

23 10-11). By the Romantic period, it was commonly assumed that Chatterton's genius
 24 might have blossomed had Walpole not spurned his appeal for financial support;
 25 callousness prevailed, supposedly leading to Chatterton's suicide on 22 August 1770.

26 The purpose of this article is to survey for the first time the nature and range of
 27 Walpole's philanthropic activities in order to demonstrate that Hazlitt's characterization
 28 of him as a miser was unfair. Hazlitt was led astray by Walpole's personal view of what
 29 constituted charity and what did not. I will show how Walpole's assumptions and
 30 practices were rooted in eighteenth-century cultural norms yet were typically singular in
 31 their manifestation. It makes more sense, the article will contend, to understand
 32 Walpole's view of charitable good works as akin to that expressed by Pope in praise of
 33 private, hidden relief of the needy, embodied by the Man of Ross (John Kyrle of Ross in
 34 Herefordshire) and Ralph Allen (upon whom Henry Fielding's Squire Allworthy in *Tom*
 35 *Jones* was based), who liked to 'do good by stealth, and blush to find it Fame'.² After a
 36 survey of Walpole's charitable acts, the article will seek to recover related themes within
 37 his 1764 Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto*, first published with characteristic self-
 38 effacement under a pseudonym. Hazlitt wrote on the assumption that literary talent such
 39 as Chatterton's was a deserving cause. Walpole simply did not regard this as the case and
 40 so found himself at odds with later commentators who, like Hazlitt, regarded his
 41 reluctance to extend patronage as hard-hearted. In the acrimonious exchange of letters
 42 between Chatterton and Walpole in March and April 1769, re-examination of which
 43 makes up the middle portion of this article, it will be seen that the same divergence of
 44 opinion about the nature of financial obligation is the principal bone of contention.

² Kyrle features in Alexander Pope, *Epistle III. To Allen Lord Bathurst* ('Of the Use of Riches'), ll. 249-90 and receives a brief mention in *Epilogue to the Satires. Dialogue II* (1738), ll. 98-9; the quotation referring to Allen comes from *Epilogue to the Satires. Dialogue I* (1738), l. 136.

45 Chatterton performed the supplication required of eighteenth-century petitioners for
 46 charity but Walpole, after checking his credentials, did not consider him to be in genuine
 47 material distress.

48 It will be argued that Walpole was a generous man after his own lights. But the
 49 final portion of the essay will suggest that Chatterton's 'Excelente Balade of Charitie', a
 50 'Rowley' poem traditionally interpreted as a cry of despair written shortly before his
 51 death, was a coded attack on Walpole's miserliness composed more in anger than in
 52 sorrow. Chatterton's view that artistic patronage was a form of charity was ahead of its
 53 time and arguably prevailed, evidenced by the establishment of the charitable Literary
 54 Fund in 1790 (the Royal Literary Fund from 1842) to save destitute authors from debtors'
 55 prison. This more impersonal mode of ministering relief could be said to avoid the
 56 dominance by a single powerful, often aristocratic individual associated with the
 57 traditional patronage system. The radical Hazlitt at the risk of contradicting himself
 58 seems to have resisted any form of handout that demeaned or humiliated the creative
 59 individual. In his essay 'On the Want of Money' (1827) he wrote 'I scarce know which I
 60 dislike the most – the patronage that affects to bring premature genius into notice, or that
 61 which extends its piecemeal, formal charity towards it in decline. I hate your Literary
 62 Funds and Funds for Decayed Artists – they are corporations for the encouragement of
 63 meanness, pretence, and insolence'.³

64 The article will also aim to generate some reflections on the significance and
 65 critical possibilities entailed in reading literary texts alongside charitable principles and
 66 practices. Literary and philanthropy studies (the current preferred critical term, although

³ Hazlitt, 'On the Want of Money', in *Selected Writings* (ed. Ronald Blythe (London: Penguin, 1970), 455-6.

67 in the eighteenth century charity could be distinguished from the broader category of the
 68 love of mankind) have seldom been placed in dialogue. One is chiefly concerned with
 69 modes of representation, the other with modes of action (who gives and how people
 70 might be encouraged to give).⁴ But there are emerging scholarly efforts to connect the
 71 two under the rubric of empathetic reading, or what we might call the sequential
 72 transition from the scene of reading to affect to action.⁵ Underlying Walpole's Gothic
 73 fiction and Chatterton's medievalist ballad, as with most literature of the period, is a
 74 shared belief that literature, by conjuring emotion, shapes behavior. Literary form and
 75 patterning are central to this process. The novel form of *Otranto* with its dialogic
 76 structure is attuned to expose differences between proclaimed principles and performed
 77 practices – the rift between 'true' and 'cold' charity described by Raymond Williams,
 78 which scores through this topic.⁶ Chatterton's 'Balade' as a more declamatory lyrical
 79 poem is better suited to vocalizing an act of supplication. One is defensive and recessive,
 80 as Walpole was, the other demonstratively registers the sense of entitlement held by
 81 Chatterton. Both are concerned with matters that go to the quick of morality: nothing less
 82 than efforts to ameliorate, if not relieve outright, the lot of humanity.

⁴ See the work of René Bekkers, *passim*. Peter Singer and the effective altruism movement consider representation insofar as it maximizes practical good: see *The Most Good You Can Do: How Effective Altruism is Changing Ideas About Living Ethically* (London: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁵ See the work of Derek Matravers, *Fiction and Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Kathleen Stock, *Only Imagine: Fiction, Interpretation and Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Literary scholars of the eighteenth century tend to focus on representations of charity in terms of gender, class and domesticity: see Donna Landry, 'Picturing Benevolence against the Commercial Cry, 1750-98: or, Sarah Fielding and the Secret Causes of Romanticism', in Jacqueline M. Labbe (ed.), *The History of British Women's Writing, 1750-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), 150-71 and Lisa Zunshine, 'Introduction', *Philanthropy and Fiction, 1698-1818*, Levene et al (eds), *Narratives of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 5.vii-xx, whose work mine admirably follows.

⁶ See entry for charity in *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1983), 54-5, where Williams notes the opposed senses of 'love' and the 'odium which has gathered around charity [...] from feelings of wounded respect and dignity' (55).

83

84 **Horace Walpole, Philanthropist**

85 As a son of Sir Robert Walpole, Horace Walpole was a wealthy man. During his father's
 86 lifetime Walpole held the lucrative sinecures of Usher of the Exchequer, Comptroller of
 87 the Pipe and Clerk of the Estreats which entailed no duties yet brought an income of
 88 never less than £3000 per annum and often considerably more; after Walpole senior's
 89 death in 1745, Horace inherited a sizeable cash sum, the additional office of
 90 Collectorship of Customs and the lease of the family townhouse in fashionable Arlington
 91 Street, St James's.⁷ From 1749, Walpole was also freeholder of Strawberry Hill in
 92 Twickenham where he would have paid the poor rate (recorded by the antiquarian
 93 topographer Edward Ironside as 2s. 6d. in 1787) and been familiar with the parish's two
 94 charity schools erected in 1740, one for 30 boys and one for 20 girls, and the parish's six
 95 alms-houses. A local tradition was for the vicar of St Mary's church (where Pope was
 96 buried in 1744) to throw £1 worth of penny loaves from the tower for poor children to
 97 catch in the churchyard below, before they were regaled with ale inside the church. By
 98 Ironside's time this custom took the more sober form of a distribution of cash doles.⁸

99 As fine studies by Donna Andrew, Sarah Lloyd, Hugh Cunningham, Joanna Innes
 100 and others have shown, in the eighteenth century charitable practices and the parish
 101 system of poor relief – the 'old poor law' before its reform in 1834 – underwent dramatic
 102 changes as a result of population growth, war, industrialization, urbanization and, in the

⁷ See Paul Langford, 'Walpole, Horatio [Horace]', fourth earl of Orford (1717-1797)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://0-doi-org.lib.exeter.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/28592> (accessed 10th November 2018).

