



Pre-paring Philanthropy: The Mimesis of Business and the Counterfactual Construction of Care^{*}

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abstract

Through consideration of the content of interviews conducted with senior managers in one of the UK's top ten charities, Heritage, this paper explores the present and possible futures of philanthropy in a world in which legitimate forms of organization seem increasingly limited to that of the business. Through a reading of Elaine Scarry's (1985) *The Body in Pain*, the paper explores the ways in which the relationship between, and indeed existence of, self and world is mediated by objects that enable the body to extend itself through culture. This capacity for extension is seen to be under threat in the demographic group for whom Heritage seeks to care and it is to the ways in which Heritage seeks to ameliorate this threat, in a context that demands business of organization, that the paper's attention is devoted. It is a key contention of the argument deployed here that the mimesis of business, whilst perhaps of short term legitimacy benefit to organised charities, will be ultimately fatal for philanthropy as an end in itself.

'We Care... The Work of Heritage'¹

The modern charity is very different to the traditional charity... which was based on philanthropy in one form or other... It was basically funds and money available... to direct charitable works, giving money to the poor in some shape or form, ... doing work for poorer people... Government... is increasingly providing that sort of bottom line net. So really in many ways it's taken away the... original market for charity... Charities are looking, having to look, for other reasons to be...

* The collection of the empirical material upon which this argument draws was made possible by the generosity of both the Economic and Social Research Council and the many *Heritage* managers who so kindly allowed me to speak to and observe them. The majority of the data was collected during 1996 – 1998. The research formed part of a wider project investigating informational practices in 'non-conventional' organizations (ESRC Award R0002218592197). Names, including *Heritage*, have been changed to protect the innocent. The current paper has benefited from comments provided upon earlier versions of the same argument presented at the International Workshop on *The Consumption of Mass*, Prince Rupert Hotel Shrewsbury, 27-28 November 1998 and at a departmental seminar at the School of Business and Economics of the University of Exeter in January 2005. I am also particularly grateful for the careful readings provided by Mihaela Kelemen, Valérie Fournier, Rolland Munro and Bob Cooper. Inadequacies that remain are, of course, all my own work.

1 The quote in the subtitle comes from the 'special newsletter', provided by *Heritage* OR (1996, issue 3: 2), to "people who in the past, have requested our Will Information literature" (p.1). It forms the banner above a section of the newsletter which outlines a number of activities funded by 'donations and legacies' to *Heritage*. The page's tableau is completed by three suitably varied, uplifting and consonant images.

I think charities are looking for things to do, because a lot of them, their original objectives don't exist anymore or somebody else is doing them. The government is doing them. (Interview with Finance Director, Heritage, 10-10-1996)

This paper is the product of research conducted in the Head Office of Heritage, one of the UK's most successful charities. Heritage 'aims to improve the quality of life' of its target demographic group – the elderly – and particularly the 'quality of life' of those amongst this group who are deemed most vulnerable, or most impoverished in 'quality' terms. The potential beneficiaries of Heritage's work, according to this demographic definition of target sector, are extremely numerous and they constitute an ever increasing proportion of overall population, at least in the western, industrialised world.

My own interest in Heritage was not however sparked by such lofty and topical concerns. Rather the opposite. I was looking for research sites in which to trace the content and direction of information flows in organizations which were somewhat 'oddly' embedded in capitalist relations of production² and a close relative worked at Heritage's Head Office. I was aware that Heritage's activities increasingly encompassed 'commercial' ventures but clearly approached the site with a 'traditional' view of charity as 'philanthropy', albeit late-modern, organised, philanthropy. Indeed, such a view had informed my selection of the site. But as the quote above makes clear, and it was a view offered to me very early in my contact with the organization, I was very much mistaken. This paper is the product of that mistake. It examines both the extent of my error and Heritage's managers' attempts to correct it. And hopefully, in so doing, it also examines how 'care' is constructed and consumed in conditions, at least as seen by those charged with the administration of its provision, of a relative absence of 'need'. For charities, and Heritage has been at their forefront, have not been slow in taking up the challenge that concludes our preceding quote.

I've heard figures for the size of the charitable sector ranging from about six or seven billion to twenty-five billion, maybe something around fifteen or sixteen is right. (Interview with Finance Director, Heritage, 10-10-1996)

Yet despite this huge level of activity, apparently in the face of Government policy that has 'taken away the... original market for charity', Heritage's Finance Director (FD) was able to assert that there was still 'tremendous growth potential here'. It is to an explanation of this somewhat curious contradiction that this paper is devoted.³

2 Either through virtue of their ownership, the status of their participants, or their espoused purpose.

3 It is important to note that at the time when the research reported here was undertaken there was considerable uncertainty concerning the future legal status of charities, given lengthy and ongoing consultation process on the matter instigated by the UK's government. Whilst the new legal framework that eventually emerged from this process is seen by some as one which 'radically overhauls' preceding law in the area (Maclennan, 2007: back cover) for those of more cynical and sceptical bent, not looking for a market need into which one can sell advice, the changes appear much closer to general perpetuation of the status quo. That said, the existence of uncertainty about the precise nature of the future legal framework in which charities would operate is clearly a contributory factor to the extent of reflection on the nature of the beast that our informants have engaged in here.

From 'Need' to 'Care'

Heritage was formed some thirty years ago, by one of the key players in *Oxfam*, to meet the needs of a newly defined target group, drawing upon capital – both funds and property assets – and individuals who had been involved in previous, organised, philanthropic activity. This preceding, generalised practical benevolence, directed towards a relatively undifferentiated 'poor', was apparently seen by those responsible for Heritage's formation to be too broad to meet the particular needs of a particular segment of world society. Heritage sought to fill this gap by explicitly devoting its relief of 'poverty' to an explicitly delineated section of the 'poor', a section defined demographically. At its inception the main focus of Heritage's work was overseas, but over time the balance of activity has shifted, with national programmes and initiatives taking an up ever greater proportion of resources, an issue to which we return. Heritage is currently both the largest and oldest charity in the UK serving its target demographic group.

