The Wonderful, the Worthy and the Weak:

Non-profit Disaster Relief Discourse of the American Red Cross
in Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti Earthquake

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Communication

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-83080-2
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-83080-2

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Abstract

This thesis uses colonial discourse theory and discourse analysis methodology to examine the non-profit disaster relief discourse used by the American Red Cross in two cases—Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake. The discourse is analyzed through samples of American Red Cross online videos for each of the disasters. The comparison of these videos explores the differences in discourse for a local, first world disaster and an international, third world disaster while also identifying shared strategies and themes. The positive presentation of self is a constant and recurring strategy throughout the videos in both case studies, as the American Red Cross consistently places a central focus on itself as a heroic saviour to the victims of disaster. In Hurricane Katrina videos, however, the videos emphasize the worthy, individualized victims under a neoliberal framework, while the Haiti videos emphasize the weak, uneducated mass of victims with colonial discourse.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of many people who have inspired and guided me throughout the process. First, my sincere thanks to Dr. Miranda Brady for your input and wisdom that have shaped this project from its inception. Your guidance as my supervisor has been invaluable, and I cannot thank you enough for your time and encouragement at every stage. Also, my deep gratitude to Dr. Chris Russill and Dr. Chad Lavin for being part of my thesis committee and for your time and contributions toward improving this work.

I must also recognize all the faculty of the Communications graduate program and the Masters students with whom I have had the pleasure of working this year. The scholarly community and learning environment that I have been a part of have been everything I could have asked for and more. Thank you for supporting and encouraging me in my ambitions and goals and for inspiring me in my projects and plans. To the friends who have become my Ottawa family, thank you for walking through the journey with me and helping me in all the various ways that you have.

Finally, unending thanks to my family, my parents, sisters and grandparents, who have supported and loved me over the distance this year. I have missed your faces but not your unconditional love and constant encouragement as these have been present at all times. Thank you for your confidence and belief in me. And to Dani, for your patience, for your selfless sacrifice, for your unwavering love, for your faith in me, I will be forever grateful. You made this dream possible with your support, and you have comforted, encouraged and inspired me at every step, at every moment. I could not have done it without you. Gracias por esperar, mi amor.

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1. Introduction and Literature Review

Japan, Alabama, Haiti, Indonesia, the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. A growing list of locations, united in common association as sites of recent natural disasters, holds as much, if not as prolonged, attention and connotation as a list including Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. Unlike war, terrorism and even poverty, however, natural disaster strikes without apparent political motivation or social discrimination, a seemingly random occurrence. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one victim reports. “It didn’t care who you were...It took you out” (“Hurricane Katrina – World Vision”). Their unpredictable and catastrophic nature is fascinating. Their images are spectacular, leaving a wake of destruction and devastation that can hold audience attention for days and even motivate donors and volunteers for months. Yet it is in this subsequent mediated and constructed experience of the disasters and the following aid provision that the political and social environment becomes part of the natural disaster.

Disaster relief efforts and the discourses employed to support such efforts are influenced by the political goals, societal understandings and particular outlook of the contributing nations or organizations. While a number of studies have examined the ideology and implications in news reports and national political discourse on disasters, little work has been done on the discourse of the non-profit organizations actively campaigning to gain financial support for their disaster relief work. Given the responsibilities to both donors and victims in addition to the attitudes of development that often inform relief work, the disaster relief communications produced by non-profit organizations offer a unique area for study in the context of many natural disasters occurring across the globe. These representations take on a particular significance given the extent of first hand interaction with the victims of the disaster, the history of long-

term development efforts and often the unique responsibilities of care assumed by aid agencies as opposed to news media. This thesis uses discourse analysis to examine political and societal subtext in non-profit disaster relief donation campaigns, specifically colonial and neoliberal discourses in the construction of victim and donor. With a focus on the colonial attitudes in disaster relief, this project will analyze the donation campaign videos produced by the American Red Cross organization for both the Haiti earthquake in 2010 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005 to compare the discourses constituting disasters in the first and third world. Specifically, my analysis will focus on the following questions: what is the central focus of the videos and how are representations of self and other managed; which discursive strategies are used and to what purpose, whether to provide information, encouragement, gratitude, etc; who is featured and/or speaking; what themes and tropes are present; and ultimately, how do the answers differ between the two cases and what does this reveal about neo-colonial and neoliberal attitudes in the videos. The Red Cross has been chosen as a recognizable, non-profit relief organization that has done significant work in both contexts, providing sufficient material for comparison. Thus, the analysis begins with an overview of the political aspects of disaster relief efforts and communications and the specific context of the Red Cross campaigns, then proceeds to establish the theory and methods, present two case studies comparing the discourse in donation campaign videos for Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake and finally concludes with future directions and implications in this significant area of study.

This thesis argues, ultimately, that while both campaigns for Hurricane Katrina and Haiti privilege a positive presentation of the Red Cross as heroic saviours, the videos reveal much more significant differences in the construction of victims in the third world

country as compared to the first world country. The contrast between the treatment of first and third world disasters indicates that in the Haiti videos there is a greater degree of silencing, inferiorization and Othering through colonial discourse and tropes than in the Hurricane Katrina videos, despite racial similarities between the residents in both areas. In the videos on the first world disaster in New Orleans, the victims are portrayed as worthy, individualized victims, even equals and friends, and are also allowed to speak in some cases. These depictions further reflect neoliberal expectations on Hurricane Katrina victims for self-improvement and responsibility as modeled by the American Red Cross initiatives. In Haiti, the depictions are more reliant on neo-colonial and traditional colonial expectations of the colonized Others. The victims are portrayed as a homogenized, uneducated mass of colonial Others in need of much more fundamental and extensive American Red Cross expertise, instruction and intervention. Although there has been little work on non-profit disaster campaign communications, these findings do reflect other literature on disaster relief efforts that is examined in the following sections and which establishes the political aspects of providing aid and the prevalent themes in disaster representations.

Political Nature of Aid

The literature surrounding aid delivery illustrates the undeniable political nature of producing, framing and offering international aid. Even the basic acceptance and rejection of aid delivery in the aftermath of disaster are used to connote various political messages and are particularly political acts (Nelson 380). After Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005, former President George Bush's refusal of international aid was intended to communicate independence and self-sufficiency (Nelson 379), despite the government's early ineffectiveness and delays in aid delivery.

Similar stands after other disasters by countries including China, Myanmar, India, Thailand and Japan are often intended to communicate their own independence and economic capacity for recovery and thereby gain status and respect internationally (Nelson 380; Zhang 29). To accept aid, conversely, can connote a measure of dependence and need that may be unflattering to the state's government and the country as a whole.

In contrast to the independent stand made by Bush after Hurricane Katrina, the government of Haiti accepted not only international aid but also the foreign control of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (Dupuy 14). The Commission, initiated by the United States State Department, temporarily governs the country through the various voting members, of which the majority are from the international community (Dupuy 15). Four of the seventeen members are representatives of the main states offering aid to Haiti, including Brazil, Canada, France and the United States (Dupuy 14). Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive advocated for surrendering sovereignty to these foreign votes in Haiti's Senate with the following defence: "I hope you sense the dependency in this document. If you don't sense it, you should tear it up. I am optimistic that in 18 months...we will be autonomous in our decisions. But right now I have to assume, as prime minister, that we are not." (qtd. in Dupuy 15). In Haiti after the earthquake, unlike after Hurricane Katrina, the sense of dependence has been inserted even into the highest level of political leadership within the country, a marked contrast to the American position. This surrender of control illustrates the political projects that are attached to the provision and acceptance of aid and the dependence constructed for the recipients of the relief efforts.

In the exertion of such political influence in aid provision, the literature identifies American neoliberal policies as prominent in disaster relief, connecting to and extending neo-colonial practices of control. In the postcolonial context, neo-colonialism is the “continued...exploitation and underdevelopment of erstwhile colonized regions” both economically and territorially (Olaniyan 270). Neoliberalism, emerging from the history of traditional colonialism, is also economically and politically based, defined by Wendy Brown as “market rationality,” as a privileging of individualization, privatization and economic profitability in governance, including neo-colonial projects (693-94). Disaster relief work offers access and opportunity for both influences in vulnerable regions. As Jeff Motter illustrates through his study of the rhetoric of humanitarian militarism in American aid provision for the 2004 tsunami, the politics of aid can be attached to significant neo-colonial interests, particularly in this case through a territorial presence. The interest of the American government and the actions of the military sent to Indonesia for delivery of aid and rebuilding projects were justified to American citizens through evocations of the Good Samaritan parable and a rhetoric of compassion (Motter 509). Despite the Indonesian government’s request that all non-essential humanitarian personnel withdraw, the presence of American troops is justified by a feeling of moral exceptionalism among American citizens (Motter 508). The provision of aid to a primarily Muslim nation is described by Bush as a result of the extraordinary compassion of the American people for helpless victims regardless of religious creed, especially as compared to other foreign countries who offer less assistance (Motter 509). However, the humanitarian aid delivered through the American military, Motter suggests, has a deeper intent than such rhetoric implies. The disaster opened opportunity to re-assert relations

with Indonesia, which had previously disintegrated over humanitarian abuses committed by Indonesia in East Timor. Under the cover of compassionate aid delivery, American military troops have established a presence in the area “in order to rebuild roads and to hunt suspected terrorists” (Motter 508). Thus the image of generosity and the interventionist neo-colonial project of the United States are both furthered through the provision of aid that is justified by the moral goodness of an America that according to Bush “cares deeply about suffering people around the world” (qtd. in Motter 508). This construction of victim and donor images exemplifies neo-colonial influence in disaster response and the potential for disaster communication campaigns to both obscure and further neo-colonial projects.

Similar reports of control and political influence also emerge out of the response to Haiti’s crisis and the subsequent surrender of control to the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, headed by former President Bill Clinton as a special envoy to Haiti for the UN. A report from the North American Congress on Latin America by Alex Dupuy describes the plans for recovery as an extension and repetition of failed neoliberal development tactics of the past few decades that initiated dependence in the country many years prior to the 2010 earthquake (15). Particularly, Dupuy cites interventions in the 1970’s that gave economic control of the country to international finance institutions, again in return for military and economic aid from Canada, France and the United States (15). This earlier intervention initiated a two-fold strategy to remove tariffs particularly on imported American food products such as rice and to keep wages low so that cheap labour would be readily available to foreign business interests for assembly exports (Dupuy 15-16). The results meant that a nineteen percent food import level grew to fifty-

one percent and Haiti “went from being self-sufficient in the production of rice, sugar, poultry, and pork to becoming the fourth-largest importer of subsidized U.S. rice in the world and the largest importer of foodstuffs from the United States in the Caribbean” (Dupuy 17). Through this foreign intervention, the trade liberalization “meant transferring wealth from Haitian to U.S. farmers, especially rice farmers in Arkansas and the U.S. agribusiness companies that export to Haiti and those Haitian companies that resell it on the domestic market” (Dupuy 17). Further, the foreign business interests in export assembly (particularly garments) for which wages were kept low only served to employ seven percent of the population and contributed little to the national economy due to tax breaks (Dupuy 16).

Despite the negative outcomes of these initiatives, Dupuy argues that new recovery plans administered through the management of aid echo the tenor of these former policies. The reconstruction policies are “nearly identical” in that they focus on the economy, seeking to increase opportunity for garment and select crop exports (Dupuy 18). In these policies, “the key to Haiti’s competitiveness, of course, remains its abundant, low-wage labour force which rivals that of China as the world’s largest garment producer” (Dupuy 18). Further, increasing employment in garment assembly would pull even more farmers off the land, leaving room for larger agri-business to take over for increased mango, coffee and avocado production and export (Dupuy 18). However, Dupuy protests, no mention is made of how Haiti could become self-sufficient in the production of rice or other domestically needed crops or of the fact that increasing competition and economic instability makes the garment industry an unstable means of economic growth (Dupuy 19). These development and relief plans for Haiti once again

serve neoliberal and neo-colonial interests of donor countries, such as the United States and Canada (Dupuy 15; Winter). Particularly, these neoliberal policies detailed by Dupuy are centered around economic dependence on cheap export production and necessary American imports to serve the political and economic interests of the United States in the area, using neoliberal economic policies to support neo-colonial influence in Haiti.

These neoliberal policies are overtly economically based, but again as Wendy Brown notes, neoliberalism extends beyond free market economics to also dominate and organize the political and social spheres around market concerns (693), both in the developing and in the developed world. Such initiatives are part of the imposition of “market rationality” that defines neoliberalism (Brown 693). Neoliberalism as part of governance “depicts free markets, free trade, and entrepreneurial rationality as *achieved and normative*, as promulgated through law and through social and economic policy” (Brown 694). In governing by the “criteria of productivity and profitability,” neoliberal policy then pushes toward individualization and privileges economic interests in governance (Brown 694), as in the tradition of policies created for Haiti discussed by Dupuy. The outcome of the market influence in the economic, political and social spheres is policy oriented toward “privatization and outsourcing schemes for welfare, education, prisons, the police, and the military” that further “figure and produce citizens as individual entrepreneurs and consumers whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for ‘self-care’—their ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions” (Brown 694). Thus, although the neoliberal policies in Haiti are overtly economic, they also significantly impact the political and social outlook and expectations for the country.

Such neoliberal policies contrast the advice offered by Paul Farmer, founder of the Partners in Health organization, who asserts that “the international community doesn’t know best. Local people do” (70). He suggests that, while economic growth is the key to reconstruction, people could be immediately employed with the promised aid money in tangible positions in reforestation and rebuilding government buildings (Farmer 70-71), in contrast to the export production jobs planned in the recovery policies. An emerging popular movement in Haiti further asserts their own concerns for constructing the country and their objections to neo-colonial power structures by resisting the rhetoric of reconstruction “since few are served by re-creating the gross levels of mass poverty and social exclusion that existed before the earthquake” (Bell 30). Instead, the grassroots organizations in Haiti seek the “full participation of those who are usually denied both input into public policy formation and benefit of the fruits of those policies: peasant farmers, sweatshop workers, informal-sector workers, destitute women, and others” in six agenda items for construction of the country that would counter the unfair trade rules, environmental degradation and devaluing of small-scale, family farming (Bell 30). In disregard of the advice and advocacy of such actors, however, “the Haitian people, together with their government, have been [largely] bypassed in the planning and oversight of how aid money is spent and in reconstruction policies” (Bell 31). This silencing and circumvention, manifested in Haiti through the neoliberal recovery plans, demonstrate the colonial attitudes and neo-colonial ambitions in the area that are established in the postcolonial theory discussed in chapter two. As Graeme MacRae and David Hodgkin acknowledge in their treatment of aid delivery in Indonesia in 2006, there is a greater accountability to donors (or potentially the neo-colonizers) both at a state and

organization level, rather than to principles or the people being assisted (263). As the authors note, “these donors have their own hierarchies of policy and budgetary priorities, which are often tied to political and public relations concerns and thus have no automatic fit with the needs of the recipients” (MacRae and Hodgkin 263). Therefore, in Indonesia as in Haiti, the political manipulations of aid often outweigh the victims’ needs and indeed their own actions and agendas of construction.

Yet, as indicated by Laurie Ouellette and James Hay, neoliberal ideology in relief work is not limited to an international, third world realm either. Ouellette and Hay employ the idea of neoliberal governance in their book *Better Living through Reality TV* where they adopt Michel Foucault’s definition of governmentality to assess a liberal and neoliberal framework in reality television programming in the United States. Ouellette and Hay describe neoliberalism similarly to Brown, as the intentional and ambitious extension of free market rationality into all of society and governance (12). Specifically, the authors highlight Foucault’s view that “it is the State’s ability to encourage ‘freedom’ as long as behaviour is exercised responsibly that enables it to ‘govern at a distance’ rather than primarily by force” (9). This view is then applied to understand neoliberalism as a “privatization and personalization of welfare” as an enactment of governing from a distance (Ouellette and Hay 12). In such a neoliberal rationality, “the management and care of the self becomes an imperative in different, and arguably more urgent ways...in terms of obliging citizens to actualize and ‘maximize’ themselves not through ‘society’ or collectively, but through their choices in the privatized spheres of lifestyle, domesticity, and consumption” (Ouellette and Hay 12). It is this neoliberal governmentality of self-governance and self-actualization that Ouellette and Hay trace throughout their book on

reality television programming specifically within the United States, but as with Haiti, the neoliberal projects are prominent in local American disaster relief responses as well.

Chris Russill and Chad Lavin examine the neoliberal attitude towards the failed federal disaster relief effort following Hurricane Katrina in their analysis of “tipping point” discourse in the forthcoming article “From Tipping Points to Meta-Crises.” They explain how the discourse of tipping points used by Michael Brown, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in defending the actions of the agency also indicates a neoliberal attitude of Band-aid solutions that limit the responsibility of the government in the disaster (Russill and Lavin 12). Russill and Lavin suggest that instead of acknowledging responsibility or even going further to address systemic causes of the political economy of vulnerability, the response to Hurricane Katrina was more focused on a displacement of blame through restricting responsibility (17). Jason Hackworth and Joshua Akers pick up this criticism of Michael Brown’s defence, suggesting that the federal government’s lack of response exposes the neoliberal assumptions of the government. Within these assumptions, Hackworth and Akers declare that “chief among them was the idea that charities, not the state, should assume responsibility for human welfare” (41). Further, they cite criticisms that recognize “efforts by the Bush Administration to exploit the storm’s aftermath as an opportunity to deregulate and make New Orleans more business-friendly” (42). These acknowledgements of neoliberal exploitation support Ouellette and Hay’s discussion of the promotion of neoliberal governmentality specifically through Hurricane Katrina, as they argue that treatment of Hurricane Katrina victims in reality television further privileged and glorified the charity-based response that emphasizes individual

responsibility and preparedness rather than drawing attention to state efforts or lack thereof. However, within a first world and neo-colonizing country such as the United States, these neoliberal approaches are less clearly associated with internally directed neo-colonial projects. Nevertheless, as Russill and Lavin indicate, the political economy of vulnerability that is engendered by the neoliberal position of the American government is related not only to poverty and age but also significantly to race and the process of racial ghettoization that particularly targets African American people (10, 14), again a problem with historical roots in colonial attitudes. The neoliberal discourse of tipping points obscures the political economy of vulnerability that is in part due to continued colonial issues. Thus, even within the United States, neoliberal policies and discourse connect to a colonial discourse that informs disaster response communications and politics.

The literature surrounding the delivery of aid in disaster situations has strongly established the political agendas that often accompany such assistance, particularly in the neoliberal, neo-colonial projects of the United States. The studies detailed herein illustrate how aid is a political project, from the very acceptance and rejection of it to the neo-colonial goals it accomplishes. Neoliberal policies are also closely tied to political disaster response projects and contribute to neo-colonial influence and discourses in disaster response communications. Using disaster relief as a mechanism for intervention, the United States covers its humanitarian militarism and neoliberal interests with a discourse of compassion through which the government extends its influence. The development and aid system are thus not autonomous of government interests, neoliberal projects or neo-colonial influence. Financially, secular and some faith-based non-profit

charities and organizations rely both on individual and corporate donations but also serve as channels for government funds (Hackworth and Akers 45). As Ouellette and Hay establish, such organizations as the Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity, even if not relying on government aid, reinforce neoliberal principles of non-government based assistance and individual responsibility (139). In the Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Katrina as in the tsunami and other disasters, relief efforts are inextricably tied to larger political practices of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism.

The Politics of Representation

The politics involved in the delivery of aid as detailed above are closely tied and indeed can rely on the politics of representation, as demonstrated in Motter's examination of American relief rhetoric for the 2004 tsunami. Thus, the established connection between disaster relief and neoliberal, neo-colonial influences is also tied into the representations of these disasters. As Russill and Lavin point out in their forthcoming article, "crises do not merely arise, but are produced when political actors characterize the world in a manner that emphasizes the possibility and maybe ethical necessity of responding to a particular situation" (18). The crisis is created and defined not primarily by "objective and unmediated conditions" but rather by the "narrative explanation of the situation" (Russill and Lavin 18). Elsewhere, in his article "Sublimity and Solutions," Russill explores another form of problem construction through information and communication technologies (ICT) in development work. Issues in development work are "interpreted as problems of deficient communication" so that "solutions are offered that advance a political project on the grounds of communication theoretical advance—'more two-way participatory dialogues'—and which require new communication technologies" (Russill 394). Access to information becomes a central development goal so that

communication concerns and technologies can be used to formulate the problems and focus of development work (Russill 392). Thus, ICT are used to problematize development, to create and solve crises in order to control the means of participation and to further “a neo-liberal strategy for redirecting development activities from the national assistance ODA model to an ‘economic trade, not aid’ position” (Russill 392). The communicative construction of problem and crisis are used in service of neoliberal interests. Motter exemplifies this type of communicative construction as well in his study of the rhetoric of compassion surrounding the neoliberal American tsunami relief project: “The U.S. tsunami relief effort was as much a rhetorical moment as a material act” (508). The representations of disaster relief are also part of a larger development discourse that in particular “has created an extremely efficient apparatus for producing knowledge about, and the exercise of power over, the Third World,” thus creating subjects in the governance of the third world to ensure control over it, according to Arturo Escobar, a critical development scholar (9). He continues to discuss development in terms of the problematization since, “the very existence of the Third World has in fact been waged, managed, and negotiated around this politics of representation” (215).

Within these particular politics of representation, then, neoliberal and neo-colonial political influence is created through strategies of repression and denigration of victims, particularly third world victims as the literature indicates, and the glorifying of the donor citizens and nations. Because little work has been done on the discursive constructs produced and reproduced by aid organizations, this literature review draws on work also analyzing news and government representations of disasters, the victims and relief efforts in order to denaturalize common discursive constructs. For example, in a

comparison of framing through newspaper images of the 2004 tsunami and Hurricane Katrina in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, the newspapers present more depictions of human emotions and death in the tsunami coverage and more relief work and survivors in Hurricane Katrina coverage (Borah 55). Further, when such representations of human suffering for the tsunami were featured, they were large, close-up shots of people grieving in deplorable conditions, while for Hurricane Katrina, comparable pictures were avoided, less prominently featured and smaller in size (Borah 56). This type of representation that features more of the depravity and suffering from the tsunami in the third world context is consistent with other evaluations of newspaper images depicting Haiti. The graphic nature of many images from Haiti has been attributed to the poverty of the subjects and the lack of Haitian government protest over the display of such pictures (Emmett 32). Using such extremely graphic images of death and devastation in Haiti has been justified for the awareness and aid contributions increased through the visual representations (Emmett 31). From the viewpoint of a Haitian elementary principle interviewed on the topic, however, such images are humiliating and take away the dignity of Haitian people who are depicted in deplorable, almost inhuman contexts (Emmett 33). After seeing such images, she asks, “who will be motivated to go to Haiti in the next decade after seeing how ‘ugly,’ ‘poor’ or ‘insecure’ it can be?” (qtd. in Emmett 32).