⁸ See Edward Ironside's *The History and Antiquities of Twickenham: being the first part of Parochial Collections for the County of Middlesex; begun in 1780* (London: John Nichols, 1787), 2, 8-9, 71, 72, 115-17.

103 latter decades of the century, severe food shortages.⁹ Numerous schemes to combat
 104 vagrancy, begging and the social evils of prostitution and infanticide were promulgated.
 105 By mid-century, associational charities had brought the innovations of the joint-stock
 106 company into the eleemosynary sphere, such as the Foundling Hospital for the care of
 107 abandoned children established in 1739; the Lock Hospital for the treatment of venereal
 108 disease established in 1746; the Marine Society for training poor boys for sea service
 109 established in 1756; and the Magdalen charity for the rehabilitation of penitent prostitutes
 110 established in 1758. Andrew has shown that as posthumous bequests fell from favor,
 111 donors increasingly sought public recognition for their bounty during their lifetimes.
 112 Associational charities such as the Foundling, which boasted England's first art gallery
 113 with canvases by Hogarth, Highmore and Hayman and annual fundraising concerts
 114 conducted by Handel, rapidly evolved into places of fashionable resort and the public
 115 performance of virtue.

116 Walpole was wary of such displays, as his visit to the Magdalen charity in 1760
 117 discussed below indicates. More to his taste, inveterate correspondent as he was, were the
 118 private philanthropic networks that coalesced around *causes-célèbres*, galvanized by
 119 figures such as Hannah More and Elizabeth Montagu.¹⁰ Walpole anonymously
 120 contributed five guineas to the campaign led by John Thornton and John Wesley to
 121 relieve French prisoners-of-war held in England during the bitter winter of 1759-60
 122 (midway through the Seven Years' War), which raised £4000 (approximately £300,000

⁹ Donna T. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the Eighteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Sarah Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty in England, ca. 1680-1820: Wild and Visionary Schemes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009); Hugh Cunningham and Joanna Innes (eds.), *Charity, Philanthropy And Reform from the 1690s to 1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998).

¹⁰ Patricia Comitini notes the prominent role played in such activities by women and dissenters; see *Vocational Philanthropy and British Women's Writing, 1790-1810* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

123 today) for warm coats, shirts, breeches, stockings and shoes.¹¹ He also shared in the
 124 national pride that could be derived from such large-scale humanitarianism, asking ‘must
 125 it not make the Romans blush in their Appian Way, who dragged their prisoners in
 126 triumph? We abound in great charities: the distress of war seems to heighten rather than
 127 diminish them’.¹² Theodore, King of Corsica (really the German mercenary Theodor
 128 Stephan Freiherr von Neuhoff), lived off the charity of Walpole, who wrote about
 129 Theodore’s plight in a special edition of *The World*, and others until he died penniless in
 130 London in 1756. Walpole paid for Theodore’s memorial and composed its epitaphic
 131 quintrain that can still be seen today in the churchyard of St Anne’s, Soho.¹³

132 In 1783, Mary Hamilton, Governess to the Royal Family, drew Walpole’s
 133 attention to the case of Louisa, a mentally ill German woman who had been found living
 134 rough beneath a haystack outside Bristol. For a time it was supposed that she was the
 135 daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Francis I.¹⁴ Even while he confessed the curiosity
 136 and interest of the case, which resembled the plot of a romance, Walpole’s response was
 137 tellingly focused on material exigencies: he offered to trace Louisa’s relatives in
 138 Germany through his ambassadorial connections and offered to pay for medical
 139 treatment. Walpole may have been sympathetic to mental illness given that his nephew,
 140 Lord Orford, was certified insane in 1773. This may also have led him to bequeath £3500

¹¹ See his letter to Grosvenor Bedford in Walpole, *Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis *et al*, 48 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937-83), 40.453. The fundraising effort is recounted in *Proceedings of the Committee Appointed to Manage the Contributions Begun at London Dec. XVIII MDCCLVIII for Cloathing French Prisoners of War* (London: for the Committee, 1760), i-xiii. For background and analysis of the episode, see Erica Charters, ‘The Administration of War and French Prisoners of War in Britain, 1756–1763’ in Charters, Eve Rosenhaft, and Hannah Smith (eds.), *Civilians and War in Europe, 1618–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 87-99.

¹² Walpole, *Correspondence*, 21.367-8.

¹³ R.W. Ketton-Cremer, *Horace Walpole: a Biography* (London: Faber, 1940), 151.

¹⁴ Louisa became a minor literary sensation. Her story was related in *The Affecting History of Louisa, the Wandering Maniac, or, “Lady of the Hay-Stack”* (London: A. Neil, 1803) and Ann Yearsley’s poem ‘Clifton Hill’ (composed 1785). Hannah More and her circle supported Louisa for many years, but she died 1801 in Guy’s Hospital in London; see *Gentleman’s Magazine* 71.1 (1801), 280-1.

141 in trust to Elizabeth Hunter and Rachel Davidson Daye, sisters who were insane, in his
 142 will.¹⁵ In response to Hamilton, Walpole displayed his characteristic blend of picaresque
 143 wit and practical shrewdness when, alluding to Cervantes, he wrote that ‘if it ever is
 144 justifiable to good sense to act romantically, it is by being the knights errant of the
 145 distressed. Louisa shall be my Dulcinea, Madam: and you shall be the Duchess who
 146 countenances me’.¹⁶ This reconciliation of material relief and *ad hoc* charity that risked
 147 straying into the Quixotic evidently did not come easily to Walpole and only his
 148 perception of genuine necessity seems to have coaxed him into action.

149 Besides the semi-concealment Walpole found within networks of corresponding
 150 philanthropists, in the privacy of home he scanned the personal letters of appeal that were
 151 a staple feature of eighteenth-century newspapers. Andrew has written in detail on the
 152 typical dynamic between the petitioning supplicant and the potential benefactor that
 153 evolved within this sub-sector of periodical culture, noting that hired amanuenses were
 154 sometimes used and that donors could expect their bona fides to be checked.¹⁷ A typical
 155 example that corroborates Andrew’s analysis is Walpole’s response to two letters of
 156 appeal which he seems to have cut out of a newspaper and transmitted to his man of
 157 business, Grosvenor Bedford. On 24 September 1762, Walpole wrote to Bedford if he
 158 would ‘be so good as to inquire if the persons mentioned in these advertisements are
 159 really objects of charity, and if they are, I will beg you to leave a guinea for each, and put

¹⁵ *Correspondence*, 30.358-9. The will also bequeaths £300 in trust to one Mary Newton, *alias* Farren of Chelsea, as having been maintained by Walpole ‘from her infancy’; this legacy was revoked in a codicil after her death in December 1796. Nothing further is known of this woman; see *Correspondence* 30.360.