Our Finance Director's comments require then a little further unpacking when arrayed alongside even such a superficial account of the 'facts' of Heritage's past. For they seem a little at odds with this history. For example, we see that Heritage as charity emerges not as 'traditional... philanthropy' that seeks to ameliorate unconscionable social conditions attendant upon a capitalism that has not yet geared up a state to provide the 'welfare' required to ensure the reproduction of labour. Rather it is a progressive response to the failure of such a project to adequately represent and serve the needs of a particular demographic group whose particular needs have been in some senses submerged amongst those of others who are themselves more 'adequately' served by state welfare and voluntary sector provision. The absolute needs of such individuals are undoubtedly more pronounced in the overseas markets that form the initial focus of Heritage's work, whilst their relative need may be seen to be greater in the home market that Heritage has increasingly come to serve. These subtleties of shifting emergence may in part be due to the fact that members of Heritage's target group are often excluded from, or unable to contribute to, the productive side of capital's circuits of exchange. But they may also be partly the result of the group's status as implicit *other* for many of our images of a dynamic and productive, modern world.

This issue of timing then is worthy of a little more attention. For we realise that from its inception Heritage has been a 'modern charity', coming into being, as it does, at a time when 'Government...' has already 'taken away the... original market for charity....' Indeed, the inception of Heritage occurs at a time when the rhetorical power of claims on state resources to support the less well off was arguably much greater than it is today. And thus we must see the Finance Director's comments not as a detailed and reliable account of the history of his own organization, for such an account thoroughly contradicts the implicit aims of his commentary. Rather, we must focus upon its own rhetorical dimensions, upon the reality it seeks to *structure* rather than that which it seeks to report, if we are to understand its purpose and utilise it to understand shifting priorities at Heritage.

Heritage is not alone in the charity world in having made a shift away from justifying itself and orchestrating its activities with the aim of meeting the needs of 'the poor'. Mellor (1985) tells a general story that is consistent with the beginning of our Finance Director's line. He notes that whilst

little examination has been made of the history of the development of associations in modern societies (although histories of individual associations have been written), ... it seems likely that it was not until the 19th Century that specialised groups began to emerge in Britain. Previously organizations were diffuse, arising substantially from commercial or religious interests, though there were numerous charitable trusts. (Mellor, 1985: 9)

According to Chesterman (1979), prior to about 1600 ecclesiastical courts administered land left to the church in accordance with the wishes of the departed donor. However, increasingly from this time "wealth was committed through innumerable gifts and endowments... to the control of secular trustees and administrators for specific welfare purposes in such areas as education, health and poverty relief" as "the charitable trust emerged as a major mechanism of institutionalised private philanthropy and several key features of the modern law of charities were established" (Chesterman, 1979, quoted in Mellor, 1985: 9). The process continued through the Victorian era with many more charities being established, particularly in the area of poverty relief, as the notion of poverty took on increasing salience in public discourse. However, the 'modern' shift from concentration upon 'doing work for poorer people' to 'other reasons to be' seems not to be as recent as our Finance Director suggests, at least at the general level of Mellor's story. Mellor quotes Murray (1969) with approval, if also with some reservation, who noted in the late 1960s (in Mellor's words), "that in all voluntary organizations there is distinct movement from concentration on the pathology of society to its positive health" (Mellor, 1985: 11). Heritage was born at the moment of this apparent realisation and thus we may see the Finance Director's dramatisation of shifting focus as much as a continuing reflection of initial aims as of any 'recent' shift in conditions and their understanding. Nevertheless, being initially an organization that focused primarily upon the 'absolute needs' of those members of the overseas poor who fit the demographic template, and currently a home focused organization catering more to 'relative need' relief through 'care', we may note that this general history may have been entirely played out, albeit in an abridged and concatenated form, during Heritage's relatively short past. Whichever focus we take on the reality of the Finance Director's comments, it is clear that rhetorically his description of the past is intended to function as a foil (Haber, 1991; Lilley, 1995) that will allow us to better see the radiance of the present against it.⁴ Although arriving at a time when 'positive health' was, for many,

4 Indeed, there is certainly no shortage of effort deployed, in a variety of burgeoning literatures, to both the problematics of defining and grasping the myriad organizational forms that constitute that portion of activity seemingly not well captured by the notions of the private and state sectors of the economy (including, *inter alia*, the overlapping notions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the voluntary sector, the charity sector, the aid sector, the social economy and the seemingly more all encompassing notion of the 'third sector') and articulating a variety of periodicisations of 'its' shifting history in relation to notions such as philanthropy, generosity, benevolence and beneficence and the imagined greater clarity of definitions and instantiations of institutions such as the private and state sectors (see, for example the contributions of Anheier and Kendall, 2001; Kendall and Knapp, 1996; Harris, 2001; Lewis *et al.*, 2000; Amin *et al.*, 2002; Dollery and Wallis, 2003; Evers and Laville, 2004; Bremner, 1988; Sogge *et al.*, 1996; Frankel *et al.*, 1987; Cunningham and Innes, 1998;

emerging as *the* issue in the home based charity market, we are meant to see that it is only now, with its current range of managers and managerial techniques, that Heritage has really been able to shine as an exemplar of such an ethos. We explore the activities deemed to constitute the modern Heritage in a later section. For now we take a theoretical detour in order to examine how a limitless care which contributes to 'positive [and hence ever increasable] health' can emerge out of a concern with the theoretically limited 'needs' of pathology. And to do so we draw upon Elaine Scarry's (1985) magnificent consideration of pain as a source for our making of the world.

Pain and Making

Scarry's account of our making of our "mental and material culture" (1985: 326) takes as its origin the *aversiveness* and *unsharability* of physical pain. She notes that in physical pain we witness both certainty and its absence.