Murali Balaji theorizes this type of depiction of the impoverished victims in his description of the distinction between empathy and pity. The disaster response in Haiti, like the tsunami response in 2004, focuses on “the spectacle of donating to Haiti and the repetition of images underscoring the country’s pitiful state” that emphasize the

“dysfunction, violence and hopelessness” in the devastation (Balaji 50). In such presentations of the disaster, there is an evocation of pity that implies a superiority and power over the victims on the part of viewers, while if viewers were invited to empathize with the victims, there would be a sentiment of equality rather than dominance (Balaji 51). Instead, pity is used to “privilege the white view of a dark world as dysfunctional, childlike and dependent,” making Haitians a tragic Other that is more consumable in the spectacle of pity (Balaji 51-52). The Othering of Haitians echoes the Othering of the Orient that Said traced in various designations of Orientals in Western depictions as “backward, degenerate, uncivilized, and retarded,” akin to “delinquents, the insane, women, the poor,” and ultimately “lamentably alien” (207). Employed in discourses concerning the Haiti earthquake, these representations effectively use but also exclude the Haitian people and their voices in the very campaigns that support them, as “we give millions out of pity, [while] those we pity are left out of mediated public discourse” (Balaji 52). The exclusion of local Haitians from the recovery planning process discussed above (Bell 31) also therefore extends into the wider discourse around the disaster as well. This silence is reflective of issues raised particularly by postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak, in terms of “representation as ‘speaking for’” the Other or the subaltern, whom she concludes cannot speak because “representation has not withered away” (70, 104). In other words, the representation, such as that made in the images of Haiti and the tsunami, replaces the voice of the Other and continues to speak for the Other, presenting the subaltern in a way that is often incongruous with their own expression of identity and understandings.

Balaji further connects the depiction and discourse about Haitians to larger issues of racial stereotypes and tropes out of colonial history and postcolonial theory, which he also traces in the representations of African American victims of Hurricane Katrina (55), evoking theorists such as Stuart Hall and Frantz Fanon on racial stereotypes of blackness. Thus while coverage of Hurricane Katrina may differ from that of the tsunami in the images shown, Balaji suggests that, through postcolonial themes of Otherness, race and silence, there are common racial discourses of pity in the Haitian and Hurricane Katrina news coverage. This type of pity, furthermore, is predicated on a distinction between the audience and the victims represented. Through language and inscription of Otherness, an I-Other binary is created to keep the pitied separate from the pitiers (Balaji 52). Haiti is linked to Africa, New Orleans and even the south side of Chicago as the victims are homogenized while the benevolent, (white) European and American helpers are individualized and potential donors are empowered (Balaji 53-56). Therefore, “pity becomes a powerful rhetorical device when organizations and individuals use it as a means of highlighting their good deeds (without giving the recipients of those deeds a voice)” (Balaji 55).

A similar movement and focus from victim to helper is traced in the American government’s rhetoric of compassion discussed earlier in the 2004 tsunami relief context. In Bush’s address and exhortation to the American people after the tsunami, he focused on the moral exceptionalism of the American citizens, rather than the needs and problems of the victims. Bush emphasized the moral superiority and the exceptional compassion of the American people in providing aid particularly to the Muslim victims of the tsunami despite being at war with other Muslim people. By prioritizing the character of the

American people particularly in contrast to the Muslim Other, “Bush’s call for citizens to participate in international humanitarian aid kept the discursive gaze fixed firmly on America’s compassionate action” as “his narrative focus quickly reverted from helpless victims to the centrality of the agent—the tacit Good Samaritan—who does good without regard for religion or ethnicity” (Motter 510). These representations of the American citizen as agent are part of a well-established tradition of neo-colonial interest and justification wherein the compassion of the citizens is incorporated as moral legitimation in the narrative of international interventions that are supposedly in the best interest of the victims (Motter 514). The Good Samaritan characterization of American citizens, Motter claims, depoliticizes and dehistoricizes the actions of the government and exalts America to the figurative “shining city on a hill” (516-17).

The exultation of the agent over the victim reflects as well the “saviour and liberation” trope conceptualized by Jennifer Fluri in her study of American interventions for Afghan women after September 11. Fluri identifies this saviour image through interviews with Afghan women that reveal an important need felt by western women to “[play] the role of ‘saviour’ in unveiling” women in the burqa (245). Although a public unveiling on Oprah brought attention and financial support to particular issues of an Afghan women’s organization, it also “served to reinforce the subordinate and oppressed position of the ‘third world’ woman and her perceived lack of agency, thereby bolstering the ‘saving Afghan women’ trope, that was, in turn, effectively embedded into the subsequent ‘war on terror’ discourse” (Fluri 246). Therefore, the depoliticized emphasis on the compassion and selflessness of American saviours is reactivated for political use,

much as the Good Samaritan rhetoric was used by the Bush administration during the tsunami.

Yasmin Jiwani similarly comments on the treatment of Afghan women particularly in the context of mainstream Canadian press such as *The Globe and Mail*. She too identifies the “rescue motif” of colonial discourse as applied to Afghan women who are seen as oppressed by the burqa and other veiling practices (Jiwani 731). Canadian media discourse, following the lead of American journalists, participates in the casting of the United States and Canada in “the role of chivalrous warrior out to rescue helpless maidens” (Jiwani 734). The women, when they are depicted, only become worthy for rescue as they suffer heroically and become more “like us” in Canada, particularly by embracing economic initiatives from the West (Jiwani 736). Such privileging of Western initiatives and perspectives adds to a particular focus in the articles in which “Canadians’ benevolence and noblesse oblige are highlighted” (Jiwani 739). Meanwhile, Jiwani suggests, the coverage of the Afghan victims obscures coverage of domestic crimes against women. Particularly in the coverage of the missing women in British Columbia and the investigation of Robert Pickton, the victims are framed predominantly as silenced, passive Aboriginal women and as sexually deviant prostitutes (Jiwani and Young 904), less than worthy of the salvation eagerly granted to Afghan women. The difference in framing of female victims and the emphasis on international over domestic issues illustrates how “by focusing on issues ‘out there,’ the media can overlook the issues ‘over here’ and thereby obfuscate – if not evacuate – the issue of our complicity in upholding the ‘existing scheme of things’” (Jiwani 740). Russill and Lavin have also demonstrated this obscuring of local issues in the response to Hurricane Katrina

and to the Chicago heat wave in 1995 where response focussed on responsibility displacement rather than on the deeper political economy of vulnerability that informs these disasters and problems like the missing women in British Columbia (17). In this balance of salvation and worthy victim tropes, then, news representations offer validation for international interventions while obscuring local problems, implying significant differences between representations of Haiti, the international Other, and New Orleans, the local Other.

Yet the concerns of representation of victims and the saviour trope are not confined to government discourse and news reports. Non-profit aid organizations spend significant resources and time establishing a credible reputation and character to justify donor support and international interventions. Additionally, as representatives of a particular country and sometimes dependent on government funding from that country, the organizations' reputations and interests are tied to the image and projects of the sponsor nation. In the American domestic context, the increasing number of charities, the decrease in government funding for them and the resulting competition for private donor's contributions has generated interest in non-profit marketing, especially given the new generation of individual donors who want to hold non-profits accountable for their effectiveness in operations and services (Venable et al. 295). Thus, in the competition of the charitable market, "brand personality differentiates non-profit organizations," and because this brand personality is reliant on social exchange and trust, the non-profit must ensure their credibility and worthiness in representations to donors (Venable et al. 296). In part, non-profits seek to increase attention and credibility of their messages by utilizing the prestige of celebrity, creating further spectacle around the pitiful representations of

victims. However, Mark Toncar, Jane Reid and Cynthia Anderson have suggested in their research that the association of celebrity with public service announcements can obscure the message due to distraction with celebrity status and questionable sincerity and expertise (271). They further suggest that a more effective spokesperson is actually a victim of the tragedy who is perceived as more sincere, credible and trustworthy (Toncar, Reid and Anderson 271).

Nevertheless, despite this evidence to the contrary, the previous literature has shown that the worthiness of the helpers is most often constructed in contrast to the dependence and Otherness of the victims or aid recipients presented in the discourse (Balaji; Fluri; Motter). As “stakeholders search for cues that symbolize reliability and integrity” (Venable et al. 297), aid organizations are expected to construct justifying positions much as the government itself does, whether through an appropriate spokesperson, rhetoric of compassion or emphasis on the value of their efforts. This project of self-promotion becomes even more crucial in response to criticisms such as those faced by the Red Cross for administrative mismanagement of funds in the aftermath of both September 11th and Hurricane Katrina (Sisco, Collins and Zoch 22). Reputation becomes a valuable commodity to be privileged through the “saviour and liberation” trope identified by Jennifer Fluri that simultaneously exerts dominance over pitiful aid recipients.

Red Cross Representations

In this climate of political motivation and representations, the American Red Cross societies constructed appeals for donations to support their relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake. A particular focus in the mandate of the international Red Cross organization is to provide humanitarian aid without

discrimination to vulnerable populations. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the American Red Cross societies share the fundamental principles that emphasize impartiality, neutrality and independence, in addition to humanity, voluntary service, unity and universality, which is the equal responsibility of all Red Cross and Red Crescent societies on a world-wide scale. Through these principles, the Red Cross societies express a commitment to operate outside of political interests “to bring assistance without discrimination...to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found...to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being” (“About the Red Cross,” *Canadian*). The organizations operate at local and national levels as auxiliaries to the government, receptive to requests by national officials yet independent in funding and governance (“Auxiliary”). However, political influence is not absent from Red Cross operations, as the governing structure of the American Red Cross indicates. The American Red Cross was involved in the formation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which was defamed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In addition, the “president of the United States, who is honorary chairman of the Red Cross, appoints eight governors, including the chairman of the board” (“Red Cross History”).

In addition to the complicated political relationships and struggle against discrimination, the Red Cross also negotiates the balance between victims’ needs and supporters’ interests. In the differences between the Canadian Red Cross’ mission and vision, for example, there are indications of the tension between victim and volunteer, subject and sponsor. While the mission of the Canadian Red Cross places emphasis first on the needs of the victims, the vision statement reflects the parallel need to recognize

donors and volunteers. Although the mission is “to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity in Canada and around the world,” the vision of the organization in Canada is to be “the leading humanitarian organization through which people voluntarily demonstrate their caring for others in need” (“About the Red Cross,” *Canadian*). Similarly, the American Red Cross mission is to “provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies” (“About the Red Cross,” *American*), but thanks donors not for providing for victims but rather for “empowering people to perform extraordinary acts in the face of emergencies” (“Corporate”). As “the Canadian Red Cross relies on public donations, corporate partnerships, public grants and program revenue” and the American Red Cross is “financially supported by voluntary public contributions and cost-reimbursement charges” (“Frequently Asked Questions”; “Red Cross History”) the conflict in the mission and vision of the societies is played out in the appeals for donations that represent both donors and victims. Ultimately, the tension here is performed in the disaster response communications. In the following case studies in chapters three and four, the tension is evident but also nuanced since both cases illustrate constant efforts of positive self-presentation that rely on depictions of Red Cross heroics and victims’ dependence on the organization. Yet there is a stronger colonial discourse of Othering in representations of weak, Haitian victims than in representations of worthy, individual Hurricane Katrina victims. Such nuance is theoretically grounded in postcolonial theorists’ work on colonial discourse and is explored through discourse analysis, as discussed in chapter two.

2. Theory and Methods

In development work, there is a popular rhetoric of participatory development that is often adopted, both officially and unofficially by both development and relief organizations in their overlapping work. Fully participatory development would imply representations of partnership and a reflection of the vitality and transformation being enacted by the victims themselves. The participatory development theory was introduced by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator who is considered a founding scholar on participatory development and whose work offers a useful background and contrast for disaster response since the rhetoric of participatory development has been popularized in development work and further integrated with disaster relief communications in both fundamental and superficial ways. In many disaster relief efforts, the discourse consistently includes a development approach, emphasizing long term aid and development plans that are often informed by a rhetoric of partnership and respect for local populations that echoes the central concerns of participatory development theory. Such rhetoric, however, may not indicate a full understanding of the theory or its proper application. Freire urges a break from colonial attitudes and discourse, to be replaced with authentic trust and partnership with oppressed people as humans in contrast to dehumanizing modes of representation, alienation and manipulation. The move toward participatory development “involves openness to the people, not imperviousness to them; it involves communion with the people, not mistrust” (Freire 133). This process involves dialogue with the oppressed, with their own reflection and action on their situation (Freire 119). Only in this way, Freire suggests, can the oppressed become “‘subjects’... those who know and act, in contrast to ‘objects,’ which are known and acted upon” as Said’s Orientals are (Freire 20). Rather than stereotyping and fixed representation, “dialogue

with the people is neither a concession nor a gift, much less a tactic to be used for domination. Dialogue, as the encounter among men to ‘name’ the world, is a fundamental precondition for their true humanization” (Freire 133). Such a perspective offers a contrast and foil against the colonial discourse encountered in disaster relief communications around third world victims and first world sponsors.

Instead of true participatory development dialogue, the literature reveals that there is an emphasis on the “saviour and liberation” trope (Fluri; Jiواني; Motter) while pitying and denigrating the victims (Balaji). These representations suggest a significant departure from the ideal of participatory development posited in theory, while also embodying colonial attitudes identified by postcolonial studies. Given this context, postcolonial theory is an appropriate frame for research on non-profit disaster relief donation campaigns in order to trace the colonial discourse that remains embedded in representations, particularly of the third world. This discourse, I am arguing, continues to be present in certain disaster relief campaigns despite participatory development rhetoric of partnerships and local empowerment. Admittedly, the purpose of disaster relief campaigns is to gain financial support for the victims of the disaster and therefore such people are necessarily presented as needy and dependent in order to gain such support; however, the long-term implications of colonial discourse can certainly be detrimental despite the aid that may be delivered through the campaigns. As Raka Shome and Radha Hegde argue, there is an unavoidable interventionist impulse in postcolonial studies (250), accomplished here by challenging the accepted structures of knowledge about the third world victims and first world sponsors in the campaigns, by identifying the continuing strains of colonial discourse in them, and by acknowledging the departure of

such representations from the theory behind the rhetoric of participatory development. Postcolonial theory allows the direct identification of the themes and traces of colonial attitudes through discourse analysis of the videos and texts. Essentially, postcolonial theory is employed to answer the question: What aspects of the campaigns continue (or counter as the case may be) colonial discourse? In other words, if and how do colonial discourses constitute a continued image of dependence in the third world as opposed to the first world?

Colonial Discourse Theory

Within postcolonial studies, this project is informed by what postcolonial theorist Bill Ashcroft calls “colonial discourse theory,” of which the main theorists are Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha (9). Colonial discourse theorists identify a discourse either originating from or somehow reflective of colonial attitudes, whether these are as Ashcroft describes from the complex and diverse European colonizations or “the pervasiveness of neo-colonial domination” (11). The discourse represents the colonized subject through stereotype and, as a result, constructs them as Other and exercises power over them as Other. These stereotypes include an essentialized view of the people being represented as a monolithic, homogenous, fixed group. Additionally, the stereotypes include passivity, inferiority, dependency, and a lack of civilization and development. The identity of the colonized is often constructed through a binary with the colonizer such as child/adult, slave/master, uncivilized/civilized, or black/white (Ashcroft 21). As well, issues of race are inextricably bound up in the representation of the Other, according to accounts of the colonial discourse theorists. The following examination of key theorists will explore these themes from their work as they relate to discourse and how they challenge or protest such representations. In particular, Said’s work in

Orientalism establishes many of the indicators and tools of colonial discourse that will be central in this project. However, Spivak and Bhabha as well as Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall expand on these themes in specific directions through their work on representation and the effects and characteristics of colonial discourse.

Edward Said wrote *Orientalism* in 1978 as a “landmark work” that according to Ashcroft “led to the development of what came to be called ‘colonial discourse theory’” (9). The book *Orientalism* is an exploration of the discourse used by the West to manage the Orient. Said initially identifies the Orient as “the place of Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring image of the Other” (1). Orientalism, on the other hand, exists both as a field of study and as a style of thought about the Orient to set up the contrast to the West but also particularly as a strategy to manage the Orient, to dominate it and exert authority over it that began as early as Napoleon’s expeditions around 1800 (Said 2, 122). The discourse used in managing the Orient is necessarily exterior to it, according to Said:

Orientalism is premised upon exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. He is never concerned with the Orient except as the first cause of what he says. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. (20)

Orientalism is thus constructed—a structure of ideas established from the outside, without input or challenge to it from the people of the Orient (Said 5-6). The creation of the Orient, then, was not due to the discovery of certain qualities but “also because it *could be*—that is, submitted to being—*made* Oriental” (Said 6), much the way Haiti submits to being made dependent and to being constructed so graphically in images. The representations made through this strategy are thus hegemonic constructs of the Orient from British and French colonies and American neo-colonial dominance. The Orient emerges out of a “sovereign Western consciousness...according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections” (Said 8). The idea of the Orient is man-made, as hegemonically constructed as the West itself, with a unique history, imagery and vocabulary separate from the heterogeneous nations and cultures that exist in the space of the Orient, “despite and beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a ‘real’ Orient” (Said 5).

This discourse from without is based on a presumption of knowledge about the Orient. It is layers of idioms based on a doctrine of European experiences in the Orient in the assumed characteristics of it, such as “Oriental despotism, Oriental sensuality, and the like” (Said 203). Superiority is determined by the ability to know the Orient, to study, understand and characterize it better than the people of the Orient could. “To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it,” Said writes, “to have authority over it” (32). Orientals are perceived without autonomy as a “subject race, dominated by a race that knows them and what is good for them better than they could possibly know themselves” (35). Thus knowledge of the Orient creates inferiority in the people there who are

subjected to study and become vulnerable in being known better by an external colonizer than by themselves. In this way, they are simply presumed to be, and are effectively made to be, subordinate to the colonizing power (Said 32, 37). This inferiority through knowledge is one of the central tropes of colonial discourse and is entrenched in the structures of knowledge that postcolonialism sets out to challenge and disrupt. In this trope, the subject races in the Orient are never allowed to speak, cannot know what is good for them and instead must trust the knowledge and administration of the colonizers (Said 33). This knowledge builds into power, which requires more knowledge “in an increasingly profitable dialectic of information and control” over the colonized Orient (Said 36) and by extension other previously colonized areas that are still perceived as underdeveloped, such as Haiti. In the administration of disaster relief in Haiti for example, quite similar presumptions of knowledge, and therefore power, can be observed in the recovery policies and governmental control exerted there by the international community, which are attributed to the inadequacy of the local government (Dupuy).

In the context of the Orient, the knowledge structures Said identifies essentialized Orientals through stereotypes such as childlike, lazy and weak. Said traces the tradition of descriptors in a history of writing about the Orient, noting attributions of gullibility, lack of initiative, false flattery and lies, cruelty to animals and disorder in a “lethargic and suspicious” people (qtd. in Said 38-39). As such, they are passive and certainly not participatory since “the West is the actor, the Orient a passive reactor” (Said 109). They are described as uncreative, particularly “a thing dead and dry—a mental mummy” (qtd. in Said 193). Oriental people are regarded as simplistic and illogical and thus are assumed to be easy prey to communist and capitalist ploys of control during the Cold

War (107). The stereotypes include “perfidious Chinese, half-naked Indians, and passive Muslims,” and Arabs as “camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization” (Said 108). This distinction between people of the Orient and “real civilization” is a recurring theme. These concepts, including the view of the Oriental as uncivilized, are reflected in artistic representation of the Orient, such as works by Rudyard Kipling including the poem, “The White Man’s Burden.” This work concretized the stereotypes in phrases like “your new caught, sullen peoples/ Half-devil and half-child” full of “sloth and heathen Folly” that describe the noble work of the colonizer among the savage and ungrateful colonized. The emphasis on the white man, of course also points to the obvious, central and recurring racism in Orientalism that was tied up with assumptions of inferiority and primitive origins (Said 226). Thus, “an Oriental man was first an Oriental and only second a man” (Said 233).

The knowledge of the Orient made the Oriental people not only artistic representations but primarily into debased objects of study for Western experts, travellers, historians, colonists (Said 117). Out of such attitudes emerge the views of salvation and heroics previously noted in the work of Fluri and Jiwani that reflect Said’s assertion that “the modern Orientalist was, in his view, a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation, and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished” (121). The Orientalist scholars built an impersonal vocabulary for discussing the Orient in scientific and rational terms to lift it out of its supposed natural obscurity (Said 122), and in this way they made the Orient. Part of creating the Orient was assuming that the cultures there were stable and unchanging so that they could be known. The knowledge is inherited from a tradition of Orientalist study, seen to be widely applicable and

unchanging “because Orientals were almost everywhere nearly the same” and exist “fixed in time and place for the West” (Said 38, 108). The discourses, as Said describes them, however, are not attempting accuracy but are instead like stylized costumes used to characterize the Orient as alien, regardless of the multiple realities that may lie beneath. Orientals were not seen, Said says, but rather seen through (207). Further, the tradition of essentialist stereotypes has not faded away, according to Said, but continues in “modern American awareness...to keep the region and its people conceptually emasculated, reduced to ‘attitudes,’ ‘trends,’ statistics: in short, dehumanized” (291).

Said also describes how such prolonged discourse can not only create knowledge about the Orient but can actually create the stereotypes as reality when the representations of the colonized are absorbed and interpellated. For the Western Orientalists to hold knowledge, and therefore power, over the Orient “means for ‘us’ [the West] to deny autonomy to ‘it’—the Oriental country—since we know it and it exists, in a sense, *as we know it*” (Said 32). Further, when knowledge is put into texts, they accrue and perpetuate the power of that knowledge:

Most important, such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time, such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. (Said 94)

Said is not claiming that underlying this knowledge is the essence of a true Orient corrupted by stereotypes but rather that these representations have been formed regardless of reality and channelled to a purpose of control and subjugation (Said 6, 273).

This control is perpetuated even at the point of independence, when the argument was made “never to let the Orient go its own way or get out of hand, the canonical view being that Orientals had no tradition of freedom” (Said 240-41). In summary, the Orient was and continues to be constructed through four dogmas or clichés: first, as different from and inferior to the West; second, as known through experts rather than their own representations; third, as eternal and uniform and generalized; and finally as something to be feared or controlled (Said 300-01). Thus Said chronicles many of the constructs used to represent the Other and argues for, as he describes it, a sensitivity to “what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas...” (327). Though these constructs are drawn specifically from the context of the time and place Said describes, the central traditions of Orientalism are reflective of the wider colonial projects and are observable in other contexts such as disaster relief discourse in the third, and even the first world.

