so, for the institution’s policy at this time was to admit only those who were aged between eight and twelve. Mrs. Abbott’s children — the eldest only seven years old — did not qualify. *Old Bailey trial of James Abbott*, October 23, 1828 (t18281023-51); *The Times*, October 29, 1828.
165. *Freeman’s Journal*, October 17, 1821.
166. *Sessional Papers* (1829), 166.
solely to qualify them for the institution. It was for this reason that the Philanthropic subsequently considered only oaths made by non-relatives to be valid.

The governors of both the Philanthropic and Refuge gave preference to youths who had been sent directly to the institutions by magistrates or judges after being examined or tried for an offence; these individuals were routinely admitted.\textsuperscript{167} It was much more difficult for those who appeared at the committees of their own accord to gain entry; even a recommendation from a benefactor or certificate of incarceration did not guarantee success.

Parents sometimes had their own offspring brought before magistrates. At the Marlborough Street police office, Mr. McGarvie accused his daughter Elizabeth of prostitution and immoral conduct.\textsuperscript{168} Parents who charged their children with offences often stated their desire that the youths enter the Philanthropic and Refuge. Most parents readily agreed to magistrates’ suggestions that youths be sent to an institution or committed to prison for a short period in order to qualify them for entry into the Refuge. This suggests that parents sought charitable care, not penal punishment, by bringing their offspring before the Law.

If a magistrate was not willing to send a youth to an institution, parents occasionally prosecuted their children at the criminal courts, despite the possibility that a sentence of whipping, imprisonment, or transportation might result. Legal theorist Thomas Wontner described an incident in which a woman purposefully prosecuted her own son in order to qualify him for the Refuge.\textsuperscript{169}

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\textsuperscript{167} Police of the Metropolis (1817), 443; Sessional Papers (1829), 165.
\textsuperscript{168} Bell’s Life in London and Morning Chronicle, November 27, 1825.
\textsuperscript{169} This case demonstrated the risks involved in prosecuting one’s own child in order to secure charitable aid. While giving evidence, the mother mentioned that her son had stolen a shawl from her locked house. This detail made the crime burglary, a felony, and the boy was sentenced to death. Thomas Wontner, Old Bailey Experience: Criminal Jurisprudence and the Actual Working of Our Penal Code of Laws... (London: J. Fraser, 1833), 301.
\end{flushright}
Of course, many of these parents were desperate and resorted to legal intervention only after having found disciplinary methods ineffective. Mr. Ball had his son William arrested and conveyed to Union Hall for theft. Mr. Ball informed the magistrate that he and his wife had tried everything to reform their son, but “neither promises of forgiveness, nor all the entreaties they had used, had any effect upon the young delinquent.” Pressing charges was Mr. Ball’s last hope “to save [William] from the gallows.”170 Yet, such parental desperation may not have resulted in prosecution had there not been institutions to receive the youths from the courts or, indeed, institutions which required criminal charges as a condition of entry.

It was never common for adults to charge their youthful relations with crimes and then approach the Refuge for admittance. However, some evidence suggests that these incidents became more common after the institution began to require concrete evidence of criminal activity from petitioners. There were twice as many reported cases of youths petitioning the Refuge after being brought before magistrates or judges by relations between 1822 and 1830 (following the change in admittance policies) as there were between 1813 and 1819.171 Further research is needed to determine if the number of cases reported reflects the actual number of cases and if an increase in parental prosecutions was motivated by changing admittance requirements or other factors.172 Nevertheless, it is certainly a possibility that parents consciously adapted their behaviour in response the changing institutional policies.

Magistrates could prove extremely helpful when youths and their parents appeared before them to request entry into an institution. Sir Peter Laurie not only signed the certificate in

170. The magistrate believed that there was little chance that William would be admitted into the Refuge (as Mr. Ball desired), probably because the boy was unenthusiastic about the prospect of reform. Even though Mr. Ball declared that his son would soon resume his wicked ways if allowed to return home, the magistrate released the boy to his father and recommended Mr. Ball send him to sea. The Times, October 6, 1824.
171. These figures were obtained from the sample of Refuge petition summaries (see footnote 157), trial transcripts, and press reports from these periods.
172. For example, the fact that the Refuge admitted more objects between 1822 and 1830 than between 1813 and 1819 may account for the increase in reported cases of parental prosecutions.
support of Mrs. Abbott’s quest to get her children into the Philanthropic, but provided her with the name of a member of the society and five shillings. When prostitute Hannah Hock “intreated [sic] the magistrates of [Woolwich] to recommend her to some Institution,” they gave her a letter which “strongly recommended” her to the Refuge. Some magistrates appear frequently in press reports of youths and parents who sought officials’ aid in obtaining charitable relief. In particular, Bow Street magistrate and Refuge member Sir Richard Birnie features prominently. It is possible that the poor knew that certain magistrates were sympathetic to pleas for youths to be admitted into institutions, or were well-connected to the charities. Poor youths and their parents may have chosen to appear before these officials, recognizing that they presented the best likelihood of success.

In at least three reputed instances, youths purposefully committed offences to qualify for the Refuge. A “poor young girl” was arrested for disorderly conduct in March of 1825. As the Times reported, the girl informed the magistrate that she had behaved so in order to be committed to prison and thereby obtain the certificate of incarceration required for admission into the Refuge. The following month, eighteen-year-old William Ashley was arrested for an offence he had reportedly committed in order to gain entry into the Refuge. Hugh Hughes was tried at the Old Bailey for pickpocketing on April 15, 1830. In his defence, he stated: “I was trying for fifteen weeks to go to the Marine Society, but was refused by the doctor; I was told if I

173. The Times, October 29, 1828.
174. Indeed, magistrates were often too helpful. The charity governors frequently complained that candidates sent from the police offices were too young or old or insufficiently criminal. Petition summary of Hannah Hock to the Refuge, August 29, 1818 (HAD D/S/4/5).
175. The magistrate sentenced the girl to a week’s imprisonment. The articles does not state the girl’s name; therefore, I have been unable to trace whether she achieved a place in the Refuge. The Times, March 15, 1825.
176. Unfortunately for William, the plan backfired. The judge, Sergeant Arabin, “deprecated such a preconcerted plan and would take care that it should fail of its object.” The boy was sentenced to a whipping. William did subsequently appear before the Refuge committee on April 22, 1825, but was refused on the grounds that there was no room in the institution. The Morning Post, April 12, 1825; Petition summary of William Ashby to the Refuge, April 22, 1825 (HAD D/S/4/24).
committed any act, that they would send me there, or to the Refuge—I should be happy to get my living honestly.”

These individuals may have merely claimed to have purposefully committed the acts of which they were accused to avoid facing harsh penal punishments. Yet, the evidence suggests otherwise. All three offences were particularly obvious, as if inviting arrest. The girl was disorderly directly outside a watchhouse and Hugh picked pockets in broad daylight and in full view of a police officer. William “went into [a] shop, took a hat off the counter, put it on his head, and walked out.” He was apprehended immediately. Moreover, two of the three youths cited the admittance policies of the institution and Hugh had even previously sought entry into a charitable organization, suggesting that these youths did not seek charitable relief at the last minute to escape punishment. In addition, the magistrates and judges did not cast doubt on the defendants’ professed motivations.

Commentators frequently expressed fears that the Philanthropic, Refuge, and similar charitable institutions encouraged the very criminal acts which they had been established to prevent. The Philanthropic faced objections that it “caused men of good principles to degenerate and become bad, to qualify their children for the school of reform.” In 1809, William Hale argued that young women became prostitutes for no other reason than to secure a place in an asylum and there gain access to the institutions’ material rewards and work placements.

177. The arresting officer noted during the trial that he had found Hugh’s statement about the Marine Society to be true. The judge respited the judgment. I have not been able to trace if Hugh obtained entry into the Refuge. Old Bailey trial of Hugh Hughes, April 15, 1830 (t18300415-346).

178. When youths were sent to the Refuge from the courts, judgment was usually respited and they received no penal punishment.

179. The Times, March 15, 1825; Old Bailey trial of Hugh Hughes, April 15, 1830 (t18300415-346).

180. Old Bailey trial of William Ashley, April 7, 1825 (t18250407-52).

181. First Report (1789), 42.

182. Hale contended that the opportunities provided within institutions were much better than those available to the non-criminal poor outside the institutions. William Hale, An Address to the Public upon the Dangerous Tendency of the London Female Penitentiary (London: W. Nicholson, 1809), 16.
It is implausible that poor individuals purposefully embarked upon lives of crime or prostitution solely for the chance of obtaining charitable relief; the risks outweighed the benefits. However, those already in desperate situations (with much less to lose) may have staged offences in order to obtain relief. Lord Mayor John Garratt, for one, believed this could well happen. In 1824, the Mayor sent a boy by the name of Woodward to the Refuge after the boy had been found in a den of criminals. The Refuge governors rejected the application, however, because Woodward had not been tried for an offence. Incensed, the Mayor asked: “Was it necessary that he should go and commit a robbery in order to qualify himself?” Some months later, when a young destitute girl was brought to Mansion House, the Lord Mayor “ordered that the… child should be taken care of, [he] being determined that she should not be compelled to qualify herself by crime for the ‘Refuge for the Destitute.’” The 1819 Committee on Gaols asked Refuge member Stephen Lushington if the institution’s rule of giving preference to criminals above destitutes was “an encouragement to crime.” Lushington did not deny it, claiming that the governors “fe[l]t the defects” of the system, but could only accept the worst cases due to limited funds. As the case of the disorderly girl, William Ashley, and Hugh Hughes demonstrate, the concerns if the Mayor and the Prison Committee were not unfounded. In rare instances, individuals actively deployed their knowledge of the institutions’ admittance policies in ways which undermined the central goal of these institutions to decrease crime.

A proportion of applicants to the Philanthropic and Refuge was recommended directly to the institution by magistrates and judges. These applicants had been acquitted of crime, had

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186. Peter King has found that “[b]etween 1817 and 1826, which appears to have been the most important decade during which the Old Bailey made use of [the] judgment respited mechanism, over a quarter of the males and
their judgment respited, or were pardoned on condition of entering a reformatory. While the referrals system depended upon the co-operation of the courts and the institutions, youths (and their parents) also played a part in the process. This chapter has already demonstrated how parents sought to secure recommendations by prosecuting their own children and youths by purposefully committing offences. In more conventional cases, in which youths were accused of crime by non-relatives and had not purposefully committed offences, the poor could nevertheless influence the outcome of the trials. Many youthful defendants begged the court to be sent to the Philanthropic or Refuge. Parents, too, made these pleas on their children’s behalf.\(^{187}\) One police officers claimed to “ha[ve] known Irish women appear before the magistrates, when their children have been apprehended, to get them into the Refuge.”\(^{188}\) Friends and relations of youths under sentence also submitted petitions for pardon in which they begged that the youths be sent to a reformatory rather than face punishment.\(^{189}\) These pleas were often successful. In every case in the Old Bailey Proceedings where a youth begged to be sent to the Philanthropic or Refuge, judgment was respited.\(^{190}\)

Most of the individuals who begged for a place in an institution claimed they did so out of a desire for reformation. Yet, these pleas were also a tactic to avoid the harsh penal punishments which were usually passed over when juvenile delinquents were referred to charities. Caricaturist James Gillray mocked the ability of criminals to evade sentencing in this manner. His print *Effusions of the Heart; or, Lying-Jack the Blacksmith at Confession* (1798)

\(^{187}\) For example, see The Morning Post, October 31, 1821; The Standard, June 3, 1830.


\(^{189}\) For example, see Criminal petition of Edward Stutters (HO 17/67/159), National Archives.

\(^{190}\) Old Bailey trial of Hugh Farrell, September 14, 1814 (t18140914-108); Old Bailey trial of John Clark, December 6, 1827 (t18271206-55); Old Bailey trial of Leger Peltret, September 16, 1830 (t18300916-136); Old Bailey trial of William Clark, December 9, 1830 (t18301209-67).
depicts a man standing before the Bow Street magistrates. Hands clasped before him, he provides a flood of ridiculous excuses in an attempt to sway his examiners to mercy. A package labelled “Ways and Means” lies at his side, in which is clearly visible a book entitled “The Philanthropic Society.” Gillray depicted the Philanthropic as a refuge for insincere criminals desperate to escape the firm hand of the law.

Although no object of the Philanthropic or Refuge declared that he or she used the institution to escape punishment, the behaviour of some beneficiaries suggests that this may indeed have been the case. When ten-year-old Hugh Farrell was first brought to the Old Bailey, he begged to go to the Philanthropic and his judgment was respited. He used the same technique ten months later when he appeared again in the prisoner’s dock, but this time expressed a desire to be sent to the Refuge. His request was granted; judgment was respited and the boy admitted into the institution. Within five months, however, he had absconded from the Refuge and was arrested for stealing silver plate. Hugh’s repeated re-offences and quick departure from the institution suggest he had little true interest in reformation.