For the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it [pain] that 'having pain' may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to 'have certainty', while for the other person [the co-present, not herself 'in' pain] it is so elusive that 'hearing about pain' may exist as the primary model of what it is 'to have doubt'. Thus pain comes unsharably into our midst as at once that which cannot be denied and that which cannot be confirmed. (Scarry, 1985: 4)

Pain, in its essence, is *aversive*: it makes us want nothing more and nothing less than bring about its, ideally, total amelioration through removal. It is, in this sense, the most pressing challenge we face. But it is also, as we noted above, in the very primacy of its nature *unshareable*. This unshareability is seen, in part, as a result of pain's "resistance to language" (*ibid.*: 4), a resistance which may be seen to be at least two-fold. At a deepest level, at its most painful,

[P]hysical pain does not simply resist language, but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to the sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned. (*ibid.*)

And even when less intense it is incredibly difficult to express convincingly. Scarry (1985: 4) quotes Virginia Woolf (1967: 194) in this regard:

English, which can express the thoughts of Hamlet and the tragedy of Lear has no words for the shiver or the headache... The merest schoolgirl when she falls in love has Shakespeare or Keats to

Whelan, 1996; Coles, 1997). There have even been attempts – to follow the logic that we might discern in our FD's comments – that have sought to articulate lifecycle stages in the histories of individual charities that are seemingly relatively common to all and might be seen to reflect a more general history of the sector as a whole being played out at the level of each of its constituents (see, for example, Tapp *et al.*, 1999). Needless to say, here, as elsewhere, such 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny' arguments, whilst superficially attractive, are far from easily sustained when confronted by the complexities of empirical detail. However, as the main body of the paper indicates, the veracity of the stories of the managers at *Heritage* is not our central concern. It is rather the work that such narratives do in establishing the plausibility of the present and the desirability of particular futures that is of most interest to us in the current context.

... speak her mind for her, but let a sufferer try to describe a pain in his head to a doctor and language at once runs dry.

Part of the problem here is the *objectlessness* of pain as sentience, its lack of a referent. When in physical pain, even the localised pain of a headache, it is our body as a whole, or more precisely the entirety of the sentience associated with that body, that is consumed by pain. We feel pain not *for* or *of* anything, or perhaps better, not *for* or *of* anything other than our bodies. Pain is thus incredibly difficult to objectify, in language or other material culture, because it has no object (outside of the sentience of which it may be seen as limit case, as pure exemplar). Pain, of and for the body's sentience (of and for itself), can only enter into shareability of language through the *as if* of metaphor. When for example, we gather some words to express our pain, when we attribute to it a nature, when we talk of a 'stabbing pain', we invoke an 'as if' which states, 'my pain is like being on the point of a knife'. Metaphor moves, or better 'carries' (Hopfl, 1997), pain by giving it a cause, an object, *outside* of the body, in this case a knife. It takes the agency of sentience acting upon itself, perhaps creating itself, and attributes it to an object that, by being outside of the body, is more open to transformation by the body, is more amenable to the body's *work*. This *imagined* cause of pain is not of course 'absolutely' *real*, but it is more real, more graspable than pain *qua* pain. And it is just what is required if pain is to allow the sentient body to achieve its defining aim when in pain, the removal of aversiveness. For if we can imagine pain as stabbing, and hence imagine a knife (or something similar) as causing that pain, then perhaps we can imagine that knife moving away from the body and not immediately returning.⁵ By *objectifying* pain in the object that (imaginarily) causes it, we have made pain external, moveable, sharable. In short we have rendered it as something that may be acted on by both our sentience (some of which is now freed from its limit state of complete aversiveness) and the sentience of others. By *making* our pain sharable, we have begun to *unmake* our pain. And we have also begun to make our shared world, our verbal and material culture.

Scarry then draws our attention to two limits, two causes, of our making⁶ of verbal and material culture. Our pain – that through its objectlessness makes sharing difficult (if not impossible at the extreme) but through its aversiveness demands externalisation as a first step towards removal – and our imagination⁷ – our ability to make objects appear when there are none, to create, to *make up* objects. Together pain and imagination define the scope of our making, the scope of what we can *make up*, which itself provides the limits within which we can *make real* material objects that extend the

5 Indeed, we may even find a 'thing', perhaps internal to the body, that is responsible for the 'stabbing', a thing which we can perhaps remove to remove the pain.

6 Scarry's notion of making here is obviously sympathetic to Arendt's (1958) mobilisation of the term, but it is also important to note that her usage is not identical.

7 It is worth noting here the sympathy between pain and imagination as modes of being. Both are extreme privacies "both pain and imagining are invisible to anyone outside the boundaries of the person's body" (Scarry, 1985: 170), which nevertheless imbue their holders with something close to absolute certainty, yet both are to be seen as essential bases for the sharing that constitutes culture, a sharing that itself is initially so fragile, so difficult for the companion to believe in, that it is remarkable to see them as the source of the 'distinctly human form' of "sentience become.. social" (*ibid.*).

sentience of the body by making in and out of the world of objects that exist, new ones which previously did not. Pain – pure, objectless sentience; and imagination – objectness, or intentionality at the greatest remove from the particularities of our bodily modalities of sentience; define the space of our creation. The ways in which we ‘take in’ existing, ‘dead’ objects of the world and re-make that world by ‘putting back’ new objects imbued not only with new forms but also with the marks of human intentionality and the ways in which we make our world both meaningful and expansive beyond the limits of our bodies.