¹⁶ Walpole, *Correspondence*, 31.207-9. The reference is to Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, II, chap. 30.

¹⁷ Andrew, “To the charitable and humane”: appeals for assistance in the eighteenth-century London press’, in Cunningham and Innes (eds.), *Charity, Philanthropy And Reform*, 87-107.

160 it to my account'.¹⁸ W.S. Lewis, the editor of Walpole's correspondence, speculates that
 161 one of the advertisements may have been published in the *Daily Advertiser* three days
 162 earlier on behalf of
 163 a poor creature now lying in St George's hospital, having lost all she was
 164 possessed of in the world by the late fire in Pulteney Street; and who to avoid
 165 perishing in the flames, threw herself together with a little boy out of a two pair of
 166 stairs window. [...] She has not a rag of clothes to put on, nor either money or
 167 relations to assist her, but is a woman of an unexceptionable character, as the
 168 people of this house can testify.¹⁹

169 On 25 July 1764, the *Daily Advertiser* carried appeals from a 'poor destitute widow, with
 170 three children [...] all perishing from want of necessities' and 'a poor tradesman, eighty-
 171 seven years of age, that is [...] plunged into prison for a small debt, and in great distress'.
 172 On 30 July, Walpole sent Bedford three 'advertisements' with instructions to 'inquire
 173 after' them and 'if their cases are really compassionate, to give half a guinea for me to
 174 each [...] but don't mention me'.²⁰ Walpole also used Bedford as his conduit for the
 175 anonymous relief of sick prisoners housed in the various jails around London.²¹ In short,
 176 he was doing 'good by stealth' and stipulated that credentials were checked before money
 177 changed hands. As shall be seen, this was of a piece with his response to Chatterton's
 178 appeal for preferment when it reached him in March 1769.

¹⁸ Walpole, *Correspondence*, 40.270.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.270n.

²⁰ Walpole, *Correspondence*, 40.344-5. By way of comparison, Lord Townshend's account book for 1766-72 kept by his agent, Sir Robert Lees, records *ad hoc* payments of between one and five pence to individuals in similar circumstances; see Lewis Walpole Library MSS vol. 26.

²¹ Walpole sent two guineas to sick prisoners in the County Jail, Southwark and one guinea to prisoners in the Marshalsea on 29 February 1764, and one guinea to prisoners in the Fleet Prison on 30 July 1764; see Walpole, *Correspondence*, 40. 308, 345.

179 Where Walpole differed from eighteenth-century norms of genteel benefaction
180 was in his unease, bordering on active distaste, with the public performance of generosity
181 that was expected on the social stage provided by the associational charities. This is
182 manifest in his account of a visit to the newly established Magdalen charity on 27
183 January 1760 when he formed part of the entourage of Prince Edward. Francis Seymour-
184 Conway, Earl of Hertford and Walpole's cousin, was the Magdalen's Founder President.
185 Walpole's letter (incidentally the sole surviving description of the chapel at the
186 Magdalen's original site at Prescot Street, near the Tower of London) to his confidant
187 George Montagu draws attention to the occasion's pomposity, casting the penitent
188 prostitutes (to whom he is revealingly kindly) as nuns. The charitable institution becomes
189 a convent and the ceremony itself a popish spectacle laced with hypocritical outward
190 shows of piety and Gothic sensory excess:

191 This new convent is behind Goodman's Fields, and I assure you would content
192 any Catholic alive. We were received by – oh! first, a vast mob, for princes are
193 not so common at that end of town as at this. Lord Hertford at the head of the
194 Governors with their white staves met us at the door, and led the Prince directly
195 into the chapel, where before the altar was an armchair for him, with a blue
196 damask cushion, a prie-dieu, and a footstall of black cloth with gold nails. We sat
197 on forms near him. There were Lord and Lady Dartmouth, in the odour of
198 devotion, and many City ladies. The chapel is small and low, but neat, hung with
199 Gothic paper and tablets of benefactions. At the west end were inclosed the
200 sisterhood, above an hundred and thirty, all in greyish brown stuffs, broad
201 handkerchiefs, and flat straw hats with a blue ribband, pulled quite over their

202 faces. As soon as we entered the chapel, the organ played, and the Magdalens
 203 sung a hymn in parts; you cannot imagine how well. The chapel was dressed with
 204 orange and myrtle, and there wanted nothing but a little incense, to drive away the
 205 devil – or to invite him.²²

206

207 The preacher was the ‘macaroni parson’ William Dodd, whose sermon was on *Luke*
 208 19.10, ‘for the son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost’ and addressed,
 209 with the aid of lively gestures, Walpole noted, to the fallen women directly.²³ Dodd
 210 invoked lurid tropes of pursuit and seduction familiar from amatory fiction as he
 211 described women ‘lost to Virtue [...] treading, with careless terror, on the alarming
 212 precipice of utter ruin, and speedy *death*’, some of whom had fallen victim to ‘the
 213 complicated arts of seducers’ and ‘the treachery of perfidious friends’.²⁴ Both language
 214 and scenario are reminiscent of the plight of Isabella in *The Castle of Otranto*, the subject
 215 of Walpole’s dedicatory sonnet to Lady Mary Coke added to the 1765 second edition:

216 The gentle maid, whose hapless tale
 217 These melancholy pages speak;
 218 Say, gracious lady, shall she fail

²² Walpole, *Correspondence*, 9.273. Compare Walpole’s letter to Sir Horace Mann (3 February): ‘I was there t’other night and fancied myself in a convent’; 21.367-8. The Magdalen relocated from Goodman’s Fields to St George’s Fields, Southwark, in new buildings designed by Joel Johnson. See Compston and S.B.P. Pearce, *An Ideal in the Working: The Story of the Magdalen Hospital 1758 to 1958* (London: H.B. Skinner, 1958), 28.

²³ The sermon was published on 31 January 1760 as *A Sermon, Preached at the Magdalen-House, before His Royal Highness Prince Edward* and was reproduced in Dodd’s *Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Magdalen Charity* (London: W. Faden, 1763), 10 ff. On Dodd’s tenure at the Magdalen, see Compston and Pearce, *Magdalen Hospital*, 113-38.

²⁴ Dodd, *Account*, 89, 94.

219 To draw the tear adown thy cheek?²⁵
 220 Walpole observed that Dodd's pulpit *tour de force* reduced Lady Hertford and Fanny
 221 Pelham to tears, 'till I believe the City dames took them both for Jane Shores', a
 222 reference to Edward IV's mistress. This levelling of the lower-class magdalens and the
 223 high-born women tearfully consuming their predicament has the effect of reducing
 224 distinctions between rich and poor, benefactor and supplicant, sinless and sinner;
 225 Walpole in effect makes the blunt point that upper-class women have been whores too.
 226 Judge not lest ye be judged.²⁶

227 Indeed, there is great scope for reading Walpole's skepticism towards charity
 228 whose chief purpose is self-aggrandizing display into the plot of *Otranto*. It is set in
 229 medieval Italy with the Catholic doctrine of good works forming an intrinsic part of the
 230 novel's neo-Gothic fabric and, I suggest, its supernatural denouement. As is well known,
 231 the first edition of Walpole's tale was published anonymously on Christmas Eve 1764
 232 and purported to be a translation by 'William Marshall, Gent.' of the work of 'Onuphrio
 233 Muralto' (a partial translation of Walpole's name into Italian) a 'Canon of the Church of
 234 St Nicholas at Otranto', printed in black letter and discovered in the household of a
 235 Catholic family in the north of England. The 'editor' singles out for criticism the moral
 236 weakness of the plot, which rests on the doctrine that 'anathema may be diverted by
 237 devotion to saint Nicholas'; an instance, the editor avers, where 'the interest of the monk
 238 plainly gets the better of the judgement of the author' (7). This refers to the novel's
 239 backstory in which Manfred's grandfather, Ricardo, who by murdering Alfonso the Good

²⁵ Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*, ed. E.J. Clery (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

²⁶ On differing perceptions of the Magdalen charity, see Jennie Batchelor, "Industry in Distress": Reconfiguring Femininity and Labor in the Magdalen House', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 28.1 (Winter 2004), 1-20.