Hugh was not the only object to vote with his feet. Many beneficiaries absconded from or discharged themselves from the Philanthropic and Refuge soon after arriving there from the courts, thus neatly circumventing both legal and charitable correction. Neither institutions had the legal right to retain beneficiaries against their will, even if objects had been placed there by the courts. Magistrates and judges also had no power to specify how long juvenile offenders should remain in the institutions. The Refuge sought to return to the magistrates and courts those

191. The print also features the fake inscription: “Price 6d. for the benefit of the Philanthropic Society.” James Gillray, Effusions of the Heart; or, Lying-Jack the Blacksmith at Confession (1798), British Library.
192. Hugh was not given a third chance to escape punishment. He was found guilty of stealing the plate and sentenced to transportation for seven years. Old Bailey trial of Hugh Farrell, September 14, 1814 (t18140914-108); Old Bailey trial of Hugh Farrell, May 10, 1815 (18150510-67); The Times, July 29, 1816; The Morning Chronicle, July 29, 1816; Old Bailey trial of Hugh Farrell, September 18, 1816 (18160918-99).
193. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 452; Selection of Reports (1819), 151, 166, 172.
objects who refused to remain in the institution; however, in most cases, this was unsuccessful.\textsuperscript{194} Susannah Dobell entered the Refuge from the Worship Street police office after Mr. Cheeseman, a man from whom she had stolen a blanket, agreed not to prosecute on condition that the girl be admitted into the institution. After three months in the reformatory, Sussannah informed the committee of her “determin[ation] to Quit this Establishment.” The governors returned her to the magistrate, but there is no evidence that she was prosecuted for the theft and the girl was moving freely about London ten months later.\textsuperscript{195}

Charlotte Duckett, too, challenged the system of court referrals. The Old Bailey respited Charlotte’s sentence for receiving stolen goods and sent her to the Refuge on January 3, 1822. Little more than three weeks later, Charlotte refused to remain any longer in the establishment. The governors tried to send her back to Newgate, but the gaol’s Common Sergeant informed them that it was not possible to do so. As historian Peter King has noted, “in law [a] respited judgement,” such as that Charlotte received, “could only hang over the offender until the next sessions of the Old Bailey, i.e. about a month and a half.”\textsuperscript{196} It is unclear if Charlotte was aware of this fact when she requested discharge from the Refuge. Nevertheless, her actions pitted the Refuge’s lack of legal right to retain beneficiaries against a legal system which could not re-

\textsuperscript{194} I have found only one case in which a Refuge petitioner on a judgment respite was sent back to the courts and subsequently received penal punishment for the offence. In 1826, sixteen-year-old Mary Sullivan had her sentence respite for stealing bread and was sent to the Refuge. However, she “refused to submit to the Rules of the Institution, and was sent back to Newgate.” She was then sentenced to transportation for seven years. Old Bailey trial of Mary Sullivan, April 6, 1826 (18260406-175); Petition summary of Mary Sullivan to the Refuge, April 22, 1826 (HAD D/S/4/7); Convict records of Mary Sullivan (Grenada, 1827), Founders and Survivors: Australian Life Courses in Historical Context 1803-1920, www.foundersandsurvivors.org.

\textsuperscript{195} Given that three months had elapsed since Susannah had committed the theft when she decided to leave the Refuge, it would have been difficult to prosecute her successfully. The magistrate would have had to have found the victim and convinced him to prosecute. After her release from the Refuge, Susannah was arrested and tried for an entirely different offence. Petition summary of Susannah Dobell to the Refuge, October 25, 1823 (HAD D/S/4/6); Refuge minute book, January 24, 1824; Old Bailey trial of Susannah Dobell, September 15, 1825 (18250915-326).

\textsuperscript{196} King, Crime and Law, 160; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 452.
involve itself with a prisoner it had already processed once, and she slipped through the crack to 
freedom.

The Philanthropic did not attempt to send unwilling objects back to the courts. The 
governors’ sole means to ensure these individuals did not escape all punishment was to bring 
them before the magistrates as refractory apprentices. Yet, this method was far from ideal as it 
could not be used on objects who were not yet apprenticed (particularly boys in the Reform).  
Moreover, even if the governors could make these charges, magistrates’ sentences were 
generally quite minor.  

It was not only applicants from the legal system who could manipulate admittance 
procedures. Indeed, those who came before the charity committees of their own accord or 
recommended by respectable citizens may have had a greater need to do so, as they were much 
less likely to be admitted than their counterparts from the courts. Drawing upon their knowledge 
and experience of charity, voluntary applicants (and their parents) formulated petitions which 
they hoped would satisfy the governors’ exacting demands. Petitioners conveniently “forgot” to 
mention conditions which might lead to rejection. For example, when Ann Tyrrell successfully 
applied to the Guardian Society for the Preservation of Public Morals, she did not disclose that 
she had been in the Refuge and imprisoned for stealing from that institution. If she had done so, 
she would almost certainly have been rejected, for the Guardian sought only to admit prostitutes 
who had not been involved in criminal activity.  

Similarly, the Refuge governors discovered only after accepting Ann Taylor that the girl had been in the Penitentiary, leaving because of 
disobedience. Ann may have been deceitful for fear the governors would not admit her if they  

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197. Usually, apprentices were punished with whipping or short periods of incarceration. As Muriel 
Whitten has noted, incarceration had the added disadvantage of “cancel[ling]-out any virtues a Philanthropic sojourn 
had instilled.” Whitten, 67. 

198. When the Guardian governors did discover Ann’s past history, they expelled her. Ann then petitioned 
the Refuge for readmittance. Petition summary of Ann Tyrrell to the Refuge, December 4, 1824 (HAD D/S4/6).
knew of her past conduct under charitable care. The chaplain of Bridewell claimed that ex-prisoners received relief from multiple institutions without the charity officials’ knowledge.

Some petitioners were willing to lie outright before the admittance committees. Philanthropic vice-president George Holford stated that the parents of applicants “have often accused their children of crimes falsely, or have exaggerated their real offences, for the sake of inducing the society to take them.” This was such a problem that by 1828 the Philanthropic no longer accepted petitioners whose only proof of criminal activity was the testimony of their parents. Several Refuge females misrepresented their familial situations. Catherine Parsons informed the committee that “her friends [were] dead,” despite the fact that her father was living and her sister, brother-in-law, and another relation by the name of F. Hugh Parsons resided in London. Jane Evans claimed herself to be an orphan when she petitioned the Refuge for entry in 1813. Upon learning that Jane had a mother and step-father who were very much alive, the committee ordered the girl to explain herself. Jane “declared that what she had said was from the persuasion that, were it known that she had a mother and a Father in law, she would not be taken notice of”; that is, considered for relief by the committee. Catherine and Jane were aware that the Refuge typically refused aid to those who had relations capable of providing for them. Employing this knowledge, they lied to improve their chances.

203. Petition summary of Catherine Parsons to the Refuge, March 8, 1828 (HAD D/S/4/8); Old Bailey trial of Catherine Parsons, Rebecca Hall, Honora Caton, and William White, May 29, 1828 (t18280529-163); Criminal petition of Catherine Parsons (HO 17/45/73), National Archives; Convict records of Catherine Parsons (*Harmony, 1829*), *Founders and Survivors*.
204. During her second examination before the committee, it emerged that Jane’s stepfather was “cruel towards her & beat[–] her so much, as to render it unsafe to go home” and Jane was permitted to remain in the Refuge. She was lucky; lies, if discovered, often resulted in objects’ dismissal. Petition summaries of Jane Evans to the Refuge, January 13 and 20, 1813 (HAD D/S/4/3).
It is difficult to determine how many applicants lied to secure entry into the institutions. However, lying was enough of a problem that commentators discussed it in print and both the Philanthropic and Refuge expended considerable time and effort in exposing deceit. William Hale deemed applicants at the London Female Penitentiary—a charity which often shared applicants with the Refuge—to be “filthy adepts at deceit, [who] know, that they only have to patch up a few falsehoods, to procure them a ‘prompt admission.’”205 The Penitentiary, along with the Philanthropic and Refuge, introduced a host of measures to prevent liars from gaining entry. Detailed questions put to petitioners revealed some lies.206 In cases where the committee members doubted the veracity of petitioners’ tales, visitors were dispatched to interview applicants’ relations and employers. Nevertheless, these measures were far from perfect and some liars went undetected.207

Like most charities concerned with moral reformation, the Philanthropic and Refuge based their decision to relieve or to turn away not only upon evidence of a need for reform, but also upon applicants’ desire for it. Youths who showed penitence and a wish to abandon criminal or sinful conduct were much more likely to be accepted than those who denied all wrongdoing. Some juveniles were brought to the Refuge against their will, usually by parents who enthusiastically petitioned on their behalf. These youths often took steps to ensure that they would not be placed in the reformatory. They refuted their parents’ claims that they had acted in

206. For example, Ann Jones informed the committee that she was from Colchester. The committee members asked her specific questions about the town; however, Ann was not able to satisfactorily answer them and eventually “confessed, that she had not told the truth… she is a native of Whitechapel” who had gone to Colchester to marry the man who had seduced her. It is unclear why Ann lied, although she may have believed that the Refuge would be more sympathetic to a petitioner who was unfamiliar with London and lacked a settlement in the city. Petition summary of Ann Jones to the Refuge, March 15, 1815 (HAD D/S/4/4).
207. For example, the governors never learned that Catherine Parsons had lied about her relations (see footnote 202).
a disorderly or criminal manner, or refused to admit they had done wrong. 208 Esther Abrahams “denie[d] having been dishonest in any thing, except picking a few cherries.” 209 Others baldly stated that they did not wish to enter the institution.210 In almost all of these cases, the committees rejected the petitioners, undoubtedly to the chagrin of their parents. Far from submitting to the wishes of their elders, these youths clung to their own interpretations of their conduct—whether truthful or not—and promoted their own desires.

Unwilling applicants were, however, exceptional. Most petitioners who appeared before the committees were eager for admittance and readily professed their remorse. Susannah Topping, for example, “showed much contrition & desire of being rescued from her miserable course of life.” 211 While it is certainly possible that applicants who deemed themselves contrite truly felt so, others likely over-emphasized the degree of their repentance or simply acted sorry in order to gain admittance. Prostitute Sarah Alexander declared her “wish to abandon her present state of living, and endeavour to maintain herself honestly.” The sincerity of her sentiment was soon under doubt when, mere weeks after her admittance into the Refuge, she returned to prostitution.212 Similarly, the conduct of Philanthropic boy Nathaniel Banner was so good when he first entered the institution that the governors believed reforming him would be

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208. It is possible that in cases where petitioners denied parents’ claims of immoral conduct, youths may have been telling the truth and parents lying to secure a place in the Refuge. Youths may simply have been unwilling to cooperate with their parents’ scheming. Alternatively, some parents may have been misinformed about the behaviour of their children; for example, parents may have wrongly assumed that a daughter who did not return home at night was a prostitute. For examples, see Petition summaries of Margaret Enevor to the Refuge, September 22 and 29, 1813 (HAD D/S/4/3); Petition summary of Ann Martin to the Refuge, June 3, 1815 (HAD D/S/4/4); Petition summary of Martha Marsh to the Refuge, May 17, 1823 (HAD D/S/4/6); Petition summary of Joseph Cheesely to the Refuge, October 29, 1824 (HAD D/S/4/24).


210. For example, see Petition summary of Phebe Smith to the Refuge, July 8, 1820 (HAD D/S/4/5); Petition summary of James Simpson to the Refuge, September 30, 1825 (HAD D/S/4/24).


212. The Sheffield Independent, and Yorkshire Advertiser, September 18, 1830.
simple. Yet, it was not long before Nathaniel took to repeatedly absconding to thieve.\textsuperscript{213} The Refuge committees tacitly acknowledged the potential deceptiveness of “remorse;” the secretary recorded in the minute books that petitioners \textit{seemed} or \textit{appeared} sorry, without confidently asserting that they \textit{were} so. Moreover, by 1828, each new object was required to pass an initial period in the “school of probation” (the Temporary Refuges) before becoming a permanent fixture.\textsuperscript{214} Objects’ professed desire for reform could not be trusted; only time could prove if penitence was real.

If not for reformation, why then were most petitioners and their parents so enthusiastic about the prospect of institutionalization? For parents, the attraction of the Philanthropic and Refuge might have been the chance to divest themselves, temporarily or permanently, or offspring who were burdensome. As discussed above, fathers and mothers, fed up with their child’s running away from home, thieving, and associating with depraved characters, often petitioned magistrates and the charity committees to admit their children into the institutions.

While some parents used the institutions to rid themselves of behavioural issues, others sought relief from the economic strain of raising children. Widow Margaret MacKabe begged the Philanthropic to accept her child, who was “a clog upon her.” A hospital stay had exhausted Margaret’s savings, so she could no longer financially support her child, nor could she leave her child unattended to return to work as a servant.\textsuperscript{215} As neither Margaret nor her child were engaged in crime or prostitution, it was nothing more than need which propelled Margaret to the society.

\textsuperscript{213} Eventually, after a second arrest for a theft he had committed after running away from the Philanthropic, the governors refused to readmit him: “[Nathaniel] Having been taken up & carried before the Magistrates in Bow Street & by them ordered to be brought to the Committee of this Society [he] was remanded back to be dealt with according to the pleasure of the Magistrates being too incorrigible for readmittance into the Reform.” Philanthropic boys’ behavioural register.

\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Sessional Papers} (1829), 165.

\textsuperscript{215} \textit{First Report} (1789), 48-49.
In some families, institutionalization may have served as a stop-gap measure in difficult economic times. When there was little opportunity for youths to contribute to the family economy, they were placed in asylums; once conditions had improved such that a juvenile could be a productive member of the family, he or she was removed (with or without the charities’ blessing). The friends of Ann Powell took the girl out of the Philanthropic to place her in employment at a letter founder’s. They did not request the governors’ permission to do so; indeed, as Ann had been in the institution for less than four years, the Philanthropic would have been unlikely to grant such a request.216 Objects also left the Refuge to take up work or apprenticeships found by their friends or relations. Parents of one object petitioned to have their son returned to them, “their business being brisk.”217 These individuals patronized the institutions only so long as they offered the most economic advantages. Reformation was of secondary importance in the “economy of makeshifts.”218

The Philanthropic faced criticism that the poor simply used it for free childcare; relieved of the necessity of providing for their own children, the parents of objects were susceptible to indolence.219 The society countered that children were not burdens to the poor, but profitable; parents sent their offspring out to thieve for them or used their children to elicit greater sympathy when begging.220 The society’s argument, however, was quite weak. The difficulty of feeding extra mouths likely outweighed any benefit obtained through children’s participation in thievery and begging. The free lodging, food, clothing, and occupational training offered within the institutions was of greater value than the income of a street urchin. Parents who petitioned the

216. When Ann was subsequently tried at the Old Bailey for a coining offence, the judge insisted that she had “run away” from the Philanthropic. Ann, however, preferred to describe her departure from the institution in terms of being “taken out.” Old Bailey trial of Ann Powell, January 14, 1801 (18010114-115).
217. *Short Account of the Refuge* (1818), 34-35.
218. Sarah Lloyd has discovered similar patterns of behaviour in charity schools. Parents often removed children from these establishments in order to put them to work. Lloyd, 11.
220. Ibid., 40.
Philanthropic and Refuge certainly never complained that they would suffer a decrease in income should their child be admitted. Furthermore, if objects became capable of making a significant contribution to family funds, nothing prevented parents from removing them from the institutions at that time.