While Said’s work offers a seminal and comprehensive overview of the themes of postcolonialism as they have been applied in the East/West binary, other theorists further expand and confirm these themes in colonial discourse as well. Although Homi Bhabha is noted for his work on borders, hybridity and mimicry, these concepts are concerned more so with the response of the colonized population than the constructions of them. In his book, *The Location of Culture*, however, Bhabha highlights other postcolonial themes that in fact echo Said quite closely. The focus in his book positions his postcolonial studies not in the Orient as Said did but instead in the context of the neo-colonial international division of labour in which first world capital draws on third world labour. “Postcoloniality,” he writes, “for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent ‘neo-

colonial' relations within the 'new' world order and the multi-national division of labour" that further aims toward validating "histories of exploitation" and developing "strategies of resistance" (Bhabha 6). As such, like Shome and Hedge, he also notes the interventionist impulse of postcolonial studies that is "to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human historic commonality" (Bhabha 7). In this intervention, a challenge is extended to cultural difference as "the process of *enunciation* of culture....a process of signification through which statements *of* culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability and capacity" (Bhabha 34). As Said examines the way the Orient has been created through stereotype and tradition, Bhabha focuses similarly on the inscription and the re-inscription of and by neo-colonized people but also acknowledges that such re-inscription "demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present" (7). This concentration on the neo-colonial division of labour and the "newness" of contemporary culture aptly reflects the postcolonial context that disaster response occurs in that it is significantly distinct from the Orient Said describes due to differences in time, global developments and political relations.

Despite the differences of location, however, like Said, Bhabha also describes how "difference and otherness...become the fantasy of a certain cultural space or, indeed, the certainty of a form of theoretical knowledge that deconstructs the epistemological 'edge' of the West" (31). Bhabha also recognizes that the Other in being interpreted as fantasy and as the edge loses the ability to insert themselves into the discourse, to represent themselves:

The Other is cited, quoted, framed, illuminated, encased in the shot/reverse-shot strategy of serial enlightenment. Narrative and *cultural* politics of difference become the closed circle of interpretation. The Other loses its power to signify, to negate, to initiate its historic desire, to establish its own institutional and oppositional discourse. (31)

The culture of the Other is still subjected to being known as the Orient is known, even in critical theory where it is expected to “be always the good object of knowledge, the docile body of difference, that reproduces a relation of domination” (Bhabha 31). In this critical, theoretical “strategy of containment,” the Other is again passive, “never the active agent of articulation” who expresses their own voice (Bhabha 31). Thus, representation relies on a tradition that, like Said’s idea of the costume, is not “a faithful sign of historical memory” but is meant to represent authority based on the “artifice of the archaic,” as the tradition of Orientalism does (Bhabha 35). Such traditions and knowledge in colonial discourse are again distinguished by a reliance on fixity, a recurring theme in colonial discourse that “connotes rigidity and unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition” (Bhabha 66). Further, the stereotype as the “major discursive strategy” of fixity, is read also as fetishism, a simplification through the “arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference...constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations” (Bhabha 66, 75). Thus, the “*processes of subjectification* [are] made possible (and plausible) through stereotypical discourse” (Bhabha 67).

The stereotypes Bhabha establishes as central to colonial discourse are ultimately aimed to “construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction,” exerting a controlling governmentality over them (Bhabha 70). The use of stereotypes and the resultant knowledge of the colonized to establish and justify the system of domination works to create a reality in the way Said also recognized.

Representation, through writing and rhetorical discourse, produces knowledge, “defines the ‘social’ and makes it available as an objective of and for action” (Bhabha 23). Bhabha explains that through this process, “the colonized population is deemed to be both the cause and effect of the system, imprisoned in the circle of interpretation” (83). However, again echoing Said, Bhabha also notes through the newness of the present that there is no “inherent originality or ‘purity’ of cultures” (37) and instead continues on to question “the *mode of representation of otherness*” (68). Such critique “properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics” (Bhabha 25). The themes of fixity, stereotype, fetishism in representation of the Other thus complement Said’s *Orientalism* but also expand it into a political disruption in the neo-colonial context of enunciation, one form of which occurs in the disaster relief communications discussed in the following chapters of this thesis.

In one of her founding works, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Gayatri Spivak is also concerned with the discourse of representation as “speaking for” the Other or the subaltern, the term she primarily uses to describe people outside of hegemonic power structures, the subordinate and colonized (70). These representations again build into the “violence of imperialist epistemic, social and disciplinary inscription” (Spivak 80).

Spivak locates this imperialism and inscription similarly to Bhabha in the neo-colonial context, specifically focussing on the micro-level subject formation that supports macro-level interests in the “relationship between global capitalism (exploitation in economics) and nation-state alliances (domination in geopolitics)” (Spivak 74). Representation operates in this subject formation in the way that “the staging of the world in representation—its scene of writing...—dissimulates the choice of and need for ‘heroes,’ paternal proxies, agents of power” (Spivak 74). The representation that sets up and defines the Other, then, establishes the need for salvation and heroes to continue to represent the Other. Thus Spivak echoes the salvation and heroics themes previously explored in works by Said, Fluri and Jiwani.

Also, like Said and Bhabha, Spivak examines the use of knowledge as power but particularly in the way knowledge is discounted. She again seeks to neither “describe ‘the way things really were’ or to privilege the narrative of history as imperialism as the best version of history....[but] rather, to offer an account of how an explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one” through the devaluing of colonized knowledges (Spivak 76). Thus, Spivak explores the constructed version of reality through colonial discourse. This indicates the particular focus in Spivak’s work, as reflected in the title of her essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”—a concern with silences, and the “muted, subaltern subject” (particularly the female subaltern) within the neo-colonial division of labour (91). Neo-colonialism is characterized in the essay through labour practices between and across postcolonial histories:

The contemporary international division of labour is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism. Put simply, a

group of countries, generally first-world, are in the position of investing capital; another group, generally third-world, provide the field for investment, both through the comprador, indigenous capitalists and through their ill-protected and shifting labour force. (Spivak 83)

Within this context then, Spivak suggests that the “archival, historiographic, disciplinary-critical and, inevitably, interventionist work involved here is indeed a task of ‘measuring silences’” and examining the “narrative sanctions granted to the colonial subject in dominant groups” (82). Although, in agreement with Bhabha and Said, she recognizes that the problem of silencing can “not be solved by an essentialist search for lost origins,” postcolonial studies should be open to “all the information retrieval in these silenced areas” (Spivak 90-91). However, the essay concludes on the point that “the subaltern cannot speak” and that “representation has not withered away” (Spivak 104), thus confirming a continued need for examining such representations and the silences they contain. As mentioned above, these representations silence the subaltern by speaking for them, by covering and obscuring their voices and expression with an external representation of them from a position of superiority and power. Although more recent work has problematized the bias toward an active Western speaker in Spivak’s work, adapting her question instead to “Can the Subaltern be Heard?” (Maggio), the silencing of the subaltern in colonial discourse remains a central and key concern in postcolonial theory and particularly in the representation of disasters and disaster victims, as is demonstrated in the case studies presented in this thesis.

Two other postcolonial theorists, Frantz Fanon and Stuart Hall, also offer valuable perspectives on colonial discourse that can be applied to disaster response, as they

describe similar themes that run throughout the previously discussed works but do so specifically out of the heritage and racial context of colonized Africa. In his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon adds an impassioned voice to this theory, again commenting on a European colonial perspective as in *Orientalism*, in discussing the violent imposition made on the colonized subject through the language and racism of the colonizer. Fanon rejects strongly the objectification of black people under the inscription of the colonizer, protesting that “I did not want this revision, this thematization. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help build it together” (112). Instead of such independent agency, Fanon describes the dependence and inferiority created in and expected of the colonized subject. Colonized people are defined for Fanon as “every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality” and who must face the exalted culture of the colonizer (18). Further, the “‘dependency complex’...too proceeds from the arrival of white colonizers on the island” (Fanon 108). Dependency and inferiority are marked through language, and “to make [a black man] talk pidgin is to fasten him to the effigy of him, to snare him, to imprison him, the eternal victim of an essence, of an *appearance* for which he is not responsible” (Fanon 35). The treatment of black people in this colonial discourse, then, Fanon asserts throughout his text, is that of a child, a toy, a cripple, a victim (31, 140).

Stuart Hall, in a chapter on spectacle in representation, traces similar racial-based constructions from colonial contact to a more contemporary context, from the scientific spectacle of Sara Baartman (the “Hottentot Venus”) to the visual connotations of pictures featuring African American Olympic athletes. Hall devotes the chapter to “theories about

the representational practice known as ‘stereotyping’” (225). Often, he claims, the representation occurs through “split figures or ‘tropes’” or “reductionist and over-simplified” binaries (Hall 235):

...people who are in any way significantly different from the majority—
 ‘them’ rather than ‘us’—are frequently exposed to the *binary* form of
 representation. They seem to be represented through sharply opposed,
 polarized, binary extreme—good/bad, civilized/primitive,
 ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because-different/compelling-
 because-strange-and-exotic. (229)

Similarly, Hall considers more complex constructions in stereotyping, “adding sexuality and gender to ‘race,’ ethnicity and colour” in the representations of difference, as Spivak also does in her considerations of the female subaltern (Hall 231). Evoking the use of tradition in Said and Bhabha’s writing, Hall also describes the intertextual process of reading texts as contributing to a repertoire of repeated representations and meanings in a “*regime of representation*” (Hall 232). Within racialized regimes of representations, stereotyping as a process “*reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes ‘difference’*” in order to set the Other apart in the context of power and domination (Hall 258). In this process, stereotypes reference fantasy but also establish a certain perception of reality, as previous postcolonial theory also demonstrates (Hall 263). Thus, Hall too traces the fixity in colonial discourse as applied to people of colour that further develops into reality through the absorption of the stereotypical traits expected of them. Within the repertoire of repeated meanings and expectations, then, “‘victims’ can be trapped by the stereotype,

unconsciously confirming it by the very terms in which they try to oppose and resist it” partly through a system of binaries (Hall 263).

Tracing these stereotypes, Hall notes the infantilization of black people in tension with the stereotypes of an “over-sexed character” (263). Further, the stereotypes rooted in plantation slavery fix black people as physically and mentally inferior, latent savages who were better off under white masters, and innately lazy and primitive (Hall 243-44). Although some depictions depart from these, the idealized, sentimental representations of noble savages and debased servants deal similarly in stereotypes (Hall 245). The stereotypes lead to the creation of types that feature “a few simplified, reductive and essentialized features,” such as the large, “Black Mammy [whose] chubby countenance smiled away, a century after the abolition of slavery, on every packet of Aunt Jemima’s Pancakes” (Hall 249). Such stereotypes, like those identified in the other theoretical work, produce knowledge and the cycle of representation creates reality. Hall however, also considers, like Bhabha and Bill Ashcroft, the transformative power of colonized people in trans-coding strategies to counter stereotypes (Hall 270). The assumption that culture is static (one of the common themes noted in these theorists’ work) according to Ashcroft “underestimates the resilience and adaptability of colonial societies” (2). He further claims that the heart of postcolonial studies is to understand resistance to domination, the tenacity and practical assertiveness of the apparently powerless (2). Postcolonial studies, therefore, establishes not only the ways in which colonial discourse fixes and stereotypes but also posits the reaction and agency of the people being represented in these ways.

Within these works and the various contexts in which they were written, these theorists trace representations of the Other through stereotypes of inferiority, passivity, and dependency to characterize apparently fixed, monolithic, homogenous, uncivilized cultures that cannot represent or speak for themselves. The colonial discourse revolves around the use of stereotypes to create fixed knowledge of the Other, thus subordinating them as known and inferior. The dependent, passive Other must then rely on the heroic, white saviour in the constructs of colonial discourse. These are the themes that have been traced in discourse analysis of the relief campaigns by the development organization. Therefore, postcolonial theory offers the framework with which to critique the colonial discourse in representations of the Haiti earthquake and Hurricane Katrina. Within such a framework, then, the method of discourse analysis offers the tools to examine this discourse and analyze the themes identified in theory and previous literature.

Discourse Analysis

The critical perspective assumed within a postcolonial framework is shared by many scholars practicing the method of discourse analysis. The method places focus on “the cognitive and especially the social processes, strategies, and contextualization of discourse taken as a mode of interaction in highly complex socio-cultural situations” (van Dijk, “Introduction” 1). However, the analysis is not only of how language is used in discourse but also of what constrains and shapes that language use, as “we only tell a tiny fragment of the story if we do not specify how such discourse details serve a function in the creation, the maintenance, or the change of such contextual constraints as the dominance, the power, the status, or the ethnocentrism of one of the participants” (van Dijk, “Introduction” 5). In this way, discourse analysis too can be employed towards the

“formulation of criticism and alternatives” rather than simply identifying the inequalities expressed in discourse (van Dijk, “Introduction” 6).

As a tool for both expressing and constructing ideology, discourse is recognized as a potential tool of discrimination and domination (Fowler; Kress; Sykes; van Dijk, “Introduction”). In line with the previously established definition of neo-colonialism, discourse as an extension of power supports the “institutions, roles and statuses that preserve the hierarchic structure of society, guarding the exploitative opportunities of the ruling classes and keeping the lower orders in voluntary or involuntary subservience” (Fowler 64), a particular concern in the vulnerable state of post-disaster recovery. In conjunction with the oppressive exercise of power, discourse is also employed for the denigration and discrimination of the Other (as recognized in postcolonial theory) wherein “any lexical or syntactic pattern that fairly systematically deny their human subjects the normal range of specifically human attributes should be regarded as degrading, regardless of the intent of the speaker” (Sykes 100). As Tuen van Dijk, a leading discourse analysis scholar notes, the purpose of discourse analysis is to “focus on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (“Principles” 250) With such focus on the construction of ideology, the exercise of power and the imposition of discrimination through discourse, the method of discourse analysis offers a useful lens to complement postcolonial theory in examining disaster relief campaigns in first and third world contexts.

In the detailed, systematic analysis of texts advocated as a central consideration of discourse analysis, there are multiple strategies and details that contribute to “the particular configurations of conventionalized practices” (Fairclough 194). The study of

discourse is pursued through intertextual strategies, considering not only the linguistic aspects but also more broadly, what is included as well as excluded from the text and the context of genres and discourse that contributed to the production of the text (Fairclough 123). Specifically, this discourse analysis has considered key structures and strategies of discourse analysis identified by theorists: the lexical style, use of story-telling and witnesses, strategies of argument, agency, and omissions in the disaster relief campaigns (Fairclough; Fowler; Kress; Seidel; van Dijk “Principles”). These micro-structures have been primarily considered for how each contributes to a larger trend identified by van Dijk in his principles of discourse analysis, namely the positive presentation of self and the negative presentation or “discursive marginalization” of the Other (“Principles” 264). The positive self-presentation as a strategy of impression management and the inferiorization, problematization and marginalization of the Other (van Dijk “Principles” 264; “Discourse and Denial” 89) aligns with the “saviour and liberation” tropes previously identified in popular and news media and thus is a central focus in this discourse analysis. The strategies or structures mentioned have been considered because of the ways they express the colonial discourse themes identified in postcolonial theory, including silencing, stereotypes, superiority through knowledge, passivity and dependence.

These structures and tropes have been analyzed within a sample of twenty-six videos. These texts have been selected through convenience sampling based on availability and balance. As Hurricane Katrina occurred over five years ago, little donation campaign material remains available to the public. The Red Cross provides access to promotional materials through YouTube channels for national societies and

regional groups and offers a useful sample. Although my requests to the American Red Cross for access to more materials were directed specifically to the advertising department, the organization has not replied to multiple emails and messages and has given no further access to archives or campaign materials beyond what is available through their website and YouTube channel. Therefore, the sample is taken from the publically available videos and documents on the internet, particularly through YouTube, the American Red Cross website and other video archive services. While material for the Haiti earthquakes remains available, Hurricane Katrina videos are much less accessible. Thus, the number of videos obtained for Hurricane Katrina determined the size of the sample. Videos were selected if they met all of the following criteria:

1. Association with or endorsement by the American Red Cross, whether at the national or regional level;
2. Pertinence directly to the disaster specified, either Hurricane Katrina or the Haiti earthquake itself, not including subsequent hurricanes, tornadoes or health crises that followed;
3. And a focus on donation requests and/or updates on the situation for the general public, including interviews, disaster overviews, public service announcements and specific feature updates but not including external reviews of the organization and its work.

The sample has been acquired through web searches on the American Red Cross YouTube channels and in Google Video using the search terms: “American Red Cross,” “Haiti” and “Hurricane Katrina.” Thirteen videos were identified through this process for Hurricane Katrina, including public service announcements, staff and volunteer

interviews, an overview of the disaster response and several features on specific relief projects and the people who have benefitted. The search terms for Haiti returned many more videos, and a sample of fifty-nine videos that met the criteria was identified through the titles of each and viewings of the videos. To balance the samples, the Haiti videos were randomly shuffled using a media player computer program, and the first, last and every fifth video between were selected for the sample. The thirteen selected videos included the same categories as the Hurricane Katrina sample, although in different proportions and with different emphases.

The analysis began with the Hurricane Katrina videos, followed by the Haiti videos. Each sample was first viewed as a whole before each individual video was carefully analyzed. The analysis of the discourse identified first overall patterns, such as the type of videos, the purpose of the videos, the trends between the two cases. The individual analysis of each video then identified key themes, noted the argument and appeal strategies, the use of witnesses or victims and the construction of agency, examined the lexical and visual style of the videos and marked omissions. Specifically, the analysis of the discourse and visual representations focussed on identifying the colonial discourse tropes as they were expressed through the discourse structures discussed above. Descriptions of each of the videos as well as key quotes have been recorded in chapters three and four in addition to the comparison and larger analysis of the samples.

The following case studies present the findings of the discourse analysis as guided by postcolonial theory and the political, neoliberal framework identified in chapters one and two. Using the specific work on colonial discourse theory, this thesis draws on Said,

Bhabha and Spivak where they identify the elements of a colonial discourse, both traditional and neo-colonial. With many intersections and overlap, these theorists describe the external representation of the colonized population that assumes a fixity, inferiority, dependency and passivity in a silenced Other, as further echoed in work by Hall and Fanon. Through the combination of the themes of colonial discourse identified with the structures of discourse analysis, the case studies for Hurricane Katrina and Haiti reveal the continued presence of colonial discourse in contemporary disaster relief communications.

3. Hurricane Katrina Case Study

Hurricane Katrina became one of the most significant natural disasters in the world as of August 2005. Although its power had decreased from Category 5 to Category 3 when it reached the Gulf Coast, the damage was catastrophic to the region and the United States. Hurricane Katrina is considered by the National Hurricane Center to be “an extraordinarily powerful and deadly hurricane that carved a wide swath of catastrophic damage and inflicted large loss of life,” as the costliest and among the top five deadliest hurricanes in American history (Knabb, Rhome and Brown 1). The Red Cross five year review reports 4.5 million people were in need due to the hurricane and over eighteen hundred died (American Red Cross, “Bringing Help” 2). Financially, the disaster was also extremely significant, costing eighty-one billion dollars as eighty percent of New Orleans was submerged, among other damages (American Red Cross, “Bringing Help” 2). With approximately 350 000 homes destroyed or damaged and many hundreds of thousands of people stranded or displaced, the Red Cross launched its largest response to date (“Significant Dates”). With 2.2 billion dollars in contributions for

Hurricane Katrina relief, the Red Cross provided immediate emergency relief including shelters, meals and supplies, as well as longer term support including recovery counselling and programs (American Red Cross, “Bringing Help” 2). In part, these funds have been solicited through several public service announcements (PSAs) produced for the American Red Cross and further encouraged by follow-up reports, interviews and reviews to reassure donors about the use of the money given for this specific disaster.

This chapter provides detailed analysis of these videos, including descriptions of the content and how each utilizes the relevant discursive strategies and reflects the themes of colonial and neoliberal discourse. The materials sampled for this project are limited given the time lapse since the disaster. Additionally, online postings in the American Red Cross website video archives and YouTube channel only date back to 2007. However, extensive web searches through YouTube and Google video have returned thirteen video examples of promotional material for discourse analysis. These include five public service announcements, five features on hurricane victims and recovery efforts called Katrina Stories, two region-based interview collections with Red Cross workers and one five-year review of the disaster recovery efforts. The videos are considered in this chapter within the context of these categories, beginning with the PSAs, continuing with the Katrina Stories and the five-year review respectively, and then concluding with the regional interviews. Each video is examined in this chapter through partial transcriptions of the content and analyzed in reference to how much it reflects the discourse strategies identified in chapter two, namely the positive presentation of self and the marginalized representation of others through the use of style, witnesses, celebrity, omission, and agency. Further, the analysis examines how such strategies also reflect the

tropes of colonial discourse similarly identified in chapter two, specifically an external, heroic superiority to inferior, fixed, passive, dependent, silenced, dehumanized Others. In addition, the analysis also notes the use of neoliberal discourse in the presentation of both the Red Cross and hurricane victims that is consistent with much of the literature reviewed in chapter one. Throughout the videos, the American Red Cross is fundamentally concerned with positively presenting their organization, in this case relying mainly on victim and volunteer accounts and some celebrity endorsement to document the heroic efforts of the Red Cross. However, the presentation of others is not strictly negative given the fact that the victims are also Americans and part of the national self. Thus, while these videos construct the victims as dependent, framed and quoted according to the agenda of the Red Cross, the videos also often give a voice to the victims, in the sense that they are seen commenting on their conditions, and construct them as worthy individuals within a strategic neoliberal expectation of self-responsibility.

Public Service Announcements

The use of victim voices and celebrity endorsement can be observed in the first category of video type, the PSAs that are designed to encourage viewers to become donors to support relief efforts for the victims of the hurricane. The PSAs examined are typically short videos produced for television, often in a thirty second, advertisement style. The examples I was able to locate were produced in 2005 and aired in the United States in the months following the disaster. The advertisements are a central fundraising tactic of disaster response communications given their wide exposure on television and, increasingly, the internet. The PSAs target American viewers who would be financially capable of donating money to the organization and employ a variety of argument strategies and discourse styles to appeal to this group.

The first PSA considered here features the use of celebrity to positively reinforce the Red Cross and to encourage viewers to donate. In this PSA, the cast of the teen-detective television show *Veronica Mars*, in its second season in 2005, posed for a short, ten second appeal for donations to the Red Cross. The brief clip shows five of the series' central cast members outside on the set of the television show, a school campus, on a bright sunny day. The actors are largely Caucasian, including Kristen Bell who plays the main character, Veronica, and three other male actors. One male actor is African American and sits on the far left of the screen. Although only Kristen Bell makes a verbal appeal, the four other male cast members are arrayed around her in support. The body language of all characters is relaxed, either sitting on the steps, leaning against a railing or standing with hands in pockets. The actors are dressed casually in jeans and long sleeved shirts while Bell wears a tank top, adding to the informality of the set. The cast members fidget slightly during the announcement, one shifting his hands several times and two others looking away from the camera briefly ("Veronica Mars"). This presentation gives the PSA a relaxed but also less urgent tone.