240 usurped the principality of Otranto, postponed divine retribution for two generations in
 241 exchange for endowing a church and two convents dedicated to St Nicholas, Otranto's
 242 patron saint. This device rests in turn on Protestant skepticism, shared by Walpole,
 243 towards the supposed Catholic insistence that good works even if unaccompanied by
 244 good faith acted in surety upon God.

245 Throughout the novel, numerous instances occur of false charity performed by
 246 Manfred and true, because selfless, charity enacted by more admirable characters.
 247 Manfred's first act is to betray his fiduciary duty towards Isabella who has been entrusted
 248 to his care as a ward, having been 'delivered by her guardians' into his hands after her
 249 father, Frederic of Vicenza, was captured by Saracens in the Holy Land (15). Like a
 250 villainous governor of the Magdalen charity, he abuses the victim he is entrusted to
 251 protect when he tries to seduce Isabella after his son, Conrad, is crushed by the gigantic
 252 casque of Alonso, threatening to extinguish his bloodline. When Frederic and his
 253 cavalcade arrive at the castle in disguise, Manfred offers them false hospitality in the
 254 hope of concealing the fact that Isabella has fled. In addition, Father Jerome (really the
 255 Count of Falconara) explicitly and repeatedly vilipends Manfred for uncharitable
 256 behavior; when Manfred threatens to violate the sanctuary of St Nicholas in order to seize
 257 Isabella who has fled there, Jerome demands he 'pray to heaven to pardon that
 258 uncharitableness [...] she is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and
 259 wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her hence' (46-7).

260 If Manfred and his grandfather's self-serving gestures represent the hollow
 261 simulacrum of charity Walpole despises, elsewhere in the story characters find that
 262 genuinely altruism leads to advancement and reward; *Otranto* may in this sense be

263 described as a romance of charity. The name of Hippolita, Manfred's long-suffering wife,
264 is a byword in Otranto for pious benefaction. When Theodore (Falconara's son and
265 unknown to him Otranto's true heir) calls up to Matilda (Manfred and Hippolita's
266 daughter) in the guise of a peasant, she replies from her window 'if poverty afflicts thee,
267 let me know it; I will mention thee to the princess, whose beneficent soul ever melts for
268 the distressed; and she will relieve thee' (43). Manfred tries to ingratiate himself with
269 Jerome knowing that the friar 'was employed by Hippolita in her charities' (47), and
270 Jerome refers to Hippolita as 'a mother to our house' (63), for she has endowed an
271 'adjacent hospital for the reception of pilgrims' (66). The emphasis on practical relief of
272 the needy in these references is noteworthy.

273 As the plot nears its crisis, we learn that while in the Holy Land Frederic had a
274 dream in which St Nicholas appeared to him, leading him to discover his daughter's
275 danger and return to Otranto to rescue her. This information is unearthed when St
276 Nicholas guides Frederic to a copse where a hermit lies in his death throes. Frederic
277 relieves the holy man who declares himself 'bounden to your charity' (81). Frederic's
278 reward is to be told the whereabouts nearby of Alfonso the Good's gigantic sword, whose
279 blade bears an inscription alerting Frederic. After this convoluted device the hermit helps
280 Frederic a second time by appearing to him in a moment of weakness as a cowled
281 skeleton; terrified into a renewed sense of mission, he escapes from Manfred's
282 machinations.

283 In her introduction to the Oxford World Classics edition of *Otranto*, Emma Clery
284 considers the reason for St Nicholas's prominence in the novel 'uncertain' (117). But on
285 examination of the iconography of St Nicholas of Myra and Bari (located along the coast

286 from the real-life Otranto, as Walpole would have known), we see that the saint is the
 287 logical arbiter of *Otranto*'s plot and winnower of true charity from false. St Nicholas'
 288 moniker in Greek is *Nikolaos ho Thaumaturgos*, 'Nicholas the wonder-worker', and he is
 289 traditionally associated with gift-giving. He is also the patron saint of pawnbrokers, his
 290 attributes being three golden balls which Nicholas secretly placed in an impoverished
 291 nobleman's house to provide a dowry for his three daughters, saving them from
 292 prostitution. In *Otranto*'s final pages, a vision of Alonso appears amid the ruins of the
 293 castle and 'the form of saint Nicholas was seen [...] receiving Alonso's shade, they were
 294 soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory' (113). Having witnessed the heavenly
 295 assumption of the 'good' votary, Manfred abdicates and he and Hippolita 'each took on
 296 them the habit of religion in neighbouring convents' (115). Like the magdalens minus the
 297 outward display of virtue conected by their public setting, Manfred's soul is laundered
 298 through private penitence.

299

300 **Chatterton: Charity Case?**

301 Among the many readers of *Otranto* we know was Thomas Chatterton, who read the
 302 novel during his spell as an apprentice in the office of the Bristol attorney John Lambert.
 303 Whilst there, Chatterton began composing, or fabricating, the corpus of sham-medieval
 304 manuscripts known as the Rowley papers, named for the fictitious fifteenth-century
 305 secular priest Thomas Rowley upon whom they centered. Chatterton's ingenious
 306 forgeries, which he claimed to have discovered in the muniment chest of the church of St
 307 Mary Redcliffe where his father was sexton, are well known, but a little regarded feature
 308 of the Rowley papers is their fixation on the philanthropic support provided to Rowley by

309 his patron, the real-life Bristol merchant and benefactor of the city William Canynges
310 (1399-1474). Charity loomed large in Chatterton's short life: a charity schoolboy, until
311 1767 he attended Colston's School in Bristol, endowed in 1710 by the merchant and
312 slave-trader Edward Colston; the motto of the school (which still exists) consists of
313 Christ's parting words in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), 'go thou
314 and do likewise'. As an aspiring writer precociously possessed of a sense of his own
315 genius, it made sense for Chatterton to place a prominent poet-patron relationship at the
316 heart of his imaginative edifice in order to coax a real-life patron forward. To understand
317 Chatterton's anger at Walpole's refusal to act as his Maecenas (as Walpole later put it), it
318 is important to recognize the emphasis placed within Rowley's medieval universe on
319 artistic patronage considered as a charitable duty incumbent on the rich. Evidently for
320 Chatterton this was an obligation akin to and, in his own case, coterminous with relief of
321 the poor.