While free childcare was attractive, so too were the lodging, food, and clothing offered by the Philanthropic and Refuge. Many juvenile offenders voluntarily remained in prison for some time after the completion of their sentences until they were able to petition the Refuge.221 One young man was discharged from prison, but returned to the gaol after “the approach of night found him without the means of hiring a lodging, or of buying a pennyworth of bread.”222 While the governors generally interpreted the decision to remain in prison voluntarily as evidence of applicants’ desire for reformation, petitioners were also motivated by more material considerations. The Refuge offered a continuance of the shelter and food which were available in the prisons.223

Clothing was a particular boon to poor beneficiaries. Not only were these goods easily portable and easily accessible — particularly to Refuge females working in the laundry — but they could be easily disposed of in one of London’s disreputable pawn shops. Boys “were said to go to the Refuge for the sole purpose of improving their garments.”224 Frequent incidents of beneficiaries absconding with charity-issued garments (often after only a brief period of institutionalization) suggest that an institution’s clothes were more valued that its moral

221. For example, see Seventh Report, 119-120; Sessional Papers (1829), 184; Petition summary of Mary Thomas to the Refuge, May 25, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/3); Petition summary of John Hutchings to the Refuge, May 17, 1820 (HAD D/S/4/23).
223. It is worth noting that the young man mentioned above did not see reformation as his first priority. He tried, and failed, to secure lodging and nourishment on his own before seeking out the Refuge.
224. First Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire as to the Best Means of Establishing an Efficient Constabulary Force... (London: W. Clowes and Sons, 1839), 386.
training. No objects ran away with Bibles in hand. When two Philanthropic boys escaped, the governors explained that “they were anxious to return to their friends in their new cloaths [sic]; having before been kept, by shame of their rags, from going home.” Several boys claimed that they had absconded from the Philanthropic because of insufficient food or clothing. Material offerings were the sole incentives for objects to remain institutionalized.

The opportunities for employment offered by the institutions, too, may have been valued by the objects more than reformation. One girl refused to enter the Refuge after learning that it would take months before the governors would place her out. After Refuge object Fanny Kenyon was caught stealing clothing from the institution, the superintendent informed her that he would not find employment for a dishonest girl. Fanny presented herself before the next committee to express her desire to be discharged because “it would be useless to continue long in [the] house” given what the superintendent had said. In Fanny’s eyes, the sole use of the Refuge lay in its employment opportunities.

The benefactors recognized the attraction of material goods to poor objects. After multiple thefts of institutional clothing, the Philanthropic governors added distinctive buttons to the uniforms in the hope that these would make the garments more difficult to sell or pawn (they

225. The Philanthropic and Refuge were not the sole institutions to experience problems due to beneficiaries’ penchant for institutional clothing. As Sarah Lloyd has shown, officials of the Welsh Charity School in London waged a constant battle against objects who sold or pawned uniforms. The chaplain of Bridewell Hospital, Henry Budd, related one extreme case of systematic abuse of charity: “A woman applied to a lying-in society; one of the visitors paying her a visit, eleven different sets of clothes were found in her house, which she had got from different societies.” Lloyd, 109-110; State of Mendicity, 66. For examples of Philanthropic and Refuge objects who absconded with clothes, see Old Bailey trial of Michael Conder, October 30, 1811 (t18111030-143); Old Bailey trial of Phineas Eastmond and Sophia Baylis, April 5, 1815 (t18150405-111); The Times, April 23, 1819; Old Bailey trial of Julia King, February 19, 1829 (t18290219-15).

226. First Report (1789), 47.

227. Whitten, 76, 84.

228. Petition summary of Louisa Mackenzie to the Refuge, April 9, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/3).

being so obviously stolen goods). Newly admitted objects were also put into “plain coarse canvas frock[s],” perhaps to discourage absconding and minimize losses should this happen.

Food, clothing, and money were also integrated into the charities’ systems of rewards and punishments. Good quality clothing was given to objects who behaved well, while troublemakers wore less attractive garments. Hardworking Philanthropic and Refuge objects received better food or more portions than their idle peers. Diets of bread and water were prescribed for disobedient youths. A proportion of objects’ earning was also set aside to be given to them upon honourable discharge from the institutions. The governors hoped that beneficiaries would imbibe good Christian morality at the same time as they enjoyed the material comforts of institutionalization; yet, numerous thefts from the institutions (discussed further below) proved that some beneficiaries took the latter while refusing to accept the former.

In an attempt to secure their particular desires, some applicants exerted a degree of discrimination —of choice— in the admittance process. Petitioners chose to accept the committees’ offers only upon certain terms. Parents refused to allow their children to enter the Philanthropic unless they were granted regular visits. If the institutions’ conditions were not satisfactory, objects were often prepared to walk away. The Refuge committee denied Diane Crowe a place in the establishment but offered instead to send her to her hometown of

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230. The buttons also made the clothing more easily identifiable as belonging to the Philanthropic; this could prove useful in examinations or trials of runaways in which prosecutors (charity governors) were obliged to confirm the stolen goods were their property. The button plan was not altogether successful; it was quite easy to remove and replace the buttons, as some absconders did. Moreover, many disreputable pawnbrokers were willing to take stolen goods. For example, see Old Bailey trial of Michael Conder, October 30, 1811 (t18111030-143); Whitten, 70.

231. Whitten, 129.

232. For example, Philanthropic boy Walter Willis was “deprived of… coloured clothes for one month” for smoking, unruly conduct, and leaving charity grounds without permission. In the Refuge, only well-behaved boys received a good suit of clothes for Sundays. Whitten, 165; Sessional Papers (1829), 183.

233. Absconders or objects who were expelled were not given monetary rewards. Police of the Metropolis (1816), 317; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 443-444, 446, 451, 452; Selection of Reports (1819), 157; Sessional Papers (1829), 184-185, 187; Dick, 288, 290; King, “Introduction,” xv.

234. First Report (1789), 32.
Newcastle. This plan was not acceptable to Diane and she declined “on account of having no friends remaining in her native place.”\textsuperscript{235} Louisa Mackenzie petitioned the Refuge but, after being informed that she would spend at least one year in the institution before being put out to work, she “expressed an opinion that she would be able to provide a situation for herself” and left empty-handed.\textsuperscript{236} Some petitioners refused to allow committee members to investigate the truth of their claims by speaking with their friends and employers, while others would not submit to the medical exam or haircut which were requirements of entry.\textsuperscript{237}

The sheer number of charitable organizations in London made it easier for applicants to exercise discrimination. If a petitioner found conditions unsatisfactory at one institution, he or she might simply apply at another. As discussed above, these petitioners sometimes concealed their prior associations with charities from the committees to which they applied.\textsuperscript{238} This “charity hopping” technique was particularly common among females in their late teen years or early twenties, as several establishments specialized in objects of this description: the Magdalen Hospital for the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes (est. 1758), Lock Asylum for the Reception of Penitent Female Patients (est. 1792), London Female Penitentiary (est. 1807), Guardian Society for the Preservation of Public Morals (est. 1815), and Chelsea School of Reform (est. 1825).

While some females went from one charity to the next after a committee had rejected their applications, occasionally it was the women themselves who rejected the charities. Immediately following her discharge from St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, Ann Stevenson applied at the Magdalen. The governors there gave her a good reception and told her to return at a later date.

\textsuperscript{235} Petition summary of Diane Crowe to the Refuge, December 16, 1812 (HAD D/S/4/3).
\textsuperscript{236} Petition summary of Louisa Mackenzie to the Refuge, April 9, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/3).
\textsuperscript{237} Petitioners may have refused to undergo medical examinations as they wished to conceal venereal disease or, in the case of females, pregnancy. Objects with venereal disease were rejected or told the appear before the committee again when cured. Pregnant females were rejected. For example, see Petition summary of Jane Bennett to the Refuge, January 5, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/3); Petition summary of Ann Bonibon to the Refuge, October 4, 1823 (HAD D/S/4/6).
\textsuperscript{238} See footnote 197.
Ann did not comply with this request because she did not want the society’s chaplain to contact her friends as he had proposed to do. She then petitioned the London Female Penitentiary but was refused. Undaunted, she appeared the very next day before the Refuge committee and was admitted.\(^{239}\) Ann employed her considerable knowledge about options for relief in the capital, the locations of these establishments, and the days and times when each committee entertained petitions to shop about for the most favourable conditions.

The admittance process was not an entirely unbalanced affair, weighted entirely in benefactors’ favour. Whether voluntary applicants or court referrals, petitioners could — and routinely did — use their knowledge of the system to influence their chances of success and secure charity upon their terms, not those of their social superiors.

**Institutionalization**

In 1788, a battle of wills broke out between the officials of the Philanthropic and a young female object:

A girl… told a wilful lie, for which she was whipped; she declared she would go away, and those about her thought it necessary to watch her, lest she should escape. This gave a dangerous consequence to the girl, and turned the society’s threat [of expulsion] on itself.\(^{240}\)

When the governors eventually decided to expel the girl, her fellow objects interceded on her behalf, and she begged on her knees for forgiveness. Although the governors claimed victory, the incident demonstrates the power held by objects. Poor, young, female, the girl was hardly the social equal of her wealthy, middle-aged, and male benefactors. Nevertheless, this single object posed a “dangerous” threat to the smooth functioning of the institution; the governors believed her capable of spurring her companions to similar rebellions. She turned the tables on

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\(^{239}\) Petition summary of Ann Stevenson to the Refuge, April 8, 1820 (HAD D/S/4/5).

\(^{240}\) This girl is not identified by name in the account of the incident. *First Report* (1789), 44-45.
her superiors, switching the roles of victim and aggressor. Whipped and kept against her will, she portrayed herself—and not her benefactors—as the wronged party. Moreover, her actions threw into question the charity’s disciplinary methods. The governors envisaged that the threat of eviction would be enough to secure objects’ submission. However, the threat was met with exactly the opposite reaction in the girl’s case, forcing the governors to proceed with expulsion, an outcome they would have preferred to avoid. Objects’ agency did not end once they were admitted into the institutions. Far from being “remarkable for industry, activity, decency, and obedience,” they often challenged the authority of their superiors, misused the resources offered them, and rejected the moral teachings which formed the cornerstone of the philanthropists’ agenda of reform.  

Misconduct in the institutions was common. The charities’ minute books and registers indicate that objects frequently behaved in ways which contradicted the virtues they were taught: industry, honesty, piety, obedience, good temper, kindness, decent language, gratitude, and contentment. Fights broke out periodically among the males. One Philanthropic boy attacked his companion with a candlestick and poker, while Richard Starkey “struck another boy with a hammer in the face.” In the Refuge’s shoemaking workroom, John Greathead called John Moore a “monkey,” to which Moore responded by striking Greathead. Greathead then stabbed Moore with a knife, seriously wounding him. Philanthropic boys left charity premises without permission to visit friends, plunder neighbouring gardens or shops, or to see fireworks or

241. Short Account of the Philanthropic (1791), 5.
242. First Report (1789), 45-46; Whitten, 76.
243. John Greathead was tried at the Old Bailey for this assault. Curiously, Moore seemed to feel little animosity towards Greathead, for Moore testified during the trial: “The prisoner said he was sorry, and we shook hands… I do not think he owed me any malice when he did it.” Greathead was found not guilty as the court declared that the stabbing “was done at the impulse of a moment.” The Times, February 24, 1817; Old Bailey trial of John Greathead, April 16, 1817 (t18170416-104).
executions.\textsuperscript{244} One boy used the Philanthropic’s presses to produce an “obscene Print.”\textsuperscript{245} Objects in both institutions were punished for smoking, gambling, drunkenness, and saucy and indecent language. The governors’ efforts to segregate males and females were not always successful. Philanthropic boys communicated with the girls over the walls which separated their respective quarters and the Refuge typically discharged one or two young women every year due to pregnancy.\textsuperscript{246}

Despite governors’ attempts to prevent the spread of bad morals through supervision and classification, opportunities for inmate-to-inmate corruption existed. Separate beds did not stop some Refuge females from forming “intimate” attachments which Peter King has interpreted as sexual in nature.\textsuperscript{247} Former Refuge object Mrs. D*** reportedly claimed that she had been “completely depraved by her female companions” in the institution and that “her confinement laid the foundation for her future infamy” as a prostitute. In her opinion, reformatories were “nurseries of vice.”\textsuperscript{248} Youths often acted in groups to steal and/or abscond from the institutions.

\[\text{Footnotes}\]
\textsuperscript{244} Dick, 283; Whitten, 70.
\textsuperscript{245} Dick, 295.
\textsuperscript{246} In some of these cases, the young women had been pregnant when admitted.
\textsuperscript{247} The minute books record that several girls were “restrained” and threatened with expulsion for conducting improper relationships; however, the secretary did not provide details as to what made these relationships improper. Refuge minute book, August, 1814; King, ed., Narratives of the Poor, 124-125, 126.
\textsuperscript{248} The biography of Mrs. D*** was written by Rev. Henry Revell as an exemplary narrative warning against sin and providing an uplifting account of a sinner’s repentance. Revell claimed that he had met Mrs. D*** while she was dying of consumption in August of 1830. Although Revell may have invented the tale, it is quite possible that Mrs. D*** was Margaret Hanley who entered the Refuge in 1817. The tract notes that Mrs. D***’s maiden name was Henly, that she was admitted into the Refuge at fourteen-and-a-half (an admittance which places her admittance at 1816 or 1817), and that she had been with a man in a brothel for the first time shortly before she became an object of the Refuge. All these details match with those in the petition summary of Margaret Hanley. If based on true events, Revell’s account is one of few sources that records an ex-object’s perception of institutionalization. Petition summary of Margaret Hanley to the Refuge, August 9, 1817; Henry Revell, An Extraordinary but Authentic Narrative of the Penitence and Death of the Notorious Mrs. D***… (London: J. Hatchard and Sons, 1832), 104-105.
In October of 1819, the Refuge governors foiled an attempt by five young women to abscond with articles from the laundry. 249

Both the Philanthropic and Refuge waged a constant battle against absconding. The Philanthropic reported that 51 of the 176 boys (29 per cent) and 5 of the 60 girls (8 per cent) admitted during the institution’s first six years had absconded permanently. 250 In 1817, 2 Refuge males (12 per cent of all males discharged that year) ran away. In 1826, 5 males (6 per cent of males discharged) and 7 females (4 per cent of females discharged) absconded, as did 8 males (9 per cent of males discharged) and 7 females (7 per cent of females discharged) in 1830. 251 Some years brought much more trouble in this regard than others. In the space of six months alone in 1825, 12 boys (26 per cent of males discharged during this period) ran away from the Refuge. 252 The Philanthropic lost first 8, then 13, and finally 17 girl in three separate mass escapes in 1817. Considering the institution housed only 35 females at a time, these were significant numbers. 253 Indeed, the numbers quoted by the institutions do not provide an accurate impression of the scale of the problem. The figures only included objects who ran away permanently and do not take into account multiple instances in which objects returned to the institutions of their own accord.