The appeal for donations is spoken directly to audience members, with the resources for donating printed across the bottom of the screen throughout the PSA. A 1-800 number for the Red Cross as well as the American Red Cross website direct viewers specifically to donate to this organization. Bell speaks to the audience, telling them "You can help someone whose life was displaced by the hurricane" before verbally directing them to the resources on the screen. The clip concludes with a grey screen featuring the television channel's logo as Bell's voiceover confirms "UPN cares" ("Veronica Mars"). Although very little verbal discourse occurs in this clip, the argument strategy relies on

the identification viewers may feel with the compassion of the celebrity supporters, and extends that to the television station and to the Red Cross organization. The announcement then depends on the familiar image of the celebrities, associates the positive recognition with the station and the relief organization, and uses it to encourage viewers to give money and identify with the celebrity they support through viewership. Throughout the series, Veronica Mars assists friends and clients in solving mysteries and crimes, delivering justice to criminals and giving relief to those who ask for her help. Viewers are thus invited to echo the compassion of the on-screen character in a real disaster, taking action to help those who are passively affected. Bell's diction places the viewer in a position of agency in contrast to the people affected by the hurricane who have been displaced by it. Notably, however, the word victim is not used in this PSA. There is also no mention of devastation, chaos or scale of the disaster. Instead, rather than referencing many victims, Bell mentions only "someone whose life was displaced" ("Veronica Mars"). Thus, she individualizes the people affected rather than referring to a mass group of victims, allowing the people to be "someone" rather than a victim and "displaced" rather than destroyed.

The PSA reflects neoliberal governance in two ways, both individualizing the victims and also emphasizing and encouraging citizen rather than government responsibility to help those affected by the hurricane. In contrast to many of the videos produced for Haiti which emphasize the extreme destruction of the earthquake as examined in the following chapter, this PSA uses understatement and celebrity endorsement to appeal to viewers to donate. The PSA associates the Red Cross with the recognizable celebrity and the compassion of Bell's character but also enables viewers to

identify with her in a similar way by donating. This identification is encouraged through the casual setting and wardrobe and the behind-the-scenes address, as well as by understating the disaster and individualizing victims to empower viewers to approach the problem. Through the individualization of victims, the PSA also places victims on relatively equal footing with donors, temporarily displaced rather than completely destroyed. Since the people Bell's character assists in her show are her friends and peers, the PSA also implies that the viewers would be helping their peers in a similar fashion to the Veronica Mars character. Thus, the PSA relies on the positive image or ethos of the celebrity rather than the marginalization or inferiority of victims who are instead humanized through individualization.

In a second PSA produced for the Red Cross, the use of celebrity is more subtle. Over this thirty second, commercial style announcement, Johnny Cash sings "Bridge Over Troubled Water" while black and white images of the hurricane disaster are presented ("September 2005"). All images feature people placed in the context of Hurricane Katrina. The first two stills show victims with dejected expressions and posture surveying damage, including the obvious skeleton of a building. In the third frame in front of debris piled in the background, a parent with pained expression clings to a shirtless child who looks out toward the viewer with a solemn expression as Cash sings the lyrics: "I am on your side when times get rough and friends just can't be found" ("September 2005"). The Red Cross logo, number and website appear in this third frame, directing viewers to the organization within the first ten seconds. In the fourth frame, a similar pose of a parent or grandparent hugging a child contrasts the third, however, since instead of debris, there is an American Red Cross disaster response truck in the

background and the expression on the adult's face, while still solemn, is much calmer than the previous frame. Both child and adult wear clothing and embrace in a comforting pose instead of the alert and stricken pose of the third frame. The victims featured in the first four shots seem to alternate between Caucasian and African American, although this is not entirely clear or obvious in the black and white stills. In the final still shot, two Caucasian Red Cross workers with the logo on their clothing focus on an African American man with his back to the camera who seems to be a victim of the hurricane given his lack of uniform dress. Cash concludes with the lyrics "like a bridge over troubled water, I will lay me down" over this frame and the final screen featuring the logo and contact information over a plain black background ("September 2005"). Thus, in this PSA, there is no direct, verbal appeal to viewers to donate. Rather the implied argument positions the Red Cross as the comforting, capable friend on the side of the victims to help them get through the tough times, establishing in the first three frames the upset caused by the disaster and featuring in the last two frames the comfort and help provided by the Red Cross.

This positive self representation of the Red Cross puts the emphasis not on directly helping someone affected by the hurricane but on supporting the efforts of the Red Cross as a friend of the victims, offering relief and comfort, putting less focus on the agency of both donors and victims. This PSA, like the one discussed first, uses celebrity recognition to increase attention to the PSA, but it also draws on the themes from the lyrics and supporting visuals to emphasize the needs of traumatized victims and the comfort offered through the Red Cross. Again, as in the previous PSA, the victims are positioned as friends of the Red Cross, supported and passive in their need to be helped

but also somewhat equal and worthy of assistance as friends. The lyrics imply that the people in need are at a disadvantage, but the Red Cross identifies with them rather than marginalizing them or constructing them as Other. The formal and solemn tone in this PSA also increases the seriousness of the situation, and the visuals depict the devastation and trauma while also humanizing the tragedy with the inclusion of victims in every frame. Emphasizing the trauma of the situation also allows the help offered by the Red Cross to be viewed as heroic, something that is not possible if the disaster is seen as less serious. In this case, the lyrics suggest the sacrificial nature of the Red Cross efforts in effectively laying themselves down as a service to victims. Additionally, given the gospel versions that have been done of this song, there are religious overtones as well that connect with the Good Samaritan discourse discussed by Motter in American tsunami relief communications. Thus, the PSA builds on the celebrity recognition but also the sacrificial implications of the lyrics to promote their image in contrast to worthy victims who are comforted by the efforts of the Red Cross. The image of the Red Cross as saviour is developed as a model of neoliberal citizen responsibility, friends helping friends rather than government preparing for and responding to disasters.

In a third PSA in the same style of black and white stills, the appeal is similarly structured but combined with a direct verbal request for support as well. This example does not include celebrity endorsement or recognition but instead relies on creative use of semiotics. The horizontal bar in the Red Cross logo is overlaid as a minus sign paired with labels on black and white stills of thematic pictures of the hurricane's effects in specific areas, indicating the removal of "home," "electricity," "food," and "water" (GSD&M). These first stills show collapsed roofs, downed powerlines, a flooded

supermarket and vulnerable, immobilized victims (Caucasian in these instances) with sorrowful music in the background to increase the pathos of the images. The voiceover begins with the last still of two African American people hugging and smiling in front of the debris as the minus sign is changed into a addition sign as the Red Cross logo and the word “hope” spreads over the picture, accompanied by the phrase: “Hope, it’s more powerful than a hurricane” (GSD&M). The screen fades to white with logo and contact information as the voiceover continues, “Help victims of Hurricane Katrina and thousands of other disasters across the country each year” (GSD&M). The appeal here is simple and direct, and viewers are expected to become donors to actively support non-profit relief work again within the neoliberal welfare system. The clip even potentially gives agency and power to the victims of the hurricane as well, indicating that while they may not have homes, electricity, food or water, they do have hope and thus can sustain themselves and rebuild—with donor help of course. Here the victims are eventually depicted as happy and hopeful, less passive and dependent due to their outlook. However, this is also the only time in the sample that the people affected by the hurricane are referred to as victims, suggesting some dependency and need. The Red Cross is subtly inserted into this clip, as victims and donors are emphasized, but nevertheless, the overlying implication is still that the Red Cross is instrumental in encouraging victims’ hope as indicated by the significance and prominence of the logo as the addition sign when hope is featured. Hope is added to the situation through the presence of the Red Cross. Thus, while the image of the people affected shows a more positive depiction by the end of the PSA, ultimately the clip is still speaking for them, naming them victims and asserting that their hope is found through the Red Cross.

The PSAs discussed here so far are all created from an external viewpoint, looking in on the disaster, but the last two PSAs signal a shift that includes views from within the disaster. These PSAs are again a departure from the celebrity strategy but demonstrate further the attempts to humanize the disaster and its victims, relying on victims as spokespeople which has been demonstrated to be more effective in certain cases (Toncar, Reid and Anderson 271). They were both produced by the same company for the Red Cross and are structured in very similar ways to each other. Rafferty Weiss Media created these announcements for television, and thus they are both thirty seconds in length. These PSAs feature the Red Cross as the primary focus by presenting victims of the hurricane reflecting on aid from the Red Cross, elevating it to the heroic status of “lifesaver.” In one of these PSAs, an African American family is featured, opening with the 65-year old matriarch of the family, Doris Smith, stating that she has never seen something so devastating as the hurricane in her whole life (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Gibsons”). The viewers then meet her daughter and son-in-law, Vanessa and Greg Gibson, who explain that they had evacuated and returned to the destruction. The PSA provides perspectives from these victims on the disaster as the discourse switches between the daughter and mother’s accounts: “There were houses in the street. There was nothing left. We had no place to go, no place to cook food. We would spend days trying to find water” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Gibsons”). The description places emphasis on the extremity of the disaster, drawing attention to the foreignness of such experiences that seem almost impossible in the developed context of the United States.

However, in the final ten seconds of the clip, the victims begin to describe the Red Cross’s response in mitigating such extreme conditions, with the Gibson couple

concluding that “The Red Cross is like: ‘We’re here to help you.’ They’re lifesavers, that’s what they are” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Gibsons”). The video also includes shots of their solemn expressions, the Gibsons holding hands and sitting with their two daughters before including a white screen shot with the logo and contact information for the Red Cross (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Gibsons”). The PSA focuses on the Gibsons as worthy victims, well dressed, grateful and family-oriented people who properly evacuated from the disaster and returned to find their homes and lives destroyed. They are worthy recipients who are dependent on the life-saving assistance offered by the Red Cross and donors’ dollars. They are framed and quoted in order to show their appropriate gratefulness, to glorify the Red Cross as heroes and to justify the use of the donations the organization receives to help such creditable people. Thus, while there is some effort in establishing the Otherness of the victims’ experience, they are concurrently also elevated as worthy.

The other PSA produced by Rafferty Weiss Media is a very similar format, introducing viewers to Lynn and Rhett Newman, a middle aged Caucasian couple, as they describe their experience with the hurricane, one they will “never forget” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). They describe staying in their house on August 29th, 2005: “the storm hadn’t even hit yet and water started entering our house. We were above waist level in water” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). They sit on the foundational remains of their home and note that the rest of their neighbourhood faced similar devastation and loss of home, life, treasures and memories. The PSA also captures the rebuilding efforts, however. One shot places the Newmans in front of fresh building foundations apparently for their new home, and another features their hands entwined

together, suggesting their commitment to each other but also indicating their financial stability through the presence of multiple rings and other jewellery (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). While this couple are not evacuees, a fact which could potentially decrease their worthiness as victims, the clip clearly emphasizes their loyalty as a couple, their optimistic, positive view in rebuilding and their financial stability outside of the disaster. As a middle-aged, stable, Caucasian couple, they form the antithesis of the poor, young, male, African American victims featured as looters and vandals on the news. As well, the damage that is discussed by the Caucasian victims is less extreme than in the previous example featuring African American victims. The Newmans do not describe houses in the street or searching days for water but instead the relatively less extreme flooding and loss of treasures. Their situation is presented as less severe, and they are therefore less dependent. Their position in the new foundation of their home also suggests that they take a more active role in their recovery. Thus, although they did not evacuate, their Caucasian and financial status grants them more credibility, and their active, stable depiction allows them to be worthy victims rather than burdens on the recovery resources, reflecting the characteristic of self-responsibility common in neoliberal discourse.

Again in the last ten seconds of the PSA, the attention is directed to the value and heroics of the Red Cross. Lynn Newman begins to say that “the one thing I’ve learned from this storm is the importance of the Red Cross,” as the video features the only shot of her smiling (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). Again the clip includes the white screen with the logo and contact information before the Newman’s assert “We needed their help and they were here. The American Red Cross is there for everybody” (RaffertyWeiss

Media, “Newmans”). In these PSAs then, the victims’ voices are heard, which have been omitted from the previous announcements discussed here. The devastation is not pictured, but it is described. The emphasis in the last third of both clips returns strongly to the Red Cross, exalting their work through the words of the victims to heroic status, reinforcing their worth and positive image to encourage donors to contribute and to establish their presence in future disasters. Using the carefully constructed stories of worthy victims, the Red Cross glorifies its role and character as saviour through these PSAs that offer calculated depictions of the disaster. Throughout, the victims are necessarily dependent but also significantly individualized and elevated as worthy and even equal, while the Red Cross is the responsible hero that is capable of assisting them through donor support. Similarly, donors are constructed as both Good Samaritans and instrumental in a neoliberal system in which it is up to the people rather than the government to support those worthy victims in need of assistance. This emphasis on the worthiness of victims is further developed and particularly emphasized through the Katrina Stories produced to showcase the Red Cross recovery progress.

Hurricane Katrina Stories

In follow-up videos produced several years after the hurricane for viewers on the YouTube channel and American Red Cross website, people affected by the disaster are again featured to establish the ethos of the Red Cross organization as well as to emphasize the victims’ responsibility to self-improve and even self-govern. Victims are interviewed and presented in news report style, producing a sense of objectivity in a series of five “Hurricane Katrina Stories.” One such video focuses on the swimming lessons that Red Cross instructors have been increasingly offering in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina. Even in the title, “Makin’ Waves, Savin’ Lives,” this clip places

emphasis on the heroic, life-saving aspects of the Red Cross programs and work. More than just recreation, swimming is “a survival skill that needed to be taught” according to Jeffery Parker, the Aquatics Program Director for the Red Cross in New Orleans (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Makin’ Waves”). The video positions the Red Cross in a fundamental role in the community to equip and train children, and their parents by extension, to survive future hurricanes. The Red Cross swimming lessons are described as a tool of empowerment, influence and survival for an entire community, placing emphasis on the responsibility of citizens to govern their own survival and welfare rather than on the responsibility of the government to prevent future floods. Jeffery Parker reports that “the Red Cross have always been a rebuilding mode for the community as a whole,” and the swimming lessons “teach kids how to be leaders, how to take charge and how to help and be a mentor to those who are younger than them” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Makin’ Waves”). As a case in point, the video introduces Dominique DuPlessis who trained to be a life guard through Red Cross programs and is now a Water Safety Instructor who claims that “without the Red Cross, I wouldn’t be able to teach. I wouldn’t be able to have the skills that I have to teach, to give back to the kids” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Makin’ Waves”). Thus, the clip introduces local Red Cross workers affected both by the hurricane and the relief programs offered through the Red Cross and keeps the central emphasis not on their needs and experiences as victims but on the example of self-responsibility that they set as part of the Red Cross. The video features the agency of the Red Cross workers who saw a need for swimming programs and expanded this area after the hurricane, starting with three pools and growing to eight.

Additionally, however, the agency of victims of Hurricane Katrina is also acknowledged through this specific Red Cross program. Dominique DuPlessis, as someone affected by the hurricane, has taken action through the Red Cross swimming program to pass skills on to children to better equip them to survive future hurricanes. The discourse presented in this video suggests that the children then will be empowered as leaders and mentors, better able to survive, and will also be active agents for the Red Cross in encouraging other children and their parents to learn to swim: “Kids who learn to swim encourage their parents and encourage their friends to swim as well. And they also learn self-confidence and self-reliance” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Makin’ Waves”). The Red Cross is enabling in the children the self-care and responsibility favoured in neoliberal policies even as the clip also implies the inferior education of the parents and adults who cannot swim and who failed to ensure their children could swim despite the particular danger of hurricanes and floods in the area. The failure is on the part of parents who did not adequately prepare their children rather than on the part of the government who did not adequately prepare the city for the possible flooding. Thus, the clip encourages self-responsibility while simultaneously promoting the superiority of the Red Cross and ignoring government responsibility. The video offers a locally sensitive look at Red Cross relief work in New Orleans, focussing on the actions and life-saving measures of the Red Cross but also extending some agency to the appropriate victims of the hurricane through a Red Cross program to further improve the reputation of the Red Cross by association with such noble work. The agency in the clip, however, is reserved again for the worthy recipients, innocent children and their heroic teachers as neoliberal models of self-care.

In two other examples of the Hurricane Katrina Stories, the focus remains on community programs. In “The Girls are Alright,” the feature describes a program initiated by James Rogers before the hurricane to “[break] up dysfunctional family systems of pregnancy that overwhelmed our city” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”). The narrator of this news-style feature introduces this Awesome Girls program as an initiative designed to “break the chain of poverty and pregnancy by providing at risk girls a safe place to play and in the process, teach them self-reliance” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”). As attention is drawn to this problem and particular emphasis is placed on the continuity of this dysfunction, the city of New Orleans is characterized through stereotypes and fixity but without mention of the underlying social systems that contribute to such dysfunction, which Russill and Lavin have illustrated as discussed in chapter one. The community is problematized and constructed as struggling and inferior to potential donors. Once again, the video exalts the Red Cross as a solution to the problems through the empowerment of children. The girls in the program are offered opportunities to build agency and also give back as they are taught self-responsibility through the superior foresight of the American Red Cross in funding a program to prevent future dysfunction. The non-profit charity is thus relieving the public welfare system in a neoliberal framework.

The video features an interview with Rogers who created the program that he describes as offering stability and “normalcy” in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, Brione Walker is featured who, similar to Dominique DuPlessis, went through the program as a teenager and is now working as a mentor to give back to other

girls in the program. The narration asserts, however, that the program required the support of the Red Cross to continue after the hurricane:

The Red Cross was a presence. It was like this is big brother who is here holding our hands and [saying] ‘we’re the Red Cross. You didn’t need us before but we’re here. Tell us what you need from us’...They were finding us, and they created a sense of safety. So the Red Cross was very important to our program, emotionally, spiritually, physically. (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”)

Thus, the Red Cross and the program are elevated as models for taking responsibility for welfare services and social programs. The narrator further attributes the accomplishments of the program to this important role of the Red Cross as she says “the proof of that importance is in its accomplishments,” which Rogers and Walker identify as no pregnancies in participants and unity among the girls respectively (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”). The Red Cross, although unnecessary to the program before the hurricane, becomes the support of the program after as the girls return with what Rogers calls trauma and stress disorders and what Walker describes as overwhelming feelings of sadness, grief and anxiety (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”). This trauma again allows the Red Cross to take on a heroic role, saving the disadvantaged girls from a future of dysfunction. Thus, even in a relatively capable and independent program, the Red Cross takes on a paternalistic role to fix the problems and meet the needs of people affected by the hurricane as a proactive agent. The girls in the program, like Brione Walker, are taught to be active and capable through the example of the Red Cross, seeking out problems to fix and extending the neoliberal self-care approach.

A very similar community program is profiled in the video “The Play is the Thing...” This video features an interview with Anthony Bean, who runs the Anthony Bean Community Theatre. Capitalizing on the celebrity of Irma Thomas, a Grammy winning R&B legend, the clip begins by associating her with the theatre program, promoting it as “wonderful” because it “gives children something else to pool their energy into rather than trying to figure what they can get into that’s bad, they can get into something that’s good and fulfilling” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). In particular, the theatre and acting school, according to the narrator, “found itself playing a critical role of its own in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.” while “the Red Cross saw the value of providing a relief valve for children coming back to their neighbourhoods where nothing was as it had been before the storm hit” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). In this description, the Red Cross is again the active, responsible participant, recognizing the value of a group that passively found itself in a critical role. Anthony Bean describes the situation in his interview:

The kids were still traumatized. A lot of them came back within three or four months of leaving the city. A lot of them was angry, mad, confused. They would have, I would call them little fits of anger where they would lash out. This theatre program taught them to re-channel their anger.

(“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”)

He highlights the fundamental role of the Red Cross, however, by saying that they “came in right after the hurricane with us,” emphasizing the early contributions of the Red Cross (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). The trauma is again the factor that allows for the life-saving intervention of the Red Cross.

The appropriate beneficiaries of the teaching and empowerment the Red Cross has to offer are the children in this example as well. The agency of the students is acknowledged as the video includes clips from the play “504,” referencing the New Orleans area code, which was written through students’ stories of the hurricane and ultimately performed by them. Bean describes their resiliency, since although “they’ve seen a lot, they know about dead bodies floating in the water, they’ve heard stories, but yet they’re here” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). The students are the worthy victims, resilient, creative and active through the Red Cross program. The success of the play and the theatre program is in the way, as Bean says, “we not only talk about theatre, we talk about life” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). Thus, the focus again is on empowering youth, working through trauma and inspiring them to influence others in similar ways. This is the lesson demonstrated in a final interview with Arieuna McGee whose expression through dance and choreography was encouraged through the theatre program in 2006. As a result, the narrator suggests, “the experience she gained has also led to a commitment to get involved in disaster relief” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). A member of a service group at her university, McGee helps people affected by disasters, particularly through fundraising for the Red Cross efforts in Haiti (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Play”). The cycle from support to donation is thus made complete in the video profile of the community theatre program. Ultimately, the video suggests that the Red Cross has invested in the program, so Bean and others can invest in the youth who will in turn invest in service and even the Red Cross themselves, in turn suggesting the wide impact of their programs and the life-altering effects they create for victims. The programs featured are worthy of assistance given their noble and responsible nature,

caring for the welfare of victims and encouraging self-responsibility in those they help, conforming to the neoliberal framework.

In a slightly different type of Hurricane Katrina Story, “One Family’s Tale,” the emphasis shifts away from a community program and returns to a specific family’s experience and interaction with the Red Cross after the hurricane. Shena Batiste is introduced through a captioned screen showing family pictures that are “almost all [she] has of her old life” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”). Shena describes her family’s evacuation before Katrina and her husband’s desire to help those stranded by the hurricane and others affected by it. A second captioned screen again presents a battered picture of Shena’s smiling husband with a sentence across the screen to tell viewers that “Two day later [sic], her husband, Terrell, suffered a heart attack and died” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”). The captions serve to flesh out Shena’s story without audibly interrupting her voice, although the central information required by viewers to understand her situation is presented in the video’s captions rather than directly from Shena. Thus, while she is given a voice in the first minute of the clip, it is shaped by the information provided by the Red Cross about her.

Further, the video introduces Thomas North, the American Red Cross worker who worked on Shena’s case to give more information. Standing in uniform in front of a Red Cross relief truck, North describes Shena as:

pretty much caught up in kind of like a whirlwind of problems. One was the home that was damaged by Katrina. She has extensive roof damage. And she also had the misfortune of losing her husband just days, practically, after the storm. And the family had invested all their money

and they had put a second mortgage on their house to try and start their own business with a small luncheon truck. (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”)

In this discourse, North builds a compound, organized list of Shena’s problems after the hurricane, informing viewers of the situation in much more detail than the clip of Shena herself, who spoke with more hesitation and less detail. When she speaks again after North’s description, she describes North, saying that “he just gave me so much relief. I felt like I could just breathe. The weight was just lifted off. And he just kept on reassuring me that ‘Red Cross is really going to help you. We’re going to do everything we can.’ And he did” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”). Switching back to North, his voice here interjects again with more detail, as he describes more precisely what he did in phoning and negotiating with FEMA, the mortgage company and insurance company and “then buying us time.” contrasting the vague and passive role Shena plays as she seems unable to even make these phone calls. The representative of the Red Cross is therefore presented as a more organized, capable agent in the video, filling in and expanding on the experience described by Shena and acting for her in the recovery process.