322 It was disagreement over what was and was not comprehended under the cloak of
323 charity that caused Chatterton's incandescent grudge against the master of Strawberry
324 Hill, which, the concluding section argues, powered his bitterly ironic 'Excelente Balade
325 of Charitie', often considered the finest of the Rowley poems. We have seen that Walpole
326 was publicity-averse as a giver and uncomfortable with the possibility that donations
327 might draw attention to himself or attract accusations of self-interest, the abuses of
328 charity reprobated in *Otranto*. There is a striking contrast between this position and the
329 Rowley poems' framing of patronage as not merely a form of charity but one worthy of
330 public exaltation. Daniel Cook argues quite rightly that Walpole was 'caught in a
331 slippage between the old system of patrician patronage and the rising middling sort who

332 idealistically offered charity to unfortunate artists among their numbers'.²⁷ But, unlike
 333 Chatterton, and unusually for the age, Walpole did not regard the 'old system' of
 334 patronage as charitable at all, hence Hazlitt's misplaced objections when he did not
 335 pursue this type of relief.

336 A glance at the Rowley texts dedicated to Canynges reveals the patron figure writ
 337 prominently: witness the *Brief Account of William Cannings from the Life of Thomas*
 338 *Rowlie Preeste*, composed in September 1768, or the hagiographic *Life of W: Canynge –*
 339 *by Rowlie*, composed between December 1768 and February 1769 and published
 340 posthumously in William Barrett's *History and Antiquities of the City of Bristol* (1789).
 341 The first of these has Rowley recount his service as 'Fader Confessour' to Canynges and
 342 his brother Robert. Whereas Robert was 'greedie of Gayne, and sparynge of Almes
 343 Deedes', 'Mastere William was mickle Courteous, and gave me manie Markes in my
 344 neede'.²⁸ Rowley's status as a secular priest is significant: as a mendicant he is not
 345 maintained by any religious institution and is dependent on alms for his living; as a priest,
 346 alms given to support his writerly vocation (such as Canynges gives him) can be
 347 construed as an act of charitable piety. It seems that Chatterton through his eidolon
 348 Rowley was conflating creative talent with spiritual desert, a picture he unfortunately
 349 complicated when he presented the Rowley papers as the work of another person.

350 On 15 February 1769, Chatterton wrote to the bookseller James Dodsley offering
 351 what he said was a copy of *Ælla: a Tragical Interlude, or Discoorseynge Tragedie,*
 352 *wrotenn bie Thomas Rowlie; Plaiedd before Mastre Canynge* and angling very strongly

²⁷ Daniel Cook, *Thomas Chatterton and Neglected Genius, 1760-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), 88.

²⁸ Thomas Chatterton, *Complete Works*, ed. Donald S. Taylor and Benjamin B. Hoover, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 1.51. The biographical note prefixed to 'The Excelente Balade of Charite' repeats the detail of the bequest of 100 marks.

353 for one guinea to procure the original manuscript; it is not thought that Dodsley replied to
 354 this or a brief earlier letter of 21 December 1768.²⁹ The following month, on 25 March
 355 1769, Chatterton wrote to Walpole care of his bookseller William Bathoe, enclosing *The*
 356 *Ryse of Peyncteygne, yn Englande, wroten bie T. Rowleie. 1469 for Mastre Canynge*.
 357 This was a double hook given Walpole's known taste for medievalism and authorship
 358 seven years previously of *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762), where he argued for
 359 the value of pre-Reformation art. In his title, Chatterton again highlighted Canynges' role
 360 as Rowley's financier and added a note mentioning the existence of poetry by him, some
 361 of which 'would do honor to Pope', promising that 'the Person under whose Patronage
 362 they may appear to the World, will lay the Englishman, the Antiquary, and the Poet,
 363 under an eternal Obligation'.³⁰ Walpole sent an encouraging reply on 28 March and
 364 Chatterton followed up two days later enclosing 'The Warre', supposedly a twelfth-
 365 century poem composed by 'Abbate Johne', and what was probably *Elinore and Juga*.
 366 *Written three hundred Years ago by T. Rowley, a Secular Priest*, the only Rowley poem
 367 published in Chatterton's lifetime.³¹ In his covering letter, which he later destroyed,
 368 Chatterton made the error of asking for preferment. Characteristically wary (one is
 369 reminded of the tone of notes to Bedford), Walpole forwarded the papers to Thomas Gray
 370 and William Mason who promptly – and accurately – judged them modern forgeries. In
 371 particular, they insisted that the word 'glumm' in the first line of 'The Warre' ('Of
 372 Warres glumm Pleasaunce doe I chaunte mie Laie') was a modern cant term; as we shall

²⁹ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.171-3 and 157.

³⁰ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.259.

³¹ *Elinor and Juga* was published in *Town and Country Magazine* in May 1769. E.H.W. Meyerstein thinks this was the poem enclosed on 30 March based on Walpole's description of it as 'an absolute modern pastoral in dialogue, thinly sprinkled with old words'; *A Life of Thomas Chatterton* (London: Ingpen & Grant, 1930), p. 261. However, Taylor believes the poem was composed in May 1769; see Chatterton, *Works*, 2.955-6.

373 see this detail recurs in Chatterton's reaction. Walpole at the same time followed the
 374 practice of respondents to newspaper letters of appeal by commissioning his Bristol
 375 relation Lady Malpas to check Chatterton's credentials; she confirmed that Chatterton
 376 was an attorney's clerk bound to Lambert.³²

377 Walpole's reply to Chatterton is no longer extant, but according to his later
 378 published defense of his conduct in the affair, *A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of*
 379 *Thomas Chatterton* (1779), he wrote Chatterton 'a letter with as much kindness and
 380 tenderness, as if I had been his guardian' and 'urged to him that in duty and gratitude to
 381 his mother, who had straitened herself to breed him up to a profession, he ought to labour
 382 in it, that in her old age he might absolve his filial debt'.³³ The salient point here is that
 383 Chatterton, having a home and the means of present and future material subsistence, was
 384 not deserving of charity as Walpole understood it. By referring to himself as a guardian,
 385 Walpole cast himself as a figure willing to dispense advice but not untie his purse strings
 386 to a stranger. Chatterton, on the other hand, following Rowley's example, insisted that his
 387 literary vocation is worthy of support. He wrote again on 8 April making what to
 388 unsympathetic eyes reads as a naked appeal for money: 'Though I am but sixteen years
 389 of age, I have lived long enough to see that poverty attends literature'.³⁴ Walpole was
 390 unable to reply immediately having travelled to Paris, and after his request on 14 April to
 391 return the manuscripts went unanswered, Chatterton flew into a rage from which he never
 392 seems to have recovered. He wrote an intemperate letter on 24 July proclaiming himself

³² By some irony, the Malpas family were benefactors of St Mary Redcliffe Pile Street School, where Chatterton's father was writing master. Chatterton's elder brother who died in infancy in 1751 was named Giles Malpas.

³³ Walpole, *A Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton* (Strawberry Hill: Thomas Kirgate, 1779), p. 35.

³⁴ Walpole, *Letter*, 36; *Correspondence*, 16; 113.