249. Refuge minute book, October, 1819. For further examples of objects acting together to steal, see Old Bailey trial of Michael Conder, October 30, 1811 (t18111030-143); Old Bailey trial of Sussannah Feasey and Mary Knight, February 17, 1819 (t18190217-50).

250. Objects who absconded “permanently” did not return to resume their places in the institution after a few days’ freedom, as some runaways did. Philanthropic steward Thomas Russell claimed that fewer objects absconded in later years, after the institution’s grounds were made more secure. I have found no figures for these later years. Figures reproduced in Whitten, 78-79.

251. Incidents of absconding were reportedly more common during the institution’s early years (when security was lax) than in the later 1810s and 1820s. As the minute books do not survive from before 1812 and official tracts from this period do not provide figures, numbers of absconders for these years cannot be obtained. Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 17; The Morning Post, January 27, 1827; A Short Account of the Refuge for the Destitute (London: J. Dennett, 1831), reproduced in Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Vol. 4, Institutional Responses: The Refuge for the Destitute, ed. Peter King (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006), 47-48; Selection of Reports (1819), 152-153.

252. The Times, January 27, 1826.

253. The number of female abscondings in 1817 surpassed the number of places for girls within the institution. This can be explained by the fact that many of the girls who ran away were subsequently recaptured and new objects took the places of absconders who were not caught. Dick, 294; Whitten, 148-150.
were brought back by relatives, or recaptured by charity officials. Moreover, the officials did not provide figures of unsuccessful escape attempts, of which there were many.

The governors of the Philanthropic and Refuge fortified their grounds in order to prevent absconding; in doing so, the Philanthropic governors abandoned the notion that objects ought remain in the institution out of their free will and not out of compulsion. High walls, barred windows, and locking dormitory doors were erected and installed. The Philanthropic obtained metal collars and “logs” to physically restrain youths who were deemed likely to run. The governors of the Philanthropic meted out fines and corporal punishment with greater frequency and charged runaways with being refractory apprentices in attempts to curtail absconding, while the Refuge introduced solitary confinement in 1821. Yet, despite these measures, objects devised inventive ways to escape, including: stealing keys, forcing locks, squeezing through skylights or drains, and lowering themselves from upper-story windows by ropes made from bedding. The Refuge governors believed Susannah Feasey and Mary Knight got into a neighbour’s yard “by means of a short ladder—they must have got on each other’s shoulders to get up… then have gone over the tiles, and dropped down near the front of the house,” all while carrying one gown, a shirt, and thirteen handkerchiefs. Philanthropic boy John Leary reportedly shimmied naked through a chimney (he could not fit with his clothes on), hauling a bundle of garments up behind him, the string tying the bundle held in his teeth.

254. Ibid., 46-47, 71-72, 76; King, “Introduction,” xv-xvi; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 442, 452; Sessional Papers (1829), 185.
255. Although technically the institutions had no legal right to retain objects against their will, the governors justified the walls and other measures as “security” to keep negative urban influences out and objects safe.
256. Dick, 294; Whitten, 189; King, “Introduction,” xvi; Sessional Papers (1829), 185.
257. Whitten, 69, 130; Old Bailey trial of Emma Barker, June 22, 1826 (t18260622-197).
258. Old Bailey trial of Susannah Feasey and Mary Knight, February 17, 1819 (t18190217-50).
259. Police of the Metropolis (1816), 441; William Tallack, Peter Bedford, the Spitalfields Philanthropist (London: S.W. Partridge, 1865), 62-63.
Often, objects ran away simply to spend a day out or to visit friends; they quickly returned to resume their places in the institutions. Others, however, absconded to rid themselves of the charities altogether. Runaway Charlotte Murrell refused to return to the Philanthropic — or the “Nunnery” as she called it — hating the institution’s limitations on freedom and strict moral rules. Some juveniles did not view institutionalization as a permanent condition, as their benefactors did:

[A thief in prison] passively consents to go to the Refuge for the Destitute, where the confinement is opposed to his views; he thinks he has had enough of that in prison and, with one or two more [objects] of the same disposition, forms a plan to escape, which is too easily effected.

If docile when they entered the Refuge, youths were not prepared to passively accept conditions which did not suit them.

As in the cases of Feasey, Knight, and Leary, absconding often went hand-in-hand with theft from the institutions. As objects’ own clothes were removed from them and locked away upon admittance, the vast majority of absconders stole the charity uniforms which they wore. In some cases, objects took clothing which belonged to fellow inmates or materials from workshops or the laundry. Between 1815 and 1813, at least 11 Refuge inmates were brought before magistrates or the Old Bailey for stealing from the institution. However, only a minority of thefts from the institutions were prosecuted at the Old Bailey. The Philanthropic governors rarely prosecuted their charges, preferring instead to punish them within the institution. Thus, when Edward Lion stole several items from the porter’s box, he was whipped in front of all the

260. Whitten, 149.
261. This description was based upon interviews conducted with young thieves in Coldbath Fields Prison. Constabulary Force (1839), 386.
262. These were: Phineas Eastmond (t18150405-111), Sopia Baylis (t18150405-111), Charles Loadsman (t18180617-46), Susannah Feasey (t18190217-50), Mary Knight (t18190217-50), Ann Tyrrell (t18220109-20), Ann Simpkins (t18220109-20), Mary Ann Strange (t18230514-49), Emma Barker (t18260622-197), Julia King (t18290219-15), and Caroline Parker (t18311020-78). The brackets contain the reference numbers of relevant Old Bailey trials.
boys and surrendered his earnings. The Refuge, too, dealt with many cases of pilfering in-house, particularly if the stolen items were of little value or were returned to the governors. Other thieves were examined only in magistrates’ offices, tried in courts other than the Old Bailey, or were simply never caught.

The governors often claimed that absconding and theft were committed only by objects who had not been long under institutional care and who had thus not been sufficiently subjected to the reformatory regimen. This certainly applied to some objects such as Emma Barker, who had been an object of the Refuge for less than a week before she attempted to escape out of the matron’s bedroom window with stolen garments. However, many objects had spent months—even years—in the institutions before they committed offences. Of the 11 Refuge inmates tried at the Old Bailey, 4 (36 per cent) had spent more than six months in the institution, the minimum amount of time required “to receive… the benefits of the house” according to superintendent James Ross. Phineas Eastmond had been in the Refuge for one year and four months and Ann Tyrrell for more than three years when they stole from their benefactors. The case was much the same in the Philanthropic. Edward Lion’s theft from the porter occurred in his fourth year of institutionalization, while Weightman was in his seventh year when he and two other boys stole and pawned garments from the tailoring workshop. Despite long exposure to reformatory teachings, some objects refused to embrace the moral virtues of their benefactors.
While misconduct may not be surprising given the backgrounds of the objects, it would be a mistake to claim that beneficiaries’ bad behaviour was solely the result of habit, boredom, or youthful naughtiness. Historian David Green has argued that workhouse paupers’ “transgressions of ‘the conventional grammar of social encounter’”—refusing to work, destroying parish property, and complaining to magistrates—“reflect[ed] more than just rule-breaking activity for the sake of it,” but were forms of protest.\textsuperscript{271} The same can be said of many of the Philanthropic and Refuge objects. They often acted out their dissatisfaction and sought redress for perceived wrongs. In 1796, the Philanthropic governors significantly altered objects’ diet to cut costs; the boys made loud remonstrations and went on a hunger strike for two days.\textsuperscript{272} When the new cap she had been promised was not forthcoming, Refuge inmate Sarah Gillett cut her old cap into pieces.\textsuperscript{273}

Objects also forced to submit to discipline which they believed to be overly harsh or unfair. The Refuge matron placed Sarah Wade “under restraint” for behaving inappropriately with Phebe Dalloway; Sarah responded to this treatment by refusing to work.\textsuperscript{274} One extreme case occurred in 1814. A Refuge overseer ordered Maria Gill to redo laundry which Maria had not washed satisfactorily. When the girl refused to comply, the overseer denied her her dinner. Maria then attempted to set fire to her own clothes. Whether or not she truly intended “to destroy herself by fire” (as the committee believed), Maria registered her disgust with her treatment and portrayed herself as a wronged victim.\textsuperscript{275} Periodically, objects banded together to

\textsuperscript{271} Green, “Pauper Protests,” 138-139.
\textsuperscript{272} Dick, 294; Whitten, 86-87.
\textsuperscript{273} Sarah’s actions did not result in a new cap. The governors ordered her to mend and wear the cap she had ruined. Refuge minute book, July 8, 1820.
\textsuperscript{274} Ibid., August 27, 1814.
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., 1814.
protest against discipline. Groups of Philanthropic boys physically attacked society officials on at least two occasions.\footnote{276}

Absconding was another way by which beneficiaries demonstrated their dissatisfaction with institutional policies. In the summer of 1794, the Philanthropic governors ordered the boys to go barefoot to reduce expenses. Soon after, one boy claimed to have run away because he had been “obliged to go without stockings.”\footnote{277} The mass abscondings of girls from the Philanthropic in 1817 were due to objects’ dislike of the institution’s restrictions.\footnote{278} Running away often succeeded in changing governors’ policies. The experiment of removing boys’ footwear was quickly abandoned after the boy absconded.\footnote{279} Following the mass escapes of females, the Philanthropic governors dismissed one sub-matron and began granting outside visits to well-behaved girls.\footnote{280} The girls (including many recaptured runaways) were considerably less troublesome after this.

Some objects demonstrated a knowledge of the power structures within the institutions when they protested. Rather than complaining to the superintendents or matrons in charge of the day-to-day implementation of institutional policies, objects made their criticisms to individuals who were higher up the charitable hierarchy and who were thus better able to effect changes. Philanthropic boys informed the society’s clergyman that the porter was using a cane and cat-of-nine-tails to punish them; Rev. Southgate subsequently shared his concerns about this treatment with the committee.\footnote{281} Philanthropic objects submitted petitions to the committee to complain about a variety of measures: the wearing of badges, lack of writing instruction for females, early

\footnote{276. Whitten, 71, 166-167.}
\footnote{277. Ibid., 84.}
\footnote{278. Ibid., 149-151.}
\footnote{279. Ibid., 84.}
\footnote{280. Ibid., 150.}
\footnote{281. Ibid., 74-75.}
bedtimes, charity sermons which mentioned objects’ past criminal conduct, and an unpopular beadle.\textsuperscript{282} When Thomas Trimbath absconded, he proceeded immediately to the residence of the Duke of York, the Philanthropic’s president, “and... there reported that the cause of his running away arose from his not having sufficient food.”\textsuperscript{283} By approaching the charity official of greatest power and prestige, Thomas ensured his objection would be heard.

To the horror of the governors, some beneficiaries and their parents made their objections public. During her trial for robbing the Refuge of clothing, fourteen-year-old Caroline Parker accused the superintendent of the female establishment, Mr. Hoskins, of throwing a pail of water over her.\textsuperscript{284} James Ferry ran away from the Philanthropic while wearing one of the collars which the the governors employed to restrain objects. His mother soon brought him back to the society, but only after “having been before the justices at Worship Street, and... there complaining of the cruelty he had sustained.”\textsuperscript{285} Mrs. Ferry registered her displeasure and did so without surrendering her son’s place in the reformatory.