Philanthropy and its charitable twin requires, at least in its ‘traditional’ relief stage as it is narrated above by our informant, a way of sensing the need of others. ‘Need’ must be shared. And we may see here, following our detour into Scarry’s pain, that this need is pain that is well on the way to being removed.⁸ If we consider say, hunger as a ‘need’ for food, we may see this more clearly. We know that intense, unsatisfied hunger may ‘cause’ pain, but we have already noted the myriad ways in which pain, objectless sentience, becomes objectifiable via metaphorical substantiation which makes pain the consequence of a causing object. So as well as saying that hunger as “a state of consciousness...” which “if deprived of its object” will “begin to approach the neighbourhood of physical pain” (Scarry, 1985: 5) we may also say that hunger, as “objectified state” (*ibid.*), may be apprehended as partially transformed pain, pain in which some aversiveness has been removed in the process of objectification. Whilst pain demands nothing but its own removal but gives no clues over how to go about meeting this demand, the ‘need’ of hunger is much more amenable to (re)resolution through the specificity with which its objectness endows it. Pain as surfeit of (pure) objectless sentience is entified, fleshed out, as surfeit of ‘hunger’, a lack of an object, but not any object, an object of a particular type: food. Pain, substantiated as hunger, is further substantiated as lack of food. A lack which can itself be further substantiated, further outside the individual body in pain, as need for food, or in the empowering argot of most charitable enterprises, the need for access to food, which turns again into a need to be able to produce food from the existing objects of the ever more expansive world outside. Need thus appears as substantiated pain that has ‘gone out’ from the body in pain to the world of verbal and material culture, a process that involves the removal of that pain through ongoing transubstantiation. And as should be clear, such transubstantiation makes responses to pain, and need in its turn, both potentially and practically limitless.⁹

Scarry grasps this ongoing transubstantiation, our ability to make a world imbued with our sentience and to take back that sentience from the world not as pain but as practical power, through a bifurcation of the term *work*. As we have seen, this work is the combine of imagination and pain.

That pain and the imagination are each other’s missing intentional counterpart and that they together provide a framing identity of man-as-creator (sic) within which all other intimate

8 This is, of course, not to say that it will complete its journey.

9 We could instead perhaps suggest that such moves are not limitless, but limited only by the limits of imagination. However, in common sense parlance the meanings of these seemingly different renderings are interchangeable.

perceptual, psychological, emotional, and somatic events occur, is perhaps most succinctly suggested by the fact that there is one piece of language used – in many different languages – at once as a near synonym for pain, *and* as a near synonym for created object; and that is the word ‘work’ ... The more it realizes and transforms itself in its object, the closer it is to the imagination, to art, to culture; the more it is unable to bring forth an object, or, bringing it forth, is then cut off from its object, the more it approaches the condition of pain. (Scarry, 1985: 169, original emphasis)

It is thus through work that pain and imagination become expressed and the world is made sentient through acculturation of material which is consequently imbued with sentience. It is the practice through which personhood is realised in a humanly realised world. And this world, and the personhood it substantiates, is precisely what is unmade in the victims of the decivilizing practices of torture and war to which Scarry (1985) attends. We explore the general significance of ‘work’ in more detail following consideration of the specifics of the work in which Heritage is currently engaged.

Heritage characterises its current work as ‘caring’, its interest in and regard and concern for its target group, a transubstantiation of need that preserves its limitlessness, while adding emphasis upon creating ‘positive health’ rather than eliminating ‘pathology’. It does so by identifying its target group as one for whom there is deemed to be insufficient amounts of our triptych – interest, regard, concern – in the absence of Heritage’s work. And in the process it finds for itself a new and indeed endless ‘reason to be’.

Needs and Care

Heritage’s international division apparently continues to carry out the apparently traditional work of apparently traditional charity. It meets immediate, absolute need, as and when it emerges, with immediate relief. And it does so primarily in those parts of the world where ‘government...’ has not, through unwillingness or incapacity, ‘taken away the... original market for charity’. In the process, it (potentially) nullifies itself for when we imagine that there is no more (immediate and absolute) need we might also imagine that there is no more need for traditional charity.¹⁰ However, as we have noted, such activities currently represent an ever dwindling proportion of the totality of Heritage’s engagement in the world. Within the UK, *direct* provision of services is limited to housing of members of the target demographic group, with such services being run at a profit which is ‘gifted’ back to the charity. And it is this latter point that enables us to grasp the more central *raison d’être* of the current Heritage. For Heritage now sees itself as primarily a fund raising and campaigning organization in the UK. It gathers money, through gifts, bequeathments and its associated enterprises (of which more later) and then in a reversal of role,¹¹ makes such monies available, in the form of grants, to those who work for and with members of the target group to improve the

10 Given the appalling living conditions of many people in many places, such potential is infrequently realised to say the least. The logic of the point however remains.

11 Transubstantiation is a dangerous and slippery beast, as our following discussion should make increasingly clear.

'quality' of such members' lives. Indeed, this is what it has always done. It also consumes some of the raised money itself, both in supporting its own administration and hence continued being and in a first pass meeting of its central objective: care. For care *of*, as we have noted, entails the generation of interest in, and concern and regard *for*. Heritage, by positing a lack of care of and for its target group, simultaneously posits an under-representation¹² of its target group in the centres of (both governmental and non-governmental) calculation, a 'lack' which may partially be filled, made up, by Heritage's campaigning and policy directed activities. In this regard, Heritage may be rendered as mirroring the development of the modern charity world as a whole, for as Mellor (1985: 15) notes:

Of recent years, the type of voluntary body that has been much in the news has been the kind that seeks to influence public policy – the 'pure' pressure group or, more commonly, the organization that whilst having practical work for certain kinds of client to undertake, has a well-developed 'social advocacy' role too.

Heritage then, through its care, its concern and regard for, and its interest in, its 'clients' acts to enhance visibility of its clients, to increase 'care' for them, by enhancing its own visibility in places (such as government) where such matters may be seen to matter. Here needs, but also desires, wants, aspirations and concerns, of its clients are made more real in policy by being made more present in the places in which policy is made. Such a role is very much in line with expectations that might be generated by an extrapolation of Scarry's arguments. But that is not our sole concern here. Rather we also focus upon the action of increasingly commercial managers at Heritage's UK head office, which is, following our brief history of Heritage, where we can see that the action now is. And we dwell upon it for two related reasons. Firstly we examine the ways in which Heritage managers account for their activity: for their accounts of themselves in their accounts of their activities that were provided to me during interviews are mimetic (Scarry, 1985; see also Taussig, 1993)¹³ to the central rationale that they provide for their organization. Secondly we examine in more detail the content of the activities themselves, the things for which our (commercial) managers are responsible. For in the choice of activities through which to raise funds, Heritage again displays pain – in this case the pain associated with a loss of being needed and thus a loss of legitimacy; pain which is *worked* away through the transubstantive *making* of the new activities and their apparent delivery of renewed legitimacy – and becomes trapped in an odd mimesis of its own making. To begin this journey we return to the quote which began our exegesis of Heritage's work, for we are now able to interpret its meaning in a much richer context.