Shena concludes the video by attributing her stability and improvement to the Red Cross: “Because of the help from Red Cross, today we’re really doing good. Everything is going along fine. We’re stable. The house is fine. We know we have insurance now. Everything is just going great” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”). While Shena is featured as a worthy victim, an enterprising individual who evacuated properly with a particularly unfortunate story compounded by her husband’s death, her voice is

also tempered with the details from the Red Cross worker. Her story is thus shaped in a way that promotes the Red Cross but omits some of her own personal experience. No mention is made of how she has recovered emotionally from the loss of her husband, nor is any mention made of the business they had started. While these details are introduced, they are not resolved. The depiction of Shena's recovery is thus limited to the specific actions that the Red Cross could take and omits a larger picture of her own response. This clip employs story-telling to promote the Red Cross as an active agent taking responsibility for victims but in fact truncates Shena's story to that end, silencing her on the personal aspects of her struggles. These silences work to frame Shena's recovery only through the efforts of what the Red Cross could do for her within the neoliberal style of privatized welfare for needy individuals that Ouellette and Hay describe (50).

A final example of the Hurricane Katrina Stories, however, departs from this narrow focus on the Red Cross, expanding somewhat to include more of the victims' stories and the larger relief community around the hurricane response. Adopting a combination of news report and story-telling styles, this video, "Restoring One Family's Past to Guarantee Their Future," focuses on the four generation Swanier family. Again profiled as victims worthy of help, the family evacuated and expected to return home three days after the hurricane but lost their home in the storm and only three years later could move into a new home built for them through the Red Cross and other funders and volunteers. Further complicating their situation, the eldest family member, Miss Emma, was undergoing chemotherapy treatments for her cancer. A male narrator's voice introduces the situation while pictures of the storm, flooded houses and a destroyed bedroom fill the screen. With the new house in the background, Margaret Swanier, the

daughter of Miss Emma, then recalls her fears after the loss of their home, that the family would have no place to stay and would end up homeless in tents or literally “under a bridge or something” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring”). The narrator again resumes the voiceover with pictures of the original home and the family, revealing that the eight member family found themselves living in a FEMA-issued trailer before Red Cross case worker Genia Clay Crane met them. Crane notes her first meeting with the family already a year after they had been living in the trailer while Margaret Swanier shows the camera the trailer they lived in, opening the fridge to note, “can’t put too much stuff, but we piled it in here,” testifying to the patience and resilience of the family (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring”). Over footage of Miss Emma with her great granddaughter and a photo of the family with Crane hugging one of the children, the narrator quotes Miss Emma’s advice to her family during her cancer treatments, “to take care of each other, to keep going to school, to keep their faith, and above all, to keep the family together” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring”). The family ties and persistence through the particularly difficult challenges after the hurricane, including the limited space in the trailer and cancer treatments, elevate the Swaniers, like the examples before, as worthy victims, as discussed by both Jiwani and Ouellette and Hay, in need of rescue from the Red Cross.

Although the great grandmother is given this voice and central inspirational role, the narrative continues to note that it was Crane who gathered the funding and brought in volunteers to help build a house that would make such advice a reality for the family. Pictured as part of the family in photos and the video footage, Crane describes the entire community of relief efforts that it took to build the house. She notes the contributions of

the volunteer builders, the county's hurricane relief program, and others in addition to the Red Cross since "it was all the funders that came together. that heard this family's story and were willing to commit funds to be able to build the house" and "not only was the Red Cross instrumental...but also the volunteer community that were willing to come down here," some of whose names have been written on the very structure of the new house ("Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring"). The video concludes with footage of the family happily enjoying their new home but also with Margaret's reflection on the death of Miss Emma one month before the family moved into the house that was rebuilt for them on their land. She expresses her grief: "I'm still not used of, you know, her not being there, but I can feel her. Every room I go in, I can feel her presence. It's like, you know, she's there" ("Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring"). The video ends on this personal note of grief and comfort, fading out to the Red Cross logo and website on a white screen. Thus the central arc of the video is not solely the Red Cross efforts, but it is shared between the cooperative effort to rebuild the house and the inspiration and loss of Miss Emma. The Red Cross is certainly still portrayed in a positive way as the essential, organizing force for the restoration of the family, as suggested in the title of the clip and in the central role played by Crane, a Red Cross case worker. The Red Cross is depicted as a leader among the "armies of compassion" that are to replace the government in "address[ing] lingering social needs" within the neoliberal welfare society (Ouellette and Hay 37). While it is the government who provided the initial trailer, it is the Red Cross who fully restored the future of this family. However, the clip also allows space and dignity to the non-Red Cross assistance and importantly to the family who have been helped, noting the importance of Miss Emma in inspiring and motivating the family to

keep going. This also contributes to the positive image of the Red Cross, though, depicting the organization as a cooperative part of communities, partnerships and families.

Throughout all the Katrina Stories, the central emphasis is on the positive efforts of the Red Cross, but also significantly on the worthiness of the victims assisted. The Red Cross provides lifesaving assistance to victims and programs that are necessarily in need and dependent. However, as American beneficiaries of Red Cross assistance, the programs featured are also socially responsible and produce neoliberal, individual empowerment projects similar to those often featured in reality television that Ouellette and Hay explore. The victim families featured, like those shown in the PSAs, are also characterized as worthy through their extreme need and trauma. While certainly the victims are framed and even silenced through colonial discourse strategies in order to better highlight the Red Cross, the emphasis is largely on their gratefulness and worth as American Red Cross beneficiaries. The Katrina stories and Red Cross heroics are again included in the five year review video that features more of the progress made by the Red Cross in the hurricane recovery process.

Five-Year Review

The five year overview video produced by the Red Cross to provide both a review and update on the situation in New Orleans combines pieces of many of these stories specifically to personalize, localize and humanize the statistics and numbers of the disaster. Although the statistics included are potentially alienating and de-humanizing, the discourse employed indicates the concerted effort made by the American Red Cross to humanize those affected by the disaster and positively present their organization. The eight and a half minute clip begins with the familiar pictures of the storm's damage

paired with the statistics from the disaster read out by voiceover. As pictures of encroaching waves, a collapsed road, damaged house and flooded buildings play in the background, the narrator reads out that eighteen hundred people were killed, there was over eighty-one billion dollars in damages and enough debris to fill the Superdome (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”).

The narrator here notes the overwhelming scale of these numbers, and taking an informal tone tells viewers “you know, the numbers can also tell another story. one of hope and recovery and spirit” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). The pictures begin to change as well to echo this shift in topic, depicting Red Cross workers, stores of supplies and children with huge smiles on their faces and supplies in their hands. The narrator describes the record-setting assistance offered by the Red Cross in the hurricane’s aftermath, including a million meals served in one day, over a million families who received financial assistance and the 250 000 volunteers “who made Katrina the largest response in American Red Cross history” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). Although no mention is made of the difficulties of relief delivery or the scandal of government and other aid delivery during the hurricane, the narrator suggests improvements and assures viewers of the “long-range planning designed to channel your generosity into long-term help” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). The list concludes with a description of the “new and creative” innovations Katrina has encouraged in the organization to increase preparedness, including “greater outreach to community and faith-based groups, more volunteers, pre-positioned supplies, more warehouse space and better use of technology” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”).

After beginning with the negative statistics of the hurricane, the video creates a positive, creative and capable image for the Red Cross in the first minute of the clip.

The majority of the video, however, is reserved to “meet some of the people of the Gulf and learn the ways they were helped by the American Red Cross and of its continuing efforts to prepare for the next time the Red Cross is needed” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). These people are not described as victims of the hurricane. Yet the emphasis is certainly on how they required the help of the American Red Cross after the hurricane and how the organization worked for them, placing these people in passive, sometimes helpless positions, although certainly worthy of aid given their unfortunate situations or enterprising initiative in the community. The following stories are taken from the longer features described above, with some exceptions. The Swanier family is introduced with the same details of their life in a FEMA trailer, and again asserting that “the Red Cross contributed to the cost of having that home rebuilt and found other resources for the Swaniers” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). The video then shifts to the coverage of the swimming lessons that were increased in response to the “significant number of deaths through drowning” caused by the storm. Again, Jeffery Parker emphasizes the essential survival aspect of the Red Cross’s efforts to teach children how to swim. Further, the narration includes more numbers in establishing the wide range of influence on more than fifteen thousand people “thanks to efforts supported by the Red Cross Hurricane Recovery Program” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”), again emphasizing the effective, individual agency of the organization rather than structural failure in the community and nation.

Continuing on the promotion of the transformative, life-saving nature of the Red Cross' work, a new interviewee is introduced in Cecile Tebo, a police officer and social worker in New Orleans who utilized the mental health services offered by the Red Cross for her son's post-traumatic stress issues. By featuring a police officer, the clip associates their work with the type of honoured and life-saving work of the police in the introductory phrase "you know sometimes the people who need help the most are the very people busy providing help to others" ("Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview"). Suggesting that the Red Cross can provide assistance even to those who are trained to handle such crisis, the clip centrally positions the organization in society and constructs yet another worthy victim and sympathetic character. Introducing Shena Batiste's story, the video includes footage of the physical destruction of houses as the narrator suggests "the mental toll could have been debilitating. But sometimes what people needed most was just someone to help make sense of it all," placing the Red Cross in a role of preventing the mental breakdown of helpless, desperate people like Shena who lost her home, business and husband, ultimately saving them and their families ("Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview"). The final clip features the success of the "504" play written from the stories of students at the Anthony Bean Community Theatre. Although the link between the Red Cross and the play is not made clear, Bean again emphasizes Red Cross assistance right after the hurricane, suggesting that the healing, success and agency accomplished by the students is enabled by the support of the Red Cross ("Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview").

In these clips and the supporting pictures on either side, issues of race are also notable. Of the eight minutes of footage, there were seventeen instances of Caucasian

volunteers shown, often in large groups, while only three African American volunteers are featured. Similarly, of the victims either pictured or featured, eight instances were of African Americans while in only three cases were Caucasian victims shown. In the video features, all but one of the stories profiled African American victims, and the one Caucasian victim was Cecile Tebo, the police officer who in fact sought help for her son. She is a worthy victim not based on her unfortunate circumstances like the African American Swanier and Batiste examples but because she is a hard-working police officer and social worker who is only momentarily financially unstable as she waits for her insurance to come into effect. Thus, the clip overwhelmingly features African American victims being assisted by Caucasian volunteers with few exceptions.

After presenting the individual stories, the clip shifts back to the statistics, continuing the informal, conversational tone directed to donors, telling viewers “so you see there is a person, a family, a story behind every number” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). More pictures of relief workers with families and victims of the disaster fill the screen as the narrator reminds viewers of the eight thousand families who received eighty million dollars in financial aid as “the means to the start of their recovery after the storms,” which significantly leaves the details of their recovery in their own hands (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). The nine thousand families who were helped by case workers and the 1.4 million who received financial support for basic needs, among other statistics, are all mentioned to assure donors of the efficacy of the Red Cross and the proper use of their contributions (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). This is reinforced with the final statements that insist “here’s the most important number of all—the number one, each and every one of you who helped us help so many others, because

that's what we do, down the street, across the country and around the world" ("Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview"). This acknowledgement extends the active, heroic role of the Red Cross to the donors watching the clip.

The informal tone drops away somewhat as the clip concludes by emphasizing the pride and nobleness of the Red Cross effort through the words of the CEO of the Louisiana chapter of the American Red Cross, Kay Wilkins. Although she begins by saying she is humbled to be a Red Cross worker, she then describes her pride in the people who offer comfort, compassion and courage in the middle of disasters, "people who immediately start to work, but first come over and give you a hug," people who are "heroes and giants" ("Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview"). Throughout this video clip, the review is designed to promote a positive image of the organization, to affirm the usefulness and efficacy of their relief efforts and the appropriate use of their funds. This goal is accomplished by asserting the heroic status of the Red Cross and the active role it plays in the lives and communities affected by the hurricane. Using the words and stories of certain worthy victims, whether in family units facing extreme difficulties or in important societal roles, the review portrays the Red Cross as saviour to the beautiful, worthy Others, a construct very similar to that which Fluri observed in news discourse about Afghan women. In these cases, the Red Cross also gives some voice to the people being assisted, although the organization simultaneously edits and frames these voices to reflect the victims as appropriately grateful and worthy recipients.

Interviews

Finally, the last type of video related to the Red Cross's Hurricane Katrina relief efforts are two examples of interviews with Red Cross workers produced by two local chapters, Finger Lakes, New York and Napa County, California. The interviews offer

perspectives from the mostly Caucasian volunteers and workers who travelled from these areas to New Orleans to help with the relief effort. Although both fit the criteria of Red Cross videos for Hurricane Katrina, they are less professionally produced as initiatives of the local chapters rather than the national level of the organization. Their audiences would also be considerably more specific, since although released on the internet, the videos are largely intended to be updates for local donors in the specific chapters' areas.

In the nearly two minute clip for the Napa County chapter as one section in a three part video review of recent projects for the chapter, the video introduces the disaster with newspaper headlines and a satellite image of hurricane activity while storm noises plays in the background. Fred Vogel, as the first interviewee, describes his immediate task in training volunteers to go to New Orleans to assist in the relief efforts. Vogel's evaluation of the effort is positive, confirming that "Napa chapter sent seventy volunteers out...and it was the largest deployment in the history of Napa chapter and just incredible response from the county" ("American Red Cross Part 2"). Responding perhaps to the many criticisms of responses to the disaster, Vogel concludes with a defence of disaster response efforts: "You're always in a difficult situation that was not perfectly planned for, no matter how much planning a local community or state does, it's a disaster" ("American Red Cross Part 2").

Barbara Pope, another Caucasian Red Cross volunteer from Napa County, reveals the distance she perceived between her situation and that of the people affected by the hurricane. She says "It was strange for us to be living there knowing what life was like for us here at home and then seeing how these people were living" ("American Red Cross Part 2"). In this description, Pope separates "us," the volunteers, from "these people," the

victims. Further commenting on the victims of the hurricane, she characterizes them and asserts her knowledge of them, commenting that:

Often in a disaster it is the poorest people who are affected the most because they live in the cheapest housing. And just to see them just trying to get their family back together and get some groceries and go to K-Mart or Target or wherever we can get cards for, and people are so polite and so nice and so grateful. (“American Red Cross Part 2”)

In this statement, Pope establishes a particular character for the struggling victims, “just” trying to preserve family and find food and supplies. Her tone seems to express a level of incredulity at the politeness and gratefulness of the people accepting aid, as if surprised at their humanity, and also recalls stereotypical expectations of poor, disaster victims accepting charity. Her comments, while designed to complement the people affected by the hurricane, also set them up as poverty stricken Others struggling with the very basics of life.

Anne Marie Clifford is the final volunteer interviewed in this clip and describes a different viewpoint than Pope. Clifford acknowledges the learning that she and any volunteer will gain from helping in a disaster. She implies a similar knowledge of the victims as Pope asserts since as a volunteer taking in a disaster, she explains, “you keep all of that with you, and it helps I think in the next time because you’ve gained some more experience, more insight, more empathy” (“American Red Cross Part 2”).

However, this knowledge is informed by empathy, potentially an identification with the victims and greater understanding through that experience. Throughout this clip, the focus has been on the responsibility and sacrifice of the Red Cross volunteers in contrast

to the people in need, asserting distance from them and a superior knowledge base, using colonial discourse strategies identified by Said in *Orientalism*.

The interview video produced by the Finger Lakes chapter introduces the disaster with scrolling text under the Red Cross logo. Although difficult to read, the text notifies viewers that the following interviews are “testimonials” from the unprecedented storms and response from Hurricane Katrina on the fifth anniversary of the disaster as “a reminder that the unthinkable can happen and the Red Cross is better prepared” (RochesterRedCross). As gentle jazz music plays, evoking a stereotypical marker of African American culture, the text appeals for “everyone to do more” for disaster preparedness before transitioning into the examples of Caucasian volunteers who have already contributed when they “brought help and hope to the Gulf Coast” (RochesterRedCross). The first volunteer, standing in front of a relief truck, comments on the “desperate need” with people injured, dead or missing, but his story is about “the good times that we tried to make” (RochesterRedCross). He tells about running a food station and exchanging simple language lessons with a couple of men from Vietnam and Peru who would come by his station in line every day, concluding that “we would all laugh and feel good about the rest of the day” (RochesterRedCross). While this story recounts a mutually beneficial exchange between the Red Cross worker and aid recipients, he also speaks for them, projecting his own positive feelings about the day onto people with whom he only momentarily interacted.

In a Red Cross office, the second interviewee, Brad Lowell, describes his role as coordinator for shelters and relief efforts in Harrison County, doing “everything that we could to provide immediate assistance to the people of Gulf Port and Harrison County”

even as he stayed in the back of a car while he was there (RochesterRedCross). The next volunteer, in front of a Red Cross flag, recalls helping a carpenter who had lost all his tools to get to North Carolina for a new job through the connections and financial contributions of Red Cross workers in the area. He describes his experience as “it’s enjoyable, it’s heartbreaking at times, but it is worthwhile” (RochesterRedCross). Gayle Rosenkrans talks about the difficulties of nursing with a lack of medical histories and medications but also the satisfaction of teaching first aid to children who in turn took care of a scrape on her leg, another example of the empowerment of children seen in previous clips.

The last interviewee tells viewers of his work in stepping up to run a shelter of seven thousand people over six weeks. He concludes with an appeal to viewers, promoting the Red Cross and its work:

The best recommendation would be to pick up the phone and call your local chapter and find out what skills can the Red Cross use that you have to help them in their efforts. This is a wonderful organization, and I was very proud to be part of this response. (RochesterRedCross)

The final screen presents the scrolling text thanking donors who “continue to bring help and hope” and urging viewers to contact the organization to contribute (RochesterRedCross). These accounts rely on story-telling to decrease the distance between the victims of the hurricane and the volunteers who helped, while also emphasizing the self-sacrificing nature of Red Cross volunteers who worked through heartbreaking and logistical difficulties to offer assistance. Like the Good Samaritan rhetoric around the tsunami (Motter), these and previous examples draw attention to the

religiously self-sacrificing nature of American Red Cross workers who will stay in the back of cars even as they run shelters for the people who have lost their homes, pay bus fare for an unemployed carpenter, and lay themselves down as a bridge over troubled water. The positive image of the organization in this case is linked to a positive representation of the sacrifices of relief workers. This image of sacrifice and selflessness further supports the saviour image, feeding into the religious themes implied by the Good Samaritan rhetoric, the use of a gospel song and the word “saviour” itself. As well, this emphasis on sacrifice reflects the superiority and heroic attitude of colonizers in colonial discourse as described by Said and Spivak, but also significantly serves as an example of the citizen compassion and self-responsibility that is paramount in neoliberal governance.

Summary

Throughout the videos discussed here concerning the Red Cross’s efforts in Hurricane Katrina relief, neoliberal overtones emphasize projects of empowerment and self-responsibility that ignore systemic inequalities and problems while placing the responsibility for welfare and social assistance in the hands of individuals and charity programs and even the victims themselves. Through various techniques, the videos focus on the positive presentation of self that van Dijk identified as a central trend in discourse (“Principles” 264) and thus obscure government failures and responsibilities. The ideology constructed through the discourse in these videos glorifies the Red Cross as a hero in the hurricane recovery process in contrast to dependent victims. However, this neoliberal, charity welfare discourse overlooks underlying issues of government responsibility and preparedness as Russill and Lavin have previously demonstrated through the tipping point discourse. In promoting the privatization and individualization of welfare and self-responsibility through charity and non-profit heroics, the presentation

of the Red Cross in these videos reflects the larger “neoliberalization of welfare” that Ouellette and Hay analyze in reality television (54). The Red Cross thus supports and cooperates with the neoliberal system and particularly the displacement of welfare, obscuring the vulnerabilities and failures that otherwise could lead to political reforms on future prevention.

Further, in comparison to the Haiti videos discussed in chapter four, there is less of an overtly negative or marginalized presentation of victims as Others, which van Dijk also describes in conjunction with positive self-presentation (“Principles” 264). In the PSAs, the Red Cross used the discursive techniques of celebrity attraction and built an image of a compassionate friend to individualized victims. The series of profiles of relief recipients allows a voice to the certain victims, although it is shaped to reveal the capabilities and heroics of the Red Cross. This is similarly constructed in the Red Cross review of the disaster, pairing statistics to assert a professional efficacy and victims’ stories to assert compassion and community sensitivity. The profiles, however, are specifically emphasizing particularly the worthy victim and most often the African American victim in contrast to the Caucasian relief worker, which evokes colonial discourses of racial inferiority. Finally, the use of story-telling in the local chapter interviews shows both distancing and superiority and emphasizes the self-sacrifice of Red Cross workers. In all cases, however, the ultimate goal is to present the merits of the Red Cross and invite donors and volunteers to join or support the organization. The discursive techniques of featuring celebrities and witnesses and the attribution of agency to the Red Cross in these videos contribute significantly to the positive presentation of self.

While victims are often included in these videos, the emphasis is not to explore their personal struggles and victories but the struggles and victories of the Red Cross in that situation. The worthy victims are used to improve the credibility of the Red Cross and to humanize the disaster, but their own stories are often truncated and silenced, framed to fit the purposes of the American Red Cross as postcolonial theorists note is common in colonial discourse. These videos illustrate the citing, framing and quoting of the Other that Bhabha describes, demonstrating how the victims have no power to initiate their own institutional or oppositional discourse in this context as they are shaped to fit the Red Cross's institutional discourse (31). The victims are necessarily dependent and sometimes passive in the depictions, a similarly common characteristic ascribed to Others in colonial discourse. The emphasis on the heroics of the Red Cross also exemplifies the assertions of Said and Spivak that a saviour figure is constructed as necessary for Others through discourse. However, ultimately, although some of the videos are positioned external to the disaster, the American Red Cross is viewing a crisis in the West from a Western viewpoint, and thus these video perspectives are constructed internally rather than externally as was Orientalism. While there is certainly still a focus on passivity and dependence in the victims, there is also a significant effort by the Red Cross to humanize the disaster and assert the worth of victims, at least those featured as relief recipients. The central discourse in the videos for Hurricane Katrina is thus a neoliberal one rather than a colonial one, although elements of both are present. When the Red Cross approaches a disaster to which they are truly external as in the case of Haiti, however, these strategies are much changed, and a stronger colonial discourse emerges in depicting victims,

although a similar self-presentation persists in the videos examined in the following chapter.

4. Haiti Earthquake Case Study

While the American Red Cross may have turned its disaster relief efforts inward during Hurricane Katrina and the months of recovery, after the Haiti earthquake the organization approached this third world area from an external, Western position despite having various resources already in place within the country. Haiti was constructed in the American Red Cross communications as Other, foreign but also known. This portrayal of Haiti is similar in many ways to the external construction of the Orient that Said discusses (6), although with more emphasis on the neo-colonial context rather than the traditional colonial one. This view of Haiti is supported by the country's submission in the context of the disaster as indicated in chapter one, since Haiti allowed foreign government control as well as the graphic depictions of the disaster that would be unacceptable in the United States (Dupuy; Emmett). With virtually no visible input from Haitians themselves, the Red Cross videos examined through discourse analysis in this sample illustrate a stronger colonial discourse than was present in the Hurricane Katrina videos examined in chapter three. While the themes of Red Cross heroics and salvation continue, the victims are depicted as weak and uneducated masses.