Whenever possible, the Philanthropic and Refuge sought to retain their objects. Abscondings and expulsions not only resulted in the governors having little to show for expenditures of effort and money, but reflected badly upon the institutions’ aims and methods. When Richard Leeworthy was tried for stealing five sovereigns after leaving the Refuge, the \textit{Morning Chronicle} declared: “What’s bred in the bone won’t come out in the flesh.”\textsuperscript{286} Educationalist Samuel Wilderspin interpreted the Refuge governors’ refusal to readmit John as evidence that they view him as incorrigible; John had turned bad “notwithstanding all the pious

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{282} Dick, 293.
\bibitem{283} Philanthropic boys’ behavioural register, quoted in Whitten, 76.
\bibitem{284} Old Bailey trial of Caroline Parker, October 20, 1831 (t18311020-78).
\bibitem{285} Philanthropic superintendent’s journal, quoted in Whitten, 72.
\bibitem{286} \textit{The Morning Chronicle}, September 25, 1825.
\end{thebibliography}
instructions” and “discipline he had undergone” in the institution. 287 Such commentary placed doubt on the institution’s foundational claim that juveniles were reformable and on the efficacy of the institution’s methods. In order to maintain their charges and avoid such bad publicity, the governors frequently gave objects multiple opportunities to redeem themselves after misbehaviour and even occasionally intervened to have objects who had been convicted of crimes returned to the institution. 288 Governors’ sympathy for their charges may also have influenced the decision to extend second chances to troublemakers.

Many beneficiaries took advantage of their benefactors’ desire to keep them under their control. This chapter has already explored how a single Philanthropic girl turned the tables upon the governors who threatened to evict her. 289 Objects pressed the limits of charity officials’ patience with their bad behaviour. Only after receiving several threats of expulsion did many objects beg for forgiveness (heartfelt or not). On August 14, 1814, Phebe Dalloway was brought before the Refuge committee for being overly intimate with Mary Ann Dodd; if her behaviour did not improve, they warned her, she would be expelled. However, Phebe was back at her old tricks less than two weeks later. When the governors decided to evict her, Phebe finally responded by “lamenting the disgrace into which she had fallen” and was permitted to remain. 290

Such pragmatic and well-timed expressions of “penitence” are littered throughout the minute

287. Wilderspin used the example of Richard Leeworthy to argue for the necessity of beginning moral education at a very young age (not at eleven years or later). Samuel Wilderspin, On the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor... 2nd ed. (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1824), 16-17; Samuel Wilderspin, Infant Education; or, Practical Remarks on the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor... 4th ed. (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1829), 14-15.

288. For example, twelve-year-old William Wiley, who had absconded from the Philanthropic, was sentenced to transportation for seven years for stealing cocoa in 1794. A member of the Philanthropic submitted a petition requesting that the boy be pardoned and returned to the institution. The request was granted. Old Bailey trial of William Wiley, November 11, 1794 (t17941111-10); Criminal petition of William Eady (HO 47/19/34), National Archives.

289. See page 64.

290. Refuge minute book, August 14 and 27, 1814.
books and behavioural registers, often followed by further instances of misbehaviour by the supposed penitents.

The Philanthropic tried to retain its beneficiaries by sending troublemakers to sea. The governors hoped that the boys, fearing this outcome, would refrain from misbehaviour or absconding. The plan backfired. After two boys were sent aboard ship in 1794, their companions who remained under the society’s care began clamouring to be fitted out for sea too. The superintendent “found it necessary to address them on the subject lest instead of [preventing]… their absconding —the novelty and useful desire of change would induce them to it.”

An effort by the Refuge governors to keep Mary Ann Strange an object failed in 1823. The governors hoped to punish Mary Ann for stealing garments from the institution themselves and thus avoid a public prosecution. However, the girl refused, “declaring she would not be confined to see the committee [to receive her punishment], but would take the event of justice” at the Old Bailey. Objects rarely took such a course of action, likely because the criminal courts could inflict much harsher punishments than could the Refuge (poor Mary Ann was transported). Nevertheless, even when their options were grim, objects exercised their own judgment and refused to be swayed by the wishes of their benefactors.

Several objects profited from the institutions’ willingness to readmit absconders, thieves, and even expelled objects. Between his initial admission into the Philanthropic on July 7, 1793, and his expulsion less than two months later, William Causer absconded and was readmitted three times. Ann Tyrrell was readmitted into the Refuge after she had been “idle, impertinent, & dishonest” to the mistress with whom she had been placed as a servant. She subsequently

291. Philanthropic superintendent’s journal, quoted in Whitten, 69.
292. Old Bailey trial of Mary Ann Strange, May 14, 1823 (t18230514-49).
293. Whitten, 66.
stole, with accomplice Ann Simpkins, an enormous amount of clothing from the institution’s laundry. Despite this, she was sufficiently hopeful of another chance to declare during her trial that “if [she] was permitted to return, [she] would behaved with great propriety.” Indeed, the governors did allow Ann to return, although not before she had spent three years in prison for her crime. 294

Even if one institution was not prepared to readmit an offending object, other societies were often willing to take them. Several petitioners entered the Philanthropic and Refuge despite confessing to behaving badly—or even being expelled from—charitable establishments they had previously frequented. 295 Mary Middleton had been dismissed from the Guardian Society for knocking pears off a tree and refusing to apologize. 296 The widespread practice of readmittance and “charity hopping” may have encouraged misbehaviour. Aware that dismissal or absconding from one institution did not necessarily preclude admittance at another, beneficiaries might easily have become less concerned with toeing the line.

The promotional material of the Philanthropic and Refuge frequently portrayed objects as friendless—orphaned, abused, or abandoned by kin. Refuge visitor Samuel Hoare noted that “a great part of the boys are poor and destitute, and have not a friend in the world.” 297 Philanthropic boy Henry Smith was described as having “neither father nor mother; was found begging in the streets.” 298 However, a large proportion of beneficiaries in both institutions had parents and other relations. Of the 68 Philanthropic objects described in the Address to the Public (1790), 19.

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295. For example, see Whitten, 58; Petition summary of Sarah Parker to the Refuge, March 11, 1815 (HAD D/S/4/4); Petition summary of William Burgwyn to the Refuge, June 1, 1820 (HAD D/S/4/23); Petition summary of Maria Burrant to the Refuge, November 20, 1824 (HAD D/S/4/6); Petition summary of Sarah Brewer to the Refuge, November 17, 1827 (HAD D/S/4/7).
296. Petition summary of Mary Middleton to the Refuge, July 30, 1825 (HAD D/S/4/7).
297. Selection of Reports (1819), 154.
298. Address to the Public (1790), 19.
Public (1790), 36 (53 per cent) had one or two parents, 4 (6 per cent) had no parents but did have other relations, while 13 (19 per cent) had neither parents nor relations.\textsuperscript{299} Precisely half of a sample of Refuge petition summaries from 1823 record that applicants had one or two living parents. A further 22 per cent noted that parents were dead (or made no mention of parents), but recorded that other relations were alive. Only 11 per cent of the petition summaries noted that petitioners had no parents or other relations.\textsuperscript{300}

The Philanthropic and Refuge sought to limit relations’ influence over objects. The Philanthropic governors claimed that they acted in \textit{loco parentis}, replacing parents who were unable or unfit to provide for their offspring. Moreover, the officials declared their willingness to “employ the sword of justice to sever [the] cords of parental authority, which are used only to drag a child to ruin” by prosecuting criminal parents.\textsuperscript{301} Parents could visit the institutions only on certain days, and only then after having first obtained a ticket of leave from the committee.\textsuperscript{302} The Refuge committee expressly forbade some relations of bad character from calling at all.\textsuperscript{303}

In both the Philanthropic and Refuge, visits were always conducted under the supervisory eye of

\textsuperscript{299} Step-parents were considered to be parents. Mothers and fathers who were transported were not considered to be “parents” as these individuals could do little to support or influence their children from New South Wales. For the remaining 15 individuals (22 per cent), no information is provided about family status. \textit{Address to the Public} (1790), 17-22.

\textsuperscript{300} This sample included all the petition summaries recorded in 1823 which are featured in Peter King’s edited volume \textit{Narratives of the Poor} and digitized at Old Bailey Proceedings Online. Summaries which appear in both collections were only counted once. The remaining 17 per cent of summaries do not record any details about family, often because the summaries were unusually short.

\textsuperscript{301} There is no evidence to suggest that the Philanthropic ever prosecuted parents in order to secure a child; the institution had more petitioners than it could accept even without taking such drastic and expensive measures. \textit{First Report} (1789), 31.

\textsuperscript{302} Only relations and not “acquaintances” were permitted to visit Refuge objects. Ibid., 32; \textit{Selection of Reports} (1819), 154.

\textsuperscript{303} For example, the governors ordered that the sister of Selina Wright “be on no occasion permitted to see [Selina].” Selina’s sister seemed to have had much influence over the girl, encouraging Selina to leave respectable situations in service. Petition summary of Selina Wright to the Refuge, January 20, 1816 (HAD D/S/4/4).
the chaplain or another charity officer. Youths were only permitted to leave institutional grounds to see friends or relations under strict conditions.

In spite of these obstacles, relations were often reluctant to relinquish their children entirely into the hands of the governors. When agreeing to the admittance of their children into the institutions, mothers and fathers did not sign over their rights as parents. It has already been shown how the mother of boy James Ferry complained to magistrates about the Philanthropic governors’ collaring of her son. Parents (and mothers in particular) played active roles in the institutions and frequently appeared before the committees. Parents of runaways brought them back to be readmitted. Occasionally, mothers requested that the clothes of their absconded children be returned to them. Parents also often successfully negotiated with the committees; mothers’ claims that their daughters could find positions in service if only they had an extra set of clothes often resulted in gifts of garments. Parents also often suggested work placements for their children to the committees. If entreating the governors failed, objects’ friends might break the rules. Visitors sometimes gained entry into the Refuge without the necessary permission.

In some cases, parents actively obstructed benefactors’ designs. Both institutions released large numbers of objects to parents and relations. Ten of the 96 boys (10 per cent) and 7 of the 20 girls (35 per cent) who were discharged from the Philanthropic during its first six years went to family or friends. In 1817, the Refuge discharged 20 males (39 per cent of males discharged that year) and 14 females (29 per cent of females discharged) “to parents or

304. First Report (1789), 32; Selection of Reports (1819), 154.
305. Dick, 286.
306. See page 73.
308. Refuge minute book, 1813.
309. Refuge minute book, 1812; Selection of Reports (1819), 156.
311. Figures reproduced in Whitten, 78-79.
friends.” The governors allowed 20 males (23 per cent of males discharged) and 40 females (38 per cent of females discharged) to do the same in 1826, and 13 males (15 per cent of males discharged) and 28 females (27 per cent of females discharged) in 1830.\footnote{Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 17; The Morning Post, January 27, 1827; Short Account of the Refuge (1831), 47-48.} In some years, the number of Refuge objects taken out by their friends outstripped the number proceeding directly from the institution into apprenticeship or employment.\footnote{In 1817, the Refuge discharged 20 males to parents or friends, but only half that number “to good and respectable situations.” In 1826, 33 girls were discharged “to respectable service” and 39 to friends. Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 17; The Morning Post, January 27, 1827.}

Many of these friends and relations did not obtain permission to remove the youths from charitable care. The friends of Philanthropic girl Ann Powell took her out of the Philanthropic without first consulting the governors.\footnote{Old Bailey trial of Ann Powell, January 14, 1801 (t18010114-115).} Parents took children out on officially sanctioned visits, but failed to return them to the institutions at holiday’s end. The Philanthropic governors granted one mother’s wish that her eleven-year-old son return home for a brief visit. However, without informing the governors, she determined the boy was sufficiently reformed and kept him with her permanently.\footnote{It soon appeared that the boy was not reformed as he resumed his thieving ways. The mother eventually brought him before magistrate Sir Richard Birnie to seek his advice. Jackson’s Oxford Journal, March 9, 1816.}

If parents did approach the committees seeking their children’s discharge, the governors had little option but to yield to parents’ requests; the institutions had no legal right to retain objects against their will. Thus, for a variety of reasons — job opportunities, illness in the family, or simply the desire to be reunited— parents secured objects’ freedom. These parents seldom paid heed to governors’ agenda of reform, pulling their children from the institutions before they had spent the recommended period of time undergoing reformatory treatment.
Parents consulted their own needs and employed their own criteria to judge when their children were ripe for release.

In some extreme cases, relations conspired in objects’ rebellions by harbouring runaways and frustrating charity officials’ attempts to reclaim the youths. When Mary Moore absconded from the Refuge, her mother not only failed to insist upon her return, but had the temerity to petition for the admittance of a second daughter Margaret some time afterwards.\textsuperscript{316} A Philanthropic official went looking for runaways Zylpha Williams and Mary French at the lodgings of Mary’s grandmother, but the woman “hid them under the bed” and refused to relinquish Mary, claiming that “she would get her a place [in service] herself.”\textsuperscript{317} The superintendent had no better luck securing Charlotte Murrell. He tracked the girl to a house but was forced into retreat after Charlotte’s stepfather threatened him that “if [he] attempted to force the lock, or proceed farther into his house… he should make the Society pay for it.”\textsuperscript{318} Despite their lowly social status, mothers and fathers asserted their parental prerogatives to see their children, to control their whereabouts, and to deem what types of discipline and employment were suitable for them.

The “gift exchange” in the Philanthropic and Refuge did not function so smoothly as benefactors might desire. Many beneficiaries failed to embrace the virtues of obedience, honesty, and piety, conducting immoral and criminal behaviour right under their benefactors’ noses. Far from passively and gratefully swallowing treatment which they perceived to be unfair or unsatisfactory, objects (and their parents) voiced their complaints, rioted, or voted with their feet.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{316} Margaret was admitted. Petition summaries of Margaret Moore to the Refuge, July 12 and 19, 1823 (HAD D/S/4/6).
\item \textsuperscript{317} Except in instances where objects stole property while absconding, the Refuge officials did not track runaways down. Philanthropic superintendent’s journal, quoted in Whitten, 149.
\item \textsuperscript{318} Philanthropic minute book, quoted in Whitten, 150.
\end{itemize}
CHAPTER THREE

The promotional tracts of the Philanthropic and Refuge are replete with tales of street urchins transformed into tradesmen and former prostitutes who became respectable wives and mothers. The Refuge described one former object who had been “snatched from a… life of vice and misery… and restored to the society of virtuous people… where she is likely to pass the remainder of her life in sobriety, honesty, and comfort.” While the institutions certainly effected some reformations, the governors exaggerated their success in official publications. Parliamentary investigations, trials, and newspaper reports show that a significant proportion of beneficiaries—a third or more—failed to live up to their benefactors’ expectations that they lead moral, industrious, and self-sufficient adult lives. Moreover, the governors were often unwilling to acknowledge that the institutions’ systems of moral and occupational training were partly to blame for these failures, as some evidence suggests.