12 This notion of underrepresentation is also central to Scarry's project, as our notes on pain's resistance to language have already hinted. As she expresses the point: "the relative ease or difficulty with which any phenomenon can be verbally represented also influences the ease or difficulty with which that phenomenon comes to be politically represented... It is not simply accurate but tautological to observe that given any two phenomena, the one that is more visible will receive more attention" (Scarry, 1985: 12, original emphasis).

13 It is interesting to note that much of Taussig's account of mimesis is also derived from an account of the pain of torture.

‘This is My Ideal Job’

The majority of my interviews at Heritage were conducted with senior managers who were often termed ‘directors’ and who certainly held levels of responsibility consonant with those who share their titles in the (more) commercial world. This was not the only strange thing about them. They had also, not quite without exception, joined the organization in the recent past, usually in the preceding ten years, after some form of disillusionment with the particular bit of the (usually) private sector from which they had just come. Such disillusionment manifested itself in different ways and was also differentially attached to different aspects of private enterprise. For some a partner had worked as an intermediary here, with one director, for example, telling a story of how his partner had dramatically presented him with the recruitment ad for his present position whilst reminding him that the work he was currently doing was turning him into a ‘bastard’ and an ‘arsehole’. Others had been confronted by the cruelty of the market more directly, having ‘been let go’ by their employers during the last recession. Regardless of these differences in origin however, each of these managers/directors shared a strikingly similar initial orientation to Heritage. They had seen it as something of an easy life, lower reward option that would act at worst as a stop gap in, and at best as temporary relief from their ongoing career in the wider world. Few had envisioned themselves as working in the charity sector, until circumstances reduced their other options, and few pictured themselves, once they had taken the decision to enter, as staying in it for very long. All however did seem to expect that it would provide a simpler, easier life than that which they had experienced in the ‘real world’ of (private sector) commercialism. As our finance director remembered this complex of motivations:

When I came into the, this job, between you and I, I thought to myself well okay, you know, this is probably a bit narrower than what I’m used to and, you know, it’ll be good. Because my previous job to this one was as Financial Director of [a] business information company..., I was Financial Director for their UK and some of their European subsidiaries and I also ran some of their businesses and... it was quite a big job. I thought well I’ll, that, that sort of came to a natural conclusion as many jobs in that sector did in the early nineties and I thought well I’ll do this, this on an interim basis and I thought well in the meantime, you know, I’ll sort of, I’ll have plenty of, plenty of time in the afternoon too (laughs).

However, for this informant, as for many others, such a view soon proved to be, at least in part, without foundation. For he

quickly found that not only were my mornings but my afternoons and my evenings and some of my weekends were well accounted for and, and also equally soon found that, you know there was much more to this, there was much more excitement than I might have ever imagined before.

This shift in understanding was not solely dependent upon the increased amount of work that was required compared to expectations. It also drew upon what were rendered as real differences found between the worlds of commerce and charity, in contradistinction to those differences previously assumed to exist. In the view of this informant, in the world of commerce,

most problems had occurred at least two or three times if not ten times before. But here I find virtually everything, you know, you’re so frequently breaking new ground and that’s exciting, it’s different and, you know, it actually allows you to stir the grey matter.

Indeed many of the new managers said that after the initial work shock, they had come to love their new jobs, seeing them as perfect vehicles for the deployment and development of their skills. Comments such as 'Although I didn't realise it when I first started, or come here for that reason, if I were to sit down and design my ideal job, this would be it' (Senior Manager), along with variations upon this theme, were incredibly common from the new managers interviewed. Through deploying the standard skills – 'it's just retail management', 'systems is the same everywhere', 'its basic marketing really' – that they had learnt elsewhere to the, from their purview, virgin territory of the charity, they provide both the latter and themselves with enhanced 'reasons to be' at just the time when other such potential sources for allegiance and its associated legitimation are in retreat. Given the lack of apparent need on the part of the other two sectors of the economy for our managers they had glimpsed the pain associated with the lack or loss of identity and visibility attendant upon a lack of use for their work, only to be saved by the assumption of a working role within an organization that was similarly seeking to remove the pain associated with an increasing lack of need for its services, seemingly brought about by an increasing lack of (absolute) need on the part of its clients. And whilst we may explain the disjuncture between expectation and subsequent experience away in terms of cognitive dissonance, such an account seems insufficient to cope with the extent of identification we have uncovered. However, it is just such a story that we need to give us some purchase on our starting quote. For as we have noted, Heritage was born at a time in which 'traditional charity' was already giving way to 'modern charity' and thus our first quote cannot, as we have already noted, be merely a 'factual' description of changing circumstances. Rather we must see it as a sign of an attempt to utilise and trammel the (near) limitless power of transubstantiation (see also, Burke, 1969) that work entails. For what is also and more importantly being rendered as new here is not 'modern charity' but the bodies of our new managers and their roles within such a beast. Such managers were very keen to advertise their difference to one (myself) who had approached them with a traditional view of charity and its bodies firmly in mind. Indeed, they were also keen to show their difference from the usually unnamed but seemingly clearly inferior others who co-populated their organization but lacked the appropriate background to engage in its ongoing transformation. The new managers sought to show that it was they, with their 'professionalism' and 'businesslike' orientation who were the drivers qua non of an organization that was moving beyond the stewardship of assets to meet specific needs with imagined limits, to the explosion of activity that is 'care'. And in the process they mimed the move towards social advocacy of their clients in a society that devoted insufficient attention to them, in their self advocacy as under-represented parts of an organization whose self image had yet to catch up with the changing realities of its own constitution and practice.