Again, each video was analyzed individually within the context of the categories of video types. The same categories have been identified here as in the Hurricane Katrina chapter. The PSA category includes the announcements created for television to encourage donations; the review category includes videos created for an overall update on the situation and progress in Haiti; the feature videos are those created to highlight a

smaller and more specific aspect of the disaster response; and the interview videos, while very similar to feature videos, are those that use more general questioning not focused on a particular aspect, including self-interviewed video journals. The analysis provides both a description of the clip and consideration of the discursive techniques and colonial discourse themes that have been identified in chapter two. Thus, the following analysis considers the use of style, witnesses, celebrity, omission, and agency for the positive presentation of self and the marginal representation of others. Additionally, colonial discourse themes are also analyzed such as externality, heroic superiority and the characterization of Others as inferior, fixed, passive, dependent, silenced and dehumanized. The following chapter again analyzes the PSAs first but then proceeds with the update or review videos, followed by the specific service feature and interview videos, given the similarity between these two categories. The analysis determines various thematic and stylistic similarities with the Hurricane Katrina videos, but also significant divergence from them. The central focus remains on the positive presentation of self through justifications of Red Cross actions and emphasis on their superiority and heroics, while the victims are excluded from the discourse and are more strongly constructed as inferior, uneducated, simplistic, passive and dependent, consistent with colonial discourse.

The contexts of the disasters, like the analysis of the videos, are markedly different, particularly in scale. Like Hurricane Katrina, the more recent disaster in Haiti on January 12, 2010 also devastated a major city and surrounding areas but within an entirely different context of a third world, developing country. In terms of scale, although the Red Cross reported 4.5 million people had been affected by Hurricane Katrina and

only three million people affected by Haiti's earthquake, Haiti's relatively small population of nine million means that one third of the population was impacted while only roughly 1.5% of the American population were directly affected by Hurricane Katrina. The 7.0 magnitude earthquake that was centered in the capital of the country, Port-au-Prince, caused a reported 230 000 deaths and 300 000 injuries (Rodgers), a casualty rate one hundred times higher than Hurricane Katrina. Between 1.2 and 1.5 million people were left homeless and moved into the temporary relief camps ("Disaster in Haiti"). In comparison to other recent earthquakes in China and Italy, a much higher percentage of people affected died (one in every fifteen people) and a much lower percentage of people affected were rescued (one in every 16 588) (Rodgers). Reported estimates of the costs in damage range from five to thirteen billion dollars, which even when conservative most likely exceeds the entire country's Gross Domestic Product (Lacey; Rodgers). Other disputes about the number of casualties and homeless have also arisen, suggesting the Haitian government's official estimates are much higher in order to capitalize on international relief fund opportunities ("Haitian death toll"). Regardless of the debates, however, even at conservative estimates, the relative scale of the Haiti disaster far exceeds Hurricane Katrina. In the official report of the American Red Cross one year after the disaster, for example, the amount of debris is estimated to fill the Louisiana Superdome five times (American Red Cross, "Haiti Earthquake Relief" 6), in comparison to the estimate of debris from Hurricane Katrina which was reported to be enough to fill the same building once. The report also reviews the poverty and difficult conditions in the country before the earthquake and documents the \$479 million that the American arm of the Red Cross has received in donations for Haiti (American Red Cross,

“Haiti Earthquake Relief” 2, 14). Although this number is a fraction of the \$2.2 billion contributed to Hurricane Katrina, the relative percentages of the contributions within the total estimated damages are similar.

Of the videos produced by the American Red Cross to request such support for Haiti, many more have been preserved online through the American Red Cross YouTube channel and website. A total of fifty-nine videos were sampled from the YouTube channel which fit the criteria for this project (association with the American Red Cross, pertaining to the Haiti earthquake, focussed on donations and updates) and which were included in the sampling frame for this study. Given the recent timeline of this disaster and the ready availability of outlets such as the YouTube channels, there are many more videos available of greater variety. These videos were largely produced by the American Red Cross in Haiti, although the PSAs appear professionally created in the United States for specific airings on television. The majority of the videos, however, were posted online only and thus target internet users who are already connected with the Red Cross or searching for information on Haiti. In the total number of videos, there were seven PSAs, thirteen overall updates, fifteen specific features on certain relief efforts including one interviewing female victims of the earthquake and finally twenty-four interviews or video diaries with Red Cross staff. To balance this analysis with the number of videos from Hurricane Katrina, the Haiti videos were shuffled to a random order, and every fifth video was chosen, starting with the first video and also including the last video to achieve a sample of thirteen videos. This sampling procedure, identified by Larry Leslie as systematic random sample, ensures a random, unbiased sample is created (144). This resulted in a sample of two PSAs, four overall updates, five interviews and two specific

features, with certain overlap between the interviews and features. This process of sampling ensured that no selection bias would distort the analysis according to assumptions or prejudices and created a commensurate number of videos to compare with the Hurricane Katrina sample.

Public Service Announcements

The first PSA discussed here relies on the use of celebrity endorsement similar to the Veronica Mars PSA for Hurricane Katrina discussed in the previous chapter. This example, however, is much more extensive and mainstream. The PSA features several very successful and mostly white Hollywood movie actors and musicians, including Morgan Freeman, Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Tim McGraw, Jake Gyllenhaal and Reese Witherspoon, all high profile and recognizable stars (“PSA”). The PSA runs for a standard thirty second length, cutting back and forth between the stars, as they urge viewers to donate to the American Red Cross. The dialogue starts with Morgan Freeman, establishing a common ground immediately with the opening line “We *all* know Haiti was hit by a devastating earthquake,” inviting viewers to identify with the celebrities’ concern (“PSA”). Freeman, like the other celebrities that follow him, faces directly into a close up camera shot set within a kitchen. Streep, Roberts, Gyllenhaal and Witherspoon seem comfortably seated in living rooms while McGraw is surrounded by instruments in a studio-like room. Each is framed within a unique and recurring setting as they reappear in the clip to imply they are each speaking from their homes, further offering an inside intimacy with viewers. These settings also implicitly juxtapose the poverty and homelessness in Haiti, emphasizing the comforts of America and further distancing the celebrities and viewers from the victims of the earthquake.

Streep continues the dialogue by suggesting the scope of the disaster stating, “tens of thousands of Haitians have died and that number is rising” (“PSA”). Roberts raises the issue of urgency in the next frame, further categorizing the celebrities with viewers with collective pronouns in her line: “we don’t have time to sit around and talk about what we can do to help” (“PSA”). McGraw, Freeman and Gyllenhaal subsequently build a list of the items that “they,” the Haitians, “continue to run short of,” including food, water, medical supplies and “support for relief workers” (“PSA”). Although this does acknowledge that such basics of life did exist in Haiti before, it emphasizes “their” lack and inadequacy. Thus, the celebrities identify not with the victims or the relief workers, but with the everyday viewers watching the PSA. Streep, rather than inviting viewers to “join us” as a charity organization, instead includes herself with the general public when she says “there’s still something every one of us can do” (“PSA”).

Witherspoon offers the first direct exhortation to the individual viewer in her part of the dialogue, “you can help by donating today,” and Freeman and Roberts conclude by emphasizing this urgency of the need (“PSA”). In Freeman’s third appearance, he finishes Witherspoon’s phrase, adding “by giving *now*” and Roberts finishes the PSA with the conclusion that “one more thing they’re running short of, is time” (“PSA”). The immediacy is further encouraged in the last screen of contact information including instructions for convenient and immediate text message donations. Throughout the PSA, then, the Haitians are grouped in masses of tens of thousands, people unable to fill basic needs, separated from the celebrities and viewers as “they” who need “our” help. The celebrities, however, are also separate from the Red Cross and included in a collective “we” implying the whole viewing public capable of giving help to the Haitian people

through “support of relief workers.” This diction, coupled with the home-like settings, invites identification and intimacy with the celebrities and ideally motivation to emulate their concern, urgency and direction. The national scale, urgency and distancing from the victims contrasts the celebrity PSA for Hurricane Katrina in which the disaster was not elaborated on and was made to seem less urgent through brevity and informality. In both cases, however, the PSAs rely on the legitimacy and recognisability offered through celebrity association and support. In this instance, though, the victims are described as a mass rather than individually as they often were throughout the Hurricane Katrina videos. Echoing Said’s analysis of the depiction of Orientals, this depiction of Haitians homogenizes the victims, making the assumption that they are “almost everywhere nearly the same” (Said 38).

The second PSA, again echoing a similar Hurricane Katrina PSA, also relies somewhat on celebrity in the music of John Mayer, a popular singer-songwriter. In the thirty second clip, the song “Heart of Life” plays over images of the fundraising and relief efforts. Accompanying the instrumental introduction, the first three images fade through a group of people with yard sale items and signs, two young girls with a tray of cupcakes iced with the Red Cross logo and three smiling people studying a text message in progress, each separated with the appropriate caption to label each: “Every yard sale. Every cupcake. Every text” (“Heart of Life”). The phrase is finished after the next four images of victims of the earthquake being helped or cared for by Red Cross volunteers when the caption reads “Every donation brings hope” (“Heart of Life”). Meanwhile, the lyrics begin with the phrase “pain throws your heart to the ground” as the images depict obviously bandaged and injured children being examined by Red Cross workers (“Heart

of Life”). The second line of the song changes the focus somewhat with the words “love turns the whole thing around,” as suggested in the next two images of comfort—another injured, bandaged child being hugged by a Red Cross doctor and another worker holding the hand of a Haitian man at a Red Cross relief station—pairing the love that can turn the situation around with the support and work of the Red Cross (“Heart of Life”). The final picture of a Red Cross worker holding a small Haitian child is matched with the lyrics “I know the heart of life is good, I know it’s good” (“Heart of Life”). Throughout the PSA, a red bar across the bottom of the screen displays the logo and contact number and website, and an additional screen at the end emphasizes the American Red Cross logo on a white background with the fading notes of the song, making the link between the Red Cross and the heart of life unavoidable.

The implication of the lyrics and images are again that the American people are actively contributing through yard sales, cupcakes, even just texting to make a difference, to bring hope that is missing in the lives of the Haitians who have been passively thrown to the ground by the pain of the earthquake. The Red Cross is then the organization of love that can turn their lives around through the good heart of the American people. This clip is similar to the Hurricane Katrina PSA featuring Johnny Cash’s version of “Bridge over Troubled Water” in the framing of the Red Cross, but the images put the emphasis on the actions of the American people and the American Red Cross rather than just depicting the destruction and victims in it as with the images in the Katrina PSA. Further, the images of Haiti in this example are more graphic depictions of injuries and present a much more pathetic view of Haitian people, most of whom are children, evoking the common colonial stereotypes of a passive, childlike and weak Other that Said, Bhabha

and Hall describe. While in the Hurricane Katrina PSA the victims were positioned as friends through the lyrics, here the song instead emphasizes the goodness of the American people's heart for Haitians, again evoking the idea of moral exceptionalism described by Motter in relation to tsunami relief efforts in 2004. Through both the captions, images and lyrics, then, the emphasis is not on the victims in need but on the admirable, compassionate actions of the American people and the American Red Cross. At the same time, the victims that are depicted are visually injured, passive and dependent, resulting in a problematic, graphic framing that was never present in the Hurricane Katrina videos. Thus, the representation of Haitian victims places emphasis on their weakness, incapacity and dependence rather than their worthiness, a focus that is reinforced in the update videos as well.

Earthquake Updates and Reviews

Before even the PSA videos were created, however, the American Red Cross had also begun making update videos to notify their YouTube and website audience of the situation. Five hours after the earthquake, Tracy Reines from the American Red Cross International Disaster Response Operations Centre informed viewers in one video that “unfortunately, the earthquake seems to have done extreme damage in Port-au-Prince” before admitting that, because it was night there and still so recent, there was little known about the damage and no images to see how extensive it was (“Earthquake in Haiti”). However, in the video she backs up her previous claim with references to reports from media, the American government and Red Cross workers “on the ground” in Haiti that have confirmed that “significant damage is evident” (“Earthquake in Haiti”). Reines further describes the disaster as damage to infrastructure including hospitals, hotels, roads and residences as well as injuries “that you would expect from a traumatic event” which

she haltingly lists as “broken bones, lacerations, traumatic physical injuries and some injuries which unfortunately will not be able to be treated” as well as loss of life although the extent is so far unknown (“Earthquake in Haiti”). Through this introduction, she establishes a traumatic and significant need due to the earthquake before quickly transitioning into a description of relief delivery difficulties given the unknown status of roads, ports and airports. A problem like this “of course makes things a bit slower and certainly more expensive in terms of resources going into it, but those resources will be mobilized to provide assistance to people who are affected” (“Earthquake in Haiti”). Nevertheless, despite the unknowns and logistical difficulties, Reines establishes and justifies the expenses and relief efforts early on to encourage support for the Red Cross. Additionally, she asserts her knowledge of the area and the Haitian people’s experiences:

People in Haiti typically have been used to or more experienced with hurricanes, landslides, potentially civil unrest. An earthquake comes out of nowhere. There’s no warning, and this region doesn’t typically have earthquakes so there is no question of the shock, fear that people experience after an earthquake, especially one that does this much damage. (“Earthquake in Haiti”)

In these statements, Reines asserts an expertise of the area while implying the unpreparedness and even the inferiority of Haitian people to cope with the event. The presumption of a superior knowledge on the part of the Red Cross positions the Haitian victims as uneducated inferiors, reflecting the similar colonial discourse of knowledge that Said described as dominating Oriental people (32).

The update then transitions to the efforts the Red Cross is taking to provide relief to such people. Reines uses a map of the area with the Red Cross bases marked on it to point out the supplies located in Panama for approximately five thousand families that the American Red Cross was at that moment working to transport into Haiti directly or indirectly through the Dominican Republic. Asserting the preparedness of the Red Cross, Reines lists the “bedding, water, food supplies, cooking materials, things like that for emergency needs” and the response teams with expertise in “all elements of disaster response from logistics and telecommunications to relief to shelter” (“Earthquake in Haiti”). In addition to moving these supplies and people, she tells viewers that “we’ve released money to purchase supplies to charter transportation services, to provide financial assistance needed” up to 200 000 dollars from the American Red Cross at that point and more from the international Red Cross movement (“Earthquake in Haiti”). In concluding, she re-emphasizes the efficacy of the Red Cross in the situation:

All of that has been happening—that’s what we’ve been working to mobilize in the last, you know, four to five hours as soon as we heard about the earthquake. It’s what we’re going to be working on overnight, and certainly come tomorrow morning, it’s going to be an unfortunately, a very, a sad day I think for Port-au-Prince, the people in the region and for us as well. (“Earthquake in Haiti”)

Her descriptions remain understated and relatively unemotional, mostly discussing logistics and describing the realization of the disaster as just a sad day with injuries that “will not be able to be treated” and loss of life.

After setting up the unknown but significant damage and describing the immediate actions of the Red Cross, Reines then suggests to viewers that “if you would like to assist us in this effort, which we always look for this sort of assistance and support, please feel free to go to redcross.org” (“Earthquake in Haiti”). She informs viewers that the “simplest, most effective and efficient way to provide support to the people of Haiti” is by financial contribution, again focussing on the efficacy of the Red Cross (“Earthquake in Haiti”). Her final statement summarizes this focus in an again somewhat foundering diction:

Again, um, we’re moving people, supplies and goods to the Dominican Republic and Haiti now. And should be on the ground hopefully in Haiti by tomorrow, um, with resources that weren’t currently in Haiti. For people who are already in Haiti and the Haitian Red Cross, they’ve already distributed their relief supplies. They have their volunteers and staff providing triage assistance now and will continue to provide assistance immediately and in the weeks and days and months to come after this, this very tragic event. (“Earthquake in Haiti”)

This first video report on the earthquake uses discourse to establish the effectiveness and immediate action of the Red Cross and to justify the actions and expenses undertaken in the disaster area even before all the information is received. In this way, the video provides a testimony to the rapid response of the Red Cross, potentially in response to a legacy of criticisms of the delayed responses including that for Hurricane Katrina. The unpolished style contributes to this testimony, attesting to the low budget and quick turnaround for the production of videos and communicating a sense

of authenticity and honesty from Reines, although she also seems somewhat unprepared. The understatement of the extent of the disaster is partially due to the early stage and lack of information, but it also serves to focus the attention not on the devastation but on the actions of the Red Cross as a dominant, prepared authority.

The next two update videos included in the sample were produced approximately one month after the earthquake. These more extensive updates include the recurrent themes of positive promotion of the Red Cross, incorporating the salvation trope and confirming the speed and efficiency of the work of the organization in Haiti. However, there is also emphasis on the deep needs and time commitment required for the full recovery efforts. One of these two videos begins with a reminder of the date of January 12, 2010 as dull pictures of wide spread rubble, collapsed structures, crushed vehicles and further destruction fill the screen accompanied by soft instrumental music (“Haiti: 1 Month”). It further combines video clips documenting the disaster and chronicling specific relief efforts with varied pictures of Haitians, often sitting or lying in various bandages and being cared for by Red Cross staff, again graphic depictions that were not included in the Hurricane Katrina videos. A statement from health delegate, Chloe Gans-Rugebregt explains the immediate medical action of the Red Cross in the disaster: “We started here the day of the earthquake, actually, and that evening we started transporting people to the hospital” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). Gail McGovern, the President and CEO of the American Red Cross, shares her impressions from amidst the rubble, reflecting that “the country has sustained such terrible damage and it breaks your heart” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). In Mat Morgan’s video journal entry clip, he admits his first disaster response has been challenging and difficult for him (“Haiti: 1 Month”).

Again graphic pictures of Haitian people carrying young and elderly through destroyed streets precede a review of “Basic Needs.” While captions inform viewers that “More than one million people have received...food...water...and relief supplies...” the images show Haitian people waiting and lining up in large groups for supplies, and then smiling with Red Cross boxes. Haitians are pictured filling water containers controlled by a Red Cross worker, balancing loads of Red Cross blankets and supplies on their heads to carry home, and smiling at the contents of opened boxes, while Red Cross workers are shown unloading water jugs, blankets and organizing supply boxes (“Haiti: 1 Month”). The voice of Bonnie Gillespie, a communications delegate, judges the efforts as “logistically...probably one of the most complex operations I’ve ever seen,” and the captions add that “in just 2 months, the Red Cross has provided water, tents, latrines, kitchen sets, hygiene kits and food to more than 1.9 million Haitians. Despite the hazardous conditions” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). Gillespie continues, “the roads would simply be impassable, but they always found solutions using wheelbarrows so the beneficiaries could get their supplies home,” with supporting pictures of a cracked road and Red Cross workers organizing wheelbarrows of supplies (“Haiti: 1 Month”).

The medical update is introduced with more images of supply organization and bandaged Haitians in various positions of pain and injury being helped or comforted by Red Cross workers. Morgan reappears, describing his encounter with a boy who had lost his mother, brother and the use of his left leg in a house collapse who “was so sad, he wore this expression on his face that I still carry with me in my mind” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). Despite this sober story, the captions inform viewers of the thirteen hundred patients the Red Cross treats every day, with vaccines and other assistance (“Haiti: 1 Month”). In the

final segment on “Hope,” the captions turn to financial assistance, noting the eighty-two million dollars spent for immediate needs, the urgency of rebuilding in time for the hurricane season and ultimately issuing an appeal to viewers: “we’re only at the beginning of a long journey, please join us on this road to recovery” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). McGovern concludes the video with her renewed commitment to “make sure that ninety-one cents of every dollar goes to the Haitian people. It’s going to take years for them to recover and we’re going to be there to help in the recovery process” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). As Chloe Gans-Rugebregt describes it, this means “making sure all their basic necessities, water, food and shelter are covered for as long as they’re staying in the camps. We don’t know how long that will be” (“Haiti: 1 Month”). Before the final logo and contact information screen finishes the clip, the last images are a mixture of injured children, grieving Haitian people amidst the rubble and people accepting the help of the Red Cross (“Haiti: 1 Month”).

In this video, unlike the first update, the seriousness of the disaster is more evident. The compassion of the Red Cross is emphasized in response to the seriousness of the disaster, particularly through the testimony of the president of the organization. Her presence in the area and her description of her heart-breaking experience increases the compassionate image of the American Red Cross and suggests a strong commitment to the Haitian people. Throughout, the video remains concerned with the experiences of the American Red Cross workers in Haiti rather than the people being assisted. This again contrasts the style of the Hurricane Katrina update video that featured so many victims. Drawing attention to the workers demonstrates their self-sacrifice in facing the difficulties as Mat Morgan describes and illustrates their creativity as in the use of

wheelbarrows. This focus, then, implies a contrast between the workers and an uncreative, unorganized passive group of Haitian victims since it is up to the Red Cross to solve problems and deliver supplies. The video pairs graphic and emotional stories with the positive statistics documenting Red Cross work. The statistics further group the Haitians into dehumanized masses without the inclusion of victim voices to personalize these numbers as the five year review of Hurricane Katrina did. The video silences the Haitian victims who become the “muted, subaltern subject” discussed by Spivak (91). Ultimately, this update projects a positive image of the Red Cross as responsible with donations and the recovery effort, but the discourse excludes the human, personalized Haitian victim from the video and instead marginalizes them as Others in graphic pictures and through impersonal statistics.

The other, slightly earlier, update video is of a similar style, featuring many of the same pictures of the disaster and the Red Cross relief workers but is organized around a timeline of captions (“Progress Report”). The video begins with a segment titled “Looking Back” that chronicles the Red Cross response as it unfolded. The first caption thus reads “Within minutes American Red Cross staff in Haiti began providing first aid to survivors” (“Progress Report”). The captions continue to outline the arrival of other Red Cross workers within hours, the arrival of essential supplies and access to clean water within days, the establishment of mobile clinics within a week and the constant efforts to reunite families. Stretching the timeline further to the month marker, the caption reads “the Red Cross has helped more than 1.3 million Haiti earthquake survivors” (“Progress Report”). Transitioning into the second segment for “Today,” marking efforts at the time in Haiti, the captions include the 3 100 Red Cross workers in the country, the 12 500

people being given basic supplies every day, the 320 000 people given clean water each day, the one thousand patients being treated each day and the 33 000 people the Red Cross helped to “reconnect with relatives” (“Progress Report”). Finally, in a section on “Looking Ahead,” the captions indicate a five month commitment for clinics and hospitals, a year-long distribution of supplies and projections for emergency and transitional housing that the Red Cross “plans to provide” for Haitians before the rains and hurricanes (“Progress Report”). The last few frames include a thank you and financial update to donors, announcing that “in one month we have spent or allocated eighty million dollars to help earthquake survivors,” and “our work is not done. We will continue to invest your donations wisely to help the people of Haiti” (“Progress Report”). In addition to the regular logo and contact information at the end of the clip, one final caption reads “you can still help” (“Progress Report”). Throughout this video, the efforts of the Red Cross are justified and emphasized as quick, efficient and effective through the timeline approach, while again simultaneously silencing Haitian people. No “earthquake survivors” are heard from in the clip, or celebrities or even Red Cross officials, but the captions tell a story of success and effort by the Red Cross for the Haitian people. The conclusion serves again to assure donors and encourage more giving to the organization that is presented as responsible and effective.