The founders of the Philanthropic and Refuge hoped that the morals and occupational skills which they imparted to objects would not only guide and provide for them while in the institutions, but would continue to do so for the remainder of their lives. Despite benefactors’ long-term goals, studies of the two charities typically engage only a small component of objects’ lifespans—that time which they spent under charitable care. There has been no work on the post-institutional conduct of the Refuge’s objects, while the adult lives of Philanthropic beneficiaries are only slightly better understood. Muriel Whitten’s monograph on the Philanthropic touches upon the topic of recidivism, but does not provide any detailed analysis. In a brief section of his dissertation, Malcolm McKinnon Dick argued that the Philanthropic’s

319. Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 22.
320. Whitten, 92.
occupational training failed to adequately prepare objects (particularly males) for adult independence. However, his evidence came from a single investigation conducted by the society in 1840 and did not discuss criminality.\(^{321}\)

Historians’ reluctance to explore the post-institutional lives of beneficiaries is perhaps due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence. The charities themselves experienced great difficulty keeping track of former objects and statistical data is difficult, if not impossible, to compile given the dispersal of ex-objects and the vagaries of reporting. However, investigations, trial records, and newspapers can allow the historian to identify patterns of post-institutional behaviour which may have been common to many beneficiaries.

The Refuge kept yearly accounts which recorded the number of objects the institution discharged and the manner in which they departed from the institution. Occasionally, these were published in newspapers and printed reports. The figures for 1826 (Figs. 3 and 4) are fairly typical of years in the mid 1820s.\(^{322}\) The Philanthropic was less thorough with its record-keeping than the Refuge and did not regularly publish such information. However, in 1796, the governors did investigate the status of all objects who had been admitted between 1788 and 1795 (Figs. 1 and 2).\(^{323}\) Although these reports do not reveal how objects conducted themselves after discharge, they do suggest that many objects did not begin their post-institutional lives on a good footing.

\(^{321}\) Dick, 296-300.
\(^{322}\) The Morning Post, January 27, 1827.
\(^{323}\) Figures reproduced in Whitten, 78-79.
Figure 1  Males discharged from the Philanthropic, 1788-1795 (n=96)

Figure 2  Females discharged from the Philanthropic, 1788-1795 (n=20)
Figure 3  Males discharged from the Refuge, 1826 (n=87)

- Provided for by friends (23%)
- Apprenticed to trades (21%)
- To suitable employment (18%)
- Sent to the Surrey Society (10%)
- Gone to sea (8%)
- Discharged incorrigible (7%)
- Absconded (6%)
- Enlisted in East India Company (3%)
- Died (3%)

Figure 4  Females discharged from the Refuge, 1826 (n=104)

- Provided for by friends (38%)
- To respectable service (32%)
- Sent to the Surrey Society (13%)
- Dismissed at their own request (8%)
- Absconded (4%)
- Discharged in disgrace (4%)
- Died (2%)
- Gone to New South Wales (1%)
The records indicate that a minority, or only a very slight majority, of objects proceeded directly from the institutions into employment or apprenticeship. Only 7 per cent of the males and 35 per cent of the females (admitted and discharged between 1788 and 1795) entered employment in the field for which they had been trained.\textsuperscript{324} In 1817, 20 per cent of the males and 45 per cent of the females who left the Refuge obtained situations. This was the same situation for 50 per cent of males and 32 per cent of females discharged in 1826 and 55 per cent of males and 40 per cent of females in 1830.\textsuperscript{325}

The governors occasionally experienced difficulty finding situations for objects. Some masters and mistresses were unwilling to employ youths who had criminal histories.\textsuperscript{326} Moreover, the institutions’ strict selection criteria limited the pool of available employers.\textsuperscript{327} However, obtaining employment for objects was not so significant a problem that the governors released individuals whom they deemed “reformed” to fend for themselves.\textsuperscript{328} The low rates of placing out are due, rather, to the large numbers of objects who absconded, were expelled, discharged at their own request, or who were taken out by friends before the governors were able to offer them employment.

Moreover, the Philanthropic and Refuge obtained situations only for those who behaved themselves suitably well while in the institutions; many objects who were discharged to friends or to the parish were objects whom the governors believed insufficiently reformed to be trusted

\textsuperscript{324} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{325} Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 17; The Morning Post, January 27, 1827; Short Account of the Refuge (1831), 47-49.  
\textsuperscript{326} Police of the Metropolis (1817), 445, 453; Selection of Reports (1819), 156.  
\textsuperscript{327} In 1829, Refuge superintendent James Ross commented: “We can find plenty of people to take them, but the difficulty is to get proper situations with those who will look after them, and take them to church on a Sunday. I suppose we have twenty applications for one that we put out; but we always have three references, and we make inquiries ourselves besides inquiring of the people that we are referred to.” Sessional Papers (1829), 183-184.  
\textsuperscript{328} That is, unless the objects themselves requested to be discharged.
in the workshops and households of respectable citizens. Those who were most likely to reoffend were launched into their adult lives without the security of employment.

The Philanthropic had another means of disposing of unreformed objects. Between 1788 and 1795, 23 per cent of the boys discharged from the society had either been fitted out for sea or sent to the Marine Society to be trained up as sailors. While some of these boys were sent to sea because they had expressed a desire for such a life, the majority of boys was disposed of in this manner as a last-ditch effort to reclaim them. Boys who had proved immune to the institution’s reformatory regimen were placed on ships; the governors hoped that isolation from urban temptations and strict naval discipline would—quite literally—whip them into shape. Far from successfully reformed, these boys had little to show for their time in the institution.

Boys sent to sea were not the sole objects to leave in disgrace. Between 1788 and 1795, 56 per cent of the males and 25 per cent of the females discharged from the Philanthropic either absconded or were expelled. The corresponding figures for the Refuge were: 5 per cent of males and 4 per cent of females discharged in 1817, 13 per cent of males and 8 per cent of females in 1826, and 16 per cent of males and 8 per cent of females in 1830. Their manner of leaving the institutions did not bode well for their future good conduct.

330. Figures reproduced in Whitten, 78-79.
331. Refuge males also went to sea. However, the Refuge governors did not fit incorrigibles out for sea, but only those objects who wished to become sailors or who had previously been at sea and wished to return. For this reason, going to sea from the Refuge was considered as “employment” on page 85. *Selection of Reports* (1819), 152; *Sessional Papers* (1829), 185.
332. Even being sent to sea failed to effect any change in some boys. For example, the Philanthropic placed Thomas Pearce on a ship, but the boy ran away before it sailed and reappeared at the Philanthropic. Whitten, 65, 67-69.
333. Figures reproduced in Whitten, 78-79.
334. It is unclear why the figures reflect a greater amount of absconding in the Philanthropic than in the Refuge. It may be because the Philanthropic figures come from an early period of the institution’s existence (before charity grounds were made secure), or because the Refuge was more open to allowing its objects to discharge themselves or go to friends or family. *Short Account of the Refuge* (1818), 17; *The Morning Post*, January 27, 1827; *Short Account of the Refuge* (1818), 47-49.
In public, charity officials typically emphasized the institutions’ success in reforming youths. Philanthropic steward Thomas Russell declared that he “ha[d] no doubt the far greater number” of the society’s objects had turned out well.\textsuperscript{335} Such optimistic statements, however, are not supported by reported rates of recidivism or accounts of trials. Before a parliamentary committee in 1819, Refuge visitor Samuel Hoare provided data on all the males who had been admitted into the Permanent Refuge between 1815 and 1818, when under twenty years of age.\textsuperscript{336}

![Pie chart showing discharge outcomes of juvenile males discharged from the Permanent Refuge, 1815-1818 (n=131).](image)

Figure 5  Juvenile males discharged from the Permanent Refuge, 1815-1818 (n=131)

Hoare believed that, in effect, half (49 per cent) of all males discharged during these three years were recidivists — hardly an insignificant proportion.

\textsuperscript{335}  Police of the Metropolis (1817), 445.
\textsuperscript{336}  The category titles in Fig. 5 are those used by Hoare himself. Selection of Reports (1819), 151-152.
Although Hoare admitted that “the number of those who… returned to their evil practices is very high,” he claimed that the period which he had sampled (1815-1818) was unusual.\textsuperscript{337} The male establishment had moved from Hackney Road to Hoxton in 1815. Hoare surmised that:

> the majority of… cases [of males who returned to crime] were admitted at the commencement of the institution [i.e. at Hoxton], before we could furnish them with sufficient work, and what is also important, before we had any defence against their escape; and many of them on the committal of a slight offence, before they had experienced the benefits of the establishment, took advantage of the insecurity of the premises and ran away.\textsuperscript{338}

Hoare further stated that, should 50 boys be admitted as he spoke in 1819 —now that the system of labour was solidly established and walls, bars, and locks installed— he believed that 45 “would become valuable members of society.”\textsuperscript{339}

Hoare’s predicted success rate of 90 per cent was not to be. In 1827, superintendent James Ross studied the post-institutional conduct of 282 males who had passed through the Refuge during four years in the early 1820s (Fig. 6).\textsuperscript{340}

\textsuperscript{337} Ibid., 152.
\textsuperscript{338} Hoare admitted that he was “merely speaking at hazard” when he claimed that the recidivists had primarily left the establishment soon after it moved to Hoxton. Ibid.
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid, 153, 155.
\textsuperscript{340} Ross did not specify which four years he sampled. The category titles in Fig. 6 are those used by Ross himself. \textit{Sessional Papers} (1829), 184.
According to Ross, 18 per cent of objects resumed illegal activity and probably more, as many of those in the “doubtful” or unknown category were also likely recidivists. Ross found exactly the same percentage of ex-objects “doing well” (41 per cent) as Hoare had quoted in 1819. The apparent decline in numbers of confirmed recidivists from 35 per cent in 1815-1818 to 18 per cent in the early 1820s may not necessarily suggest that reoffending became less common as the Refuge evolved. Rather, the discrepancy may simply be due to Ross’ surveying methods. He included in his sample only those males who had spent a minimum of six months within the institution; had Ross considered objects who had absconded, were expelled, or left of their own accord before this point (as Hoare had done), the proportion of recidivists would likely have been even greater than he reported.\textsuperscript{341}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{341} Ibid., 184.}
The Philanthropic did not conduct detailed investigations into the post-institutional lives of its objects and the Refuge did not compile female recidivism rates to quote before parliamentary committees. However, official charity accounts and testimony before inquiries are not the sole sources through which one can catch a glimpse of objects’ conduct after leaving the institutions. Indeed, it is necessary to look beyond these sources to gain a broad perspective of the challenges objects faced once beyond charities’ walls. The institutions often lost contact with ex-objects. Charity officials claimed this was because youths were anxious to conceal their place of education lest their employment prospects be ruined by a revelation of past criminal conduct. The institutions were therefore imperfectly informed about the condition of their former beneficiaries; neither Hoare nor Ross were able to trace all the objects from their sample years. Moreover, in their anxiety to uphold the institutions’ reputations, the governors did not often acknowledge their failures. Trial transcripts and newspapers are useful as they describe many events of which the charity governors were unaware or ashamed.

While trial transcripts and newspaper accounts cannot be used to compile broad-ranging statistics, they can disprove certain claims made by the charity officials. Philanthropic steward Thomas Russell testified in 1817 that he was aware of no former beneficiary who had been executed and only one transported. Yet, prior to May of 1817 (when Russell gave his evidence), at least 5 former objects were convicted of larceny, 2 of pocketpicking, one of shoplifting and another of passing forged banknotes. Three of these individuals were sentenced

342. It is also possible that those who failed to keep in touch were recidivists who feared castigation or arrest. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 445-446, 453; Sessional Papers (1829), 166, 184.
343. Newspapers’ patchy coverage of crimes and the courts and their tendency to over-represent extraordinary incidents make them unsuitable for statistical analysis. The body of court proceedings (including not only those of the Old Bailey, but those of other criminal courts and police offices in which ex-objects were tried) is too large to make statistical analysis feasible for this study.
344. Police of the Metropolis (1817), 446.
to transportation and two to execution. In 1828, superintendent Richard Collyer claimed that only “three or four” out of the 1100 objects who had been through the Philanthropic since 1788 had been convicted of crimes after discharge. However, by 1828, at least one more ex-object (in addition to the 9 previously mentioned) was found guilty of larceny.

Newspapers and trial records also indicate that former beneficiaries of the Refuge were often before the courts. Of objects who had been admitted into the institution between 1804 and 1830, no fewer than 12 were convicted of theft from a dwelling house or stealing from master, 12 of larceny (not including the 8 individuals convicted of stealing from the Refuge), 4 of pocketpicking, 2 of shoplifting, and 2 of extortion. At least one individual was convicted of

345. The convicts were: Charles Crawley (t17930109-2), William Wiley (t17941111-10), Richard Greenhove (t17960622-40), Thomas Wood (t17960622-40), Mary Banks (t18000219-22), William Bradbury, John Leary, Joseph Williams (t18160403-29), and a boy convicted of pickpocketing in 1801. Another boy, Edward Edwards, was also tried for larceny in 1791, but the outcome of his trial is not known. Wiley, Leary, and Williams were sentenced to transportation and Crawley and Bradbury were sentenced to death, although not all of these sentences were carried out. The brackets contain the reference numbers of relevant Old Bailey trials. The Times, October 21, 1801; Police of the Metropolis (1817), 441.