Their narrated histories and those of 'charity', regardless of their veracity, are important precisely because of the difference and distance between past, present and future that is carried them. Charity as unprofessional and unbusinesslike, the charity of the past, is required to act as a foil for the charity of the future, the modern charity in which business and professionalism are assured by the presence of professional and businesslike bodies that can substantiate these ideals. Charity, whose work and identity are threatened by removal of need, eases the pain of apparent inferiority to the market – as the contemporary exemplar of ongoing need – by engaging in the work of mirroring that market and its handmaidens in the process of redefining the need both for itself and

its clients in terms of care. Heritage thus comes to be seen to meet the need for care for its clients through the actions of its (new) managers who come to care for the organization by making it work in a professional and businesslike way as they simultaneously assuage their own pain – of fear or remembrance of redundancy – through their work in and for an organization that comes to be seen to need such work of care if it is to survive. For as Mellor (1985: 14) notes:

It must not be possible in the 1980s [or in the here and now, wherever that may be] for someone to write, as occurred in the 1950s that voluntary societies ‘are unscientific¹⁴ in their approach and unbusinesslike in their methods’ (Roof, 1957).

In the penultimate section which follows we focus specifically on the nature of Heritage’s target group for it allows us both to reconnect with Scarry’s account and to explain the nature of the enterprises that Heritage engages with in order to sustain the flow of its funds into grants and advocacy. As such it provides us with a path for reconsidering the final act of mimesis at Heritage which is of concern to us here.

‘Only the Good Die Young’

The title of this section rehearses a familiar yet little remarked upon comment concerning our view of the elderly, the group that Heritage takes as its target ‘market’. Yet it is a very strange notion that ‘only the good die young’. It is a notion that performs a huge variety of representational, or transubstantial conjuring tricks within and between its parlous assembly of words. For we say that it is only the good that die young to indicate both the anti-Panglossianism of such common senses as ‘Murphy’s or Sod’s Law’ and the reverse. We note that unfairly and unjustly it is only the good who seem to have life taken from them ‘early’, but also and somewhat contradictory (for what is good about having one’s life terminated?) that this must be so, that ‘good’ cannot survive the passage from youth to age, indeed, that *only the young are good*. The moral high ground, in our infantile imaginings of society, is tied to youth, as Hinchliffe’s (1997) deconstruction of the cinema ads that sell us ice cream makes clear. And it is against such pressures that Heritage struggles, or better, it is *within* such pressures that Heritage finds need of its work, in the (new) social advocacy role that it has taken on.

Scarry too pays attention to the ‘problem’ of age. For as she sees in pain a mimesis of death, so she sees in aging, in the approach of death, both the mimesis and reality of pain. Pain mimes death through inversion: in death the body remains as sentience departs, removing the world from person and person from the world, whilst in pain through sentience’s manifestation in its total form, world and self are removed as the aversiveness of the body, in and of itself, comes to dominate all.

As in dying in death, so in serious pain the claims of the body utterly nullify the claims of the world. (Scarry, 1985: 33)

14 Science being the exemplification of professionalism.

According to Scarry, the process of perception through which one realises not the relative comfort of generalised mortality but the horror of the certainty of one's own specific, individualised mortality – a process that is itself close, if not identical, to pain, as we noted above – is one which “belongs anywhere where death is near and so belongs to aging” (1985: 32).

Sometimes assisted by younger human beings, the body works to obliterate the world and self of the old person. Something of this world dissolution is already at work even in the tendency of those in late middle age, no longer working, to see their former jobs, their life actions, their choices as wrong or trivial ... As the body breaks down, it becomes increasingly the object of attention, usurping the place of all other objects, so that finally, in very, very old and sick people, the world may exist in a circle two feet out from themselves; the exclusive content of perception and speech may become what was eaten, the problems of excreting, the progress of pains, the comfort or discomfort of a particular chair or bed. Stravinsky once described aging as: ‘the ever-shrinking perimeter of pleasure’. This constantly diminishing world ground is almost a given in representations of old age. (Scarry, 1985: 32-33)¹⁵

Thus we see that it is not only *the* good that is restricted to the young but also the goods that make up our made world, the objects of our work that form the basis of our extension into and consumption of that world. And it is just such a facet of the life of the elderly that ‘is almost a given in our representations of old age’. But *not* in the representations of old age that are provided by Heritage. For Heritage, the ‘givenness’ of ‘diminishing world ground’ is a call to action, a demonstration of the need to *make up* images that show the perseverance of personhood into old age. In, for example, Heritage’s ‘special letter’ to those who have shown an interest in ‘remembering’ Heritage in their wills, we see a hospice¹⁶ that is thoroughly connected with the wider world – ‘there will be family support workers and... [a] special wing... devoted to service training and education, spreading the hospice’s philosophy to NHS professionals’; an elderly lady radiantly enjoying her usage of a telephone; and another one ‘enjoying a break at the Day Centre’ with a younger companion, perhaps one of the ‘unsung heroes’ of volunteering. Such images must be *made up* through the work of inverting ‘given’ representations of old age, in order that they can subsequently *make real* a world in which diminishing world ground is at the very edge of experience, if allowed a place at all.

And it is here that we witness the second sense in which the work of Heritage ‘makes’, ground for the expansion of the world of the elderly, in a world otherwise diminishing. For the services that Heritage provides, in collaboration with ‘commercial’ partners, may all be seen as attempts to mitigate the diminishing of world that is increasingly the lot of the ever longer lasting elderly in an ever more modern world. It is to the nature of such services and of the final act of Heritage’s mimesis (at least in this account) that we turn in our conclusion.

15 See also Caillois (1984) on the relations between moving in and out of the body, death, and the life force of love. See Shakespeare (2000) and Warnes (1993) for accounts of the ways in which those who might benefit from care can consequently risk representation as problematic objects of, in the case of the elderly, increasing incapability. See Bettio and Plantenga (2004) for comparative consideration of care for the elderly in relation to the different historical and institutional contexts of different states.