The last update video in the sample is the one year update, charting the progress and continuing efforts of the Red Cross. The clip begins with energetic singing and footage of several young children smiling and dancing for the camera (“Haiti One Year”). This optimistic start is continued through the first forty seconds of the video, including footage of children playing, a leg amputee learning to walk, daily routines in the camps

and even a Haitian man working to build a shelter. These depictions of the earthquake survivors give a sense of improvement and regular life. However, when the dialogue begins, attention is once again turned to the extent of the disaster as Matt Marek, the deputy country representative for Haiti, recounts the number of lives lost or displaced from the earthquake. With footage of the rubble and mass groups of people waiting for supplies and being ordered by megaphone, the earthquake is dubbed “the worst urban disaster the world has seen since World War II” (“Haiti One Year”). As McGovern comes on the screen, the use of participatory development rhetoric and the promotion of the American donors and the Red Cross is clear as she tells the camera that “the American people were so very generous, and that money is being used to help the Haitian Red Cross to get Haiti back on its feet” (“Haiti One Year”). However, she also describes the continued involvement of the American Red Cross not only in financially supporting the Haitian branch but also suggesting that it is time to go beyond what the Haitian Red Cross has done thus far to long term solutions including permanent shelters, “jumpstarts” for livelihoods and getting people out of the camps (“Haiti One Year”). From this point, Julie Sell, an American Red Cross communications officer, guides viewers through the video chronicle of the American Red Cross’s projects, beginning with the assertion that “the Red Cross has helped to keep literally, you know, tens if not hundreds of thousands of people alive, with food and water and basic shelter” (“Haiti One Year”). This emphasis on the life-saving actions of the Red Cross is continuous throughout the segments that follow, which highlight health and hygiene, cholera, water distribution, medical, sanitation and shelter. Consistent with the colonial discourse described by Said and

Spivak and the tropes discussed by Fluri and Jiwani, the clip repeatedly positions the American Red Cross as the saviour of the Haitian people in a variety of ways.

In the health and hygiene segment, Haiti is described as “plagued by all sorts of health threats,” while the Red Cross is the proactive actor who initiated hygiene education programs “as early as this spring” immediately after the earthquake (“Haiti One Year”). The American Red Cross in this example also takes on the role of a superior, teaching the Haitian people how to wash their hands and stay clean. This initiative is emphasized by McGovern who explains that the two hundred health promotion workers are “literally going tent by tent and explaining to every single resident in those tents exactly how to prevent the spread of cholera” and that “each time somebody goes into one of these tents, they are saving lives. Lives are at stake” (“Haiti One Year”). In the response to the cholera outbreak, the emphasis is on the treatment centre and prevention efforts funded specifically by the American Red Cross for this preventable disease that “can be fatal in a number of hours” (“Haiti One Year”). This description again places the Red Cross in a superior, knowledgeable position over an unhygienic Haitian population who urgently need saving. Further, the segment on water distribution positions the Red Cross in a fundamental role for the survival of the “over one million people still living in, under tarps and in tents and makeshift camps” as they are “supplying approximately thirty-five to forty percent of the daily water needs to those populations” (“Haiti One Year”). Also in this section, Steve McAndrew, the director of emergency relief, draws attention to the pre-existing conditions of vulnerability in Haiti before the earthquake: “the fact is that on January 11th, Haiti was already in a poor state, was already the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. In Port-au-Prince, only seventy percent of the

people had access to potable water before this earthquake” (“Haiti One Year”). On an ongoing “non-stop” basis, the Haitian people are “counting on us every day to bring them water,” to fill their basic needs, according to various Red Cross workers (“Haiti One Year”).

In the last two sections, sanitation and shelter, the dialogue emphasises the skills and knowledge that the Red Cross brings to enrich the education, skills and lives of the Haitian people. While the Haitian people “just moved to any open patch,” the Red Cross knows how to work to improve that area, employing the Haitian people to dig drainage ditches, simultaneously “keeping them dry” and “putting money into people’s pockets” (“Haiti One Year”). Similarly, Sell discusses “livelihoods programs” involved in building new shelters. She describes shelter as “one of the biggest challenges we’ve faced this year” and the plan of the American Red Cross to “move people from under tarps and tents to semi-permanent shelters...and eventually we hope we can move a significant number of people into permanent shelters” (“Haiti One Year”). Again, the Red Cross is the active force here, moving and teaching the Haitian people in essential skills training programs for “getting back to a sense of normalcy, to achieving, you know, independence, empowerment. We want to have people take control of their lives and get back up on their feet” (“Haiti One Year”). This frames the Haitian people as in need of training and empowerment since they currently lack control, independence and the “cheerful feeling” that the Red Cross creates (“Haiti One Year”). The video concludes by emphasizing the good intentions of the Red Cross in Haiti to “leave Haiti in a better place than we found it” by “rebuilding these communities in a more permanent way” and “make a difference here” (“Haiti One Year”). McGovern asserts she is “in awe of the

Haitian people” as the last few seconds of people living and playing in the camps fade to a caption informing viewers that “together we have raised \$479 million to help the Haitian people. Thanks to all the Americans who have generously donated money” (“Haiti One Year”). This conclusion makes a small effort to suggest the Haitians deserve and are worthy of American Red Cross help but ultimately places greater emphasis on the generosity of the American people, leaving an impression of weak Haitians assisted by wonderful American donors.

Throughout this update, there is an emphasis on the life-saving work of the American Red Cross and their superior knowledge imparted to the Haitian people. As Said describes in *Orientalism*, colonial discourse assumes superiority and knowledge of the colonized Other. In these videos, the Red Cross emphasizes their superiority through knowledge both of the situation in Haiti in terms of pre-existing poverty and of the hygienic, financial and skill-based needs that are being taught to Haitians. The emphasis on poverty further places the victims in an inferior, pitiable position in contrast to the generous American public and the capable, responsible Red Cross. Again, no victims are featured, and their views are omitted and silenced as the colonial discourse speaks for them as emphasized by Spivak. The Red Cross attributes agency to their organization and omits Haitian efforts to recover from the disaster. The Haitian people are to be taught, empowered and shuffled between shelters according to the larger plan of the heroic and knowledgeable Red Cross. The superior knowledge and activity of the American Red Cross is further explored in the feature and interview videos also included in the sample.

Features and Interviews

In addition to such overall updates and reviews, smaller interviews and features are also designed to promote the Red Cross’s work and justify donors’ dollars in Haiti.

One such feature offers a thirty second view of the supply distribution system in the American Red Cross compound. The voice of an American Red Cross worker not visible in the clip describes to viewers the process of handing out supplies to the Haitian people. A line of Haitians stretches around a Red Cross truck, “nice and ordered, single file,” while Haitian Red Cross workers hand out packages and direct the recipients through the area “and out through the security perimeter” (“American Red Cross Relief”). The Haitian victims are depicted as children in this clip who must line up and behave in an orderly fashion in order to be given supplies, evoking the childlike stereotypes of colonial discourse. The American Red Cross volunteers are not directly included in the process and thus seem external and supervisory, similar to the external and superior Orientalist in Said’s *Orientalism*. The video is again raw and unedited, interrupted in the middle by the noise of a helicopter overhead. This feature thus illustrates the resources and organization of the American Red Cross who are protected by security perimeters while the Haitian Red Cross workers interact with the victims. Filmed from a distance, the clip offers a patronizing and external perspective on the Haitian people while confirming the security and resources of the American Red Cross.

A second feature interviews Chloe Gans-Rugebregt, who was introduced in a previous video. In this report on the health response after the earthquake, she is filmed in the midst of rubble on a busy street with the sounds of traffic nearly drowning out her voice at times. She establishes her expertise with her background in Haiti, telling viewers that she has been in the country for four years and working for the Red Cross there for two, before describing again the situation before the earthquake (“From the Field”). She explains that “before the earthquake, Haiti was in a pretty dire situation. It is the poorest

country in the Western hemisphere. Roughly one in thirteen children die before their fifth birthday and around 630 women out of 1000 die in childbirth” (“From the Field”). Half way through the two minute clip, Gans-Rugebregt begins to describe the response to this context and the disaster aftermath. The multi-level response she describes involves prevention education for HIV, malaria, sexual and gendered violence and promotion of hygiene: “We go out everyday into the camps and provide education, sensitization,” as well as supplies like mosquito nets, water purification systems, condoms and disaster risk reduction information (“From the Field”). In this short clip, Chloe Gans-Rugebregt places the focus on the vulnerability of Haiti, the expertise of the Red Cross and herself as a Red Cross worker. The raw style of filming again contributes to the authenticity of the information, communicating realism and genuineness. The Haitian people are further characterized as uneducated in this clip as well, trapped in the continuity of poverty and passively accepting the supplies and education offered by the Red Cross. This emphasis, while it does reference underlying conditions of vulnerability, ultimately avoids any political implications and instead “connotes rigidity and unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition” (Bhabha 66).

Two other very similar interview features in the sample focus briefly on Chris Darlington and Luis Matnog, American Red Cross workers on a supply distribution trip to an outlying town. Both run approximately thirty seconds and are filmed in a similar, informal style to Gans-Rugebregt’s interview in the midst of preparations for the supply delivery trip. Both men provide a brief background for themselves, listing their role and even home city in the United States. Matnog summarizes the trip as “distributing relief items to the one hundred fifty families...that will be distributing tarps, kitchen sets,

blankets and other needs of the people” (“Luis”). Darlington, as a team lead taking over from the last three week shift, stumbles a little over his description:

We’re going to be going out today to feed and distribute, well not feed, distribute supplies to a hundred and fifty families...And we’re hoping for a really good day. We’ve got some great volunteers and workers, and I think it’s going to be really good. (“Chris”)

In these brief reports, there is very little information, but what is offered refers to a large group of people in need. Darlington’s suggestion of feeding these people positions them passively as well and emphasizes their dependence, although Matnog briefly considers other needs that they may have outside of the Red Cross supplies he has listed. Again, the unedited style offers a sense of realism and honest documentation of the Red Cross in Haiti to be shared with donors for accountability. The Red Cross workers featured here are again the active agents, modeling neoliberal charity based welfare by seeking out and taking responsibility for a passive population of Haitians, presumably waiting to receive the essential supplies offered by the Red Cross.

In a similar but more extensive style of interview, Mat Morgan, a young communications officer again introduced in a previous update video, provides his general impressions and experiences after one week working in Haiti (“Haiti Journal”). His video is self-recorded and very informal with poor video quality due to lack of light. Filmed at night from the top of a Red Cross base camp building, he admits:

I know it’s against the Red Cross safety standards to be climbing a rickety ladder to be speaking to you from this perch, but I thought it would be a great opportunity not only to talk to you about the Red Cross response

operation and what my experiences have been but also to show you a little sliver of what it is like to be a Red Cross responder. (“Haiti Journal”)

The purpose of his video, therefore, is to share his viewpoint with Red Cross supporters and other viewers. In his initial introduction, Morgan describes the Italian base camp below him that “has been set up to house Red Cross responders and volunteers as they sleep and eat in the few hours that they’re not out in the field responding,” attesting to the dedication of his fellow Red Cross workers (“Haiti Journal”). He acknowledges, however, his personal challenges and difficulties as this is his first disaster assignment and a much larger one than most of the workers are familiar with (“Haiti Journal”).

His monologue moves from here into a comparison of an abstract view of the destruction and statistics with actually speaking to “people who have been through this disaster and survived.” He relates his experiences in the camps:

Every day we go out and we talk to people not only to learn what the Red Cross has done for them, what the Red Cross can do for them, but just to hear some of the challenges they go through on a day to day basis. (“Haiti Journal”)

He emphasizes the sadness of loss of family, friends, even limbs and the impact of witnessing this as “one of the strongest things that I have seen in this week of disaster response, and I’ve seen a lot of things” (“Haiti Journal”). As well, he includes his experience of simply listening to a woman relate her challenges to him and the overwhelming numbers of other people needing similar comfort with similar stories (“Haiti Journal”). Despite these stories and his access to Haitian victims, however, his journal entry still focuses solely on his work with the Red Cross and omits the actual

voices of the Haitians he talks to every day. Morgan is “speaking for” the victims he has met (Spivak 70), framing them and citing them in his own words and excluding them from what Bhabha describes as “the closed circle of interpretation” (31).

Transitioning half way through the clip, Morgan begins to reiterate the essential work the Red Cross has done, in providing basic supplies to 1.3 million people, “meeting some need in their lives from water to shelter to basic food” (“Haiti Journal”). He describes the Red Cross efforts as inspirational since “the hope, the excitement is very real, I think” (“Haiti Journal”). Further, Morgan remarks on the noble effort of the local Red Cross workers who although they “have lost so much even in their own lives, thousands of local Haitian Red Cross volunteers still come out seven days a week and work long hours to make sure that their friends and family and people that they’ve never met are helped and that whatever they’ve lost is not lost by others” (“Haiti Journal”). In the last experience he relates, Morgan reflects on the “resiliency of youth...and their innocence in the wake of this disaster,” recounting the playful interest the children often take in him in contrast to the worry of their parents, associating the recovery of Haiti with children and innocent ignorance, reflecting again the childlike stereotypes of colonial discourse (“Haiti Journal”). His closing comments, in line with the previously discussed updates are to thank donors and assure them again that “the disaster response money that you have sent is making a significant impact down here” (“Haiti Journal”). Additionally, he establishes a continuing need for more funds as the Red Cross continues to provide aid and make long term plans through impending hurricanes and rains (“Haiti Journal”). His video thus attempts to reassure donors, justify the use of their money while also emphasizing the sacrifice and dedication of the Red Cross workers in the country.

Although he also attempts to provide a human face for the disaster victims in relating a couple of their stories, he includes little detail and ultimately only features his own experience rather than the victims' stories as many videos for Hurricane Katrina did. He does acknowledge the heroic and self-sacrificing actions of some Haitian volunteers but this is only in connection to the Red Cross and they are depicted as exceptional Haitians among a devastated people.

Forming a stark contrast to this informal, off-the-cuff style of video journal, the last two interviews included in the sample are part of a series of formal interviews conducted with Gail McGovern as the CEO and President of the American Red Cross. Seated in a living room in the United States, McGovern responds to three questions over the course of the two videos included in the sample to explain the response of the Red Cross in Haiti. Throughout her answers, her language is carefully chosen and reflects participatory development rhetoric. In one clip, McGovern is simply asked to share her impressions from her two trips to Haiti, much as Morgan does in his journal clip ("Part 1"). She describes a contrast between her initial visit and her second visit in the "resiliency of the Haitian people" ("Part 1"). While on the first occasion soon after the earthquake, she characterizes the country as "in shock" and "eerie" as the 2.5 million people in Port-au-Prince were "walking the streets because they had no shelter, they had no place to go. They were walking the streets without making a sound. They weren't smiling, they weren't crying, they weren't laughing, they weren't talking. They were in shock" ("Part 1"). With the deceased still unburied and the roads clogged with rubble, "it was a terrible thing to witness" ("Part 1"). On her second trip, however, McGovern describes the extraordinary resilience of the people. In addition to having cleared the

streets and buried the deceased, “people were walking with purpose, they had smiles on their face, they greet each other” (“Part 1”). McGovern deems the people of Haiti “strong...resilient...and determined, and it’s inspiring” (“Part 1”). Further, “against all odds, commerce is springing up right there on the streets of Port-au-Prince” (“Part 1”). Offering examples, she recounts the tarp covered two-person restaurant, the manicure and pedicure shops, the furniture and supply merchants she saw on “almost every square inch of the curb” (“Part 1”). Given this resiliency, “you can see that the fledgling economy is about to come back” (“Part 1”). The goals of the Red Cross, she continues are long term to “get cash in the hands of the Haitian people so they can take advantage of all the goods and services that are there” (“Part 1”). Despite this positive prognosis, however, McGovern also reconfirms the need for Red Cross presence, citing the terrible conditions of the tent camps and the continued need for permanent shelters. In conclusion, she relates an anecdote that the Creole response to the question “how are you?” is “I’m striving,” which “epitomizes the spirit of the Haitian people” (“Part 1”).

In the other video clip, she addresses two questions more specifically describing Red Cross work in the area: why people claim not to see the Red Cross on the ground in Haiti and why the supplies are not branded for the Red Cross (“Part 4”). She replies by pairing the arguments of fiscal responsibility and local empowerment. Although sending volunteers would be easy, she claims, it would be too chaotic and financially irresponsible to fly the volunteers there and feed and lodge them while there. To import volunteers would be “just creating more mouths to feed” and “is not a good use of our donors’ dollars” (“Part 4”). Instead, she explains that a central team of American Red Cross staff is organizing the logistics of supplies and then “relying on the Haitian Red

Cross, the tens of thousands of Haitian Red Cross volunteers to distribute the food” (“Part 4”). In addition to benefitting from their knowledge of the countryside and language, such a system means fewer “mouths to feed” and “is psychologically empowering” to the local people to ensure a “thriving, sustainable Haitian Red Cross” when the American Red Cross leaves (“Part 4”). McGovern asserts that “this isn’t our country and we have to be very respectful of the people that live there” (“Part 4”). McGovern also links this attitude of respect and efficiency to the decision not to brand all of the supplies sent to Haiti that are widely used but not recognizable as Red Cross materials. This decision was made in order to save time and expedite the delivery of relief items but also because “putting our logo on people’s temporary homes, it just doesn’t feel right. And we are all about making sure that the people of Haiti have what they need not only physically but also psychologically” (“Part 4”). This defence further attests to the consideration of the Red Cross and thus increases their cultural capital through the strategic lack of branding.

McGovern’s interview places an emphasis on the compassion and responsibility assumed by the American Red Cross for the Haitian people. Her interview is a justification to donors for the way the money is spent and she seeks to characterize her organization as one with a unique duty of care for the victims of the disaster over and above interest in the promotion of the organization. She utilizes participatory development rhetoric to further explain their strategy, speaking of the partnerships and empowerment undertaken by the Red Cross. However, the lack of true dialogue and the pervasive attitude of superiority throughout the videos contradict this rhetoric and indicate a failure of true participatory development. Further, her descriptions of their efforts in economic recovery diminutizes their livelihoods. These efforts nevertheless

position them at least partially as worthy victims. The responses to the interview questions are carefully phrased to promote the Red Cross, assure donors and display the compassion of the organization. None of the interviews or features offers a Haitian perspective or portray effective agency by Haitian people despite fleeting rhetoric that patronizingly describes it. Instead, the Red Cross is shown to be active and effective, supervising a weak and needy Haitian population.

Summary

The videos produced for the Haiti earthquake thus employ colonial discourse to separate the benevolent American Red Cross from the weak Haitian victims. The analysis pulls out various themes and strategies that echo the central purpose of the Hurricane Katrina videos but also others that contrast the findings of the previous chapter. The central focus is again on the positive presentation of self through characterizations of the sacrificial, superior and heroic nature of the American Red Cross. The victims of the earthquake, however, are constructed much differently than in Katrina videos. No videos in the sample examined include the views or voices of Haitian victims but instead use only American Red Cross witnesses and stories. The Haitians are spoken for, framed but not even quoted or cited in the videos unlike Hurricane Katrina victims, implying in this sample that they are incapable of speaking for themselves. Rather than humanizing those affected by the disaster, the videos present a colonial, patronizing view of inferior, uneducated Haitians, although interrupted and disguised at points with the rhetoric of participatory development. Stylistically, while the PSAs as well as certain interviews and update videos are professional and polished, much of the discourse out of Haiti is constructed through raw, conversational, unpolished footage often filmed directly in the country which is markedly different from the style of videos from Hurricane Katrina.

This reflects the technological limitations of the country but also indicates efforts to depict authenticity and honesty in a third world context. Through this style and the use of colonial discourse, the videos for Haiti construct a compassionate, responsible, genuine Red Cross organization in contrast to the weaker, uneducated, dependent, inferior Haitian victims.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Underneath the varied strategies and stylistic choices analyzed in the previous two chapters, from the inclusion or exclusion of victims' voices to the use of celebrity or the bid for authenticity with raw, unedited style, the central focus throughout the videos produced by the Red Cross in response to both the Hurricane Katrina and Haiti disasters has undeniably been what van Dijk identified as the positive presentation of self, which denies agency and effectiveness to the victims of the disaster in these representations. Rather than the needs of victims or even the noble qualities of donors, the most central emphasis throughout the videos is on the heroic and effective efforts of the Red Cross in both Hurricane Katrina and Haiti. The videos illustrate, therefore, the findings of Balaji, Motter and Fluri that track the shift of attention away from the victims and toward the donor organization and its supporters. This emphasis takes shape in various ways, using multiple shades of the saviour trope discussed by Jiwani and Fluri but also using justification arguments and testimonies of staff and victims. However, the negative representation of others, which van Dijk identifies as the counterpart to the presentation of self, is less straight forward in the disaster relief videos. As the people affected by the disaster are the beneficiaries of the positive work of the Red Cross, they are not necessarily represented in overtly negative ways. Nevertheless, with significant

differences between Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake contexts, the victims of the disasters are somewhat denigrated and dependent in the relief communication videos. As Stuart Hall notes, the depiction of Other is key to the formation of self (237), which is reflected in the Haiti case study, but when the victims are also Americans, the Othering preformed on them is lessened. In the Hurricane Katrina videos, therefore, the victims are most strongly constructed as worthy and individual in keeping with a neoliberal framework since the disaster occurs within the nation and within the context of the self. In Haiti, however, the dominant construction is of weak victims, uneducated and in need of superior guidance by the American Red Cross saviours, reflective of colonial attitudes.

Presentation of Self

As established in the work of Jiwani, Fluri and Motter, the presentation of self in development and relief communications is often organized around themes of salvation, heroics and the moral exceptionalism of the Good Samaritan. Throughout the analysis of the videos, these themes have been present in the American Red Cross videos. In the Hurricane Katrina videos, often the victims themselves explicitly or implicitly express this trope. In the PSAs featuring victims, Red Cross workers are described as “lifesavers,” and the Good Samaritan theme emerges in that “we needed their help and they were here. The American Red Cross is there for everybody” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). Even in the PSA using only the song “Bridge Over Troubled Waters,” the lyrics imply the same idea, that the Red Cross is there in times of need when others are not (“September 2005”). Thus, the Red Cross replaces the government welfare system with neoliberal self-responsibility, encouraging viewers to support a private, charity organization rather than expect government action and prevention, in keeping with the larger neoliberal model in the United States as particularly discussed by Ouellette and

Hay. Further, in the series of Katrina Stories, similar themes emerge, as in the feature on the swimming lessons as a “survival skill” that is taught by the Red Cross (“Hurricane Katrina Story: Makin’ Waves”). In Shena Batiste’s feature, she describes the relief offered by the Red Cross as allowing her to breathe again (“Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family’s Tale”). The Red Cross volunteers in the five year update video are described as “heroes and giants” (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). As well, in the Haiti videos, similar language is also used in some of the videos. The PSA using John Mayer’s “Heart of Life” song mirrors the intent of the Hurricane Katrina version by suggesting that the Red Cross is the source of the love that turns the whole painful situation around with the exceptional compassion of the American people (“Heart of Life”). In the one year video update, the communications representative tells viewers that “the Red Cross has helped to keep, you know, tens if not hundreds of thousands of people alive” partly because the people of Haiti are “counting on” the Red Cross for water supplies among other necessary supplies (“Haiti One Year”). In cholera prevention campaigns, Red Cross volunteers are “saving lives” with prevention education (“Haiti One Year”). Thus, the discourse in the videos employs the “saviour and liberation” trope and “rescue motif” that Fluri and Jiwani identify and further constructs the American Red Cross as “‘heroes,’ paternal proxies, agents of power” that Spivak and Said describe as a central strategy of colonial discourse (Said 121; Spivak 74).