346. The committee seemed a little surprised by Collyer’s claim, asking in clarification: “During the time you have been there, have you only heard of three or four who have been again convicted?” Collyer was also asked how he had derived this figure. Sessional Papers (1829), 166.

347. In 1832, another ex-object was convicted of larceny. Trial of William Miles at the Old Bailey, September 10, 1823 (t18230910-185); Trial of Henry Jones at the Old Bailey, September 6, 1832 (t18320906-279).

348. There are more reports of Refuge objects returning to crime than there are of Philanthropic objects doing so. However, this does not necessarily imply that the Philanthropic was more successful at reforming its charges than was the Refuge. The disparity is likely due to the fact that there were far more Refuge than Philanthropic objects. Not only did the Refuge surpass the Philanthropic in size in the late 1810s, but the Refuge’s practice of keeping objects only for a few weeks or months (in the Temporary Refuges) or from one to three years in the Permanent establishments resulted in a much larger turn-over rate than in the Philanthropic, where objects were expected to remain for seven to ten years.

349. The offence of “stealing from master” was created in 1823. It is here considered in the same category as “theft from a dwelling house” as the latter offence most often applied to thefts committed by servants. Those in this category include: Elizabeth Hatherell (t18150621-22), Ann Harding (t18160214-64), Eleanor Connor (t18190915-86), Joseph Bell (t18200517-28), John Bell (t18200628-4), Richard Leeworthy (t18231022-37), Mary Moore (t18240407-78), Susannah Dobell (t18250915-326), Mary Jane Searle, Ann Mitchell, Jonas Lawday (t18280410-163), Robert Young, and Frederick William Elliott (t18331128-72). In the larceny category: Hugh Farrell (t18160918-99), Thomas Owner (t18200217-100), Joseph Wilson (t18200918-216), Robert Stevenson (t18210214-117), William Bumbie (t18210606-23), James Holmes (t18211205-152), Edward Watts (t18240916-43), Catherine Bayliss (t18221204-46), Charles Whitmarsh (t18230514-130), John Head (t18260216-171), and Catherine Parsons (t18280529-163). In the pocketpicking category: Mary Fincham (t18170115-125), John Beasmore, Alfred Caesar Joy (t18200628-171), and Thomas Wilbraham (t18220911-300). In the shoplifting category: William Daltry (t18231022-46) and Margaret Moore (t18241202-162). In the extortion category: Joseph Mould (t18250407-99) and Frederick Denman (t18250407-99). The brackets contain the reference numbers of relevant Old Bailey trials. The Morning Chronicle, April 19, 1819; The Times, September 7, 1825; Convict records of Mary Jane Searle
each of the following offences: housebreaking, burglary, assault, and imposture.\textsuperscript{350} Two more
were charged with being reputed thieves, and several others were found not guilty of a variety of
offences.\textsuperscript{351}

Newspapers and trial transcripts not only cast doubt on officials’ estimates of recidivism, but also upon the efficacy of the institutions’ reformatory techniques. Charity officials often argued that ex-objects who engaged in crime were primarily those who had left the institutions prematurely.\textsuperscript{352} They reasoned that reformation was a lengthy process and that recidivists had not been exposed to the institutions’ moral teachings for a sufficient period of time to internalize Christian virtues. Moreover, as these objects had not completed their occupational training, they were unlikely to secure respectable employment. In the governors’ opinion, the system itself was not faulty; objects were to blame for failing to see the process through.

Certainly, many objects who left the institutions before charity governors had deemed them reformed—by absconding, expulsion, self-discharge, or discharge to friends—subsequently fell into crime. Some took to pickpocketing, robbing fields on London’s outskirts, and begging.\textsuperscript{353} Boys between the ages of ten and sixteen were particularly liable to join young criminal associates. Robert Young claimed in 1795 that he could “\textit{name} those who are now

\textsuperscript{350} (\textit{Brothers}, 1824), \textit{Founders and Survivors}; Convict records of Ann Mitchell (\textit{Persian}, 1827), \textit{Founders and Survivors}; \textit{The Morning Post}, December 12, 1832.

\textsuperscript{351} These were: Jonathan Batty (t18261207-61), John Thomas Davis (t18290716-61), John Malory Wiltshire, and a man by the name of White. \textit{Royal Cornwall Gazette}, February 21, 1824; \textit{The Morning Post}, December 14, 1825.

\textsuperscript{352} Selection of Reports (1819), 152; Sessional Papers (1829), 184.

\textsuperscript{353} \textit{Address to the Public} (1791), 26-27; \textit{The Morning Post}, October 6, 1821; \textit{Royal Cornwall Gazette}, February 21, 1824; \textit{The Bristol Mercury}, March 8, 1824.
again leagued with gangs of thieves.” Young’s description applies to Charles Crawley, who was “enticed away by two boys on the street” to leave his master at the Philanthropic twice and John Leary, who absconded to re-join the criminal gang of which he was leader. Some females took up prostitution after leaving the Refuge.

However, not all recidivists had prematurely left the institutions. Of the seven convicted Philanthropic objects for which it is possible to determine their length of stay in the institution, four had spent more than two years under charitable care. Mary Banks was an inmate of the Philanthropic for two years before she was placed out in service by the society. Joseph Williams stole a shawl in 1816 despite having spent eleven years in the Philanthropic. The Refuge governors believed that six months of institutionalization was the shortest length of time required to effect reformation. A large proportion of Refuge objects reached or surpassed this mark yet, nevertheless, returned to crime in their post-institutional lives. Of the 36 ex-objects of the Refuge who were convicted of crime, no fewer than 11 (31 per cent) had been in the Refuge for at least six months and/or had been placed out in apprenticeship or employment by the governors. Not all females who became prostitutes had left the Refuge with their educations

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354. Young, Mr. Young’s Report, 25.
355. Old Bailey trial of Charles Crawley, October 6, 1791 (t17911026-27); Police of the Metropolis (1816), 441; Tallack, 62-63.
356. For example, see Petition summary of Ann Peckham to the Refuge, December 17, 1814 (HAD D/S/4/4).
357. Mary was a teenager when she was admitted into the Philanthropic; this is why she spent only two years in the institution before being placed out. Old Bailey trial of Mary Banks, February 19, 1800 (t18000219-22).
358. On trial, Joseph claimed he was on his way to get work from the Philanthropic when a stranger threw a shawl into his arms. He was found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life. Old Bailey trial of Joseph Williams, April 3, 1816 (t18160403-29).
360. The following convicts had spent the recommended period of time within the Refuge: Elizabeth Hatherell (t18150621-22), Eleanor Connor (t18190915-86), John Bell (t18200628-4), Alfred Caesar Joy (t18200628-171), James Holmes (t18211205-152), Richard Leeworth (t18231022-37), Mary Jane Searle, John Malory Wiltshire, Jonas Lawday (t18280410-163), Robert Young, and Frederick William Elliott (t18331128-72). Of the remaining individuals, 4 had been in the institution for less than six months and information has not been found for 20 objects. The Times, September 7, 1825; The Morning Post, December 14, 1825; The Morning Post, December 12, 1832.
unfinished. Mrs. D*** was in the Refuge for two years and Jane Byrne for one-and-a-half years (and was placed out) before they were drawn into prostitution.\textsuperscript{361}

The official tracts of the Philanthropic, Refuge, and Prison Discipline Society claimed that male objects did well in employment. For example, the Refuge boasted of former beneficiaries:

The Committee have… placed him with a respectable master for three years, in order to complete him in his trade; and he is reported to be sober, steady and industrious, esteemed by his master and all who know him.

A situation was obtained for [A.B.] in which he has conducted himself with so much propriety, that his employer has already advanced him to a better employment than that in which he was first engaged.\textsuperscript{362}

The governors of both the Philanthropic and Refuge regularly distributed money and clothing to male objects who conducted themselves well as apprentices and employees.

However, not all young men deserved such rewards. Masters frequently returned objects to the Philanthropic after finding their performance unsatisfactory. The beadle of the Philanthropic claimed that boys were also routinely “turned out of doors because they [could not] do their work.”\textsuperscript{363} The Philanthropic governors conducted a study in 1840 to determine how their former beneficiaries were progressing.\textsuperscript{364} The findings of the study, presented in a report, were far from encouraging. Many males had abandoned the trades in which they had been trained at the Philanthropic or found that they required\textit{additional} instruction to obtain employment.\textsuperscript{365} Even those who had continued to practice their Philanthropic-assigned trade

\textsuperscript{361} The Times, January 19, 1829; The Morning Chronicle, January 19, 1829; Revell, 106.
\textsuperscript{362} A Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 35; Third Report, 181.
\textsuperscript{363} This investigation is discussed in this thesis as it examined the lives of many objects who had passed through the institution in the late 1820s. Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire into the State and Finances of the Society (1840-1841), quoted in Dick, 298.
\textsuperscript{364} Dick, 296.
\textsuperscript{365} Ibid., 299.
seldom rose to prominence in the profession. Out of 146 men, only 19 (13 per cent) had become master tradesmen.\footnote{366}

Philanthropic superintendent Richard Collyer stated in 1828 that it was objects’ “own fault if they did not turn out well.”\footnote{367} Yet, the institution itself was partly to blame for failures. As the 1840 investigation discovered, the Philanthropic’s apprenticeships were of inferior quality than those available outside institutional walls.\footnote{368} In traditional workshops, a master generally trained one or two apprentices at a time. Apprentices’ labour contributed to the master’s income and, upon completion of his apprenticeship, a young man might continue to work for his master. In the Philanthropic, by contrast, each tradesman was responsible for twenty or even thirty apprentices concurrently; this limited the amount of personal instruction, supervision, and discipline each boy received.\footnote{369} Indeed, evidence from trials suggests that supervision in the workshops was imperfect. For example, two boys were able to steal “large quantities of cards” from the printing shop before they were eventually caught.\footnote{370}

As Philanthropic masters were paid salaries, their income remained the same regardless of the revenue generated by the boys. Lacking a profit motive, the institution’s employees did not have “the same interest in teaching and disciplining the Apprentices as other Masters out of doors” had.\footnote{371} Moreover, the Philanthropic received contracts only for low-grade wares due to

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{366} Ibid., 298.
\item \footnote{367} Sessional Papers (1829), 165.
\item \footnote{368} Dick, 196-197.
\item \footnote{369} In 1793, there were 4 masters for 100 boys in the institution. The Times, April 23, 1793; Dick, 297-298.
\item \footnote{370} The boys had thrown packages of cards over the institution’s walls to avoid detection while passing out through the front gates. The Times, April 22, 1830.
\item \footnote{371} Report of the Committee (1840), quoted in Dick, 297.
\end{itemize}
competition from traditional workshops.\textsuperscript{372} The boys may not have been able to develop a full range of skills because of this.\textsuperscript{373}

The 1840 report also noted that many boys found it difficult to make the transition from a sheltered and supervised institutional environment to the streets of London, where they often lacked the personal networks to secure permanent employment.\textsuperscript{374}

Refuge males experienced many of the same difficulties as the Philanthropic males. As in the Philanthropic, juvenile trainees vastly outstripped their masters in number; supervision and discipline likely suffered as a result.\textsuperscript{375} The example of John Greathead, who stabbed fellow inmate John Moor, suggests this to be the case. According to the evidence given at Greathead’s trial, the master shoemaker had been out of the workroom for at least one hour and missed an argument between the two boys. The master returned briefly and told the boys to get back to work, but left again soon after. Greathead and Moor then came to blows.\textsuperscript{376} The goods produced by Refuge males were often ill-made and the institution periodically readmitted male objects who had been unable to perform the tasks for which they had been hired.

The Refuge males were considerably older (upon admission) and remained under charitable care for less time than did their Philanthropic counterparts. These factors may have made Refuge males less likely to experience the disorientation many Philanthropic males felt

\textsuperscript{372} \textit{Sessional Papers} (1829), 184.
\textsuperscript{373} Disgraced governor Robert Young also found fault with the occupational training offered by the institution after 1790. According to Young, the governors were more concerned with making money through the boys’ labour than with training them up to self-sufficiency. He condemned the society for abandoning carpentry and bricklaying as too costly, despite the fact that boys trained in those trades had done well. Young, \textit{Mr. Young’s Report}, 34.
\textsuperscript{374} Dick, 297.
\textsuperscript{375} In 1818, there was one master assigned to each trade; there were 24 trainee shoemakers, 23 trainee tailors, and 8 trainee basket-makers. In 1828, there were 2 masters for 25 or 26 trainee shoemakers, 2 masters for 25 or 26 trainee tailors, and another master for 6 or 7 hemp-dressers.
\textsuperscript{376} Old Bailey trial of John Greathead, April 16, 1817 (t18170416-104).
when released back into society. Nevertheless, older objects and shorter stays came with difficulties of their own.

Because they were adolescents, Refuge youths had often already undergone occupational training by the time they entered the institution. Edward Watts had worked for eight years with his father as a paviour, while Jonathan Batty was a plasterer.\footnote{Convict records of Edward Watts (Roslin Castle, 1828), Founders and Survivors; Petition summary of Jonathan Batty to the Refuge, April 22, 1826 (HAD D/S/4/24).} The Refuge often lacked the facilities to develop these individuals’ skills. For at least one male, the occupational training within the Refuge was of little advantage. William Massey had trained as a printer’s apprentice as a boy, but was required to take up shoemaking in the Refuge. While before the magistrate for a theft he had committed after leaving the institution, William attributed his failure to find work (and his eventual descent into crime) to the fact that he had not been allowed to complete his original apprenticeship.\footnote{The Morning Chronicle, July 9, 1825.}

As the case of William Massey suggests, one to three years of occupational training in the Refuge was insufficient to gain proficiency in a trade. The governors acknowledged this fact and claimed that the charity’s role was to provide foundational instruction; males’ training would be resumed in apprenticeships (found by the governors) taken up after discharge. Yet, as discussed above, only a minority of Refuge objects were placed in these positions (for example, 21 per cent in 1826). The Refuge discharged the remainder of objects when they were half-trained and had no plan in place for the completion of their instruction. Several objects were placed in low-paid, unskilled jobs which held little promise of advancement or permanent employment. For example, the Refuge sent Jonas Lawday to be an errand boy to a
brushmaker. While this position was suitable for a sixteen-year-old, it would soon be
outgrown.