393 ‘injured’ by Walpole and from mid-1769 onwards directed a torrent of satirical abuse
 394 against ‘Horatio Trefoil’, ‘Baron Otranto’ and the like, apparently to ridicule Walpole as
 395 a posturing antiquarian.³⁵

396 It is important to take stock of Walpole’s rapid descent in Chatterton’s eyes from
 397 hopeful benefactor to uncharitable miser. In Chatterton’s medievalist Rowleyan universe,
 398 the rich (the class to which Walpole assuredly belonged in Chatterton’s view) held two
 399 potentialities: generous patron (as William Canynges was) or embittered ‘gouler’,
 400 Rowley’s old-word for miser, or usurer. This significant character type occurs in the
 401 verse ‘entyrlude’ entitled ‘The Worlde’ appended to the *Life of W: Canynge*, in which a
 402 wealthy merchant instructs his son in the right use of riches. The ‘2d. Mynstrel’ in the
 403 personage of a ‘faytour [beggar]’ complains that ‘to mee a goulers goulde / Doeth nete a
 404 pyne avele’ and in a subsequent passage the avaricious are punished by ‘the Queed
 405 [devil] of goulers’.³⁶ At the peak of his anger with Walpole in May 1769 Chatterton
 406 framed a whole poem around the gouler persona, ‘The Gouler’s Requiem (quasi
 407 Requiem) bie Canynge’. This short piece comprises the deathbed confession of a miser
 408 for whom ‘ne moe the sylver Noble sheenyng bryghte, / Shalle fylle mie hande wythe
 409 weighte to speke ytte fyne’ and who must now confront ‘the Qwood [devil]’.³⁷ The
 410 association of these poems with Canynges underlines the nature of the choice the rich
 411 faced in Chatterton’s medievalist imagination as well as its blunter real-life counterpart:

³⁵ This group of texts includes ‘The Advice’ (published in the *Town and Country Magazine* supplement of 1769), ‘An Exhibition of Sign Paintings’ (published in the *Middlesex Journal* on 26 May 1770), *Burletta. The Woman of Spirit*, (composed May-June 1770 and published posthumously in the 1784 *Supplement to the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton*). The ‘Lines to Walpole’ beginning ‘Walpole! I never thought I should see so mean a heart as thine has proved to be’ were probably composed by John Dix, in whose *Life of Thomas Chatterton* (1837) they first appeared. See Nick Groom, ‘The Case Against Chatterton’s “Lines to Walpole” and “Last Verses”’, *Notes and Queries* 248.3 (September 2003), 278-80. Taylor classifies the lines among Chatterton’s dubia; see *Complete Works*, 2.986.

³⁶ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.234.

³⁷ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.

412 either earn eternal glory through the liberal dispensation of wealth or literally and
 413 figuratively go to hell.

414 This heated atmosphere, I suggest, is the compositional moment of ‘An Excelente
 415 Balade of Charitie: As wroten bie the gode Prieste Thomas Rowley, 1464’, posted on 4
 416 July 1770 in a letter to Alexander Hamilton, editor of the *Town and Country Magazine*,
 417 who rejected it. A late and artistically accomplished Rowley poem, its biographical
 418 significance and date are the subject of speculation and some uncertainty. A medievalist
 419 gloss on the parable of the Good Samaritan, ‘An Excelente Balade’ was traditionally
 420 interpreted as a rime royal cry of despair written shortly before Chatterton’s supposed
 421 suicide at his lodgings at 39 Brooke Street on 24 August 1770.³⁸ Yet the current view
 422 that Chatterton died as a result of mixing recreational opium with medicine for venereal
 423 disease, casts doubt both on this view of the poem and on Chatterton’s state of mind and
 424 evaluation of his prospects at the time – indeed Cook and Michael J. Suarez have argued
 425 separately that Chatterton’s career in the summer of 1770 was waxing prosperous.³⁹ If we
 426 accept the full range of Donald Taylor’s assessment, based on the internal evidence of the
 427 proportion of Rowleyan old-words in the text, that ‘An Excelente Balade’ may have been
 428 composed as early as May 1769, the poem can be placed in the very different setting of
 429 Chatterton’s ire at Walpole and opened up to very different interpretative possibilities.⁴⁰
 430 We need not share Taylor’s view expressed elsewhere that the earlier composition date
 431 robs the poem of ‘its pathos as a personal document’ if we relocate it, as the ensuing

³⁸ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 2.1114.

³⁹ Michael F. Suarez SJ, “This Necessary Knowledge”: Thomas Chatterton and the Ways of the London Book Trade’, in Nick Groom (ed.), *Thomas Chatterton and Romantic Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 96-113; and Daniel Cook, *Thomas Chatterton and Neglected Genius, 1760-1830* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 88-92.

⁴⁰ Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 2.1114.

432 reading will attempt to do, to another epochal moment in Chatterton's life: the clash with
 433 Walpole over the true meaning of charity.⁴¹

434 Internal textual evidence of the poem's preoccupation with Walpole's ill-
 435 treatment of its author abounds, both in the verse stanzas and the paratextual apparatus of
 436 notes and translations of Rowleyan old-words added by Chatterton. The use of rime royal
 437 with terminal alexandrines, a stanza associated with Chaucer and later with Milton, gives
 438 physical expression to the poem's keynote of defiance, for Gray and Mason had
 439 identified this very verse form as anachronistic in Chatterton's purportedly twelfth-
 440 century poem 'The Warre' (see below). The leading character, too, savors of Chatterton's
 441 self-perception at the height of his vexed dealings with Walpole. The ballad opens with a
 442 'hapless pilgrim', a poor but deserving wayfarer on life's highway, making his way on
 443 foot to 'Seyncte Godwine's convent'.⁴² The natural setting is one of plenitude and
 444 ripeness in sympathy with the maturation of genius: the 'apple rodded from the palie
 445 greene' and the 'mole peare did bende the leafy spraië', while a kindred melodist in the
 446 form of a 'peede chelandri' ('pied goldfinch'), 'sunge the livelong daie' (3-5). But the
 447 sudden onset of a storm ('a hepe of cloudes of sable sullen hue, / The which full fast unto
 448 the woodlande drewe, / Hiltring ['hiding, shrouding'] attenes ['at once'] the sunnis fetive
 449 ['beauteous'] face) compels the pilgrim to shelter 'beneathe an holme' (4-11).

450 At this point the poem's antagonistic personal agenda begins to reveal itself. The
 451 sketch of the pilgrim as 'pore in his viewe, ungentle ['beggarly'] in his weede, / Longe
 452 bretful ['filled with'] of the miseries of neede' and an 'almer' ['beggar'], beset by

⁴¹ Taylor, *Chatterton's Art: Experiments in Imagined History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 156.

⁴² Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.645, 2.16-7. Subsequent line numbers given in main text. For convenience, Chatterton's notes to old-words are shown in square brackets.

453 hailstones (15-21), piteously rehearses his view of himself as slighted by the world and in
 454 need. Then at the first mention of ‘Seyncte Godwine’s convent’ (16), a tart note remarks
 455 that ‘It would have been *charitable*, if the author had not pointed at personal characters in
 456 this Ballad of Charity.’ Rowley, a Yorkist, is said to be animated by his dislike of the
 457 Abbot, Ralph de Bellomont, a Lancastrian, but Chatterton is also signaling that his target
 458 is a real person and that the poem’s title should be understood as ironic.