16 Although ambivalence is retained: the hospice is also described as a ‘long-needed haven’.

Enterprising Bodies and the Marketing of Assurance

Heritage, as fund raising organization, has adopted many relatively standard practices to enhance giving that have strong traditions in the traditional charity sector. It has, like many other similar organizations, also ventured into the field of (social) enterprise, priding itself on a large retail (of largely second hand goods) operation, enacted by both paid staff and volunteers, with an annual turnover of millions of pounds. But it is in its second type of enterprising fund raising that we witness the most interesting and imaginative exchanges. For Heritage, partly as a result of the contacts held by its new managers, partly to give them something to do as they create their own new and expansive working worlds, has entered into an ever-increasing array of 'partnerships' with commercial organizations to provide services to its target consumers. Such services, including the housing we encountered earlier, are profit making with such results being 'gifted' from nominal trading companies to Heritage *qua* charity. Heritage offers its commercial partners access to a self-defining mass market segment, a market made comfortable by Heritage's involvement. It can offer its clients a magic portal to the market through which cheaper, but not inferior or substandard products flow, through its arrangements with its partners. In extreme cases, and they are rare, Heritage will arrange the pricing structures of such services to reflect redistributive aims. But even without the exceptional presence of this last 'good', the situation is seemingly seen by all concerned as 'win-win'. In these relationships, which cover the supply of services such as legal and financial advice, home maintenance, 'secure' housing provision (whether Heritage run or not), travel and transport and telephone advice lines, to name but a few, Heritage sees itself as not endorsing but 'branding' that which it seeks to help make available to its clients.¹⁷

We're not in the endorsement business. There is a serious significant difference between branding something and endorsing something. We are very much in the branding business, we are very definitely not in the endorsement business... if you haven't got the brand, you don't control the brand, you don't, you can't control the sale of the product. (Finance Director, 10-10-1996)

Strict and detailed service agreements are constructed and monitored by Heritage to ensure provision of what is required. Heritage, through such arrangements, is able to 'sell' the confidence it can provide its client consumers to producers who, in their turn, can supply these clients with cheaper services than they can attain elsewhere. But crucially, precisely the sorts of services that hold off the body's obliteration of the world and self of the older person as work and its made products become unavailable and the transubstantiations of pain that they carry are undone. An obliteration that as we noted is often assisted and facilitated by the infantilism of our modern world. Heritage can slow, even on occasions reverse, the diminishment in the world ground and selves of its target client market by making available services which not only see *them* as special, as the *real leads*,¹⁸ but also make available to them a world beyond the service, *because of and through the service* (see also Kam, 1996). Telephone Advice Lines connect their users widely, 'secure' housing at best stops the boundary of the extended

17 See Bruce (2005) and Tapp *et al.* (1999) for examples of the logic behind the increasing colonisation of the charity sector by the discourse of marketing.

18 In the sense deployed in the film *Glengarry Glenross*.

body being seen as the fragility of home, at worst extending it at least as far from the body *as* the boundary of the home, whilst insurance and assurance take some of the pain of death, some of what may be left behind, and transubstantiate it by dealing with it now.¹⁹ They are goods to be sold at a profit, goods that themselves extend the elderly and goods that allow further extension beyond themselves. In the context of Heritage's espoused aims, they are very good goods indeed.

But they are also, in the final instance, goods provided through 'the market', and it is here that we witness our final set of bizarre mimetic turns for the market and business function as 'strange attractors' in Heritage's work. At one level, as Hinchliffe (1997) reminds us, the commercial market functions as exemplar of a modern world that has no time for the aged. For it is the market that fails, on its own, to adequately serve this segment (many of them do not have very much money) and it is the market that in part instantiates the very category of the elderly through its pensioning of those whose work(s) can, or should, no longer be sold. It is the *sine qua non* of our modern, cultural exacerbation of the tendency of age to diminish, to shrink, the world ground of those that experience its march. We don't have time for the elderly – to extend our worlds to theirs, to keep the latter alive – and it is in large part the market that makes this the case. But the market is also the realm of choice and within cultures increasingly oriented to consumption, the place where personhood is continually expressed in the endless making and remaking of the (cultural) world. Relations to the market must thus be carefully managed.

Which leaves us where? Well, we can see that the *particular* markets made available to clients by Heritage carry limited market 'bads' and predominantly market 'goods', and very good goods they are too. This market is a safe market, a 'benign' market (Scarry, 1985), and attributes that traverse it do so through their authorisation by the mirror of charity that is Heritage. This new Heritage, the Heritage that can move from pathology to the positive health of society, is, as we noted at the start, a modern, not traditional, Heritage. And this is a modernity that is sustained by the presence of our new managers, *as* market products, working in a marketised world, in part as consequence of their preceding history in, their acculturation to, the commercial world. For this is a strange mirror: Heritage must not just show its charitable side to its *clients*, it must also show its business side to its *customers*. Transubstantiating the new Heritage through the body of the market is a difficult business.

One of the great difficulties with charity I think, is there isn't the natural competitive phenomenon or, to make them efficient for example. Charities tend not to go out of business because they don't make profits and they make services, they don't have shareholders who are looking for a return on equity, looking for a dividend on their shares. At the same time, you think alone about the concept

19 We could also usefully add to this list the volunteering that goes on in the shops which make up Heritage's 'retail' operations. The demographic profile of such volunteers is extremely consistent with that of Heritage's target 'market'. And whilst in 'many ways it would be much easier not to use volunteers, just paid employees' such individual are 'employed' for 'other reasons' (Senior Manager). Primary amongst these, one might say, is the mimesis such arrangements provide of the 'employment' from which the elderly are largely excluded, the world of work. See also Fyfe and Milligan (2003) and Parsons and Broadbridge (2007) for reflections on the complexities of volunteering, with the latter focusing particularly on these within charity retail outlets, apprehended via attention to broader regimes of signification, including that of gender.

of the customer, if you believe as I tend to believe that the customer is the person who pays the money, in charity parlance the customer is the donor. However in most businesses the customer receives the value of the product which he's given the money for. That is not generally the case in the charity world, in fact some would say legally it can't, cannot be. So the, the recipient of the service, they might live ten thousand miles away in, somewhere in darkest Africa or wherever, or South East Asia or something and, you know, so the customer, the donor, probably has very, very little experience of the value which is being provided for his, for the price, and therefore cannot make that judgement... So therefore the normal economic competitive forces that are, that are there in private and commercial business are not there in a charity and that I think leads to different ways that charities have, charities might be managed.²⁰ (Finance Director)

Such difficulties can however be completely overcome when customer and client can be merged in an act of transubstantiation of immense worth to our new managers.