In other respects, the Refuge governors failed to act in the interest of objects’ long-term
self-sufficiency. As Peter King has noted, the Refuge capitalized on increasing consumer
demand for firewood in the late 1820s and 1830s. A greater proportion of the Refuge’s males
was assigned to fulfill this demand in the 1820s than had been previously. In 1819, 23 of the 78
males (29 per cent) in the Permanent establishment were employed in woodcutting. By 1828,
this had risen to 37 of 97 males (37 per cent). Woodcutting was profitable to the Refuge; not
only was wood in high demand, but the task required few start-up costs and little training.
However, it was not such a boon to the objects. It was low-paid work, susceptible to market
fluctuations, and, as hard labour, was dependent upon the labourer remaining in good physical
health. Moreover, there was no shortage of woodcutters; any able-bodied workhouse inmate
could perform the chore. Far from rescuing males from the low-paid and temporary employment
which contributed to juvenile delinquency, the governors trained up some boys to be fit for
nothing else.

The females of the Philanthropic and Refuge fared better than the males in the workforce.
The Philanthropic report of 1840 concluded that the majority of girls had “turned out well.” In
official reports, female ex-objects were described as exemplary servants:

She continued in the same respectable service to which she was recommended,
nearly five years, and still maintains an unimpeached character.

In about fifteen months [of institutionalization] a place was provided for her, in
which she conducted herself so much to the satisfaction of her mistress, that

379. Old Bailey trial of Jonas Lawday, April 10, 1828 (t18280410-163).
380. In addition, virtually all the males in the Temporary Refuge were also employed in cutting wood.
Selection of Reports (1819), 150; Sessional Papers (1829), 187-188.
381. The report did not provide any detailed information on the females. Report of the Committee (1840),
quoted in Dick, 298.
she [the mistress] interested herself in obtaining for her a situation, wherein her services might be more amply remunerated. In this latter place her conduct was equally worthy of encouragement.\textsuperscript{382}

Many females received rewards from the governors for being well behaved in service. Philanthropic girl Martha Brown received three guineas for her “good conduct as a Servant during the term of nearly three years,” while Ann Franklin obtained several guineas for remaining in a situation for two years—an unusually long time for a London servant to spend in a single household.\textsuperscript{383}

There were, however, some problems with the occupational training of females within the institutions. Dissatisfied mistresses often returned young women to the Philanthropic and Refuge. Females also returned of their own accord to the Philanthropic. The governors worried that these girls did so because they found living and working conditions in service less comfortable and more onerous than those in the society (a major concern for an institution which prided itself on not raising objects above their stations).\textsuperscript{384}

The large number of females in the Refuge made supervision and quality control a challenge. Customers often complained that their laundry was returned to them in as dirty a state as when it had been collected for washing. As in the male establishments, tasks which generated the most income were performed by the largest numbers of objects. Initially, the Refuge instructed its females in a variety of domestic skills including knitting, needlework, cooking, cleaning, and laundering. However, the governors soon realized that washing was the most profitable venture and directed the majority of its female objects to this task.\textsuperscript{385} As a result,

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\textsuperscript{382} A Short Account of the Refuge (1818), 21-22.  \\
\textsuperscript{383} Whitten, 87-88.  \\
\textsuperscript{384} Ibid., 87-88.  \\
\textsuperscript{385} A small number of females continued to be assigned to the non-washing tasks; however, this was only so many as were required to meet the needs of the institution (for clothes, cleaning etc.).
\end{flushright}
many women departed from the institution with a limited set of skills, restricting the number of situations for which they were qualified.

Some ex-objects certainly resorted to crime because of need. After running away from the Refuge, John Paul slept on warm brick kilns and robbed fields to survive. Yet, in many cases, recidivism was due as much to moral failing as to poverty. There are multiple instances in which ex-objects committed offences despite being under the care of relations and/or holding respectable employment. Philanthropic girl Mary Banks was placed out in service by the institution. Her stepfather took her into his care soon afterward because “her character was gone,” upon which she promptly stole his breeches and waistcoat. The Refuge discharged Ann Harding into the care of her sister and brother-in-law. When her sister was out of the house finalizing agreements with a woman who had agreed to take Ann on as a servant, Ann stole several pounds’ worth of her relations’ property.

Objects’ behaviour in their situations often left much to be desired. Shoemaker Mr. Godwin claimed that Refuge boy Robert Young “was in the habit of… getting so beastly drunk that he had more than once undergone the operation of leeching to restore him to his senses.” John Malory Wiltshire was tried for raping the daughter of his master. Jane Byrne combined domestic service and prostitution, even going so far as to entertain clients in her master’s house. Objects were frequently returned to the institutions for behaving badly in their situations. In 1800, the mistress of Philanthropic girl Ann Parker informed the charity

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386. John died by asphyxiating on the “effluvia” from a kiln upon which he slept. *The Morning Post*, October 6, 1821.
387. Old Bailey trial of Mary Banks, February 19, 1800 (t18000219-22).
388. Old Bailey trial of Ann Harding, February 14, 1816 (t18160214-64).
390. John was found not guilty of the rape, but was subsequently tried for assaulting the girl and was convicted. *The Times*, August 12, 1825; *The Morning Chronicle*, August 12, 1825; *The Morning Post*, August 12, 1825; *The Morning Post*, December 14, 1825.
committee that she was determined to dismiss the girl as her “conduct… [had been] very reprehensible.”

Theft from masters and mistresses was common. Susannah Brown was readmitted into the Philanthropic after stealing several items from her mistress’ shop. Of 36 Refuge objects who were convicted post-institutionalization, 10 (28 per cent) had stolen from employers. Indeed, some evidence suggests that the institutions unwittingly facilitated property crime.

During the 1830s, prison reformer William Miles interviewed criminal boys aboard prison hulks and in gaols. Many of these youths were skeptical of reformation:

as to reforming, I think many of the boys might get a place [in employment] and wish for one, but it would only be for a day or two in order to rob their employers.

no boy who has ever been a thief would turn honest — might get into a place but it would only be for a sound opportunity to rob his master.

I would not trust a thief — they can never turn right — if they get a place it would be to run away after a month to get any thing they could get hold of

Several objects took advantage of the charities’ placing-out system by robbing their masters. Richard Leeworthy, Jonas Lawday, and Frederick William Elliott waited four months before making off with their employers’ property. Eleanor Connor lasted less than one day in her mistress’ service.

392. Philanthropic girls’ behavioural register.
393. Ibid.
394. See footnote 348.
395. Notebooks of William Miles, quoted in Shore, 146.
396. Objects generally spent some weeks “on trial” with employers. If employers were satisfied with their new workers after this period of probation, they kept the youths; if not, the objects were returned to the Refuge. The Refuge only gave objects a proportion of their earnings (from their time in the institution) when they were satisfied that objects were conducting themselves well in employment. Richard, Jonas, and Frederick may have waited four months to steal from their masters in order to first collect their earnings from the Refuge. Sessional Papers (1829), 187; The Morning Chronicle, October 25, 1823; Old Bailey trial of Richard Leeworthy, October 22, 1823 (t18231022-37); Old Bailey trial of Jonas Lawday, April 10, 1828 (t18280410-163); The Morning Post, November 3, 1833; Old Bailey trial of Frederick William Elliott, November 28, 1833 (t18331128-72).
397. Old Bailey trial of Eleanor Connor, September 15, 1819 (t18190915-86).
In addition to providing opportunities for theft, the institutions also improved objects’ criminal skills. Several ex-objects who stole from employers initially behaved exactly as their benefactors had taught them to do. Shoemaker’s apprentice Frederick Elliott, for example, was:

> very diligent in his work, docile in his manner, and used to read the book of Psalms over and over so devoutly that his master thought he had found a nonsuch. When his master offered him pocket-money he would decline taking so much, because he feared it exceeded his deserts [sic] 398

Richard Leeworthy, too, initially “conducted himself very well” as apprentice to a tailor. 399 The virtues of diligence, piety, humbleness, and honesty they had been taught (but not embraced) in the reformatory could be used to good purpose in gaining the trust of employers. Had Richard not behaved well, his master surely would not have given the boy five pounds to deliver to a creditor (which Richard took for himself). 400

Mary Jane Searle was admitted into the Refuge in 1822 after spending several years in prison for stealing thirty pounds from her master. 401 She behaved so impeccably in the institution that, after only one year, she was given an excellent character and found a situation as servant to Refuge subscriber Mr. Wallis. It was reported that “nothing could [have been] more correct, sober, industrious, and respectable than her mode of conducting herself” during the year she spent in the Wallis household. 402 However, while her master was out of town, Mary Jane stole silver plate from her master and all of her fellow servant’s best clothes. Mary Jane’s technique had improved since she had last stolen from a master (before entering the Refuge). Rather than simply denying responsibility for the theft (as she had done on the previous occasion) Mary Jane employed her literacy and knowledge of how a virtuous servant ought to

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400. Old Bailey trial of Richard Leeworthy, October 22, 1823 (t18231022-37).
401. Old Bailey trial of Mary Searle, October 29, 1817 (t18171029-4); Petition summary of Mary Searle to the Refuge, September 14, 1822 (HAD D/S/4/6).
conduct herself—learned in the Refuge—to better deceive her employers. After taking the goods, Mary Jane left a note for her mistress which read: “in consequence of the house being robbed in her [i.e. Mary Jane’s] absence, she had left; but that if she [Mrs. Wallis] thought proper, she would return. She had done all she could to please.” The Refuge had taught Mary Jane to be a more convincing thief.

The governors of the Philanthropic and Refuge overestimated the degree to which they could effect lasting change in the lives of juvenile delinquents. At least one third of all objects failed to meet officials’ expectations that they refrain from criminal activity. The governors also misrepresented, or misunderstood, the factors which contributed to recidivism. The institutions’ occupational training was often insufficient to secure long-term employment and moral education failed to prevent many beneficiaries from relapsing into crime. Many objects took the exact opposite course to the “straight and narrow” path which their benefactors had mapped out for them, reluctant to accept charitable gifts according to the terms in which they were given.

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403. Suspicion eventually fell on Mary Jane and she was tried and convicted of the theft. She was subsequently transported to Van Diemen’s Land. *The Morning Post*, September 7, 1825.
404. Or, in the case of the 1840 Philanthropic report, recognized the factors only too late to alter the course of many juveniles’ lives.
CONCLUSION

This study began by examining the concerns, ideals, and expectations of benefactors. In the late eighteenth century, the Philanthropists designed an institution to dismantle the growing criminal underclass. The founders of the Philanthropic aimed to prevent crime through moral education, rather than regulate through the fear and punishment of the gallows. The institution would not encourage idleness and dependency—as parish relief and many private charities did—but would raise its charges to live and labour as respectable tradesmen and servants.

The men who founded the Refuge in 1804 were, like the Philanthropic governors, concerned by the prevalence of vagrancy, prostitution, and crime in the metropolis. The Refuge’s reformatory regimen of isolation from criminal environments, moral instruction, and occupational training closely mirrored that of the Philanthropic. In the late 1810s and early 1820s, the governors responded to growing anxiety about juvenile delinquency by limiting admission to youths who had been convicted of offences. Concerns about the lack of classification within prisons spurred both institutions to adopt strict systems of supervision and segregation.

The first chapter demonstrated that petitioners and beneficiaries of the Philanthropic and Refuge did not always act in accordance to benefactors’ wishes. From the time of their application to the day of their departure, objects employed an arsenal of strategies to secure their own desires. Not only did these strategies often disregard benefactors’ teachings of honesty, gratitude, and obedience, but they occasionally undermined the foundational principles of the institutions, forcing benefactors to compromise and adapt.
The final chapter explored the post-institutional lives of objects. The governors underestimated the degree of recidivism and misrepresented, or misunderstood, the factors which led objects to reoffend. Not less than a third of objects resisted the teachings of the institutions.

This thesis has far from exhausted the Philanthropic and Refuge as subjects of historical research. Many of the techniques employed by the poor might easily form the focus of studies of their own. In particular, how the poor used and manipulated the courts and the referral system to secure charitable aid might be further explored.

Benefactors constantly worried about the influence objects held over one another. It would be interesting to explore whether these concerns were justified. Did objects view themselves as a community, defined in opposition to benefactors? How did objects organize themselves and act together to achieve certain ends? How strong were the ties of friendship and camaraderie formed between inmates of the institutions? How lasting were these relationships?

Both the Philanthropic and Refuge were premised upon severing objects from bad company. Further work might investigate whether objects’ relationships were sustained across the institutional boundary (as the large number of objects discharged to friends suggests) and in what ways objects maintained contact with former associates, despite institutional disapproval.

This study has touched upon issues of gender. The charity governors believed that males and females were susceptible to distinct moral dangers and committed different types of crimes. Although the Philanthropic and Refuge cared for both males and females, they did not treat both sexes identically, but tailored their education (particularly with regard to occupational training) to each sex. Females and males also conducted themselves differently while institutionalized and experienced unique pressures once free of charitable care. Further research might define
more clearly the reasons behind these gendered concerns and behaviours, showing how expressions of agency were not only informed by social class, but by gender.

When the Philanthropic children paraded about the London Tavern during the fifth anniversary of the institution, they presented an image of orderliness, obedience, and industry. Yet, as this thesis has shown, objects did not always so readily fall into line and march to their benefactors’ tune. These “objects of charity” consciously and actively manipulated the gift exchange, seeking the best bargain. In the Philanthropic and Refuge, beggars could be choosers.
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