In addition to this specific language, the entire focus of most videos is the positive role and effective work of the Red Cross in the disaster aftermath. In Hurricane Katrina videos, the beneficiaries of Red Cross aid constantly affirm the important and critical role of the organization, relying on story-telling techniques to establish worth and efficacy.

This is seen in videos like the PSA featuring the Newmans, where Lynn Newman admits “the one thing I’ve learned from this storm is the importance of the Red Cross” ” (RaffertyWeiss Media, “Newmans”). In the Awesome Girls feature, the Red Cross is “very important to [the] program, emotionally, spiritually, physically” (“Hurricane Katrina Story: The Girls”). As well, the importance of the organization is affirmed through the example of assistance provided even to a police officer, aligning the Red Cross with this essential service in society (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). Over and over, the videos explain the central role the Red Cross has played in restoring families and assisting communities. Their work is also backed up with statistics in the review videos, reporting to viewers the number of people they have helped and justifying to donors the use of the funds given. The review video makes reference to long range planning and the innovative work that the Red Cross does with donations (“Hurricane Katrina 5 year overview”). Even the informal interview videos produced by local chapters emphasize the good work of the Red Cross volunteers, sacrificing the comforts of home for living in the back seat of a car and bringing help, hope, education and even some good memories to people in the Gulf Coast region (“American Red Cross Part 2;” RochesterRedCross). The sacrificial theme even adopts a mild religious tone as well, similar to the Good Samaritan discourse discussed surrounding the 2004 tsunami (Motter), as in the use of “Bridge Over Troubled Waters,” which can be sung as a gospel song.

The videos on Haiti are focused on the same self promotion, although without the voices of the beneficiaries to support the claims. Tracy Reines describes the unfortunate circumstances to necessitate the action of the Red Cross and establishes the immediate

actions of the Red Cross literally moments after the earthquake to get people and supplies into position (“Earthquake in Haiti”). The other update videos also emphasize the speed of the Red Cross response, its complexity and inventiveness, as in providing wheelbarrows for transport when roads are impassable (“Haiti: 1 Month”). Again statistics back up the work done with concrete numbers to illustrate the effectiveness of the organization and to indicate what has been done with donors’ contributions. The one year update video even includes the information that ninety-one cents of every dollar donated is committed for use directly in Haiti (“Haiti One Year”), demonstrating the accountability that is expected in non-profit communications (Venable et al. 295). Further, the videos express the long term commitments of the American Red Cross in Haiti, with hospitals and rebuilding efforts to continue for years afterward to make sure the process is done properly, as Gail McGovern suggests in the one year update video (“Haiti One Year”). In her interviews, she talks further about ensuring responsible use of donors’ dollars in partnership relief efforts in Haiti (“Part 4”). The interview style allows her to appear responsive and open to donors’ and viewers’ concerns and questions. Involving the president of the organization in the promotion of Haiti disaster response increases the profile of the disaster, indicating the weight that the organization places on it. Notably, none of the videos for Hurricane Katrina featured the president, indicating perhaps that Haiti is a better case to draw such high profile attention to as it is safely outside the borders of the country and cannot as easily lead to a negative image of the United States. However, Hurricane Katrina videos featuring the president of the organization may have been created but just were no longer available for this sample.

In addition to and overlapping with the themes of heroics and justifications, other strategies of self-promotion include the use of story-telling, celebrity and attributions of responsibility and agency. The stories that are told in Hurricane Katrina videos about and by the recipients of Red Cross aid build a narrative that depicts a universally available organization that has the responsibility to seek out those who are in need and worthy of assistance. This image sets the Red Cross up as a neoliberal role model, with a focus on responsibility of the self and individualization. In Haiti, the stories are centred around the extreme effort expended by the Red Cross workers in distributing the generous resources of the American organization in deliberate cooperation with the Haitian people, although no evidence suggests equality in that partnership, projecting a neo-colonial relationship with the Haitian victims. Further, the videos on various occasions rely on the use of celebrities to draw attention to their organization, seeking to benefit from the positive associations people may have with such easily recognizable names. The support of such well-known people is designed to motivate others to act similarly and support the American Red Cross. Finally, throughout the videos, the American Red Cross is consistently shown as a responsible, active participant in disaster recovery. The organization takes charge and solves problems for victims in both Hurricane Katrina and Haiti as evidenced particularly in Shena Batiste's story and the update videos for Haiti. In further support of the neoliberal model, however, by emphasizing its own efficacy, the American Red Cross also becomes an impediment to structural improvements by the government as underlying issues are covered up and replaced by the positive images of the Red Cross and their work.

Besides this substantial focus on self promotion, the videos also offer some recognition and empowerment to donors. In the first PSAs discussed in both cases, donors are invited to identify with celebrities, through the compassionate character of Veronica Mars and the intimate settings around the Hollywood actors in the Haiti PSA (“PSA,” “Veronica Mars”). Further, donors are given agency, opportunity and ability to do something, as in the Haiti PSA that recognizes the fundraising efforts in yard sales, cupcakes, and text messages (“Heart of Life”). Potential donors are told “you can help,” placing them in a position of power and capacity while victims of the disasters are shown helpless and passive in the midst of the wreckage. Further, they are thanked for their generosity on several occasions and shown what their money has done in the disaster areas. Thus, throughout the videos, the Red Cross promotes itself and its efforts, sometimes using the language of heroics and salvation, but also addresses donors occasionally to thank and motivate them to support the life-saving work of the organization. This recognition affirms and encourages the compassion of the donors, depicting them as generous in the same way that Bush established the moral exceptionalism that Motter describes and constructs them also as saviours for the victims (Jiwani), particularly in the case of Haiti. All of these strategies promoting both the American Red Cross and its supporters draw on the discourse strategies examined here to create the positive presentation of self that van Dijk notes as a key purpose and trend in discourse, reflecting elements of neoliberal discourse in Hurricane Katrina and more colonial discourse in Haiti.

Representation of Other

Although in van Dijk’s model, the positive presentation of self is paired with the negative representation of other, this process is not strictly maintained in these videos.

There are certainly positive depictions of victims, yet especially in the examples from Haiti these are also paired with colonial discourse themes to marginalize the victims as the Other. On the surface, the representation of victims seems positive and sympathetic but does other work as well. The people affected by the disasters are, first of all, rarely referred to as victims, a descriptor that can have negative connotations as it is often associated with vulnerability, passivity and even gullibility. Instead, they are described as people of the Gulf Coast or people affected by the hurricane or earthquake survivors, with only one exception in a PSA for Hurricane Katrina. However, in other ways, the people being assisted by the Red Cross are marginalized and silenced, especially in the Haiti videos while they are framed and constructed as worthy in Hurricane Katrina videos.

In Hurricane Katrina videos, the Red Cross puts significant effort into constructing the featured victims as worthy, good people in particularly bad situations. The four generation family battling cancer, the selfless police officer needing help for her son, widowed mother who lost her husband and business are all presented as worthy of the help of the Red Cross. Most of the victims profiled had evacuated from the storm and returned to devastation. No mention is made of looting or the people who refused to evacuate and needed to be rescued afterwards. The victims are appropriately grateful to affirm the value of the Red Cross's assistance and are silent on the subject of social inequality and other underlying problems that the Red Cross does not address, which obscures the political economy of vulnerability in the same way that Russill and Lavin argue the "tipping point" discourse also did. Similar to the positive presentation of self, this representation of victims then further supports the neoliberal system, drawing

attention away from need for political reforms and improvement and focussing on the good work of the Red Cross in these individual victims' lives. These stories are shaped by the agenda of the Red Cross, as in the case of Shena Batiste whose personal struggles with grief over the loss of her husband and business are silenced and subordinated to the Red Cross worker's negotiations with the insurance company ("Hurricane Katrina Story: One Family's Tale"). There are exceptions, however, such as the Swanier family whose story at least recognizes the motivational role played by Miss Emma ("Hurricane Katrina Story: Restoring"). As well, one of the PSAs suggests that although stripped of home, electricity, food and water, the people of the Gulf Coast are still capable of hope that is stronger than a hurricane, although this hope is empowered by the Red Cross and donors (GSD&M). Even the Veronica Mars PSA in the ten seconds of discourse individualizes victims as "someone displaced by the hurricane" ("Veronica Mars"). Also the community groups featured in the Katrina Stories, while shown to be grateful for the help of the Red Cross, were also started independently even before the storm. The beneficiaries of the Red Cross's work in Hurricane Katrina, while often shown as dependent and helpless, both in the profiles and the various pictures that accompany the videos, are at least given individual stories, voices to express their circumstances and gratitude and even agency to go forward from the hurricane with the support of the Red Cross. Thus the victims of the disasters are presented in positive ways as worthy of the help that the Red Cross has to give. In Balaji's terms, the American victims are empathized with as equals and friends rather than pitied and inferiorized like the Haitian victims. Although this finding contradicts the similarities in racial discourse that Balaji identified between the two

disasters (55), the difference between the two cases highlights the boundaries of nation and self.

This somewhat positive presentation of Hurricane Katrina victims, particularly in contrast to Haiti, reflects the location of this disaster within the borders of the self that the American Red Cross represents. The exteriority that was necessary to the colonial discourse of Orientalism is not possible in this internal disaster (Said 20), and negative portrayals of local victims reflect poorly on the government and the entire country. As American victims, the people affected by Hurricane Katrina are represented more positively as a conflicted part of the self, victims but worthy, temporarily dependent but fundamentally good. In this discourse, the victims are constructed as having the potential to still approach the neoliberal ideal of self-care and individual responsibility through relatively minor and temporary Red Cross assistance, such as swimming lessons and making phone calls. In the same way that the applicants to reality improvement shows must demonstrate their merit and need as traced by Ouellette and Hay (47), the victims featured by the Red Cross must conform to neoliberal standards of worth and responsibility.

In the videos for the Haiti earthquake, there is some echo of this positive presentation since although the Haitian people are not permitted to speak, the discourse revolves somewhat around their positive characteristics. This is part of the participatory development rhetoric that recognizes “we have to be respectful of the people that live here” as McGovern says in one of her interview segments (“Part 4”). There are even some strains of neoliberal discourse as some of the projects are described as empowering to the Haitian people, to improve their skills and livelihoods towards an ideal of self-care

and personalization of welfare. She elsewhere notes that she is “in awe of the Haitian people” and describes their resiliency in bouncing back from the shock with commerce and purpose (“Haiti One Year”). Even this positive presentation carries denigrating strains however, since in the Katrina videos, the only victims discussed in terms of empowerment and resiliency are the children in the swimming, Awesome Girls and theatre programs. The proper subjects of empowerment then, the videos suggest, are children. Further, throughout the Haiti videos, children are significantly more emphasized than in the Hurricane Katrina videos, associating the country with children and communicating a resultant dependence and lack of education and skills. This association of the third world country with children recalls the infantilization and childlike stereotypes described in colonial discourse by both postcolonial theorists and other scholars (Ashcroft 21; Balaji 51; Hall 263; Said 38).

The attitude toward Haitian victims is thus paternalistic and condescending, reflecting a neo-colonial view of Haitians as childlike. The emphasis throughout the videos on educating the Haitians, whether in hygiene or employment skills, characterizes the victims as one homogenized group, uneducated and ignorant of even how to properly wash their hands. In keeping with the patterns of colonial discourse, the entire Haitian population is thus stereotyped with these fixed characteristics in what Bhabha has described as a “strategy of containment” (31). Meanwhile, the Red Cross is an external, knowledgeable saviour to the ignorant, dependent masses for whom the American organization takes responsibility, speaks for and sustains. The portrayal of the Haitian victims as a mass group with such basic and continuous needs as hand washing and water provision positions them as neo-colonial Others, far removed from the responsible

individuals of the neoliberal ideal. The victims are dehumanized through statistics without the countering profiles that the Hurricane Katrina videos included. All these characterizations of the Haitian people reflect the colonial discourse described by Said, Bhabha and Spivak that is created through stereotypes, imposed discourse and knowledge, just as it is in Haiti through these stereotypical generalizations and programs of education.

The Haitian victims of the disaster are not given a voice and are homogenized into mass groups. There are no interviews with beneficiaries of the Red Cross's relief efforts in the sample. In all of the fifty-nine videos from which the sample was drawn, only three translate actual Haitian viewpoints. Even further, few individual stories are told. Mat Morgan describes one boy he met in the hospital, but this is one of only two individual stories in the sample, and the victims are not even given names ("Haiti Journal"). The Haitian people as Others are, as Bhabha again describes it, "cited, quoted, framed, illuminated" in the "closed circle of interpretation" without the "power to signify, to negate, to initiate [their] historic desire, to establish [their] own institutional and oppositional discourse" (31). They are shut out of the recovery discourse as Bell and Farmer have asserted. The Haitian people are pitied as Balaji suggests, and even praised, but as a homogenized group without individual profiles and acknowledgement as in Hurricane Katrina videos. Even in the PSAs for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, two different families affected by the hurricane are featured. In the Haiti PSAs, there is much more reliance on celebrity, including those mentioned in this sample as well as other movie stars in other PSAs and even Michelle Obama, despite evidence that local victims of the disaster are more effective spokespeople (Toncar, Reid and Anderson 271).

The images of victims that are used for the Haiti videos are also much more graphic than those used for the Hurricane Katrina videos. While people affected by the disaster are pictured in both cases, in Hurricane Katrina videos, the people are never injured, nor are any pictures of people stranded on roofs or drowned bodies or the large groups of people waiting for relief in the Superdome and other locations included. Instead, the people may look upset and grief stricken, but they are only observing the wreckage and are balanced with a larger number of pictures depicting Red Cross workers. While there is a noticeable imbalance of African American victims and Caucasian relief workers that is much less noticeable in the Haiti videos, the Katrina videos are more careful of the visual depiction of victims. In the Haiti videos, for example, many of the pictures show much more graphic images of injured children, people being carried through the streets, hospital situations and intense pain, acceptable for this third world country while unacceptable in Hurricane Katrina videos. This confirms the previous findings from the study of images from the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina (Borah) and is informed by the assertion that such treatment erodes the dignity of the victims (Emmett 33).

Further, in the Haiti example, much more emphasis is put solely on the basic needs of the country. In Hurricane Katrina videos, while the profiles note the need for food and shelter, they also explore much more complex relief strategies such as empowering youth, working through mental trauma, teaching survival skills and preventing pregnancy. In the Haiti videos, the emphasis constantly returns to the mass need for basic supplies in contrast to the active efforts of the Red Cross, although psychological effects are briefly mentioned in the participatory development rhetoric

within McGovern's interview ("Part 4"). The update videos discuss provision of healthcare, water, food and shelter and chronicle the lack of basic skills and knowledge in the Haitian people. Haiti is described as a country passively "plagued by all sorts of health threats," without even the basic hygiene knowledge to properly wash their hands for simple cholera prevention ("Haiti One Year"). In the camps in which people have "just moved to any open patch," apparently without discriminate considerations, the water is up to their knees in the rainy season so no one can lie down and sleep ("Haiti One Year"). While the Haitians suffer, the Red Cross must come to teach this passive, waiting people to build ditches for drainage, thus effectively "keeping them dry" and "putting money in their pockets" which the video implies would not otherwise happen ("Haiti One Year").

With stories like these and other direct descriptions, the Red Cross videos place a particular focus on the vulnerabilities, poverty and insufficiencies of the country, even before the earthquake. However, the American Red Cross assumes the responsibility of improving these conditions beyond what the locals, including presumably the government, could do. The goal is to "leave Haiti in a better place than we found it," giving the American Red Cross the agency of finding the helpless, even childlike country in a state of ruin ("Haiti One Year"). Several times throughout the videos the limitations of the country are noted beyond the earthquake. In the health update, Chloe Gans-Rugebregt reminds viewers that Haiti is and was the poorest country in the Western hemisphere and had significant health challenges before the earthquake ("From the Field"). Similarly in the segment on water provision, it is noted that before the earthquake only seventy percent of people had access to clean drinking water ("Haiti One Year"). In

the Hurricane Katrina videos, poverty is only mentioned once as a contributing factor to the devastation in the Gulf Coast in the informal interview when Barbara Pope says “often in a disaster it is the poorest people who are affected the most because they live in the cheapest housing” (“American Red Cross Part 2”). This again illustrates Russill and Lavin’s conclusion from the comparison of Hurricane Katrina to the Chicago heat wave that the political economy of vulnerability is obscured in these disasters. In Haiti, however, the vulnerabilities are emphasized more often than in the Hurricane Katrina videos since it is a third world country in which poverty and vulnerability are expected and more accepted. By accepting aid, the government of Haiti is already depicted as dependent and unprepared (Dupuy), which is further emphasized in the Red Cross videos, while the American government must maintain an image of preparedness and self-sufficiency. Therefore, the underlying issues and even the true extent of the disaster in New Orleans is obscured as a local disaster compared to the extreme detail, weight and seriousness that the Haiti disaster is treated with in the videos, in the same way that Jiwani and Young describe the obscuring of the British Columbia murders in the shadow of Afghanistan.

In response to the vulnerabilities in Haiti, there is then an assertion of superior knowledge on the part of the American Red Cross. The review videos draw attention to the educational programs run by the Red Cross. These are particularly focused around health and skill building, but the American Red Cross also asserts their knowledge about earthquake response which is assumed to be lacking in the Haitian population. Reines suggests that the people there are not used to such disasters and will not know how to respond, thus requiring the superior knowledge of the American Red Cross in addition to

their supplies (“Earthquake in Haiti”). The health strategy is organized around the educational trips to the camps to show people how to wash their hands as mentioned above. The description of this process stereotypes the Haitians as unhygienic, implying that not one person in the camps has the sufficient knowledge to properly wash their hands and prevent cholera since the volunteers are “literally going tent by tent and explaining to every single resident in those tents exactly how to prevent the spread of cholera” (“Haiti One Year”). Similar educational programs teach Haitians how to dig drainage ditches and how to build temporary shelters to “jumpstart” livelihoods beyond the small, tarp covered businesses that McGovern praises but also marks as only “fledgling” (“Part 1”). The Haitian people are to be taught by the American Red Cross, passively moved from shelter to shelter by the American Red Cross recovery program and improved by the superior knowledge of the American Red Cross disaster response as a whole.

In conclusion, both cases illustrate a central concern with self promotion partially through the language of saviour tropes, with some recognition given to donors. At the same time, while not overtly negative, the victims affected by the disaster are depicted as dependent on the active and effective Red Cross organization. This dependence is less emphasized in Hurricane Katrina videos, in which individual victims are profiled as worthy and even given some agency, although their stories are shaped by the Red Cross. In the examples from Haiti, the people are homogenized into large categories with very few individual stories and are depicted as inferior in education and in need of empowerment like the children in Hurricane Katrina. Their voices are entirely omitted from the videos in the sample. Further, they are depicted in graphic images of injuries

and pain in contrast to the relatively modest images of Hurricane Katrina. The basic needs and vulnerabilities that have contributed to the disaster in Haiti are also emphasized in those videos while vulnerabilities and poverty are largely ignored or restricted to children in the Hurricane Katrina videos. Thus, this analysis indicates that the relief communication strategies of the American Red Cross rely mainly on the positive promotion of self and do overall marginalize the victims as dependent and passive, particularly in the third world context of Haiti where, through colonial discourse, the victims are homogenized, silenced, childlike and uneducated despite participatory development rhetoric. The Haiti videos thus continue the colonial discourse described by the postcolonial theorists discussed, while the Hurricane Katrina videos employ more neoliberal discourse than colonial discourse.

Limitations and Future Research

This research project has various limitations, especially in regards to sampling difficulties. The lack of available videos for Hurricane Katrina is problematic in comparing the two cases. A more complete selection of videos for Hurricane Katrina would significantly improve upon the convenience sample utilized here. The American Red Cross did not respond to multiple requests for access to the videos, but further contact with the organization would have possibly resulted in more videos for analysis. In absence of a full archive of videos, my sample was compiled based on the number of videos available for Hurricane Katrina. I included all videos that I could locate that fit the criteria, which resulted in a sample of thirteen. Following the same search techniques and the same criteria for Haiti videos, I compiled a sampling frame of fifty-nine videos from which I randomly selected my sample of thirteen videos in order to avoid selection bias. However, this is nevertheless limited by the lack of variety of Hurricane Katrina videos.

Ideally, I would have also been able to randomly select a sample of Hurricane Katrina videos from a larger sampling frame more representative of all the videos produced following the hurricane.

Additionally, this research is limited by a lack of focus on non-profit organization communications in previous work. However, this research could also be extended in many ways to improve that area. There are many other relief organizations available to analyze which were not in the scope of this paper for example, and unfortunately, many other and more current disasters to examine as well. In particular, a project comparing the disaster response communications between a religious and secular relief organization could illuminate different themes and issues. Also, the findings of this paper would be better informed perhaps by a comparison with communications from other branches of the Red Cross. For example, a preliminary study of Haiti earthquake videos on the Canadian Red Cross YouTube channel indicate that the PSAs produced in Canada rely more on creative graphic art than celebrity endorsement, and many more Haitian profiles are included as compared to the sample from the American Red Cross. This research could then be extended not only to compare the first and third world disaster contexts within the American Red Cross but across other national branches as well, including Australia and Britain to determine other approaches to the disaster communications. This project was specifically designed to examine differences between first and third world contexts, but there are other contrasts such as religious and secular, Eastern and Western locations and even between individual countries and branches of the same organization that would contribute new perspectives on this topic. As well, there are various types of disaster communications to examine and farther reaching effects of this type of

communication on tourism and development that could fruitfully be explored.

Additionally, research on the reaction and response by people affected by the disasters would be valuable, reflecting the emphasis of Bhabha, Hall and Ashcroft on the transformative power and trans-coding strategies of colonized people.

Within the context and scope of this particular thesis, however, a discourse analysis of the American Red Cross disaster response videos for Hurricane Katrina and Haiti reveals that there is a central and persistent focus on the positive presentation of self in both of the cases as well as shared, prominent themes of the Red Cross's heroics and the victims' passivity and dependence. In the representation of others, however, from the first world context of New Orleans, the victims are constructed through a neoliberal lens as worthy individuals who are given a voice (albeit framed and quoted by the Red Cross), but from the third world context of Haiti, the victims are silenced in the discourse and are more often dehumanized, spoken for and presented as inferior, reflecting a colonial discourse that is more evident in representations of the third world.

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