I'm most excited about [Heritage] because I think one of the things that it can do as a business is to utilise its brand franchise with older people in terms of developing products for older people which it can sell and sell at a profit and I don't think there's anything wrong with that at all. Then it can utilise those profits for the purposes of older people who can't afford perhaps those same products or it can supplement the funds for the charitable services, and I think that's the way charity is going to go. (Finance Director)

Through 'branding' rather than merely 'endorsing' products, Heritage becomes a market maker in its own right, making good its promise to the customer side of its mirror as it simultaneously satisfies its clients' ongoing need for care. But as should be clear by now, market makers are by their very nature mimetic to the market. Think only of the market in seats on the world's commodity, financial and futures exchanges. And we are therefore left in a very curious position indeed. Or, as our finance director put it, as words began to fail him:

I think... certain parts of the charity sector and I include [Heritage], is probably breaking ground to a new..., I think you know, we're leap-frogging part of the twentieth century in a way and I think you know, the roots of charity are very much in the eighteenth century or something, but I think where we might get to might be a, very much a twenty first century model...of organization.

This 'new organizational form', the combine of 'social capital [which] is non-monetary, ... basically good will, and... entrepreneurial capital[,],... financial equity' as observed by the Finance Director, is as rhetorically seductive as it is mimetically complex and fragile. And in consequence it enhances and jeopardises Heritage's identity as *carer* in equal measure. For the whip of the market is not always benign. Boots, the UK chemists, utilised the advertising strapline "We care because you do" in an apparently extremely successful campaign in the early 1990s.²¹ The three words of the conditional, 'because you do', appear as but a minor addition, a mere rhetorical invite to the second

20 *Heritage* is far from alone in experiencing the confusion of role and its perceived impact upon legitimacy. And the managers at *Heritage* who have informed this paper are far from the only ones to have reflected upon it both with regard to relations to the market and indeed relations to the state (see, for example, Amin *et al.*, 2002; Sogge *et al.*, 1996; Parsons and Broadbridge, 2007; Nettleton and Hardey, 2006; Gaskin, 1999; Held, 2005; Zimmerman and Dart, 1998; Lynn, 2002). Nor are these managers alone in seeing the potential of business, particularly in its association with marketing, as a potential solution to this problem (see, for example, Bruce, 2005).

21 A 'sign off with style ... that says it all', according to the laudatory mention given to the campaign in the dti endorsed 'practical guide to advertising' [<http://www.adassoc.org.uk/guide/creat.html>] (consulted 25th January 2005).

person of the reader, to the seemingly similar notion that Heritage deploys. But their impact, if untrammelled, is enormous. For they occlude a system of intermediary transubstantiations of immense importance. Given our knowledge of the operation of capitalist relations of production and consumption that take their place in a world too-often characterised by an impoverished sense of 'making' (Arendt, 1958),²² it is clear that the strapline's warm and fuzzy appeal is but a chimera that eighteenth century philosophy could easily disintegrate for us. Boots cares not simply because *we* do but because *they* are also aware that *we* act on *our* cares. That if *they* can attend to *our* cares with *their* products and services, and do so better than *their* market competitors, or at least create a robust impression of so doing, then *they* can also attend to *their* own cares, or rather the cares of the principals for whom *they* act as agents. As the popularity of Friedmanesque misreadings of our legal framework makes clear, *they* care because the shareholders of the company do. Through this instrumentalism, in the most pejorative sense, through this chain of equivalencies in which the cares of the customer become unproblematically synonymous with the cares of the company and those of its owners, the possibility of a rich world of 'action' (Arendt, 1958), of a 'kingdom of ends' (Kant, 1996) is lost. Heritage currently cares for the person, as well as his or her representatives in the conduits of capital, but it is far from clear for how long it can continue to do so if its mimesis of business remains unchecked. Which is not, of course, to say that we currently face an either/or in such organizations, between the business like, professional pursuit of the ends of capitalist accumulation and the presumably more shambolic and amateurish pursuit of those of philanthropy.²³ We *currently* do not. Heritage and its ilk are able to do a great deal of good, for a great many varied constituencies, precisely because they are able to oscillate within different modes and levels of mimesis of various legitimacy ideals, as they articulate various works that make, maintain and expand the world ground of their beneficiaries, of those who seek to provide for their beneficiaries and of those members of the organization itself that mediate the two. It is the hybridity and complexity of these shifting arrangements that deliver their strength and enable their perpetuation. But when the range of legitimacy modes and models shrinks and, moreover, when that shrinking is embraced in the interests of the presumed powers of consistency, the elegance of simplicity and the comforts of familiarity then the price to be paid for that which is gained is too high to compensate for that which is lost. For Heritage to continue to care and to continue to matter to all of those whom it is able to expand (or at least ameliorate and slow the contraction of) it must continue itself to be drawn in, attracted to, multiple directions and ideals. It must accept and embrace a future of "both radical change and radical continuity in the relationship between market, state and society" (Amin et al, 2002: xi). A lived future in which action can take place within the labyrinthine world ground made through the extension and realisation of disparate and irreconcilable ends rather than the dead, endlessly elongated present of a world made through the extension and realisation of the means associated with one end alone.

22 A term that Arendt deploys in contradistinction to a richer conceptualisation of 'action'.

23 Or indeed between pursuit of the formally agreed public good ends of the state and those of accumulation or philanthropy.

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