459 Most brazen of all in the light of Gray and Mason’s criticisms is the description of
 460 the pilgrim’s face as ‘glommed’ (22). An unsent draft in Chatterton’s Bristol mentor
 461 William Barrett’s hand of what become the 14 April reply to Walpole defends the ancient
 462 provenance of the word ‘glumm’, arguing that John a Beverley, Gower and Lydgate all
 463 employed the term, therefore its use by ‘Abbate John’ in the twelfth century was not the
 464 solecism Walpole (channeling Gray and Mason) said it was.⁴³ Chatterton’s note to this
 465 line more or less openly refers to the exchange of letters with Walpole and the figure
 466 referred to therein is unmistakably intended for him:

467 A person of some note in the literary world is of the opinion, that *glum* and *glom*
 468 are modern cant words; and from this circumstance doubts the authenticity of
 469 Rowley’s Manuscripts. Glum-mong in the Saxon signifies twilight, a dark or
 470 dubious light; and the modern word *gloomy* is derived from the Saxon *glum*’.

471 To Hamilton and the average *Town and Country* reader these jibes may have counted for
 472 little, but in the longer term Chatterton was playing a risky game of brinkmanship by
 473 scaffolding a poem he still presented as authentically medieval with references to an
 474 ongoing personal feud.

⁴³ For the unsent draft, see Chatterton, *Complete Works*, 1.273.

475 The ‘Excelente Balade’s turbulence and instability and refusal to occupy either a
 476 medieval or a modern habitus are seen further when a lexical turf-war breaks out between
 477 the Rowleyan old-words and Chatterton’s petulantly stark translations of them in the
 478 ensuing stanza. Doused in self-pity, the verse and the translations together teeter between
 479 a true ideal of charity that is spiritually rich, open-handed and actuated by Christian
 480 principles and a false ideal that is materialistic, spiritually barren and mean. Chatterton
 481 has already translated ‘ungentle’ and ‘almer’ as ‘beggarly’ and ‘beggar’ and goes on to
 482 render ‘church-glebe-house’, in the medieval context a place of shelter, as ‘The grave’
 483 (24): ‘Haste to thie kiste [‘coffin’]’, the narrator urges the pilgrim, ‘thie onlie dortoure [‘a
 484 sleeping room’] bedde’ (25). The note of social protest punches like a gimlet through the
 485 poem’s medievalist fabric, nowhere more obviously than in the stanza’s final three lines.
 486 Their suspiciously un-medieval language receives emphasis in the terminal alexandrine:
 487 ‘Cale, as the claie whiche will gre on thie hedde, / Is Charitie and Love aminge highe
 488 elves; / Knightis and Barons live for pleasure and themselves’ (26-8).

489 Thus set up to fall and embodying the haughty callousness Chatterton/Rowley
 490 despises is the abbot, who rides onto the scene complaining about the inclement weather.
 491 An embellished version of Chaucer’s abbot in *The Canterbury Tales*, the abbot of
 492 Seyncte Godwine’s is an overdressed pompous fop: richly attired in a ‘cope [‘a cloke’]
 493 [...] all of Lyncolne clothe so fine, / With a gold button fasten’d neere his chynne’, ‘his
 494 autremete’ (the priestly robe symbolizing purity and simplicity) ‘was edged with golden
 495 twynne’, while his shone pyke [shoes] a loverds [lord’s] mighte have binne [...] full well
 496 it shewn he thoughten coste no sinne’ (50-54). A splendid flourish of Chatterton’s own
 497 devising are the trammels of the abbot’s palfrey, which the ‘horse-millanare’ had ‘with

498 roses dighte' (55-6); a droll note reads 'I believe this trade is still in being, though but
 499 seldom employed'. This medieval macaroni is strongly reminiscent of caricature of
 500 Walpole as 'abbot of Strawberry', known for his love of display, dressing-up, effeminacy
 501 and homosexuality (Chatterton may have been young but he was scurrilous, as his
 502 satirical compositions more than demonstrate).⁴⁴

503 Like Chatterton before Walpole, the 'droppyng pilgrim' throws himself upon the
 504 abbot's mercy, begging 'an almes, sir prieste!' [...] (57). But as with Walpole's reply as
 505 Chatterton imagined it, he meets with an arrogant rebuff:

506 Varlet, replyd the Abbatte, cease your dinne;
 507 This is no season almes and prayers to give;
 508 Mie porter never lets a faitour ['a beggar, or vagabond'] in;
 509 None touch mie rynges who not in honour live. (64-7)

510 We should recognize the acute class sensitivity of these lines, as Chatterton elides the
 511 'poverty that attends literature' with the far more manifest destitution of the pilgrim, both
 512 of whom are spurned by a wealthy man who neglects his duty to God to act charitably to
 513 those in need. Following the contours of the parable, there enters a 'limitour', a
 514 mendicant friar familiar in medieval literature who may be a type for Rowley himself.⁴⁵
 515 Unlike the abbot he is dressed austerely: 'ne dighte full proude, ne buttoned up in golde; /
 516 His cope and jape ['a short surplice, worn by Friars of an inferior class, and secular
 517 priests'] were graie, and eke were clene' (73-4). When the pilgrim begs a second time,

⁴⁴ On Walpole's sexuality, see George Haggerty, 'Queering Horace Walpole', *Studies in English Literature* 46.3, 543-62; Matthew M. Reeve, 'Gothic Architecture, Sexuality, and License at Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill', *Art Bulletin* 95.3 (September 2013), 411-39; Dominic Janes, *Oscar Wilde Prefigured: Queer Fashioning and British Caricature, 1750-1900* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2016); and Timothy Mowl, *Horace Walpole: the Great Outsider* (London: John Murray, 1996).

⁴⁵ The 'limitour' features in the work of Langland, Wyclif and Chaucer; see Arnold Williams, 'The "Limitour" of Chaucer's Time and His "Limitacioun"', *Studies in Philology* 57.3 (July 1960), 463-78.

518 the limitour unhesitatingly ‘loosen’d his pouche threade, / And did thereoute a groate of
 519 silver take’ saying ‘here take this silver, it maie eathe [‘ease’] thie care; / We are Goddes
 520 stewards all, nete [‘nought’] of oure owne we bare’ (81-4). Here is another hint that
 521 redistributing money from rich to poor has its own reward and that one should do so
 522 without question. Having upbraided Walpole by the limitour’s example, the ballad ends
 523 with a couplet that requires some unpacking: ‘Virgynne and hallie Seyncte, who sitte yn
 524 gloure, [‘Glory’] / Or give the mittee [‘mighty, rich’] will, or give the gode man power’
 525 (185-91). This complex syntax is to say that if the mighty and rich do not ‘give’, that is
 526 give their money away (not necessary to the utterly destitute, one notices), the Virgin and
 527 holy saints will instead give their power to the ‘gode man’. This radical sentiment is in
 528 effect to say that charitable giving is a duty incumbent on the rich on pain of divine social
 529 intervention and confiscation of privilege.

530 This is a message entirely in accordance with the underlying attitudes of
 531 Chatterton’s letters to Walpole sent between March and July 1769. Confident of his
 532 talents as he was and convinced that they were being squandered in the drudgery of legal
 533 apprenticeship, he evidently viewed his claim upon Walpole’s bounty in the manner of a
 534 right, and moreover was vexed and baffled that a person such as Walpole, who could give
 535 easily, should subject a claimant to humiliating scrutiny. Chatterton’s problem was, of
 536 course, that he was offering what he claimed were manuscripts written by another hand
 537 while claiming the reward of original authorship; Walpole deduced quickly enough that
 538 Chatterton was the author, but declined to count literary patronage among his charitable
 539 obligations (as we have seen, that might have brought him an uncomfortable degree of
 540 recognition and acclamation). Only in Chatterton’s fiery mind could this particular circle

541 be squared. But it is also worth reflecting the social critique embedded in the ‘Excelente
 542 Balade’. Like A.W.N. Pugin’s later *Contrasts* (1841), the poem opens up a chasm
 543 between the spiritual values of charity witnessed in the Middle Ages (however much the
 544 abbot deviated from them) and the cruel indifference of the modern world which offers
 545 no target-language for the church-glebe-house or the limitour.

546 Walpole was forced reluctantly in 1779 to defend his character in response to
 547 attempts to blame him for Chatterton’s death, specifically John Broughton’s 1778 edition
 548 of Chatterton’s prose and verse, which accused Walpole of ‘neglect and contempt’.⁴⁶
 549 Walpole’s counterargument in the *Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas*
 550 *Chatterton* rests on the view that his was a reasonable reaction to an attempt by a
 551 headstrong, pardonably young man to hoodwink him. But above all, Walpole casts
 552 Chatterton as a person who was not in material need – he had a job, he just did not like it
 553 – and for whom reward in whatever form it came might have acted as further inducement
 554 to deceive. Scanning his own character, Walpole disavows any ‘abilities in the character
 555 of a Mæcenas’ and shrouds himself in his wonted privacy with the insistence that ‘my
 556 fortune is private and moderate; my situation, more private; my interest, none [...] It did
 557 not become me to give myself airs of protections’ (17). He paints himself as a harmless
 558 collector of curiosities who is more interested in cultivating books than their authors. The
 559 gravamen of Walpole’s exculpation is that it would have made no difference to
 560 Chatterton’s fate had Walpole given him money. Walpole declares himself opposed to

⁴⁶ John Broughton (ed.), *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse; by Thomas Chatterton, the Supposed Author of the Poems published under the names of Rowley, Canning &c.* (London: Fielding & Walker, 1778), xxi. Before this, a review of Thomas Tyrwhitt’s 1777 edition of *Poems, supposed to have been Written at Bristol by Thomas Rowley and Others in the Fifteenth Century* (1777) in the *Monthly Review* for April 1777 had criticized Walpole. This was followed by the direct accusation, in an account from George Catcott, that Chatterton ‘met with little or no encouragement’ from Walpole, ‘soon after which, in a fit of despair, it is supposed, he put an end to his unhappy life’, published in the continuation article in May 1777; *Monthly Review* 56 (April 1777), 256-65 and (May 1777), 321-28 (323).

561 random acts of charity and invokes the specter of Quixotism that would reappear in his
 562 reply to Hamilton four years later when he speculates on the difference helping
 563 Chatterton might have made:

564 It is one of those possible events, which we should be miserable indeed if
 565 imputable to a conscience that had not the smallest light to direct it! If I went to
 566 Bengal, I might perhaps interpose and save the life of some poor Indian devoted
 567 [devoured?] by the fury of a British nabob; but amiable as such Quixotism would
 568 be, we are not to sacrifice every duty to the possibility of realizing one
 569 conscientious vision (41).

570 This is to say that such interventions may benefit an individual but there is not the least
 571 rational basis ('the smallest light') for choosing one person over another; the effort
 572 involved in helping one person may distract from more reasonably justifiable duties.
 573 Walpole would balance reason and romance again in the case of Louisa, but evidently
 574 considered a mentally ill homeless woman a worthier case than a frustrated legal
 575 apprentice.

576

577 **Conclusion**

578 Mary Berry echoed Walpole's appeal to privacy when in 1840 she answered Thomas
 579 Babington Macaulay's withering character assassination of her old friend in his unsigned
 580 review of the 1833 edition of Walpole's *Letters*. 'Although no ostentatious contributor to
 581 public charities and schemes of improvement', Berry wrote, 'the friends in whose
 582 opinions he knew he could confide, had always more difficulty to repress than to excite

583 his liberality'.⁴⁷ Berry reiterates many of the themes traced over the course of this article:
 584 Walpole's aversion to being thought 'ostentatious' and firm conviction that charity
 585 belonged to the private sphere. One legacy of the great associational charities of mid-
 586 century and the modes of display they encouraged may have been to increase public
 587 accountability for individual magnanimity. Later on, the enabling of leisure time to
 588 secure the means of literary production for those suitably talented was certainly
 589 comprehended as charitable. Benevolence in this form united both Raisley Calvert and
 590 Tom Wedgwood in their legacies to Wordsworth and Coleridge and the more class-
 591 divided patronage offered by Hannah More, Capel Lofft and Samuel Jackson Pratt to the
 592 laboring-class poets Anna Yearsley, Robert Bloomfield and Joseph Blacket, to name but
 593 a few. This was objectionable for Walpole who resisted the imbrication of charity and
 594 patronage. Not so Chatterton, who intentionally framed Rowley's patron Canynges as a
 595 charitable benefactor.

596 There was satisfying if belated irony in the fact that Chatterton's sole surviving
 597 relative, Mary Newton (no relation of the lady known to Walpole since her infancy),
 598 benefited from sales of Robert Southey and Joseph Cottle's subscription edition *The*
 599 *Works of Thomas Chatterton* when it was published in 1803.⁴⁸ Chatterton did fulfil
 600 Walpole's guardianlike advice to provide a living for his family after all. Returning to the

⁴⁷ 'Advertisement to the Letters Addressed to the Miss Berrys', cited in Peter Sabor (ed.), *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge, 1987), 331-9 (338). Macaulay's unsigned review of the *Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford, to Sir Horace Mann* (1833) appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1833); Sabor 311-26.

⁴⁸ Robert Southey and Joseph Cottle (eds.), *The Works of Thomas Chatterton, Containing his Life, by G. Gregory, D.D., and Miscellaneous Poems*, 3 vols. (London: Biggs & Cottle for Longman & Rees, 1803). An earlier 1799 edition did not attract a sufficient number of subscribers. On the evolution of literary patronage, see Cook, *Thomas Chatterton and Neglected Genius* and Kerri Andrews, *Ann Yearsley and Hannah More, Patronage and Poetry: the Story of a Literary Relationship* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013).

601 concerns of introduction, we can trace these differing conceptions of charity into the
602 imaginative sphere by reevaluating them as patterns of belief and material practice that, I
603 argue, are recoverably embedded in creative works such as *Otranto* and the ‘Rowley’
604 poems. The former is a work of secrets, the textual embodiment of the recessive quality
605 captured by Macaulay’s portrait of Walpole as a ‘mask within a mask’ and a work much
606 concerned with what true charity should be (private). The latter openly perform their
607 expectations of reward and punishment through the paragon Canynges and the cautionary
608 example of the gouler respectively. I do not mean to suggest a direct coefficient between
609 the personality of the author and the content of a text – to do so would be to revive
610 critically outmoded ideas of simple intentionality – merely to point to ways in which
611 structural correlations in patterning and impulses at work in the text may be endowed
612 with new meaning by the study of charity, that most intimate material expression of how
613 we wish the world to become a better place, for ourselves and others.
614